

Book Discussion

The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls

1. Share the excerpt that you brought to class: a passage that you found interesting and explain what it means to you?
2. How did poverty and homelessness impact the lives of Jeannette and her siblings? In what ways could the other adults in their lives (e.g. teachers, neighbors, extended family members) have supported the children more effectively?
3. Rex Walls asks Jeannette, "Have I ever let you down?" Rose Mary Walls says, "Suffering when you're young is good for you." Examine Jeannette's parents: what qualities and parenting practices did they use that had positive effects on her development and which others had negative effects on her development?
4. What was Jeannette's relationship to her siblings? How did the children help each other throughout their childhood and into adulthood? How do you and your siblings support one another?
5. What did the glass castle represent for Jeannette? How did this image shape her outlook? How did your parents' dreams and expectations influence your own choices and goals?
6. Jeannette survived her childhood and was not victimized by her upbringing. What personal qualities and experiences contributed to her resiliency?
7. In college, Jeannette was confronted by a professor regarding her views on homelessness. What was her perspective? Do you believe that homelessness is a choice?