

Approved for use in: Honors English III Summer Reading

Summary of the Work:

The Glass Castle is a poignant memoir about a dysfunctional but lively family, told from the perspective of the second daughter of four children. Jeannette Walls is three years old when the story begins and well into her adult life when it ends. Her parents, Rex and Rose Mary Walls, are troubled people who struggle with their own issues while trying to raise four children. Neither parent can hold down a job for any length of time. They move around with their children until they finally settle in Welch, West Virginia.

In Welch, near Rex's family, they live in squalid conditions. From the time Jeannette and her siblings are young, though, their father has grand plans to build the Glass Castle, taking out his blueprints and showing his ornate design of their home. As the kids get older, they lose faith in their father ever building the Glass Castle, but he does teach them to have dreams. Each child escapes to New York City to realize his or her dreams the way their father didn't.

*Prout, *Quicklet*.

Rationale:

"Honors English III provides students the realization that the creation of literature is a product of the historical period as well as the individual author" (*Honors English III Syllabus*). *The Glass Castle* is a skillfully written nonfiction memoir that is narrated with forgiveness and compassion in the telling of the story. Through her story, Jeannette Walls speaks to the human experience and explores the strength of family along with perseverance through adversity.

The Glass Castle is not only an opportunity for students to explore themes relating to triumph against all odds, but the novel also allows students to discover a story about unconditional love in a family that despite its profound flaws, gave the author the determination to carve out a successful life on her own terms.

Through a variety of close reading and journaling activities, along with discussion and culminating writing activities, *The Glass Castle* offers students a unique reading experience.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

"*The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls | Kirkus Reviews." *Kirkus Reviews*. N.p., n.d. Web. 2 June 2016.
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/jeannette-walls/the-glass-castle/>

Prose, Francine. "*The Glass Castle*: Outrageous Misfortune." *The New York Times*. N.p., 13 Mar. 2005. Web.
http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/13/books/preview/the-glass-castle-outrageous-misfortune.html?_r=0

"*The Glass Castle*: A Memoir by Jeannette Walls" *PublishersWeekly.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 2 June 2016.
<http://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-7432-4753-5>

Noted Distinction:

- ALA Alex Award
- ALA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults - Top Ten
- Christopher Award
- Books for Better Living Award
- #1 New York Times Bestseller (100 weeks)
- Publishers Weekly Bestseller

Readability

- Lexile Score: 1010

Learning Resources Guidelines

- Honors English III 2016-2017 summer reading: <http://bit.ly/28OEyL1>
- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.