Book Review

Author’s Name

[Institutional Affiliation(s)]

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Written by Jeannette Walls, *The Glass Castle* is a memoir that was published in 2005 (Walls, 2005). The book recounts the slightly unconventional and poverty-stricken upbringing of the author, Jeannette and her siblings by their deeply dysfunctional family. The way the author reflected upon her childhood appeared so compelling that it almost read as if one is reading a well-spun piece of fiction. Her father was an intelligent man when he was sober but later on, became an alcoholic. Her mother was an artist who did not enjoy domesticity and motherhood in general. Jeanette and her siblings had to move from one place to another due to their parent’s wishes despite her father's engineering skills and her mother’s strong educational background. Most of the times, Jeanette and her siblings only had morsels of food while her parents were busy in their own lives. Although Jeanette’s life was filled with multiple exciting adventures, yet her upbringing can be considered as a riddle with difficulties like abuse and poverty.

Due to their parents’ negligence, they bonded and started to support each other. They learned how to be self-sufficient instead of relying on their parents and despite these circumstances, they all managed to rise above their adversaries so that they can have a successful and normal life in New York City while their parents, not wanting to change, remained poor.

As the name suggests, the book *The Glass Castle* successfully evokes the architecture of fantasy along with magic. The author’s father promised to build a palace for her and her siblings. Therefore, the ‘glass castle’ is used as a metaphor for fanciful construct and a carefree façade that Jeanette’s parents used as a cover to hide their incompetence and neglectful attitude towards their children. Walls’ mother believed that children should be left alone so that they could reap the immunological and educational benefits of suffering. Walls depicted the careless behavior of her parents by telling an incident where she was boiling hot dogs and was burnt so severely that she required urgent skin grafts and had to spend more than six weeks in a hospital. Also, she told an incident where Lori, one of her siblings who was bitten by a Scorpio, suffered convulsions. Walls also shared how she was molested by her neighbor and was groped by her uncle as well but her parents did not bother since they were busy living their own lives (Walls, 2005).

The detail of each memory along with Walls’ appealing and unadorned style made the memoir interesting. There was an instance where, with deceptive ease, she makes the reader see how she was persuaded that her turbulent life was, in reality, a splendid adventure. She also reflected upon a moment where Rex took her daughter to look at the stars on the sky and persuaded her that the brightest planet, named Venus, was her Christmas gift. At this instance, she described how her mother gradually descended into depression due to hunger and poverty and how her father became dishonest and abusive.

Walls crafted the memoir of her dysfunctional family engaging by explaining every detail of her life. Her story was moving. The best part about her memoir was that she was neither idealized her parents nor regarded them with contempt. This balance made the reader more connected to the story as one can go through so many emotions from heartbreak to happiness and from caring to the negligence, while reading it. The book successfully portrays how neglectful parents can not only affect the upbringing of children but also affect their lives in the long term.

# References

Walls, J. (2005). *The Glass Castle.* United States: Scribner.