

In the novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, Sherman Alexie symbolizes

the power of dreams through the desire of one girl to write steamy romance novels. Mary Spirit, older sister of Arnold “Junior” Spirit, spends her days and nights hiding in her family’s basement. After high school, Mary retreated into the role expected of her as an Indian on an eastern Washington reservation. It’s only through Mr. P. that we eventually learn of Mary’s desire to write romance novels, “Oh, she loved to write short stories. Little romantic stories. She wouldn’t let anybody read them. But she’d always be scribbling in her notebook” (Alexie 39). The fictional romances gave Mary a private secret place to go that was beautiful and wholly different from the sad existence of the reservation. In her writings, she could create any circumstances that she wanted. It’s interesting that she ultimately marries an outsider and moves away to a distant land. Even though her new house is a trailer and her new country is Montana, her life is still different from what it was supposed to have been. Her dreams of writing stories led her to a fate of her own romantic creation rather than of a life working at the “trading post or the post office” (Alexie 91). Alexie shows that dreams can carry us away from what is expected of us. While Mary’s dreams break her mother’s heart, they ultimately inspire Junior to create and follow his own dreams that will take him far from the reservation.