Dramatic Reading

Theme: A teenager’s love for a parent

Introduction- I used the theme of a teenager’s love for a parent to connect the following three texts: *The Moves Make the Man* by Bruce Brooks, *I See the Moon* by E.B. Christiansen, and *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Newton Peck. The three characters show their affection toward their parent in different ways. In *The Moves Make the Man*, Jerome is appreciative of his mother’s easygoing attitude toward his adolescent behavior. In *I See the Moon*, Bitte telephone’s her mother to share a rite of passage. Lastly, in *A Day No Would Die*, Rob and his father share heart felt emotions as they discuss the very recent slaughter of Pinky, their beloved pig.

**Jerome’s thoughts about his mother from *The Moves Make the Man*:**

“One nice thing about my momma is, she never gets on you for what you are not doing. I mean, she never looks away from the things you do, only to notice what isn’t on the plan. This is the most important thing in getting along with your son, or getting along with anybody, and I can tell you because I copy it from her and it makes good sense. You don’t go looking at the things people don’t do, when they already be doing plenty in other areas. If your son collects stamps, why you want to go fussing at him because he doesn’t play the clarinet? Check out his stamps…”

**Bitte’s phone conversation with her mother from *I See the Moon*:**

“Answer. Please answer. I need your, Mama.”…seven rings, eight, nine, ten…

“Hello?” Mama’s voice.

“Mama! It’s me!” I searched my mind for the right words. “Mama, I’m a woman today.”

Mama gave out a little gasp. “Ah! My Bitte?” Her voice sounded husky. “My beautiful, intelligent, independent daughter, now a young woman?”

I pulled back to look at the receiver. Was Mama talking about me? She had never called me those things before: beautiful, intelligent, independent. I thought maybe that was what becoming a woman was all about…people telling you things they wouldn’t tell a child.

I heard Mama take a deep breath and sigh. “I say hello to Bitte the young woman but I don’t want to say good-bye to Bitte the little girl.”

Do we have to say good-bye I wondered? Was Bitte the girl, gone forever?

Then Mama said briskly, “Do you know what to do?”

“Yes, Mama. I know what to do.” After all, I had Claire, and I had health class.

But Mama explained anyway, which is what I had been hoping for. Her cool, clear instructions washed away my fears. “All set?” she asked when she was finished.

“All set,” I said.

“Good then.” I’d like to talk to your Uncle Axel, please. But first, I want to say thank you for calling Bitte. Thank you for including me in this important day.”

**Rob’s interaction with his father in *A Day No Pigs Would Die***

…There was no Pinky. Just a sopping wet lake of red slush. So I cried. “Oh Papa. My heart’s broke.”

“So is mine,” said Papa. “But I’m thankful you’re a man.”

I just broke down and Papa let me cry it all out. I just sobbed and sobbed with my head up toward the sky and my eyes closed, hoping God would hear it.

“That’s what being a man is all about. It’s just doing what’s got to be done.”

I felt his big hand touch my face, and it wasn’t the hand that killed hogs. It was almost as sweet as Mama’s. His hand was rough and cold, and as I opened my eyes to look at it, I could see that his knuckles were dripping with pig blood. It was the hand that just butchered Pinky. He did it. Because he had to. Hated to and had to. And he knew that he’d never have to say to me that he was sorry. His hand against my face trying to wipe away my tears said it all. His cruel pig-sticking fist with its thick fingers so lightly on my cheek.

I couldn’t help it. I took his hand to my mouth and held it against my lips and kissed it. Pig blood and all. I kissed his hand again and again, with all its stink and fatty slime of dead pork. So he’d understand that I’d forgive him even if he killed me.

I was still holding his hand as he straighten up tall against the gray winter sky. He looked down at me and then he looked away. With his free arm he raked the sleeve of his work shirt across his eyes. It was the first time I’d ever seen him do it.

The only time…

*(Years later…)*

*As eldest son, it was my place to say words about my father. I didn’t know what I was going to say. It wouldn’t be much. What I thought about Papa couldn’t have been said. Being his son was like knowing a king.*