

# The glass castle argumentative essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

This amazing story of survival and dysfunction, of imagination and rationalization, and of sheer ingenuity is a testimony to the flexibility and beauty of children. Jeannette Walls' true story flashes back through a childhood with crazy addicted parents (the father to alcohol; the mother to art and idealism and the father) who raised three children in spite of recurrent poverty, nomadic tendencies, and a heritage of rebellion.

The heiress-mother ends up rummaging in a dumpster, homeless in NYC, as Jeannette rides in a limo, recognizing her.

The memoir unravels from this image. It is a tale of ups and downs as only America can stage. Cross-country descriptions, survival skills learned by necessity, and a strong independent family that somehow loves and stays together make this an unforgettable read. Cultural and class distinctions are explored by default as the family moves into various camps, neighborhoods, tenements, and even an ancestral home.

The two highly intelligent, but terribly inadequate parents, keep their family on a roller-coaster ride through their growing years.

It is a book of our times, and yet a period piece that pre-dates some of the more stringent child-abuse laws. The children tend the parents as well as themselves, and rise above their circumstances. Resilience, courage and society's assumptions are addressed. California and the Southwest in the mid-20th Century seemed innocent enough for these Bohemian souls, yet the realities of supporting a family were totally beyond their capabilities.

But self-nurtured, isolated kids became self-sufficient, quite literate and, eventually, quite functional members of civilization.

As a memoir, this is truly unique. It must have taken tremendous effort to write this often painful recollection of your own life. Yet, the exercise of exploring the dynamics of such a dysfunctional family, and the parental unit as a separate entity analyzed by a daughter, had to be a revelation and a healing experience. One merit of the work is the strength of character bred into these children, celebrated and seen in process.

In these often hilarious, mostly pathetic chapters, Jeanette's voice is accepting and actually affectionate as she describes stories from the life her parents drifted through, herding their children along. Close calls and adventures fill the pages. It is hair-raising to consider this life, yet Jeannette tells it with tenderness. She also has somehow retained a strong spiritual center, and a gentle, ironic wit. The Glass Castle, titled after her father's promised, elusive architectural and domestic opus, is a social study of the most intimate kind...the American Dream gone haywire.

You won't want to put it down.