

Title: Hero to Zero

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Jeannette Walls' "The Glass Castle" is her memoir about her childhood growing up in poverty with passionate but tormenting parents, who were essentially doing their best at raising and providing for their children. Rex is at the heart of the story, and he is the father who teeters between providing for his family and trying to fulfill his own American Dream. From the perspective of Alfred Adler, the Psychoanalyst who theorized about power struggles and inferiority complexes, it is interesting to consider whether Rex is to blame for the chaotic upbringing of Jeannette Walls and her siblings. Rex Walls is a heroic figure for Jeannette when she was a little girl, who uses illusions to hide the reality of their impoverished living situation as they go from California to New York. Jeannette begins to lose faith in Rex as he continues failing to meet the standards of an independently responsible father, thus portraying him like a false hero. Days without being home and false promises are the beginning of Jeannette's faith in her father being lost. As the story continues and the children become older, they begin to acknowledge how irresponsible and destructive their father is increasingly becoming. Although Rex seems most culpable due to his own recklessness, Jeannette humanizes him enough to view him, maybe not as the hero he once seemed to be, but as the man he always was. The connection to the psychoanalytic perspective and implications for real life scenarios will be discussed in greater detail.

Works Cited

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