



Pushing the Limits of Persistence Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

To persist is to endure. To last over time - even against the odds. Examples are everywhere: A persistent person weathers physical, emotional, or environmental setbacks and keeps trying. Elements that persist in the world around us connect us to a certain place, to an event, or to our past. We can read history in canyons carved by unstoppable rivers. Enduring artifacts and memories can wrench or lift our hearts. Put simply, PERSISTENCE expands the human experience in myriad ways.

The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge

Michael Punke, Fiction. #1 *New York Times* bestseller... The year is 1823, and the trappers of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company live a brutal frontier life. Hugh Glass is among the company's finest men, an experienced frontiersman and an expert tracker. But when a scouting mission puts him face-to-face with a grizzly bear, he is viciously mauled and not expected to survive. Two company men are dispatched to stay behind and tend to Glass before he dies. When the men abandon him instead, Glass is driven to survive by one desire: revenge. With shocking grit and determination, Glass sets out, crawling at first, across hundreds of miles of uncharted American frontier. Based on a true story, *The Revenant* is a remarkable tale of obsession, the human will stretched to its limits, and the lengths that one man will go to for retribution. Now a major motion picture. amazon.com

- Glass is faced with many challenging situations and has to do things that many of us living in 21st-century North America would find difficult, such as eating rodents and raw meat. Under the same circumstances how do you think you would have fared? Are there any other things that Glass does in order to survive that you would find especially difficult?
- As the novel progresses, Punke provides backstories for some of the central characters, including Glass, via flashback. We learn that Glass was once employed as a freighter captain for Rawsthorne & Sons. After learning of his father's death, Glass hops aboard a Spanish merchant ship to return to Philadelphia to tend to family matters. When the ship is captured by pirates, Glass decides that in order to survive he has little choice but to join the pirates. What does this say about Glass?
- Glass's mother and fiancé died while he was held by the pirates, so with no real reason to return to the east, he joins the Rocky Mountain Fur Company on their venture into the upper Missouri. Punke writes that Glass "could not explain or articulate his reasons" for joining, rather it "was something that he felt more than understood." What does this mean? Are there things you've chosen to do, based on just feeling or a hunch, but that allowed you to persist in something?

