



The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls

Reviewed by Ms. Mouchbahani, Teacher Librarian

The Glass Castle, by Jeannette Walls, is a memoir you will never forget. If you've found yourself complaining about your childhood, once you've read her story, you most likely won't complain again. The Walls children who, as a result of their parents' nomadic and rebellious lifestyle, were always on the go - escaping Landlords, hospital personnel, and the Police - living in squalor and extreme poverty while getting themselves through school and taking on adult roles and desperate measures to survive. When I told my daughter about the book, she questioned whether the stories were made up, but I never doubted their authenticity while I read it; what I couldn't believe was that the author survived it all. Walls writes with a vivid sense of genuineness, constantly speaking truths that her parents ignore and deny, so it's never the reader's compulsion to not believe her; contrarily, the reader holds onto her every word as she is, albeit a child, the ultimate voice of truth in a shockingly dysfunctional family. False promises, selfishness, neglect, abuse – all enveloped with her father's wit and charm, her mother's sense of "optimism" and her parents' intelligence and adventurous ways - make for a confusing set of emotions for both the children and the reader. You will miss the Wall children and your need to be there for them when no one else is. You will even want to meet them in real life. As your heart aches and breaks, all the while feeling amazed by the children's resilience and uncanny ability to survive all odds, you will no doubt need to discover how they fared as adults. Did they marry? Are they successful? Do they have children? As I read and watched countless interviews with Walls, I found many of the answers I pondered while reading her book, even the answer to my daughter's question in which Walls stresses the importance she placed on authenticity when recounting her earliest memories. To read Wall's astonishing life story and then to hear her comment so candidly and acceptingly about her bewildering childhood experience is incredibly inspiring. Walls is truly as amazing as an adult as she was as a child.