Eligibility
The contest is open to all current Ivy Tech Community College students, faculty, and staff members. There will be separate prizes for students and for faculty/staff.

Topic
Write an essay drawing on your experience reading *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls. Your essay may be either personal or scholarly. The essay should cite or refer to at least one specific event, quote, or theme from *The Glass Castle*, either as a starting point or as an example in your own discussion. Use one of the prompts below:

1. Write an essay in the form of a letter to the author, Jeannette Walls, in which you discuss the event or scene in the book you could relate to the most, and why. Your letter should indicate how you learned to see your experience in a new light after reading Walls’ book, or what “lesson” you drew from your own experience, compared or contrasted to Walls’ perspective.

2. Jeannette Walls kept her story a secret from friends and coworkers for many years prior to writing *The Glass Castle*. Discuss her reasons for keeping her life story secret, and/or her decision to “go public,” and the effects—on her, on her family, or on her readers. Was this the right decision—or would you have done things differently in her place?

3. As a result of her experiences, how does Jeannette Walls view homelessness in America? What policies or approaches does she suggest, implicitly or explicitly, for dealing with homelessness? What do you think of her perspective on this issue? What would you recommend for dealing with homelessness, locally or nationally?

4. Open topic. You may write an argument or reflection on some other aspect of *The Glass Castle*; the focus is up to you.

Format
· Essays should be typed and double-spaced.
· Essays should be 1,000-1,500 words in length.
· Essays should have a title.
· Your name should not appear on your essay. Supply a cover sheet for your essay that includes the title of your essay, your name, your contact information (mailing address, email address, phone), and your status (student, faculty, or staff). The cover sheet will be removed before the essays are judged.
Submission
- All essays should be submitted electronically as an attachment via email to: BL-EssayContest@lists.ivytech.edu
- Essays should be in Microsoft Word (preferred), Rich Text Format, or PDF format. No other formats will be accepted.

Judging
A panel of Ivy Tech professors and staff will do a “blind” ranking of the essays to select first place, second place, and third place winners, as well as honorable mentions.

Deadline
Essays will be collected on a rolling basis throughout the 2009-2010 academic year. Essays must be submitted no later than April 1, 2010.

Student Prizes
First prize: $200
Second prize: $100
Third prize: $50

Faculty/Staff Prize
There will be one $50 award for the best essay from a faculty/staff member.

Questions?
If you have questions about the Common Reading Essay Contest, contact Elizabeth Starr at estarr@ivytech.edu.