

## SHERMAN ALEXIE

September 1, 2013

Hello, hello, you gorgeous book nerds,

Now is the time to be a superhero for independent bookstores. I want all of us (you and you and especially you) to spend an amazing day hand-selling books at your local independent bookstore on Small Business Saturday (that's the Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 30 this year, so you know it's a huge weekend for everyone who, you know, wants to make a living).

Here's the plan: We book nerds will become booksellers. We will make recommendations. We will practice nepotism and urge readers to buy multiple copies of our friends' books. Maybe you'll sign and sell books of your own in the process. I think the collective results could be mind-boggling (maybe even world-changing).

I was a bookseller-for-a-day at Seattle's Queen Anne Book Company when it reopened this past April. Janis Segress, one of the new co-owners, came up with this brilliant idea. What could be better than spending a day hanging out in your favorite hometown indie, hand-selling books you love to people who will love them too and signing a stack of your own? Why not give it a try? Let's call it Indies First.

Grassroots is my favorite kind of movement, and anyway there's not a lot of work involved in this one. Just pick a bookstore, talk to the owner (or answer the phone when they call you) and reach an agreement about how to spend your time that day. You'd also need to agree to place that store's buy button in a prominent place on your website, above the Amazon button if you have one. After all, this is Indies First, not Indies Only, and it's designed to include Indies in our world but not to exclude anyone else.

This is a great way to fight for independents—one that will actually help them. It'll help you as well; the Indies I've talked to have told me that last year Small Business Saturday was one of their biggest days of the year, in some cases the biggest after the Saturday before Christmas—and that means your books will get a huge boost, wherever you choose to be.

The most important thing is that we'll all be helping Independent bookstores, and God knows they've helped us over the years. So join the Indie First Movement and help your favorite independent bookstore. Help all indie bookstores. Reach out to them and join the movement. Indies First!

Yours in Independence,

Sherman Alexie, An Absolutely True Part-Time Indie