May 27, 2015

Dear Parents and Students:

This year we will begin summer reading for incoming 10th grade honors students at New Albany High School. Each student may select one of the two following books to read: *The Color of Water* by James McBride or *The Glass Castle: A Memoir* by Jeannette Walls. Both books are autobiographical and will tie in to our narrative unit the first quarter of school.

Each student will need to procure his or her own book. You may purchase one, get a copy from the library, or get an electronic version. If you buy the book, there are several websites where you can buy used copies or get books at a greatly reduced price. Typically, amazon.com is a great source for purchasing used books at a low cost. Halfpricebooks.com is another nice website for getting books at a reduced price. If this is a hardship and you have trouble procuring a book, please feel free to email me, and I will try to help you get a copy. My email is smithangela\_3@yahoo.com.

As you are reading your book, complete the assigned journals. Please note that for *The Glass Castle,* you need to do a journal for every 8 chapters and for *The Color of Water* you need to do a journal for every 4 chapters. Though the books are similar in length, there are several more chapters in *The Glass Castle.* Journals will be due on Tuesday August 4th. This will be the first grade of the year and a good opportunity to start off strong. See the back of this paper for a synopsis of each book.

I hope you enjoy your book this summer! Summer reading is the kind of model the very best schools use to prepare students for the future, and New Albany High School’s students deserve the very best opportunities.

Thank you,

Angela Smith & Kaylie Fougerousse

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*The Color of Water*

Synopsis: James McBride, journalist, musician, and son, explores his mother's past, as well as his own upbringing and heritage, in a poignant and powerful debut, *The Color Of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*.

The son of a black minister and a woman who would not admit she was white, James McBride grew up in "orchestrated chaos" with his eleven siblings in the poor, all-black projects of Red Hook, Brooklyn. "Mommy," a fiercely protective woman with "dark eyes full of pep and fire," herded her brood to Manhattan's free cultural events, sent them off on buses to the best (and mainly Jewish) schools, demanded good grades, and commanded respect. As a young man, McBride saw his mother as a source of embarrassment, worry, and confusion—and reached thirty before he began to discover the truth about her early life and long-buried pain.

*The Glass Castle: a Memoir*

Synopsis: 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.