



The Names

N. Scott Momaday

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Of all of the works of N. Scott Momaday, *The Names* may be the most personal. A memoir of his boyhood in Oklahoma and the Southwest, it is also described by Momaday as "an act of the imagination. When I turn my mind to my early life, it is the imaginative part of it that comes first and irresistibly into reach, and of that part I take hold." Complete with family photos, *The Names* is a book that will captivate readers who wish to experience the Native American way of life.

The Names Details

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Author : N. Scott Momaday

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From Reader Review The Names for online ebook

Tasha says

I found the first half more compelling than the second.

Bobbi Arduini says

The first half is beautiful, but the latter half gets a little too stream-of-consciousness for me. Hard to follow. But - again - the writing sounds beautiful; it's just the content gets a little dry.

Jessica says

I only read the first half of this family memoir, and it was certainly names-- relatives and origin, not captivating, style distracting, didn't let me in.

darai says

pls no

Don Flynn says

An impressionistic account of the author's childhood, spent mostly in Jemez, New Mexico. It is as much of an Indian life as could be had in the 30s and 40s. There is not much mysticism, but there is a sweet, familiar nostalgia and a deep attachment to place and people. Momaday is a poet, and writes prose with a poet's feathery touch. The images are beautiful, but it would've been great to read more about his writing career.

Mariana says

A magical story about a boy growing up in New Mexico and taking frequent trips to Oklahoma. I enjoyed the way the language changed as the boy grew.

Josephine Ensign says

An interesting approach to a memoir and it works, especially when accompanied by the photographs of his family members.

Courtney says

This was my second time to read *The Names*. I'm unsure what I was thinking the first time, when I loved it. Now, six years later, it reads different to me. I cannot name the difference, other than to say that these days I am reading with more of my heart than I have before. Thank goodness for the chance to try somethings over and have them be fresh, ready.

Here are some of the quotes I love, one of which brought me to tears:

"There came about a great restlessness in my father, I don't know when. I believe that this restlessness is something in the blood. The old free life of the Kiowas on the plains, the deep impulse to run and rove upon the wild earth, cannot be given up easily; perhaps it cannot be given up at all. I have seen in the old men of the tribe, especially, a look of longing and--what is it?--dread. And if dread is the right word, it is a grave thing, graver than the fear of death; it is perhaps the dread of being, of having been in some dark predestination, held still, and in that profoundly shamed." (36)

"Memory begins to qualify the imagination, to give it another formation, one that is peculiar to the self. I remember isolated, yet fragmented and confused, images--and images, shifting, enlarging, is the word, rather than moments or events--which are mine alone and which are especially vivid to me. They involve me wholly and immediately, even though they are the disintegrated impressions of a young child. They call for a certain attitude of belief on my part now; that is, they must mean something, but their best reality does not consist in meaning. They are not stories in that sense, but they are storylike, mythic, never evolved but evolving ever. There are such things in the world: it is in their nature to be believed; it is not necessarily in them to be understood. Of all that must have happened to and about me in those my earliest days, why should these odd particulars alone be fixed in my mind? If I were to remember other things, I should be someone else." (61-63)

"And suddenly he knew how small he was, how little he mattered in the laughter of God, not at all, really. He knew at once that this moment, the blink of an eye, held more beauty and wonder than he could know. He had not enough life to deal with it. He could only suffer the least part of it; he could only open his eyes and see what he could see of the world. And again he laughed together with God. And he thought: Wait a moment, God. Give me a moment. I have a moment, and it is too big for me, and I cannot hold it in my little hands. And you, God, you gie me the night and the world. It is a good joke, and, God, we laugh. But I have seen how you draw the sky with light." (80)

"I try now to think of the war [WWII], of what it was to me as a child. It was almost nothing, and nothing of my innocence was lost in it. It was only later that I realized what had happened, what ancient histories had been made and remarked and set aside in a fraction of my lifetime, in an instant. And *there* is the loss of innocence, in retrospection, in the safe distance of time. There are the clocks of shame; we tell the lie of time, and our hearts are broken." (91)

"I went on, farther and farther into the wide world. Many things happened. And in all this I knew one thing: I knew where the journey was begun, that it was itself a learning of the beginning, that the beginning was infinitely worth the learning" (159).

D says

amazing
