

Shrek college essay



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' Shrek' is an award winning animated film that appeals to all ages due to its unorthodox and interesting approach to a fairy tale. In traditional fairytales there will be an attractive young maiden; a handsome, brave man usually of high office, as the hero; and inevitably bitter, disfigured evil character. Most plots will meander through a series of unfortunate mishaps, leading to the fair young maiden caught in a tower and in distress. The dashing young male risks his life to save her, but gets hampered by the wicked character who usually has some kind of connection to either the male or the female. Of course, the victorious young man rescues his damsel in distress and their true love is sealed with a kiss. ' Shrek's main aim is to break all the laws of tradition in fairytales, the alternative characters and humorous script are what make it a true blockbuster of a film.

The first scene is an imitation of Disney's Sleeping Beauty Book. The first clue that ' Shrek' is not just going to be the same as any film is when you see Shrek himself place his huge green hand over the page, rip it out and use it as toilet paper, slamming the toilet door behind him. Catchy, modern pop music starts up as we are introduced face to face with this huge, but instantly liked character. Although Shrek is basking in mud and being disgusting on the whole, the way the animators have made his character look means the audience immediately warm to him. He was specially designed to be the good character. His non-angular features and huge grin make him funny, and not frightening.

The audience know already by time the introduction music has ended, that they are not destined for a conventional fairytale story. The setting for his home, with the soft morning sunlight filtering through the tree's onto his

woodland settlement is very similar to many fairytale settings, such as Snow White. Villagers approach Shrek to assassinate him, for simply being an ogre. The director used up shots from the villager's point of view, to make Shrek appear much larger and daunting. He appears unperturbed, and lets out an enormous, smelly roar, scattering the villagers away. The camera uses a cropped shot of Shrek's teeth to enhance the disgust in the viewer.

Every well-known and loved character has a sidekick. The sidekick is usually an object of ridicule and is inferior to the main character. In this aspect, 'Shrek' does follow the rules. Shrek's first encounter with Donkey shows a different side to him. He protects Donkey from some guards, proving to the audience that he is not heartless and selfish, as a normal ogre should be. Donkey is talkative and lively; it is obvious to the viewer that he is to be a main character throughout the rest of the film.

He wins over the audience straight away as he stands up to Shrek's unwelcoming attitude, and insists on staying with him. The way the three blind mice react to Shrek also suggests that he does not have the same sort of 'scare' quality that other ogres have. The storyline begins to take place as Shrek is victimised by his villagers, for being an ogre, then is outraged when his home is taken over as a dumping ground for unwanted fairytale characters. The obligatory Castle, Duloc, is a carelessly undisguised imitation of Disneyland.

It is completely empty, which is another dig at Disney. When approached by angry knights, Shrek's alternative personality becomes apparent again as he asks simply 'Can we not discuss this over a pint?' That realistic quote would

be humorous to the older generation, as they can relate to it. Lord Farguaad's first appearance in the film is a disillusion. Another up shot is used to give the impression that the Lord is huge and intimidating as he strides through his castle. It is only when the camera shot is moved into perspective that the viewers see Lord Farquaad's ridiculously small body. It is very unusual for a royal character to be non other than perfectly formed and well groomed.

' Shrek' has introduced the evil character, and it is not what the audience expected. The next scene shows Lord Farquaad torturing a gingerbread man by dunking him in milk. This is not meant to be scary, yet is meant to make the audience realise that the Prince is not the good character in this fairy tale, but a cruel and gutless little man. He orders Shrek to rescue the Princess for him instead of being courageous and doing it himself. Familiar television programmes and film ideas are used throughout the film to bring to life that animation has reached new heights. Popular television programmes such as Blind Date are incorporated into the story and add an edge of reality to the animation.

As well as being humorous for all age groups. A stereotypical guest show host voice is used to introduce the three different princesses that were somehow or another in distress. Shrek's fight with the guards at Duloc is like that of a WWF wrestling match, which many viewers would be familiar with. The Matrix's infamous fight scene was used when Princess Fiona was fighting the Merry Men of Sherwood Forest, and this was the animator's chance to bring a scene originally from a camera shot, into animation, which is an original idea. Not only do the writers incorporate a huge selection of well

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known fairy tales into the story, but they take well known quotes and scenes from films for an older audience.

Such as Austin Powers, when Shrek claims Donkey is, ' Going the right way for a smacked bottom. ' This makes the film even more appealing to the older viewers. The castle in which Princess Fiona is trapped inside of has been made to look like the trademark Disney Castle. A fire-breathing dragon guards the castle, and the whole situation is similar to that of Sleeping Beauty. The way that the light comes up from cracks in the stone that Shrek and Donkey walk on is also similar to the scene in Sleeping Beauty. The detail and lifelike graphics bring a more intense and gripping feel for the audience, as if it was filmed with a camera.

The unique thing about the dragon is not that it is female, but it happens to fall madly in love with Donkey, who provides the audience with humour as he tries to escape her while Shrek rescues the Princess. Shrek's first meeting with Princess Fiona is when he is thrown through the roof of her bedchamber, not the most typical of entrances. Princess Fiona is beautiful, but not as graceful as you would expect of a fairytale princess. She lies on her four poster bed, but sits up nervously to smooth her dress and get some flowers to hold. This sort of behavior indicates that Princess Fiona too is a contemporary character, who act's realistically. Shrek shakes the princess awake, and tells her to hurry up.

The audience were not expecting him to be prince charming, but can empathise with Princess Fiona, who clearly had been hoping for something more romantic. The way that the writers have made Princess Fiona far from

perfectly normal adds a nice twist to the way the film ends. She is arrogant and bossy, and her and Shrek do not appear to get on well as they begin the journey back to Duloc. The audience begin to get suspicious of something different; as Fiona demands to sleep in a cave away from Shrek and Donkey. We soon find out that the secret Fiona is hiding is that she too is an ogre from sunset to sunrise every day. Meanwhile, Shrek and Donkey sit beneath the stars, and use a line from the well-known, Lion king, in conversation.

The grand wedding cathedral is made to look vast as the camera shot does a down shot from the ceiling making the people look small in comparison.

Fiona is so adamant on marrying her Prince that it would seem Lord Farquaad's appearance does not matter to her, as long as the marriage took place before sunset. That is not the case, and her curse is revealed in front of the whole cathedral. Lord Farquaad rejects her, and it is Shrek's turn to meet his one true love. In conclusion, the film brought to light that the rules of tradition are not always to be followed. Ogre's will no longer be the inevitable 'bad-guy' and people will think twice about Princes with bad attitudes.

This parody of fairytales will always be a unique and memorable production due to its clever humour and array of deceptive camera shots and cleverly presented ideas. It is suitable for all ages, and this is what made it so phenomenally successful.