

Glass Castle Essay Final Draft

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Throughout the memoir, *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls, the author uses a narrative voice to retell the story of her impoverished and tumultuous childhood. Alongside the emotional rollercoaster of her relationships with her odd and often paradoxical parents, Walls illustrates to the reader the scrappy and survivalist nature of her upbringing. In order to demonstrate this state, the writer depicts her struggle for several of the basic necessities of life: clothing, water, shelter, stability, but especially, food. Jeannette's struggles for food throughout the story are depicted with high visual detail, despite a lack of emotion which displays her psychological distancing from her unbecoming practices. Furthermore, Walls' description of not only her own struggles for food, but also of her parents lack of fiscal or emotional responsibility to their children, even when money or food aren't scarce, gives the reader a greater sense of why the narrator struggles continuously and what those trials contribute to the text as a whole. Jeannette Walls uses vivid imagery, striking adjectives and word choice, and a lack of emotional language, to capture her challenges with food security and her attitude towards her situation as a whole.

Throughout the course of the story, the Walls family constantly teters on the edge of hunger, often experiencing severe shortages of both funds and food. Especially interesting during these periods are the words Jeannette uses to craft the images of her memories. In a noteworthy scene where the narrator reclaims moldy chocolates from a dumpster, the author uses words such as "yucky garbage (110)" and "pigged out (110)." These words in particular are quite childish descriptions for such a seemingly adult situation. This contradiction is purposefully made by the

the narrator appears repetitively in these scenarios, such as again when the Walls retrieve a massive of grapes from a vineyard, and the writer can states, “We filled our entire car... even the glove compartment (22).” Because of the intricacy of these anecdotes, the reader gains a deeper understanding of the narrator’s attitude change based on her food availability. But even further, Jeannette’s tone shifts throughout the book as she reflects about these bingeing tendencies, as she states, “We bought so much food that we never had much money come payday (56),” and chronologically soon after is forced to say, in the face of hunger, “‘I guess we can eat less.’(67)” This struggle with the irresponsible authority of her home-life and her own shifting demeanor towards her memories, is evidenced by her use of compelling stories and growing dissatisfaction through her shifting tone.

In her novel *The Glass Castle*, Jeannette Walls defines for the audience her definition of struggle, resilience, and growth. She does so through her devolution of emotional language and her thorough remembrance of her childhood, which indicates the lingering effects of her past. As the reader can see, the author’s struggles with food security are quite close to her familial tensions, and the love/hate relationships she has with her quirky parents.