

Story Title: “Every Little Hurricane”

1. Summary and Message (200 words)

The story “Every Little Hurricane” tells the story of nine-year old Victor and the challenges that he and his family face in 1976. In the story, we learn that Victor watches his uncles fight during a party, that his father cries “huge, gasping tears. Indian tears” (5), and that Victor deeply loves his parents despite the challenges of reservation life and being an Indian. The message of “Every Little Hurricane” seems to be about the ways that people deal with the beginning, middle, and end of disastrous circumstances—and that oftentimes these circumstances are out of our control, just as hurricanes and other natural disasters are. The story takes us through the many challenges that Victor’s family has faced, and helps us see that in the end, the family comes out okay; they survey damage and acknowledge that life does not look the same, but they still gather together in the end: “The hurricane that fell out of the sky in 1976 left before sunrise, and all the Indians, the eternal survivors, gathered to count their losses” (11). This story captures the idea that we survive together, the sun will still come up the next day, and our survival depends on our ability to be ‘eternal survivors.’

207 words

2. Technique (100 words)

Sherman Alexie uses several techniques in “Every Little Hurricane.” First, The hurricane in this story serves as a metaphor to describe the way that life’s difficulties come at us in unexpected ways. Our personal ‘hurricanes’ may come on as small winds first, then grow and become near disasters, but they finally retreat and leave us with a world that is forever changed. A second technique is Alexie’s use of names. He gives the title character the name Victor, a name which initially seems like a fairly normal American name. As we read about Victor’s experience, challenges, and struggles, we realize in the end that his name represents the way that he has survived – this hurricane and probably many others. And the name “Victor” literally means one who has won, and we associate ‘victory’ with both winning a game but also overcoming, being strong, and surviving whatever we are faced with.

150 words

3. Personal Reflection (300 words)

At first, “Every Little Hurricane” seemed like a story that was about an Indian reservation, alcoholism, and violence. On most days, my experience does not echo the life of Victor and his family at all. However, once I thought more carefully about the experiences the narrator shares, I realize that Victor and I are not so dissimilar. We both

care deeply about our parents and our families, but we also sometimes feel uncomfortable about the world around us. Victor watches his dad struggle to with money and he watches his uncles fight, “slugging each other with such force that they had to be in love.” When I read this story, I think about the ways that my mom and I fought, especially when I was younger. I was so angry I felt I could scream “I hate you” but somehow I knew that she would still love me and I would still love her no matter what I said. I believe that “Every Little Hurricane” is partly about this comfort family can bring us, even when the world feels like it is swirling around in uncontrollable ways. In the end of the story, the hurricane departs and Victor and those on the reservation assess the damage from this storm. In the end, the story talks about how the survivors “gathered to count their losses,” and I think about the times that I fought with my mom, my sisters, and my friends in the past. I find myself remembering a huge fight that two of my friends and I had at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp when I was in 7th grade. It was, of course, over a boy that two of us liked- and I’m sure he didn’t really even notice either of us too much. But our fight centered around being noticed by him and at the time it felt like a giant hurricane. We stood in the gray, concrete shower area of the bathroom and screamed at each other. The counselor came in and tried to settle us down. Ultimately, after the storm of screams, we went on and even laughed about some of our reactions and our obsession with John Cowen. I can’t believe I even remember his name, but I think the reason I remember is because my friends and I made it through the storm that he, unwittingly, caused. We remain friends today, partly because we made it through that experience, surveyed the damage, and moved on. What I realize, as I reread the final line of “Every Little Hurricane,” is that we survive storms together and that is what is important- that people gather together and suffer and survive through difficulties and loss together. And even though my own challenges do not meet or match Victor’s, I can see that his need to feel close to others and his ability to survive is what we all do in small and large ways. What’s important is that we come out of every little hurricane alive.