



Intellectual Disability: What's Eating Gilbert Grape (Movie)

Est. Time: 2 Hours Viewing/45 Minutes Class

Synopsis

Gilbert lives in a small town with his younger sister, his morbidly obese mother, and his brother Arnie, who has an intellectual disability. Gilbert, a young adult, is forced to be the patriarch and must provide for his dysfunctional family and act as the primary caretaker for his brother. Gilbert falls in love with Becky, who is passing through town with her grandmother. He begins to readjust his priorities but feels guilty for putting his needs before those of his family's.

Activity

View the following movie and be prepared to discuss the questions below in class:

Title: What's Eating Gilbert Grape (1993)

Studio: Paramount

Questions/Discussion Topics

1. In this film, one of the central characters has an intellectual disability. Describe Arnie's behaviors that are illustrative of developmental disabilities.
2. What experiences challenge Arnie's adaptive skills (skills that allow an individual to function in daily life)?
3. Think about Arnie's needs. What types and levels of support would you recommend for him? How could Arnie's family take advantage of these supports?
4. Imagine that you have a sibling with an intellectual disability. What would be your biggest challenge? What would be your biggest reward?