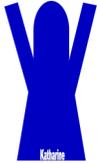




NANCY: This book opened my eyes to the life of many Appalachian people living in the places I've also lived most of my life. His razor sharp memory, detailed descriptions of love, anger, pain and triumph create a memorable read and a sociological/psychological portrait of a people in struggle. I also loved the honesty in this autobiography, his humility in explaining how he was able to transcend the brokenness and his indebtedness to those who loved him.



KATHARINE: Definitely a must-read for education students in the Mid-West. I think all college students should read it, actually. But it leaves more questions than answers. He says there may be no solution. I wonder if he becomes a U.S. Senator would he try to find solutions, or just help the rich become richer?



PRISCILLA: Bless his heart. What a life he lived. You have to feel sorry for him and his family. It's like they didn't know any better. But his dad did come to Jesus and that helped him to some extent, don't you think?



JANE: A lot of strong women helped J.D., didn't they? His grandmother, his sister Lindsay, his wife Usha, his professor Amy. They all made a big difference in this life. Ladies, this book challenges us to use our power for good! We are women, hear us call!



MOLLY: Whew. This guy knows how to tell it. Reading this book, I kept thinking I'm glad I'm Black and not his brand of White. African-Americans have their issues, but in my family it was all about being loved by God and loving others. Not this crazy, uninformed manic stuff.



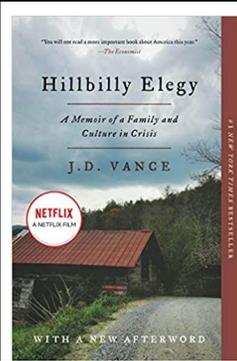
ABIGAIL: Well, I think I want to focus on the resilient ones. J.D., His uncle Jimmy, his sister Lindsay, and his Aunt Wee all were able to rise above their beginnings. I liked how he reflected on those who helped him make it through and push to get ahead. Even though personally, I'm a pacifist, I see how the Marines also played a role. We all need love and mentors to help us rise above.



SALLIE: I wish I could've read this before I started teaching. I don't think I realized what some of my kids were going through. It's a painful story. A not so pretty slice of American life. I agree with him, it's important to mentor and be there for these kids, to help them have a chance.



Discussion Guide



About the Book

Title: Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis

Author: J.D. Vance

Published: HarperCollins, 2016

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jd.vance.378>, <https://www.facebook.com/hillbillyelegy/>

Publisher Page: <https://www.harpercollins.com/blogs/authors/j-d-vance>

Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. What is your experience of Appalachian culture? Did this ring true with your experiences? Why or why not?
3. What were the events/people giving J.D. the opportunity to transcend his culture, graduate from college and attend an Ivy League law school? Does this illustrate the American Dream? Why or why not?
4. Americans often pride themselves as living in the best country in the world, but the author suggests otherwise. What does the author think causes the Appalachian brokenness and poverty described in this book? What do you think?
5. How did J.D. portray the political perspectives of his family? What connection, if any, did this mindset help lead to Donald Trump's presidency?
6. The author suggests that there may be no solution for this cultural situation, yet he does make a plea to help by mentoring the youth. What would you recommend to help youth born into this culture? Adults?
7. What were the surprises for you in this book?
8. At the time this guide was written, in early 2021, J.D. Vance just received a 10 million dollar donation to run as a Republican candidate in Ohio for the U.S. Senate. Would you vote for him? Why or why not?
9. Read over the MAMs perspective on the book. With whom do you most agree and why?
10. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?