BRONX PRINCESS

Discussion Questions and Activity
About the Film

- Details: Ghana and USA / 2008 / 39mins / Documentary / Twi, English and Ga

- *Bronx Princess* follows headstrong 17-year-old Rocky as she leaves behind her mother in New York City to reunite with her father, a chief in Ghana. By confronting her immigrant parents' ideas of adulthood during her tumultuous summer between high school and college, Rocky must reconcile her African heritage with her dream of independence.
About the Filmmakers

- Yoni Brook and Musa Syeed met at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts while studying with Professor and director Marco Williams. Their first documentary film, *A Son’s Sacrifice*, followed a father-son relationship at a halal slaughterhouse in Queens, New York. *A Son’s Sacrifice* won Best Documentary Short at the Tribeca Film Festival and broadcast nationally on PBS’s Independent Lens series in January 2008. The film was named the Best Documentary Short by the International Documentary Association. The US State Department has distributed the film to over 130 consulates and embassies around the world as part of its religious diversity initiative. *Bronx Princess*, about a teenager reuniting with her father, a chief in Ghana, broadcast nationally on PBS’s POV series in September 2009. The film premiered at the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) and at the Berlinale. Brook and Syeed are the Jewish and Muslim co-directors of *The Calling*, a four-hour PBS/ITVS film about young religious leaders. His feature films include *Valley of Saints* (2012), *A Stray* (2016), and also co-wrote the film, *Menashe* (2017).
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• Why do you think Rocky feels that her father understands her more than her mother?

• When Rocky says that she wants to go home, her relative says “here too is home,” what do you think he means?

• Do you think Rocky’s father might feel that Rocky’s pride can turn into prejudice?

• Why do you think Rocky’s mother has regrets about not going to school?
Now it’s time to think of your own story! Follow each slide, one at a time, in order to guide you through the process of a mini character study. For this activity, you will need a paper and pen to take notes. If you see (*), it simply means that if you are a group setting, you may discuss your responses for a few minutes with each other.
1. Write down 5 different names of your family or friends.

Whoever comes to mind, write it down! Don’t spend more than 2 minutes.
2. From your names list, circle 1 person you find the most interesting.*

Tip! Usually the person who pops up in your mind first is the most interesting.
3. List traits, characteristics, and behaviors of your person.

Take 5 minutes to write down as much as you can think of. Remember why you find the person most interesting. Let’s use Rocky (from a *Bronx Princess*) as an example.

- Ghanaian-American. Both parents are Ghanian.
- Lives in the Bronx, New York City.
- Very academically-driven. Excels in school and college-bound.
- Strong-willed, a bit rebellious.
4. Circle your top 5 traits, characteristics, behaviors from your list.

Take 1 minute to make your selections.
5. Write about your person using your top 5 selections.*

Take 7 minutes.
DONE!

Congratulations! You should now have a paragraph detailing an interesting person in your life. You have developed a character study. *Bronx Princess* is a nonfiction character study because it predominantly follows one character/person (Rocky). Think of it as getting to know someone but using film.
BONUS*

Using the list in step 3, capture some pictures of your character performing actions that correspond to their traits, characteristics, and/or behaviors.
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