

# The indian killer by sherman alexie essay



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The Indian Killer by Sherman Alexie is a novel about the violence and chaos caused by the destruction of the Native American identity. In the book, Native Americans strive to figure out who they are while violence continues to grow around them. Native Americans are angry with white people because they are tired of being oppressed. Whites are angry with Native Americans because they no longer want them. And in this ferocious, never-ending cycle of anger and violence, the Indian Killer is created. To some people, the Indian killer is an Indian who is killing innocent white people out of revenge.

To others, the Indian Killer kills Indians by causing violence against them. However, nobody really knows who the Indian Killer is. In reality, the Indian Killer is both and, at the same time, none of these. The killer is a force sent down by a higher power to stop the future persecution of Native Americans. The Indian Killer is unrestricted to the physical state of the human mind and body. It is not bound to the limits of the human body or the morality of the human mind. Mark Jones, the white boy that the Indian Killer kidnapped, is the only person to ever have seen the Indian Killer.

When Mark looks into the killer's face, he notices that it "[shimmers] and [changes] like a pond after a rock [has] been tossed into it" (Alexie, 153).

When a rock is thrown into a pond, the water shifts and changes according to the force that the rock caused. Likewise, the killer is able to change his form depending on the situation he is in. At one point, Mark describes the Indian killer as being a winged-creature. He says, " I don't know. Lots of feathers... On the wings...It was the bird that was there...It could fly, I bet...I think it could fly because it had wings" (324).

No one can believe that Mark actually believed the killer was a bird. However, Mark sees what the killer wants him to see: an ever-changing, chameleon force. Although it is not restricted to human moral values, the Indian Killer has its own values and is extremely religious. The Indian Killer is a divine and religious power. Even when the killer wants to kidnap Mark from his home, it compares itself to a greater force. “ The killer [knows] that the kidnapping of Mark Jones [is] the...first dance of a powerful ceremony that [will] change the world...The world [will] shudder when a white boy [is] sacrificed. A small, helpless boy.

The killer, like a Christian plague, [has swept] into the Jones’s house and stolen the first-born son of a white family” (192). Similar to the plague that claimed the lives of all of the first-born sons of the Egyptians and unrighteous Jews, the killer is sent by some higher power and it understands that. Before it goes to kidnap Mark Jones, “[t]he killer [kneels] down beside the bed as if to pray. Then the killer [does] pray” (153). The killer would not pray unless it believes that what it is doing is good. Unlike all of the other violent characters in the book, the Indian Killer is fighting for a more righteous cause.

Its objective is to right past wrongs and to prevent future persecution of Native Americans. When the killer observes Mark Jones, it doesn’t just see a target. The killer sees “...a beautiful white boy...A perfect child who, through no fault of his own, might grow up into a monster...Right now, the killer could run across the playground, pick up the boy, and slash his throat before anybody could intercede. Killing the dragon before it could breathe flames”

(151). The killer wants to prevent Mark from becoming like the other whites who are racist and wrongly persecute Native Americans.

The killer could have killed Mark right there and then, but that would've been against everything he stands for. The Indian Killer understands what it is starting and will not stop until it accomplishes its goal. Everything starts with Mark Jones. " The killer knew that the kidnapping of Mark Jones was the true beginning, the first song, the first dance of a powerful ceremony that would change the world. " The Indian Killer has a vision in mind and he understood that Mark Jones would set things rolling. This brutal action, this dance, is the first among many to come and the killer understands this. The killer dances for hours, days.

Other Indians arrive and quickly learn the song...The killer knows this dance is over five hundred years old...the killer can dance forever. The killer plans on dancing forever. The killer never falls" (420). The killer will never fall or give up. It knows that this dance, this movement that he has started is long past due. The killer has been sent down to stop the persecution and other Indians are joining it in its song. They can all dance forever and they will dance forever because in the end evil will fail.