

May 2009



*English
Department*

Dear Senior English Student:

Once again, Archbishop Mitty High School continues its Summer Reading Program for all levels. Traditionally, English teachers have selected a non-fiction work for the senior level to expose students to a different type of writing. Each year, we have attempted to select books for their accessibility and their enjoyment. The selection for next year's senior student is...

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

The book quickly climbed the Bestseller lists after its publication. The author has told the story of her chaotic, heartbreaking childhood with such clarity and grace that it is hard to put the book down once you begin reading it. This memoir cannot help but move you in many ways. Miss Walls' childhood was certainly dysfunctional and her family very much out of the ordinary in every way. Yet, despite its unconventionality, her family was a family of love and this is what held them together and enabled them to survive a life that at times included poverty, fires, and near starvation and homelessness.

Her father was a gambler, a dreamer and at times a drinker, who was a strange blend of love and despair, hopes and impossible dreams. He was very intelligent and homeschooled his children on a variety of topics. The title of the memoir comes from her mathematically inclined father who always told his kids he would build them a magical perfect glass castle they could live in. The mother, trained as a schoolteacher, liked to spend her time and spare cash on canvases, for she believed herself a talented artist. On many occasions, she spent time on this and neglected her four children.

Despite such an upbringing, the four children formed a close bond and managed to learn and become successful adults. Jeanette attended Barnard College in New York on a scholarship and currently works at MSNBC news network. It took courage to write her story, but she tells it with passion, intelligence and much introspection about her past experiences. In reading the book, you cannot help but be amazed at the resiliency of the human spirit and the vast capacity of the human heart to love.

We hope you find the book refreshing, intelligent and enjoyable. Please remember to close-read, taking note of who the characters are and what happens to them. You will take an objective examination on this book during the first week of the semester. In the meantime, have a good summer and we look forward to seeing you in August. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

AMHS Senior English Teachers