

Liz Murray Biography

Source: www.Amazon.com



Elizabeth “Liz” Murray (born September 23, 1980) is an American inspirational speaker who is best known as having been homeless in her youth, and as having overcome her hardship to achieve success.

Book Summary

Source: www.Amazon.com

“Breaking Night”

Urban slang for: staying up through the night, until the sun rises

Winner of the 2011 Young Adult Library Services Association Alex Awards for the 10 Best Adult Books of the Year that also appeal to teens.

Starred Review. From runaway to Harvard student, Murray tells an engaging, powerfully motivational story about turning her life around after growing up the neglected child of drug addicts. When Murray was born in 1980, her former beatnik father was in jail for illegally trafficking in prescription painkillers, and her mother, a cokehead since age 13, had just barely missed losing custody of their year-old daughter, Lisa. Murray and her sister grew up in a Bronx apartment that gradually went to seed, living off government programs and whatever was left after the parents indulged their drug binges; Murray writes that drugs were the “wrecking ball” that destroyed her family-- prompting her mother’s frequent institutionalization for drug-induced mental illness and leading to her parents inviting in sexual molesters. By age 15, with the help of her best friend Sam and an elusive hustler, Carlos, she took permanently to the streets, relying

on friends, sadly, for shelter. With the death of her mother, her runaway world came to an end, and she began her step-by-step plan to attend an alternative high school, which eventually led to a New York Times scholarship and acceptance to Harvard. In this incredible story of true grit, Murray went from feeling like “the world was filled with people who were repulsed by me” to learning to receive the bountiful generosity of strangers who truly cared.

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Discussion Questions

Source: www.LitLovers.com

1. If your book offers a cultural portrait—of life in another country or region of your own country, start with questions a, b, and c ...
 - a. What observations are made in the book? Does the author examine economics and politics, family traditions, the arts, religious beliefs, language or food?
 - b. Does the author criticize or admire the culture? Does he/she wish to preserve or change the way of life? Either way, what would be risked or gained?
 - c. What is different from your own culture? What do you find most surprising, intriguing or difficult to understand?
2. What is the central idea discussed in the book? What issues or ideas does the author explore? Are they personal, sociological, global, political, economic, spiritual, medical, or scientific?
3. Do the issues affect your life? How so—directly, on a daily basis, or more generally? Now or sometime in the future?
4. What evidence does the author use to support the book’s ideas? Is the evidence convincing...definitive or...speculative? Does the author depend on personal opinion, observation, and assessment? Or is the evidence factual—based on science, statistics, historical documents, or quotations from (credible) experts?

5. What kind of language does the author use? Is it objective and dispassionate? Or passionate and earnest? Is it polemical, inflammatory, sarcastic? Does the language help or undercut the author's premise?

6. What are the implications for the future? Are there long- or short-term consequences to the issues raised in the book? Are they positive or negative...affirming or frightening?

7. What solutions does the author propose? Who would implement those solutions? How probable is success?

8. How controversial are the issues raised in the book? Who is aligned on which sides of the issues? Where do you fall in that line-up?

9. Talk about specific passages that struck you as significant—or interesting, profound, amusing, illuminating, disturbing, sad...? What was memorable?

10. What have you learned after reading this book? Has it broadened your perspective about a difficult issue—personal or societal? Has it introduced you to a culture in another country...or an ethnic or regional culture in your own country?

(Questions by LitLovers. Please feel free to use them, online or off, with attribution. Thanks.)



Breaking Night
by Liz Murray



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