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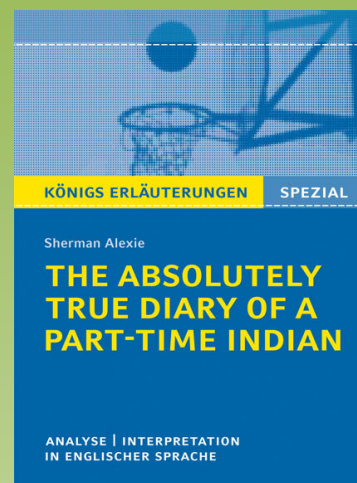
Unterrichtsmaterialien in digitaler und in gedruckter Form

Auszug aus:

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

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1. AT A GLANCE

This study guide to Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is designed to provide an easy-to-use overview. Here is a quick rundown of the most important points.

Part 2 takes a brief look at Sherman Alexie and his career.

- ⇒ p. 9 → Sherman Alexie was born on **October 7 1966** with hydrocephalus in Spokane Reservation, Washington (USA).
- ⇒ p. 11 → In *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* Alexie's main themes are **racial identity, life on the reservation** and **alcohol abuse**.

Part 3 offers analyses and interpretations of the novel.

The Absolutely True Diary ... – Origins and Sources

- ⇒ p. 22 The book was published in 2007. It was inspired by Sherman Alexie's own life growing up in Wellpinit (Spokane Reservation).

Summaries

- ⇒ p. 24 The narrator is the 14-year old Arnold “Junior” Spirit, born in Wellpinit, on the reservation of the Spokane Indians. He was born with a serious medical condition. Due to his physical problems, he is often beaten up by other kids on the reservation, but is also protected by his best friend Rowdy. He spends a lot of time at home drawing. With the help of his teacher he wants to change his life by moving to another, better school in the town of Reardan – a school full of white kids. Junior is very lonely at Reardan, and he also has problems with life on the reservation. His friend Rowdy refuses to talk to him anymore and rejects him as a traitor. He becomes friends

with Roger, an athletic kid, Gordy, the cleverest boy in the school, and the pretty but troubled Penelope. Junior's sister Mary and his grandma die in accidents related to alcohol. Junior becomes part of the Reardan basketball team: the team loses against the Wellpinit team and Junior's best friend Rowdy. In the rematch Junior's team wins. Junior and Rowdy begin to mend their friendship with a brief and insulting e-mail exchange.

Structure

The Absolutely True Diary is a novel (fiction) claiming to be an autobiography (non-fiction) which is, in fact, deeply autobiographical. It is narrated in the first person and in a chronologically linear form: the narrator, Arnold "Junior" Spirit, is looking back on this period in his life and telling it to us, the readers. ⇨ p. 39

Characters

This novel has a very simple character system (organised according to their location), in that everything revolves around Junior, the first person narrator:

Arnold "Junior" Spirit

- narrator and 14-year old Indian ⇨ p. 53
- lives with his **family** in the "rez" Wellpinit ⇨ p. 55
- leaves the reservation for a new "white" school in Reardan

Rowdy

- Arnold's best friend in the reservation ⇨ p. 58
- plays basketball against Junior's Reardan team

⇒ p. 61 **Penelope, Gordy and Roger**
→ friends at the new school in Reardan

⇒ p. 61 **Coach and other people**

Themes

⇒ p. 65 The themes are often interconnected and none of them stands independently. The three thematic groups – **identity, positivity and life on a reservation** – each include several individual themes – identity, for example, covers bullying (defending one's identity), race and tribalism.

Style and Language

⇒ p. 104 The book is written in an **unusually chatty, loose and direct style**, with a healthy dose of vulgarity and slang. This chapter looks at some ways in which Sherman Alexie uses language to reinforce themes and messages.

⇒ p. 113 The *Diary* is filled with **illustrations**. The drawings in the book are often integral parts of the storytelling, serving much more than a decorative purpose.

Interpretation

⇒ p. 123 The book is interesting for a number of reasons and offers a number of different ways to approach studying it. This chapter looks at a few of them, from issues of genre (Young Adult fiction, autobiography) to literary context (multiculturalism and colonial literature).

2.1 Biography

2. SHERMAN ALEXIE: LIFE & WORKS

2.1 Biography

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	AGE
1966	Wellpinit, Spokane Reservation, Washington (USA)	Sherman Alexie was born on October 7 with hydrocephalus. His father was from the Couer d'Alene tribe, and his mother was of mixed ancestry: Colville, Choctaw, Spokane and European-American. Alexie was one of six children.	
1966–1980	Spokane Reservation, Washington	Alexie grew up on the Spokane Reservation in Washington State. His father was an alcoholic and his mother worked multiple jobs to support the family. Alexie was an excellent student at school and became a passionate reader.	0–14
1980–1985	Reardan, Washington	He left school on the reservation to attend high school, where he became an outstanding pupil and a star basketball player.	14–19
1985	Gonzaga University, Spokane	He won a scholarship for Gonzaga University (medical science, then law), but he developed a drinking problem which led him to leave the university.	19
1987	Pullman	In 1987, he went on to study creative writing at Washington State University, where he met and was taught by the Chinese-American poet Alex Kuo (*1941), who became a great inspiration for the young Alexie.	21
1992	New York	Publication of his first collection of short stories and poems, <i>The Business of Fancydancing</i> . National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowship.	26



Sherman Alexie
(* 1966)
© picture alliance/
AP Photo

2.1 Biography

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	AGE
1993	Boston, Massachusetts	Prestigious PEN/Hemingway Award for Best First Book of Fiction for his short story collection <i>The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven</i> .	27
1995	Seattle	Publication of his first novel (<i>Reservation Blues</i>). Alexie marries Diane Tomhave.	29
1996	Seattle	American Book Award (<i>Reservation Blues</i>).	30
1998	Seattle	He wrote the screenplay for the film <i>Smoke Signals</i> (1998), which was based on one of his stories, and which is the very first all-Indian film in the USA. The film won major awards at the Sundance Film Festival as well as other major awards and was critically acclaimed. Since then he has been involved in other film projects.	32
1999	Seattle	Alexie is named one of the "20 Writers for the 21st Century" (<i>The New Yorker</i>).	33
2007	Seattle	<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> was published. National Book Award, Young People's Literature for this book.	41
2010	Seattle	PEN/Faulkner Award (<i>War Dances</i>) and California Young Reader Medal (<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i>).	44
2017	Seattle	Autobiography <i>You Don't Have to Say You Love Me</i>	51
1994–today	Seattle	Alexie now lives in Seattle with his wife and two sons.	



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