Budding Writers' Holy Grail

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Guide
The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls (2005) is set in the late 1950s to the 1980s. It is reminiscent of a marriage of The Grapes of Wrath and To Kill a Mockingbird. Wall’s text is half as heartening as these classics. Yup – it’s a good one.

This novel is a diplomatically adapted chronicle of the life of Jeanette Walls. It’s recounted through her wise voice from age three, a child prodigy, to a twenty something twice married self-made Manhattan-based elite journalist. This memoir’s magic may appeal to those who romanticize nomadic clan lifestyles.

This gifted storyteller spins tales of the ten plus townships that eschew and spew the misfit Walls wagon – Rose, Rex and their four siblings, as they drift semi-aimlessly around America’s Western desert states. Unbeknown to Jeannette the minor, her eccentric mother was secretly and knowingly a landowning millionaire for the bulk of Jeanette’s impoverished, dirt-faced, frequently famished childhood.

The lion’s share of this work centers around Wall’s life in Welch County. It is debatable whether Jeanette replicates or renounces stereotypes about so-called Appalachian hillbilly communities of West Virginia and Southern states. Most likely to latter. Compassion and logic are staples throughout her rocky road adventure.

The bond between Jeannette, daddy’s favorite, and her father, is the dominant relationship that Walls deploys to deconstruct a rich narrative of life’s lessons: fortitude, fortune, and failure. Jeanette is most tolerant of the patriarch’s incessant drunkenness, walkout disappearances, violence, self-destructive, self-entitled cycles. She forgives him almost immediately for renting her 13-years old body to a mature-aged would-be rapist, who pins her down while two pals cheerlead from the sidelines. Daddy Rex callously ignores her cries of attempted rape as he lounges like a lizard in a dive bar downstairs (pp. 212-213).

This plot’s subtext covertly promotes unconditional understanding and forbearance that glues many, maybe most dysfunctional families from cradle to grave. This mini masterpiece
may force readers to assess where they truly stand on one of the most complex hypotheticals that haunts those from broken families, long after their folks’ funerals.

If mom and dad were just our nasty neighbors, would we give them the time of day?

Jeanette Walls is a commanding protagonist in more ways than ten. According to her scripture, permanent divorce of family aren’t options.

You may experience profound loss as you speed read the last leaf. Like mourning a mentor. And a buck-toothed best buddy.

Recommended.

ISBN-10: 9780743247542
https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/glass-castle-jeannette-walls/1100321217
Nina Simone’s brazen biography begs a prickly question that muso critics galore ponder decades after her death. How can music historians rate the standing of top selling ‘artists’ who forge their name belting out covers and first edition numbers composed by others? A divisive debate indeed.

Artists who have shifted millions of units singing other’s tunes are a penny a pound. Britney, Elton, and Celine are first name members of this long-listed lucrative clique.

Some of Simon’s trademark tunes are from bygone eras. *I Put A Spell on You* (Simone, 1965) was composed by Jay Hawkins a decade prior. Nina’s immortal interpretation of *Feeling Good* released in 1965 boasts her ability to own a tune that few realize was first sung by another artist. Cy Grant’s debut version is excruciatingly cheesy. A subjective assessment, of course.

*Simone* (1965) is credited as the original singer of the classic *Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood* penned by Benjamin, Cauldwell & Marcus. Covers by acts such as The Animals and Elvis Costello are generally regarded as reinterpretations of Simone’s magnificent vocals.
Nina’s iconic fame may stem from her image, intellect, and intimacy. Few Motown mommas’ wardrobes are worthy of comparison to the trend-setting Jackson 5 posse. Simone is a lifelong member of this super-elite club. Her bouffant afros, chic head scarves, glam accessories and low-cut crocheted frocks epitomize feminine images of Motown’s heyday.

Nina’s candid, camera loving interviews showcase a deep-thinking, smarty arty soul. She openly criticizes social injustices such as racism, sexism and classism and fear-based self-censorship. ‘Me’, ‘myself’ and ‘I’ feature prominently in some rants that may relegate her art as secondary.

Nina’s ability to command the undivided attention of savvy close-up crowds in swanky piano bars may crystallize her musical legacy. Her husky, somber baritone velvety vocals are unmistakably signature-style. Simone’s analog originals are worthy of Smithsonian archival.

Nina’s tortured incarnation may ultimately define her narrative. Showbusiness in her prime was a treacherous cesspit for self-made wannabes from the hood. Being a single black female was a handicap that she triumphed with legendary grace.
According to folklore, Simone confronted music executives at gunpoint and demanded payment of a stack of swindled royalties. To be a fly on the wall. I wonder what the Queen of Gorgeous lipped to these married white daddies?

Perhaps this sanguine songbird borrowed again from Bessie’s depression days ditty.

“I need a little sugar in my bowl” © Williams et al. (1931).

Best performance: Mississippi Goddam at Carnegie Hall – composed by Simone.

https://www.ninasimone.com/studio-albums/