

Ages 10-12

Children's Book Reviews

2021

Review: Sitting Bull: Lakota Warrior and Defender of His People

Rachel Schwedt

Janice A. DeLong

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ages10-12>



Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), and the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Sitting Bull: Lakota Warrior and Defender of His People

By S. D. Nelson

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2015

DESCRIPTION:

Written in fictionalized first-person voice, Nelson allows this Hunkpapa Lakota leader to tell his own story. Born in 1831, Sitting Bull was trained in the traditional ways of his tribe although the “wasichus,” or white men, were already disrupting his people’s way of life. Growing up to be a strong warrior, Sitting Bull was aware of the of the conflicts and broken promises of the U.S. government troops at an early age. During his leadership of the Lakota people, he worked hard to protect his people from these dealings and avoided signing any treaty rights. Because of his strength and determination, he was highly regarded and gained his name Sitting Bull as a “buffalo that would not back down.” When he could no longer resist the inexorable wave of white demands, he became dependent on the government for support – just like those “Hang-Around-the-Fort” Indians he had formerly despised. He lived long enough to see the defeat of his fellow Sioux, spent a number of years traveling with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, and was tragically murdered in 1890 by a Lakota policeman. He is quoted as exhorting his people to continue to honor the traditions that served their people and to, “go forth with a good heart.”

CRITIQUE:

Written in story format, this autobiographical narrative is very readable. Its pages are filled with quotations, photographs, and ledger book art, so named because it was drawn by the Indians on ledger paper discarded by the army. These drawings depict important events in the lives of the Lakotas, such as buffalo hunts, dances, and battles. The author ends with a timeline and detailed notes about Lakota practices and spiritual beliefs putting this narrative of Sitting Bull’s life in a cultural context. A member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in the Dakotas, the author does not attempt to present all sides of the issues involved in the relationships between the U. S. government and the Native American tribes. His narrative concentrates on what happened to the Hunkpapa people and their great leader.

RELATED SUBJECTS:

1800s, Biography, Dakota Indians, Discrimination, Hunkpapa Indians, Native Americans, Prairies, Sitting Bull, United States history – 1800s-1900s, War

CHARACTER THEMES:

Boldness, Courage, Confidence, Coping, Determination, Devotion, Dignity, Ethnic pride, Faithfulness, Leadership, Loyalty, Passion, Pride, Resolve, Steadfastness

AWARDS:

Best Children’s Books of the Year (Bank Street), Best of the Best Books, *Booklist* Top 10 Multicultural Nonfiction for Youth, Carter C. Woodson Book Award, Choices, Jefferson Cup Award (VA), Lasting Connections, Notable Book for a Global Society, Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People