

Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian - Thematic Questions

Chapter Ten - "Tears of a Clown"

In this chapter, Arnold reflects on the way Rowdy was his "secret-keeper." Who is your "secret-keeper," and what kinds of secrets do you share? What do you do if you don't have anyone to share your secrets with? Is it important to share secrets about your innermost feelings and thoughts? Why or why not? How do you think it affects Arnold to be without his secret-keeper?

Chapter 11 - "Halloween"

On Halloween, Arnold follows Penelope's lead and trick-or-treats for money to give to the poor. "I was a poor kid raising money for other poor people," he says. "It made me feel almost honorable" (79). Describe a time when you did something to help other people. What did you do? What was the occasion? Is this something you do regularly? How does your participation in helping someone else make you feel?

Chapter 12 - "Slouching Towards Thanksgiving"

In this chapter, Arnold meets Gordy, who becomes his friend and mentor about how to be a student. Gordy shares his philosophy of reading and writing with Arnold, who begins to see schoolwork from a new perspective. "He not only tutored me and challenged me, but he made me realize that hard work--that the act of finishing, of completing, of accomplishing a task--is joyous," Arnold says (98). Has there ever been a time when you experienced the completion of a challenging task as "joyous"? What was the task (this can be school related or not)? What did you learn from the experience? Were there any skills, attitudes, or practices that you took from that experience and apply to your life today?