English III Summer Reading Assignments

Your summer reading assignment includes reading and writing journals over two books. You **are not** required to annotate these books, but certainly make notes and markings to help you plan your journals.

BOOK 1 – NONFICTION

(1) First, you need to **choose one of the three non-fiction selections below**. I have all three books in my classroom; feel free to come peruse them before making your choice. Don’t choose just based on length!! If you like the book because you’re interested in it, length won’t matter as much. In my opinion, they’re all good—all are *New York Times* Bestsellers—so choose based on your interests. An essay test over your book will be on Thursday, August 15. **This will be a test grade.**

**Choices – CHOOSE ONE:**

***---Same Kind of Different as Me*, by Ron Hall, Denver Moore, and Lynn Vincent**

ISBN: 978-0849919107

“A dangerous, homeless drifter who grew up picking cotton in virtual slavery. An upscale art dealer accustomed to the world of Armani and Chanel. A gutsy woman with a stubborn dream. A story so incredible no novelist would dare dream it.

It begins outside a burning plantation hut in Louisiana . . . and an East Texas honky-tonk . . . and, without a doubt, in the heart of God. It unfolds in a Hollywood hacienda . . . an upscale New York gallery . . . a downtown dumpster . . . a Texas ranch.

Gritty with pain and betrayal and brutality, this true story also shines with an unexpected, life-changing love.” – Amazon.com review

**“Until Miss Debbie, I’d never spoke to no white woman before. Just answered a few questions, maybe—it wadn’t really *speakin*. And to me, even that was mighty risky since the last time I was fool enough to open my mouth to a white woman, I wound up half-dead and nearly blind” (1).**

***---The Glass Castle*, by Jeannette Walls**

ISBN: 978-0743247542

“Jeannette Walls grew up with parents whose ideals and stubborn nonconformity were both their curse and their salvation. Rex and Rose Mary Walls had four children. In the beginning, they lived like nomads, moving among Southwest desert towns, camping in the mountains. Rex was a charismatic, brilliant man who, when sober, captured his children's imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and above all, how to embrace life fearlessly. Rose Mary, who painted and wrote and couldn't stand the responsibility of providing for her family, called herself an "excitement addict." Cooking a meal that would be consumed in fifteen minutes had no appeal when she could make a painting that might last forever.

Later, when the money ran out, or the romance of the wandering life faded, the Walls retreated to the dismal West Virginia mining town -- and the family -- Rex Walls had done everything he could to escape. He drank. He stole the grocery money and disappeared for days. As the dysfunction of the family escalated, Jeannette and her brother and sisters had to fend for themselves, supporting one another as they weathered their parents' betrayals and, finally, found the resources and will to leave home.” – Amazon.com review

**“I was sitting in a taxi, wondering if I had overdressed for the evening, when I looked out the window and saw Mom rooting through a Dumpster. . . . It had been months since I laid eyes on Mom, and when she looked up, I was overcome with panic that she’d see me and call out my name, and that someone on the way to the same party would spot us together and Mom would introduce herself and my secret would be out” (3).**

***---Into Thin Air*, by Jon Krakauer**

ISBN: 978-0385494786

“A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more--including Krakauer's--in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer's epic account of the May 1996 disaster.” – Amazon.com review

**“Straddling the top of the world, one foot in China and the other in Nepal, I cleared the ice from my oxygen mask, hunched a shoulder against the wind, and stared absently down at the vastness of Tibet. . . . I’d been fantasizing about this moment, and the release of emotion that would accompany it, for many months. But now that I was finally here, actually standing on the summit of Mount Everest, I just couldn’t summon the energy to care” (7).**

* **Purchase and read the book you have chosen** (I ordered mine from Amazon.com, but they should also be in bookstores). You are not required to annotate it.
* Then, write 3 journals pertaining to your specific book. Journals will be due Thursday, August 15. See the journal guidelines below. **The journals together will be one test grade.** You will also have an essay test over your book on Thursday, August 15.

**Journal Guidelines**

You should have a total of **FOUR** journals for both books. Journals should be an informal analysis of the text. They need to be typed, 12-point font, double-spaced, and at least **350-400 words** each. Although they are meant to be informal, you need to stay focused on the topic and use **at least 3 quotations with page numbers** for each response.

**Journal 1**

Each of these books revolves around a starkly painful past from which the author is trying to move forward. Choose one particularly memorable or difficult experience from your book that the author endures. Analyze the language of that experience; how does the author use language to depict the pain of that memory? How does this experience shape the author, and why do you think he or she shares it with you in this book?

**Journal 2**

For this question, choose the journal for the book you are reading:

*Same Kind of Different as Me*: Throughout this book, Ron Hall and Denver Moore come to depend on each other and change their behaviors, assumptions, and prejudices. How do they most help each other? Describe an event that best illustrates their progression into relying on each other. How do they change because of their growing trust in one another? How do they help each other cope with the pain surrounding Debbie?

*The Glass Castle*: Throughout this book, Jeannette, Brian, Lori, and Maureen (to some extent) help each other survive when their parents do not. In what ways do these siblings help and fend for each other, particularly when their parents only think of themselves and their desires to be free or feed their addictions? Describe an event that most illustrates the siblings’ own selflessness and care for each other. How does this solidarity keep the children alive and allow them to ultimately escape their circumstances?

*Into Thin Air*: While the other two books highlight the relationship between characters and the strength that results from that bond, part of Krakauer’s struggle comes from the fact that he is alone. He struggles against his own ability, strength, endurance, and mental clarity in the face of Everest, and no one can help him. In fact, often other climbers actually increase his struggle and hinder his ability to get to the top and back down. In what ways does Krakauer have to rely on himself on the mountain, and why? Describe an event that best illustrates his isolation and self-reliance, as well as the pain that results from that isolation.

**Journal 3**

In a way, each of these books is the author’s attempt to move on from a painful past—to tell the story that brings meaning to his or her extremely difficult memories. How does the author bring some type of resolution to this story by ending the book as he or she does? What is the meaning that the author brings to these difficult events?

NOTE: The book may not give an explicit answer to these questions. Instead, think about the ways that the author has survived and moved on from the events of the book. What has the author learned? How has the author changed from these experiences? Why is the author telling his or her story?

BOOK 2 – *The Poisonwood Bible*

(2) Second, you need to **read Book One of *The Poisonwood Bible***, by Barbara Kingsolver (pp. 1-82 unless page numbers have changed in the new edition). You will also need to purchase this book. We will read the rest of the book during the school year, but you will need to have this portion read. We will have a quiz over that part of the novel on Monday, August 19, but your journal will be due August 15 with the others.

**Journal 4**

*The Poisonwood Bible* is a fictional account of a missionary family’s experience in Africa, told from the perspective of the mother and four daughters. Choose 1 speaking character—Orleanna, Rachel, Adah, Leah, or Ruth May—and discuss the way her characterization is created through her writing style (the way she tells the story). Consider the following:

1. 1) the words she chooses – are they slang, intellectual, simple, descriptive, dull, repetitive, etc.
2. 2) comparisons she uses (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.)

3) her tone (the attitude she expresses toward her subject)

4) her sentence composition (the way she words things – short and choppy, long and descriptive. Is she eloquent? Expressive? Limited? Childish?)

5) the details she chooses to use (what is important to her)

Like the other journals, remember to use at least 3 quotes with page numbers as textual evidence. Again, write at least 350-400 words.

**\*\*NOTE: My email address is LKnezek@firstdallas.org. Email me any time in the summer with any questions you have. Remember that these assignments will be test grades your first quarter.**

* **Due Date:**
  + ALL portions of this assignment will be due **Thursday, August 15**, the 2nd day of classes. These journals will be a test grade. Students should be prepared to discuss the works on the first day of class.
* **Work Arrangements:**
  + It is expected that all students will work on these assignments individually throughout the course of the summer. While discussion of the texts is encouraged, any evidence in either the texts or the journals of collaborative efforts will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.