



Independent Lens : P*Star Rising

Film Study Guide

Director: Gabriel Noble

2009 | Documentary | 84 Minutes | USA | English | Rated PG

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/p-star-rising/>

Synopsis: In the early '80s, Jesse Diaz was a rising star in the hip-hop world. Now he's a broke single father living in a Harlem shelter with two children to support. But Jesse finally finds a shot at redemption in his nine-year-old daughter Priscilla, a precocious and immensely talented rapper. With older daughter Solsky the family's quiet cheerleader, Jesse and Priscilla look to parlay "P-Star's" talent into victory for the whole family. And that means long rehearsals, late nights, and home schooling for the growing girl. But as Priscilla's star really begins to rise, it'll tax all the relationships in her life and test Jesse in ways he never expected. Director Gabriel Noble follows four years of father-daughter ups and downs as they navigate the grit and the glamour of the music biz. From sit-downs with image consultants to the elation of spending that big signing bonus, Priscilla always remains a magnetic figure with a resolve and way of talking that belies her young age. Though Jesse, for better or worse, remains the rock in their lives, an emotional attempt to track down the girls' mother is threaded throughout the film. "She became a crackhead," Priscilla says, blasé. "Things happen, you know."

Post-Screening Discussion Questions

1. How do you describe the relationship between P*Star and her father? Is it a strong relationship? A dysfunctional one? Why?
2. Do you feel that P*Star's dad is living his career dreams through her career reality? Do you think he is taking advantage of her talent? Why or why not?

3. In the film we see P*Star age from 9 to 13. How do you think she changes as she ages? Does she seem much different as a 9 year old compared to 13?
4. Do you think the lifestyle P*Star starts to live once she signs her first record deal is an appropriate lifestyle for a 9 year old? Do you think she acts like a young girl?
5. How do you see P*Star juggling her role as a young girl, sister, daughter, student and performer? Do you think she succeeds?
6. What is your perception of P*Star's sister, Solsky? Do you feel the film showed enough of her? Do you think she has a bigger story? How do you think she feels about P*Star's career?
7. Jesse, Solsky and P*Star search for the girls biological mother. Do you think the search is worth it? Do you think the family might have a chance to live "happily ever after"?
8. What do you think about other child stars or youth stars? Do you think it makes it impossible for the star to live a "normal" childhood?
9. Do you think Jesse is a good father? A good manager?
10. Who was the most interesting character to you? Why did this person stick out to you in the story?