

Dear Cast A 2020,

My name is Clarissa, I am a Hopi/Tewa/Acoma/Laguna from a small area called Hopi in the northern part of Arizona. I don't know much about my other tribes besides Hopi because that's all I've known, and grew up with. I live in a village named Hotevilla. I'm a sophomore at a school named Hopi Jr/Sr High School.

My wish is for you to understand that the struggle that us natives go through everyday. The struggle we have to go through is living in two different worlds. We live in a "white man's" world and also our cultural way, and we have to balance between both worlds. In January I was participating in a traditional dance that required me to stay up late to practice in order to learn the dance, then I had school the next day. Where I live most people live in a home, like my grandmas with no electricity and some don't have running water. I go to school everyday throughout the week and come home to help my mother cook dinner, and clean the house. We're always busy, there's never a time where we can really relax, sit down, sleep all day. My experience is that I used to go to a "white" school where natives were hardly there. My family was 2 hours away from me. I felt left out because that wasn't something I was used to. I ended up getting home sick. That school would've been better for me to learn an education but now that I'm home I can help my family more, and learn our traditional ways. My sister has a son. He's my son so I know that may sound crazy traditionally. He's my kid too. I have to watch him sometimes because she has a job and is going to school at the same time. Me trying to balance my two worlds is hard but some people have it worse. Just me being a girl I have expectations that I have to follow. It may seem like we do a lot and it might not even make sense but living out here is harder than you think. If I'm being honest I don't even know how to work a dishwasher or anything that is really electronic. Balancing the two worlds is something that most people can't handle. I can barely do my homework but I manage my school work so I can help around the house. This letter may not have made you understand what it's like. I honestly challenge you to live out here for a month, to see how things are like out here and to experience it for yourself.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Hamilton