

Saying Goodbye

Discussion Question: In “Love Letters” by Mary E. McIntyre, the author wants to read old letters her parents wrote to each other, but her father keeps his vow to destroy them after his wife’s death. Did the father make the right decision? Why or why not?

1. Yes, the father did make the right decision by destroying the letters. Just as you respect the wishes of someone as to whether they should be kept alive artificially or not, their wishes of their possessions should be respected.
2. I feel like the father had made the right decision since the burning of the letters was a promise he had made to his dead wife. He may have lost a part of himself while doing so, but he did it for her, for respect.
3. Yes, I believe the father made the right decision by burning the letters because it was a personal love and bond between him and his wife, the daughter needs to see that her parents are human and they have a bond that is just between the two of them and it was a strong and personal bond.
4. I think the father made the right decision. Letters written to each other in a relationship is very private. I cringed when I heard he wanted to burn them because I love history and to have an actual account like what’s written in a letter is important and interesting. But then I thought what if years from now someone wanted to read the letters my boyfriend and I write to each other. The letters I write to him are meant for him alone and I would feel like I have lost my privacy. At the end of the story she makes a good point saying her mother would not be able to explain what she wrote. This would lead to wrong interpretations and I would hate for that to happen if someone read something I wrote in private. I understand why she wants to read them but I think her dad made the right choice.
5. I think that the father made the right choice. I say this because he made a promise to his wife that he would do it and I think that it is worse to break a promise to somebody you love then for the child who wants it, to be disappointed. Also these letters were between him and his wife and it is so personal that it is very emotionally stirring. Like the story says, ‘a promise is a promise.’
6. Love letters actually had a surprising ending. I thought the father would never burn the letters or that the daughter would secretly open them. Did he make the right choice? I think he made what was best for his children. There are things in this world that are a mystery to us and should remain a mystery. These are the things that keep us searching in life and bring some excitement to our lives. Everyone has only one life to live and it’s no one else’s decision to bring the past memories back to life in the present. Let the present exist in the present and the past live in the past. These were private letters between only two individuals and it should stay that way.

7. I feel he may have made the right decision. His wife had only past a month earlier and to really dig up those emotional times may be really heartbreaking. It is good that he let her read at least one to get an idea of the emotion that ran through the letters. He already knows what they're about because he lived through it and he wants to cherish the better memories. That he still hold on to. It's nice to get insight into your parents past and have a glimpse of what it was like back then, but sometimes that will bring up the wrong memories and sense of depression. Also he made a promise to his wife in her last times it would be hard to sit with that guilt that you didn't fulfill your promise.

8. I think the father did the right thing. He made a promise to his wife and it was obviously important to her that the letters remain between just the two of them. It's like they were a little secret that just the two of them could share, if the daughter had read them it wouldn't be their secret any more.

9. I think the father did make the right decision because he wanted to honor his wife by keeping her promise. He probably wanted to keep their stories private and see that it will always be between them two. He wanted to keep the stories as if they barely wrote them. I probably would have done the same thing to keep the promise and to keep the memories how they were.

10. I honestly don't know if the father made the right decision or not, because I've never been in love with anyone or shared such intimate moments with someone in writing. I don't know how I'd feel in that situation if my husband had asked me to burn the letters but my child desperately wanted to keep them. Based on my current experience, however, I would have kept the letter. As someone who is very interested in family history, genealogy, and stories from my past, I could not burn such treasured artifacts that help such valuable family insight. It would pain me to do so, even if my beloved had asked me to burn them.

11. I think he did make the right decision. The letters were a reminder to him and his wife of the times they were a part and how much they loved each other. After his wife died he promised to destroy them. Having that reminder would only make him sad. The author was upset he destroyed them but when they read that last letter together it was tough. It could have been that way through each letter and so it was good to get rid of them.