

The Scriptwriter

LEVEL 4

A

Going OnCharacter Descriptions**Pat:**

Pat is a shy young man who has difficulty expressing his feelings. He was very close to his grandmother and is very sad that she has died. He knows that his mother is mourning too, but he does not know how to comfort her. He feels depressed, lonely and friendless.

Pat's Mother:

Like her son, Pat's mother hides her emotions, although they sometimes slip out. She is a woman who cannot handle stress very well. She deeply cares for her son but because of her difficulty in showing emotion, he rarely sees it.

Sam:

Sam, who is also shy, is in some of the same classes as Pat at school. He usually does not know what to say but he tries his best to make everyone happy. He does not know Pat really well, but he would like to be friends.

Plot Summary

This play explores the theme of the surprises of friendship. All three characters have difficulty expressing how they really feel. Pat and his mother are mourning the loss of their grandmother. Right after the funeral Pat turns to see that his school friend, Sam, has been at the service. All three characters come to realize the value of friendship and Pat and Sam learn that true friendship can be communicated with few words.

B

Going On

(Lights come up on Pat who is standing down left. Pat's mother is sitting in a pew down centre. Finally Sam, Pat's class mate, is sitting in a pew behind Pat's mother. He is in the shadows. Pat has his left hand upon his grandmother's casket. The funeral service is over and the scene starts after everyone has left the funeral home.)

Pat: *(Pat turns right, brings his left hand from the coffin and to his side. His back is turned to Sam. He crosses to down centre and sits with his mother.)* Well that's that, right?

Mom: *(looking straight ahead of her)* No, not by far, there's so much to do: Bills, lawyers, finding a burial spot.

Pat: *(looking at his feet)* I don't think Grandma would want you to be stressed.

Mom: *(whispers)* I'm going to miss her so much. *(speaking normal again, and seeing that her son is depressed)* I'm sorry I brought you here but you had to experience it sometime and, because you were so close with grandma, I thought it might be good for you

Pat: *(Pat cuts his mother off before she can finish.)* I knew it was coming ... there was just so much going on that I ... really didn't have time to think.

Mom: Grandma's death makes me sad as well, but there is so much that I have to deal with that I don't really miss her right now.

Pat: I don't know what has to be done mom, but I'll try to help the best I can.

Mom: *(The mother raises her left hand and scuffles Pat's hair.)* How did I raise such a caring boy?

Pat: *(turns away from mom and says bitterly)* Yah, sometimes I feel like I'm the only one who does care.

Mom: *(Turns to see Sam who remains seated behind her. A small but noticeable smile forms on her face.)* Somehow I don't think that's true Pat. *(She then points in the direction of Sam who is currently reading the program from the funeral service.)*

C

Pat: *(Looks over his shoulder to see Sam. He is surprised and confused. He had not expected to see anyone from school where he does not have any close friends. He does not know how to react. Finally he gets up and walks back towards Sam. Pat remains standing and looks at Sam.)* You didn't have to come you know.

Sam: *(stands to address Pat)* No, I didn't.

Pat: *(pauses before he responds rather coldly)* Thank you for coming.

Sam: *(Sam places his hands on Pat's two shoulders.)* Listen I'm sorry for your loss. *(Pat breaks free of Sam's grasp before Sam can finish.)*

Pat: *(Gruffly)* Don't say that, I hate that.

Sam: I know you do, it's just that ... *(Sam doesn't know how to say he cares. He pauses for a bit so he can think of what to say.)* I want to say that ...

(There is an awkward silence. Pat looks intently at Sam and sees his embarrassment. His bitterness drains away. He begins to feel ashamed.)

Pat: *(with a little smile, approaches Sam and awkwardly puts his arm around Sam's shoulders)* I know and ... *(slight pause)* thank you. Knowing that you're around makes it easier, you know.

(Pat drops his arm and both boys grin at each other for a few moments.)

Pat: *(trying to speak normally)* I'm just worried about all the work I'm going to have to catch up on when I go back to school.

Sam: Don't worry, me and Derek have been going around each day and collecting it for you. I'm sure the teachers will take it easy on you; I mean most of them have been where you are now.

Pat: I bet Mrs. Gundy won't, calculus is more important than eating to her. *(Pat and Sam laugh for a couple of seconds.)*

Sam: Well listen, my parents are in the car, we're heading up to my aunt's for dinner, so I gotta go but, I'll talk to you later.

D

Pat: All right. I'll see you at school in a couple days. *(Pat moves so Sam can exit stage left.)* Oh and Sam ... thanks again.

(Sam exits stage left.)

Mom: *(Mom has been fiddling through papers inconspicuously, while Sam and Pat have been talking.)* That was nice of him, wasn't it?

Pat: *(Pat sits back down on the pew his mother is sitting on.)* Yah it was.

Mom: Look Pat, I know this is hard.

Pat: *(Pat once again cuts his mother off before she can finish.)* Yah it sucks now but I think it will get better. *(realising how he really feels)* No ... I know it will get better!

Mom: *(surprised at her son's positive attitude)* What did Sam say?

Pat: You know it's funny but the things he said were good, but the things he didn't say were the things that made me feel that he was there for me.

Mom: You're lucky to have a friend like that.

Pat: You know mom, knowing that one person cares ... *(slight pause)* It makes a world of difference.

(Pat and his mother then gather their things and head for the exit at stage left. During this time the lights are slowly going down.)

LEVEL 4

Teacher’s Notes**Knowledge/Understanding**

- The student provides information about the characters that is highly appropriate. Descriptions of the characters in the introduction are, for example, quite accurate (e.g., Pat’s behaviour in the scene bears out the descriptions of him as not knowing how to comfort his mother and as feeling “depressed, lonely and friendless”). The information given is also adequate for understanding the behaviour of the three characters (e.g., no explanations are given about why all of them have difficulty expressing their emotions, but that they do helps explain why their communication is so halting).

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student portrays character development with a high degree of effectiveness. All three characters are highly believable (e.g., Pat and his mother realistically display their loneliness and loss). Sam and Pat’s awkwardness and tentativeness (e.g., in the following exchange: “**Sam:** (*Sam places his hands on Pat’s two shoulders.*) Listen I’m sorry for your loss. (*Pat breaks free of Sam’s grasp before Sam can finish.*) **Pat:** (*Gruffly*) Don’t say that, I hate that.”) are both natural and moving. When Pat comes to realize that it is an awkward situation for Sam as well (captured in the direction “*Pat looks intently at Sam and sees his embarrassment. His bitterness drains away. He begins to feel ashamed.*”), the realization opens the door for a friendship to develop.

Communication

- The student creates dialogue that is highly convincing. Pat’s halting way of speaking (e.g., “I knew it was coming . . . there was just so much going on that I . . . really didn’t have time to think.”) is natural, given the difficulty he has expressing his feelings. The dialogue also illustrates Pat’s depression and loneliness (e.g., “Yah, sometimes I feel like I’m the only one who does care.”). The tension of the situation is broken, however, and in a typically teenaged fashion, when Pat and Sam discuss schoolwork and Pat jokes, “I bet Mrs. Gundy won’t [go easy on him], calculus is more important than eating to her.”).

- The student provides stage directions that are highly appropriate. For example, the directions for Pat’s mother as she struggles to find a way to help her son with his grief (e.g., “*The mother raises her left hand and scuffles Pat’s hair.*”) demonstrate her tender concern for him. Further actions by the mother effectively indicate that she senses her son will find support (e.g., she “*turns to see Sam who remains seated behind her. A small but noticeable smile forms on her face.*”).

Application

- The student creates a working script that is highly effective. The setting is well designed in that it enables Sam to be on stage, yet remain unobserved until the appropriate moment. As the scene opens, the student has Pat stand alone with his hand on his grandmother’s coffin, allowing the audience to sense the grief, loss, and loneliness he is feeling. This clear portrait of grief contrasts with the inability of mother and son to comfort each other. The tension escalates as Sam emerges from the shadows and awkwardly tries to comfort Pat. The climax is reached when Pat sees his own shyness and awkward actions reflected in his friend’s. The resolution opens the possibility for better communication between mother and son and for Pat’s acceptance of Sam’s friendship.

Comments

This work is representative of a solid level-4 performance. The student demonstrates a high degree of achievement of the expectations in all four categories of knowledge and skills.

Next Steps

In order to improve his or her performance, the student could provide a little more detail about what motivates Sam’s actions.