

Firstname Lastname

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Summary

In “Superman and Me,” Sherman Alexie describes the origin of his interest in reading. He traces this to his childhood, specifically his father’s love for books, his classmates’ lack of motivation, and the state of Native American education. Alexie states that his father’s obsession with reading led him to pick up books before he could understand them.

Alexie claims that the first book he picked up was a Superman comic book. He recounts how he could not even read at this point, but by looking at the pictures, he could create his own meaning for the words. Following this, Alexie discovered paragraphs. He realized that each group of words is put together to describe a single event. Alexie states that this realization led to putting the rest of his world into “paragraphs,” seeing his life in literary terms.

Although Alexie enjoyed this new perspective, it caused difficulty with his education. He describes his difficult learning environment. He explains that most, if not all of the Native American children were happy with mediocrity. According to Alexie, they would get upset at Alexie if he volunteered or answered a question. However, Alexie notes that this resistance did not deter him.

Alexie continued to read, and he credits his success as an author to this persistence. He recounts reading throughout the day and late into the night. For Alexie, reading was part of growing up and realizing who he wanted to be. This love of reading, and a memory of how reading was rejected by his fellow Native American schoolmates, has inspired Alexie to act.

Alexie now visits Reservation schools, encouraging Native American children to read and aspire for a life of possibilities. Alexie frequently visits schools to teach creative writing as often as he can. He says that one of the main reasons he visits these children is because he cannot remember a single time in his youth when his school had a guest speaker. Alexie describes these children as being in awe of him and encouraged to write their own short stories. Still, Alexie describes finding that some of these children resist his message, a resistant that is reminiscent of Alexie's school days.

Now into his thirties, Alexie embraces the experience of returning to schools similar to those he grew up in. Alexie claims that these experiences remind him of how he first came to reading. They call to mind how his father's love for books, his resistant classmates, and the state of education for Native Americans all helped form his view of the significance of reading.

Work Cited

Alexie, Sherman. "Superman and Me." *Fallsapart.com*. Sherman Alexie, 19 Apr. 1998. Web. 17 June 2012.