

# Character analysis "the absolutely true diary of a part time indian"

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Nowadays, money is considered to be the most powerful medium to happiness and control over one's life. That might be partially true, but only to a certain extent.

In the novel " The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian" the main character is Arnold Spirit (or simply Junior). Junior is a Native-Indian teenage boy who lives in an extremely poor family, in an extremely poor community, in an extremely poor reservation, in an extremely poor town called Wellpinit. Junior is a kid who is different from the others, as he has too much spinal fluid in his brain. This physical condition makes his life a living hell, as he continually has seizures during the first years of life. Nevertheless, Arnold is a very smart kid, and acknowledging that he will never find hope staying in Wellpinit, he decides to tell his parents he will go to a " white kids' school" called Reardan, not too far away from the reservation.

Here begins Junior's journey to reach out for hope. Therefore, if we consider Junior's story, it is my opinion that poverty is not a boundary for achieving one's dreams. The first step towards achieving Junior's dreams is going to Reardan, but involves making sacrifices, as his parents tell him, " We can't afford to move there. And there ain't no school bus going to come out here". Junior already knew the consequences of taking such a crucial decision, and doesn't change his mind.

He is aware of the fact that he'll be alone, as his father is an alcoholic (so won't be able to drive him to school) and his mother mostly stays in the house. Arnold literally gives up everything he has left (family, friends, and the Indian community's respect). Throughout the book Junior also loses close

relatives, making it even harder for him to remain sane while moving towards better prospectives. For Arnold, life is a constant challenge. Along the way he deals with the loss of loved ones but he also has to breakdown prejudices, make new friends in Reardan and distinguish between those people who won't hurt or bully him, supporting and respecting him instead.

Another member of the Spirit family is Junior's sister " Mary runs away" , a character who, as the nickname suggests, literally runs away from the Indian fate of dying in poverty and with no hope. Like her brother, she also has a dream, which is to write romantic novels and live in one herself. Not long after she leaves, Mary marries an unusual Indian man, whom she met at a bar: " She said he wasn't afraid to gamble everything, and that's the kind of man she wanted to spend her life with". Humans are free to do almost everything and anything they want, and Mary strongly understood that concept, and left her depressing life, flipping it over to take some risks. The concept of hope that this character believed in was simply achieving true happiness by the " carpe diem" ideal of living every day without any regrets. At Reardan, Junior meets a lovely girl named Penelope, who is intelligent, attractive and enjoys helping the world with small acts of generosity.

Junior and her grow close as the novel unfolds, developing feelings for each other. The author, Sherman Alexie, shows that hope is hard to achieve even when a white skinned character like Penelope tries: " I want to go to Stanford and study architecture" (Penelope talking about her dream to Arnold). People in the school stereotype her as the usual, attractive white girl, underestimating her level of intelligence, causing her to have low self

esteem and confidence. Junior is probably the only guy who sees her potential and makes a comment about the two of them “ We were supposed to be happy with our limitations/ But there was no way Penelope and I were going to sit still. Nope, we wanted to fly”. This quote impresses me, as Junior is comparing himself to a white person, placing them both on the same plane and starting line, with no advantages from either side.

Penelope has everything in life, and there is not much more she can ask for, but she never makes a comparison with Junior even though Penelope did not yet know about Arnold’s financial situation (at that part of the book), it was highly suggestible that he wasn’t as wealthy as the other white kids in school (you could easily tell by the clothes he wore). Penelope, Mary and especially Junior prove that, in life, courage, willpower and desire for something better cannot stop human beings from getting what they want. This book is about hope, love, strength of character and courage and through the protagonists we see that we can achieve whatever we want despite the numerous obstacles that impede us. Success often has a high price and involves lots of sacrifices, struggles, challenges but although the journey may be painful and difficult, it is priceless and worth it.