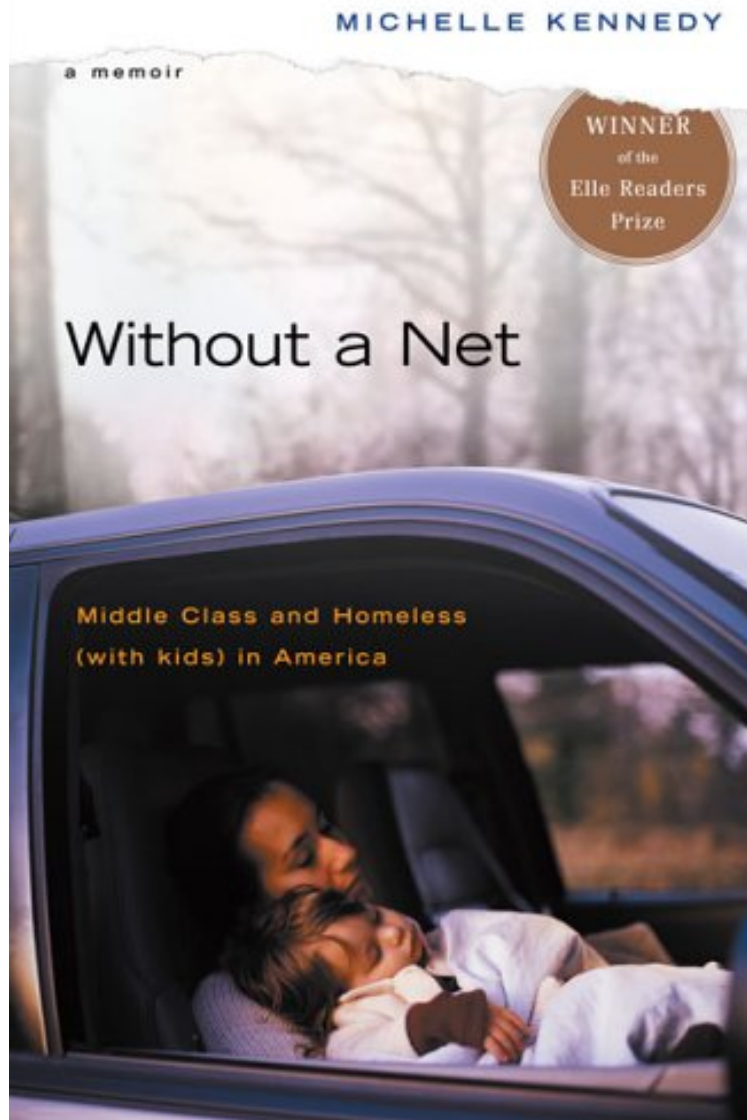


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## Without a Net: Middle Class and Homeless (with Kids) in America

*Michelle Kennedy*

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**Michelle Kennedy : Without a Net: Middle Class and Homeless (with Kids) in America** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Without a Net: Middle Class and Homeless (with Kids) in America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An inspiring read By Erin RI heard about this book on TTBOOK years ago and the story stayed with me. I finally read it and found the story very well written and incredibly moving. I'm really not sure how the author kept moving forward, but she did. It's interesting to read the judgmental tones in

other reviews on this page. It's so easy to judge others choices and yet we've all made bad choices in life. I felt no judgement. I only felt inspired to be a better me...to live an authentic life. That's an afternoon well spent reading a book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very inspiring! By Sandy Denney The struggles the author shared could be about many of us that are one paycheck away from homelessness. Her inner strength and love for her children was amazing. God placed many people in her path to strengthen and encourage her along the way. The book shows how much a little kindness shown to someone who is down and out goes a long way toward their recovery. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. With a Net By Penny Johnson This was a good enjoyable book. It was about being poor and trying to get up in the world. Her kids slept in the car while she tried to make end meet. It's about living on a smaller budget. The book was in good condition and it was sent very fast.

Michelle Kennedy had a typical middle class American childhood in Vermont. She attended college, interned in the U.S. Senate, married her high school sweetheart and settled in the suburbs of D.C. But the comfortable life she was building quickly fell apart. At age twenty-four Michelle was suddenly single, homeless, and living out of a car with her three small children. She waitressed night shifts while her kids slept out in the diner's parking lot. She saved her tips in the glove compartment, and set aside a few quarters every week for truck stop showers for her and the kids. With startling humor and honesty, Kennedy describes the frustration of never having enough money for a security deposit on an apartment—but having too much to qualify for public assistance. *Without A Net* is a story of hope. Michelle Kennedy survives on her wits, a little luck, and a lot of courage. And in the end, she triumphs.

From Publishers Weekly You'd think it'd take a while to go from "given-every-opportunity, spoiled-in-every-way... middle-class housewife... to homeless single mother," but Kennedy did it in less than a year. Just some "bad judgment calls and wrong decisions," and a smart young former Senate page and promising college student found herself, at 25, living in a station wagon with her three young children, making pots of ramen noodles at campgrounds and showering at truck stops. Oddly enough, once readers learn the details, the story of Kennedy's downfall goes from being unlikely to horribly plausible. Her parents couldn't cover her tuition, but she couldn't get financial aid unless she was independent or married. So she married her boyfriend, got pregnant, dropped out and had two more children. Meanwhile, on a back-to-the-land kick, her husband moved the family to rural Maine. His neglect almost killed one child, so Kennedy left him and took the kids to a small coastal Maine town. Finding waitressing work was simple; finding affordable child care or an apartment that a landlord would rent to someone in her situation was impossible. So Kennedy improvised—lots. While the details are fascinating, they'd also be quite depressing if it weren't for the subplot of Kennedy falling in love with a co-worker. Indeed, her romance with this hunk absolutely hijacks the homelessness story—but readers will be too engrossed to care. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Kennedy recounts how she metamorphosed from a carefree college student into a homeless 24-year-old with three children by making some "bad judgment calls," the first of which was marrying her boyfriend to be eligible for financial aid. Three children come in unplanned succession, her back-to-nature husband moves the family to a rural cabin with no electricity, and his negligence nearly kills their daughter. These are the catalysts leading to Kennedy's double life: she looks normal enough at the pub where she waitresses, but she and her three children are sleeping in their Subaru, showering at a truck stop, and boiling Ramen noodles on a campground grill. Unwilling to confide her desperate situation to her parents, she finally saves enough for the first month's rent and security deposit on a small apartment, an impossible accomplishment for so many homeless people, as Kennedy elucidates in her compelling epilogue, which lays bare the economic causes of homelessness, and describes agencies to which she could have turned for help had she been less stubborn and better informed. Deborah Donovan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved "Refreshingly candid... *Without A Net* shows how frighteningly easy it can be for an ordinary, non substance-abusing middle-class woman and devoted mother to find herself unable to afford a place to live." —Los Angeles Times Book "[Kennedy's] sense of humor, ingenuity, and refreshing refusal to blame others for her mistakes won me over, and I quickly found myself rooting for her to succeed." —Elle Magazine "A beautiful, heartfelt, and wonderful book." —Dorothy Allison, author of *Bastard Out of Carolina*