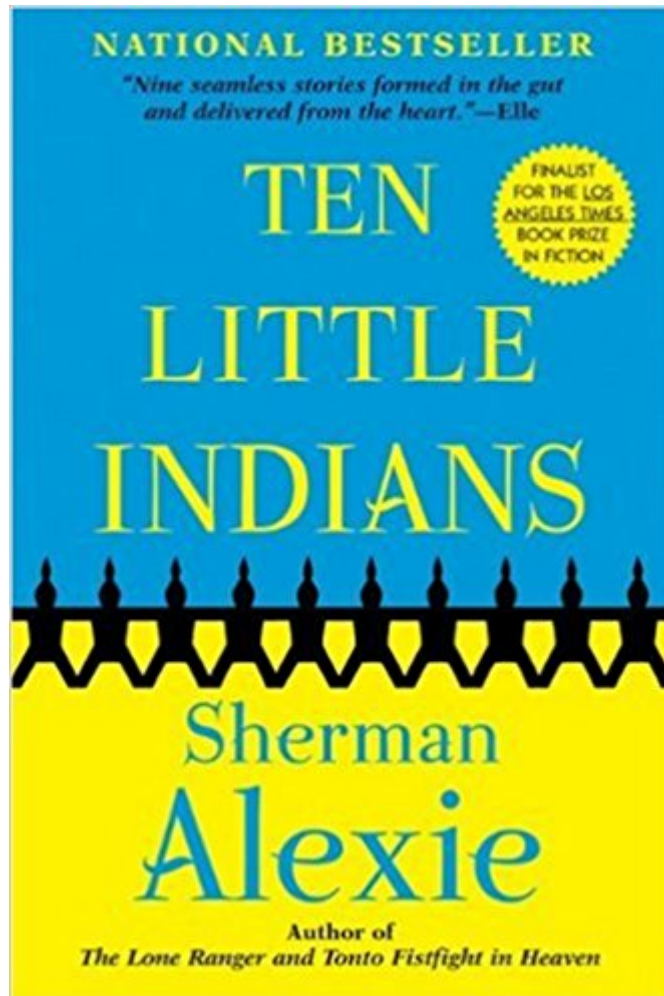




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Ten Little Indians



Synopsis

Sherman Alexie is one of our most acclaimed and popular writers today. With *Ten Little Indians*, he offers nine poignant and emotionally resonant new stories about Native Americans who, like all Americans, find themselves at personal and cultural crossroads, faced with heartrending, tragic, sometimes wondrous moments of being that test their loyalties, their capacities, and their notions of who they are and who they love. In Alexie's first story, "The Search Engine," Corliss is a rugged and resourceful student who finds in books the magic she was denied while growing up poor. In "The Life and Times of Estelle Walks Above," an intellectual feminist Spokane Indian woman saves the lives of dozens of white women all around her to the bewilderment of her only child. "What You Pawn I Will Redeem" starts off with a homeless man recognizing in a pawn shop window the fancy-dance regalia that was stolen fifty years earlier from his late grandmother. Even as they often make us laugh, Alexie's stories are driven by a haunting lyricism and naked candor that cut to the heart of the human experience, shedding brilliant light on what happens when we grow into and out of each other.

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Customer Reviews

Sherman Alexie, a gifted poet and storyteller, plows familiar yet fertile ground in his third collection of short stories, *Ten Little Indians*. The book contains nine stories populated by at least one American Indian (usually of Alexie's Spokane heritage, and mostly living in Seattle), but "little" is a bit of a misnomer; the book addresses human (not necessarily Indian), rituals, ceremony, love, loss,

insecurity over life choices, and personal sacrifices. A lot of intense basketball is played, too. When Alexie is at his best, his stories function at a profoundly sad level, where broken down characters are broken down even more, but are fierce-willed enough to attempt Phoenix-like transitions. Unfortunately, the weakest stories appear first, where characters and situations seem far too contrived or forced, the dialogue wooden, and questions or exclamatory sentences appear annoyingly in bunches. In the last half of the book, a married couple, once intensely in love but now lost in life's routines, deal with infidelity ("Do You Know Where I Am?"); a bright basketball prospect attempts a comeback--twenty years after giving up the game ("Whatever Happened to Frank Snake Church?"); and a transient Indian finds his grandmother's regalia in a pawn shop and seeks to quickly raise the lofty purchase price ("What You Pawn I Will Redeem"). Brilliant turns of phrase abound, such as ceremonies being "pitiful cries to a disinterested God," or when a gym rat plays against "Basketball-Democrats who came to the court alone and ran with anybody and Basketball-Republicans who traveled in groups of five and only ran with each other." *Ten Little Indians* is an uneven collection, but contains some significant, memorable stories. --Michael Ferch

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Fluent, exuberant and supremely confident, this outstanding collection shows Alexie (*The Toughest Indian in the World*, etc.) at the height of his powers. Humor plays a leading role in the volume's nine stories, but it's love, both romantic and familial, that is the lens through which Alexie examines his compelling characters. His range stretches from the strange to the poignantly antic. In "Can I Get a Witness" an Indian woman is caught inside a restaurant when a suicide bomber blows himself up; in "Do Not Go Gentle" a father buys a vibrator dubbed "Chocolate Thunder" and uses it as a spiritual talisman to successfully bring his seriously injured baby out of a coma. In one of the book's finest stories, "The Search Engine," Corliss Joseph, an intrepid 19-year-old Spokane Indian college student, finds an obscure 1973 volume of Indian poetry and tracks down the author, an aging forklift operator with painful memories of his foray into the literary world. Basketball looms large in a number of these stories, from the thoughtful "Lawyer's League" to the superb final entry, "What Ever Happened to Frank Snake Church?" Loose, jaunty and salted with long, hilarious, inspired riffs--"What kind of life had she created for herself? She was a laboratory mouse lost in the capitalistic maze. She was an underpaid cow paying one-tenth mortgage on a three-bedroom, two-bath abattoir"--these are still cohesive, powerful narratives, expanding on Alexie's continuing theme of what it means to be an Indian culturally, politically and personally. This is a slam dunk collection sure to score with readers everywhere. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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I love this book. I love how Alexie talks about poverty, sexism and racism in an upfront and honest way without the stories being completely tragic. Sometimes I feel like we only talk about discrimination as a result of something huge or some major catastrophe (don't get me wrong, those need to be talked about too, but I think it makes discrimination seem like something that isn't always happening in tiny ways every day... at least for white people: that is the definition of white privilege) but we rarely ever have stories that are about the lives of normal people experiencing normal discrimination in their mostly ordinary lives. Most of the narrators are funny and most of them are insightful. I would recommend this book to everyone.

I picked up this book because I vaguely knew Mr. Alexei had written about basketball, a game of which I am fond. There is basketball in this book, but I didn't know he was going to write my heart here and there. I could ramble incoherently about the characters, the humor, and the humanity, but I'd rather go read more by this author.

The stories cover wide range of experience, giving the reader a clear picture of life as a Native American. I prefer the Canadian term First Nations as it reminds us that we took everything from the Indians and have yet to replace much of anything, except basketball....a sport that thrives on and off the Reservations.

Sherman Alexie is one of America's hidden gems, a fantastic writer, thoughtful and wry. There is always a twist, always something that makes you pause and think again.

Really fun stories but a few just did not speak to me. All in all, a good collection from one of my favorites. Just not my favorite work in his arsenal.

ok but confusing

Powerful, painful, funny portraits. I shouldn't say portraits. Reading Ten Little Indians is not observing a gallery of images, or soaking up a sequence of voyeuristic shorts; it is entering the very skin of beautiful courageous individuals living lives as strangers in their own land.

Sherman Alexie's voice in these stories is true, honest and engaging. These stories not only lead you into the world of the Indian, they also allow you to experience hope, joy, and despair as Alexie's characters do. Highly recommend this collection and so glad I have more of Alexie to read.

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