The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
&
Informational Reading

Directions: Re-read the chapter titled “Halloween” on page 81 in your novel. Then read the article below. Once you have finished reading, please fill out the chart below! 😊
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**YUL KWON, FROM BULLYING TARGET TO REALITY TV STAR**

by NPR Staff

Yul Kwon’s early life was mired with a host of challenges. Born to South Korean immigrants in New York, Kwon never had a positive role model from his community. In 2006, he decided to join the cast of *Survivor* and make a name for himself in popular culture.

**As you read, take notes on how Yul Kwon overcame his personal demons to become a role model for other Asian Americans.**



["Yul J. Kwon"](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6d/YUL.J.KWON.jpg) by Asiangoose is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

[1]Yul Kwon first earned his game-changer status when the Yale University-trained lawyer put his career on hold to compete on the CBS show *Survivor* in 2006. He became the first Asian-American to win that show's $1 million prize. That led to work as a special correspondent for CNN, a lecturer at the FBI Academy, and deputy chief of the Federal Communication Commission's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau.

Kwon currently hosts the news program LinkAsia on LinkTV, and recently finished hosting PBS' *America Revealed*, a mini documentary series about agriculture, transportation, energy and manufacturing.

**BEING A TARGET OF BULLYING**

Kwon's early life involved a host of challenges. He was born in 1975 in New York to South Korean immigrants. He tells *Tell Me More* host Michel Martin he had a severe lisp as a kid, so many people assumed he was a foreigner who could not speak English properly. Kwon says he grew increasingly quiet to avoid being teased or beaten up.

"But as people who've been bullied are well aware, the more quiet you are, the more you attract bullies," he says. "And it started to be a real problem for me. I started to develop a number of social anxiety disorders."

[5]Kwon says these issues continued for many years, partly because he did not see many role models from his community. He watched a lot of television (as a way to learn English), and in the rare times when he did see Asian-Americans onscreen, they were portrayed in negative stereotypes.

"If you're a guy, you're either a Chinese cook, or a gangster, or a Kung Fu master who could kick butt but can't speak English, or a geek who can't get a date," says Kwon. "And so, over time, I think I just internalized a lot of these images and I became that quintessential Asian-American."

Despite a difficult childhood, Kwon went on to earn a bachelor's in symbolic systems from Stanford University, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa.1 He also earned a juris doctorate from Yale Law School, where he served on the editorial board of the *Yale Law Journal.* He worked in law, politics and business, then made what some would consider a surprising shift to television.

**BECOMING A STAR OF 'SURVIVOR: COOK ISLANDS'**

Kwon says he never imagined that television was an option for someone like him, but one day, he received an email from a *Survivor* casting agent who was seeking Asian-American contestants.

"It turns out that the reason they wanted to do this was because they had a twist to that season," he says, "which was they were going to divide the contestants into racial tribes and have a war of races."

[10]Kwon initially was not interested in participating, but then he thought back to his hunger for positive role models as a child. He says that if he had seen them, it might have helped him build courage, confidence and an image of himself as a potential leader.

"The great thing about a reality show is that it's not scripted, so I don't have to play a stereotype, I don't have to play a role where I'm speaking with an accent," he says. "And so I thought if I did well on the show, I could potentially be the kind of role model that I didn't have when I was growing up."

Kwon surprised even himself by winning the show, a victory he attributes to fair play. He says he wanted to apply all the things he learned from working in law, politics and management consulting, and to play an intelligent game that did not involve backstabbing.

He says the win also brought him closer to his father, who initially discouraged Kwon from joining *Survivor*. He says his performance on the show prompted his father to say something he'd never heard before: "He said, 'Yul, I'm sorry.' And I'm like, 'What?! Who are you? You're not my father,' you know. And I asked him, 'Why are you sorry?' And he said, 'You know, I've always just kind of viewed you as this kind of kid who's trying to figure out what he wants to do, and you know, didn't really have it together. And then I saw you on the show, and I'd seen what kind of man you'd grown up to become, and I was really proud of him. So I'm sorry that I doubted you.' "

**MAKING HEADWAY FOR ASIAN-AMERICANS**

Kwon says that in recent years, television audiences have seen more Asian-Americans playing roles that don't descend2 into stereotypes. He points to actor Daniel Dae Kim. Kim now stars on the CBS series *Hawaii Five-O*, but had his breakthrough role as Jin on the hit TV series *Lost*.

[15]"What Daniel Dae Kim told me when he first took on the role was, 'Look, I want to bring a level of craft and artistry to this role that no one else can. And in doing so, I want to create a narrative arc that allows this person to become a three-dimensional character.' And that's exactly what he did on *Lost*. Over the arc of that whole series, he became one of the most popular characters on that show."

Regardless, Kwon notes that Asian-Americans still have a ways to go in achieving equality on screen. He says he would like to "use media to get to a point where people look at us as Americans — as opposed Asian-Americans, African-Americans or any other subcategory. But first and foremost, we're Americans."
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Informational Reading Analysis Chart

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| --- | --- | --- |
| STANDARD: Be sure to read the explanation of each standard below! 😊  | EVIDENCE FROM TEXT: Cite your evidence using specific page number.  | EXAPLANATION OF EVIDENCE: Please be sure the use the CEI method to explain your evidence. Your explanation should be in your own words!  |
| RI6: Determine author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which rhetoric is particularly effective. Identify significant topics throughout the text. Identify an author’s feelings towards the topic within the text. This standard is asking you to consider **WHY** the author wrote this article. What impact is the author hoping this article will have on the reader? What is the author’s point of view? Provide textual evidence in the middle column and explain your evidence in the far right column.  |  |  |
| RI2: Determine TWO central ideas/themes. Identify multiple significant topics throughout the text. This standard is asking you to identify TWO different central ideas or themes in the article. Be sure to explain each! Provide textual evidence in the middle column and explain your evidence in the far right column.  | 1. Central Idea/Theme:
2. Central Idea/Theme:
 |  |
| RL2: Compare and contrast two different authors themes. This standard is asking you to compare and contrast ONE theme from the article as it relates to a similar theme in the NOVEL. Discuss how EACH author conveys EACH theme throughout EACH text. Provide textual evidence in the middle column and explain your evidence in the far right column.  |  |  |
| RI4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text. This standard is asking you to identify and explain the impact of word choice and figurative language in the text. Find at least 5 words that you DO NOT know the meaning of. Define those words and explain WHY the author chose to use those words. THEN, find at least 3 examples of figurative language. Why does the author utilize these techniques? What impact does the use of these techniques have on the reader? Provide textual evidence in the middle column and explain your evidence in the far right column.  |  |  |
| RI5: Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.This standard is asking you to look at how the author has organized his/her writing. Why do you think the author organized it this way? What purpose does it serve the reader? What specific aspects of the writing make his/her point clear, convincing, and engaging. Provide textual evidence in the middle column and explain your evidence in the far right column.  |  |  |
| How does the article relate to the novel? Be sure to be VERY specific! 😊 Provide textual evidence in the middle column and explain your evidence in the far right column.  |  |  |