

P'tang, yang, kipperbang essay sample

[Media](#), [Television](#)



' P'tang, yang, kipperbang' is a play written for television which focuses around the life of a teenage boy, named Alan Duckworth. Set after the war, the play gives the viewer or reader a well documented insight into teenage life at this point in time. The main character, Alan is not only a keen cricket fan like most boys his age, but has developed an infatuation for an attractive girl in his school. Although at first glance Alan seems to be like any other teenager, beneath this image is a boy who is healthily in touch with his feminine side. This leads to a play which not only adopts a successful comedy routine between Alan and his friends, but in the end, turns Alan into the unlikely hero of the play.

The writer of the play, Jack Rosenthal ensures ' P'tang, yang, kipperbang' sets itself from the crowd. He achieves this by using a certain dramatic device, which can only be labelled as genius.

Rosenthal employs John Arlott, a famous sports commentator to provide play-by-play of the test cricket match, England against Australia to coincide with the events in Alan's life. It's this commentary along with Rosenthal's thought and preparation into the characters, which makes ' P'tang, yang, kipperbang' such a joy to read and even more so to watch.

The stage directions can not be ignored when reading the play, but naturally they go without acknowledgement. When watching the play, however they obtain a high degree of importance throughout the production, from Alan's jerk in pain when he receives his punishment from the headmaster to Ann's kiss on the cheek towards the end of the play, they all serve a purpose, some more than others.

It's these stage directions which highlight the fact that 'P'tang, yang, kipperbang' is in fact a play written for television and not for the stage.

For one, the majority of the stage directions required for the play to be acted out to full effect demands a physically larger area than a stage.

For example, Alan's daily 'chores' for his father, which were in fact an excuse for Alan to indulge himself in Ann's presence. The scenarios used in the play also demonstrate that the play was written for television. This is evident in that there are so many scenarios in the play, I don't know where to start. From the school grounds where Alan talks to the caretaker, Tommy about cricket and life in general, to Ann's house where as soon as Alan's love object is out of view, he U-turns to arrive home.

Upon review of the play, my favourite scene was undecided. There were so many that stuck out in my mind as memorable, such as the cross country P.E lesson, a classic example of the chemistry between Alan and his friends along with their comical antics. Alan is shocked and insulted when he discovers prostitutes refuse to kiss;

“(stops dead) They won't kiss?”

His friends reply by crudely remarking that it's a price they're willing to pay to employ a prostitute.

Another scene which I find to be one of my favourites is one of the many Tommy and Miss Land conversations, the particular one I have in mind however is that of when Tommy is enlightened by Miss Land that she had a

relationship with an American during the war. Miss Land's addition of "virtually" to the end of every sentence, along with Tommy's irony makes the scene an asset to the play;

" One! One American!...Virtually.."

" Old men and Yanks! Bloody old two-faced fogeys and randy Yanks! While me and my oppos are spilling blood and guts all over Africa and France and the sodding Rhineland!"

Both Tommy and Miss Land are lying to themselves in this scene. Miss Land's self deceit is visually obvious as her " virtually" spree suggests. Later in the play, Tommy's claims of fighting valiantly in the war turn out to be false, he mentions in spite of Miss Land that he was fighting for Queen and country whilst she meddled with old men and foreigners.

These two scenes, however entertaining, come in at a close fourth and third in my opinion.

One of the two scenes that I have decided are joint for first place is Alan's scene with the Headmaster, the comments between thrashes and the Headmaster's demeanour throughout is what makes this scene primarily so entertaining. Alan's physical response to his punishment, him avoiding contact with a seat for some time after, also adds to the value of this scene.

I think Jack Rosenthal achieves such a level of humour from a place with the opposite emotional atmosphere (being the dreaded Headmaster's office) by using this feeling of dread to his advantage. Instead of portraying the

Headmaster as a stern and cold man, he shows that not only has he the strictness to be a Headmaster, but the unique blend of a sense of humour as well. It's this combination that makes the scene such joy to read.

The other scene that makes up my personal top spot double is yet another example of the rib-tickling chemistry between Alan and his friends which explained earlier, is just one of several wild-cards Rosenthal uses to make ' P'tang, yang, kipperbang' what it is, a successful comedy play written for television. The scene in question is the brilliant pontoon game parody staged in the boys' lavatory. Alan's half participation in the game, explaining the days earlier events, whilst his friends play with a trance-like attitude is entertaining on its own. As the scene goes on, Alan grows more impatient with his unimpressed companions. The game continues and his friends, still oblivious to Alan's dilemmas and more to the game at hand, and in an ironic twist reveal they have lost patience with him.

" Sod off Quack-Quack. You're getting on my nerves! (Turns his cards over) Pontoon."

" Match null and void. Ungentlemanly play from Quack-Quack."

" I had bloody pontoon!"

As " Quack-Quack" or Alan detaches from his friends, there are no signs of Alan even being present. Pontoon seems to be the popular topic of choice.

In my opinion, ' P'tang, yang, kipperbang' offers much more than meets the eye. One of the things I picked up from the play was its employment of

comedy to put across certain points, for example, the daily after school 'pressing' sessions. This demonstrates adolescent behaviour in a humorous and naïve manner.

This is a frequent occurrence throughout the play, which proves to be a success.

The point made at the end by two workmen on Alan's street, which primarily left me in a state of confusion as well as no doubt many others came in the form of the following;

" He'll be starting shaving next."

" Then spend the rest of his life trying to stop the bleeding."

Although vague, I interpret the comments to be a forecast for later on in Alan's life where as the workmen believe, despite his current desire to grow up will lead Alan to long for his days as a schoolboy again.

This may be Jack Rosenthal's way of presenting the stereotypical old man's cliché.

" The time you spend in school are the best days of your life."