Allegra Jacobs

Miss Testa

English II Period 8

30 September 2010

Letter to Alex McCandless

Dear Alex,

I feel I both admire and disapprove of you as a person. I admire you because you’re not afraid to go out and do what you want, and you don’t care what others will think. You put yourself first in life, Alex, and I like the way you handle yourself. I disapprove of your methods because even though you don’t worry about anything and attract negative thoughts to yourself, when doing something as dangerous as living on ones own in Alaska, some thought needs to be put into action. Turning down equipment from others is not a smart move, and I think you need to be better prepared. Nature can be dangerous, and is not always on your side. The word irresponsibility comes into play as well.

What I need to know is, why would you burn all your money like you did? I bet it was because you wanted nothing to do with society and just be all about nature. I can understand that, but then you opened a savings account when moving to Bullhead. That confuses me. You seem to express a double standard about money, Alex. You burn over a hundred dollars at the beginning of your journey, and then proceed to get a job and save for a period of time. Why do you do that? Are you thinking of Jan and Bob when you invest like that? Or your parents? Or yourself?

In terms of advice, I think the best thing I can leave you with as of now is to be smart and use your head when surviving in the wilderness alone. I know it may be better in your mind to get rid of everything that reminds you of society or your previous life, but those things are important. Living without protection can be dangerous, Alex. Invest in things that will help you to live out there. You will need it, guaranteed.

I feel that family is important in life. They will love you and be there for you when others may not. On the contrary, family can also be very overwhelming and they can tend to make decisions for you, just because they love you and want the best for you. I wouldn’t totally shun out my family from my life, but they do need to know that you are fully capable of running your own life, and they don’t have to make decisions for you. Nature is a beautiful part of our Earth, I agree with you there. I don’t feel that you need to live with it, though. We build houses and such because it’s a better suited lifestyle for humans, and because we can’t adapt to the wilderness as well as animals can. Bottom line, we don’t have to live in the wild to be connected with it. It can be a very harsh way of lifestyle. As for society, I think it’s a good way to live. I can understand how annoying our day-to-day lifestyle can be, and how it seems to lack freedom sometimes. I feel it’s best to live in society, or just outside of society, like you did in Oh-My-God Hot Springs. That way we can still choose to have a life with nature if we want to, but stay safe while doing so in society. Money is important in life, Alex, no matter how much you don’t seem to want it. That’s what jobs are for, to make sure we have enough money to support ourselves and are able to keep ourselves happy. That’s the most important thing to me. I’m happy you finished school like you did, and have a collage education. Since you already did that, I have no reason to seriously object to your dreams for the wild in the category of education. If you hadn’t finished high school, I would’ve strongly recommended completing that so you have something to fall back on if your plan to live in the wild fails.

You seem like a very determined person, Alex. I wish you the best in everything you do, and hope you take some of what I’ve said into consideration.

Sincerely,

Allegra Jacobs