

Educating rita characters summary



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Willy Russell's play, *Educating Rita* is set in the 1980's in the North of England.

A young woman in her late twenties called Rita is very determined to get an education and sets out to find one. She seeks help from Frank, a middle-aged university lecturer who relies on drink to get through his life. During the play, we face many dramatic devices which help us establish the characters. Act 1 Scene 1 is filled with dramatic devices such as alcohol, the study door, Rita's cigarettes, the nude painting on Frank's wall and language. Alcohol plays a huge part in Frank's life and is used as a dramatic device. He takes the Open University job so he can pay for the drinks-“ Yes, I suppose I did it to pay for the drink” meaning he only took the job for that reason.

He “ pulls out a pile of books to reveal a bottle of whisky”. Books are a symbol of disguise; Frank uses this to hide the drink. He does this because he doesn't want anyone to know that he still drinks. Frank also drinks because he seems to be unhappy and even depressed. One of the other dramatic devices Russell uses is the door to Frank's office.

Frank's door is broken and Rita cannot get in. She struggles and fights to get in and eventually she gets in. Rita's struggle shows that she is determined to get an education and she will do anything to get it. When Frank tells her to “ come in, come in” she replies by saying: “ I'm comin' in aren't I? It's that stupid bleedin' handle on the door.

You wanna get it fixed! ” On the other hand, Frank isn't bothered to get the door fixed in return he says: “ Erm- yes I suppose I always mean to... ” Frank not being bothered shows that he wants to keep everything and everyone

out of his life which makes the door a metaphorical barrier to the outside world. During the film, Rita oils it for Frank and it becomes easier for Rita to get in to Frank's office. This shows that Rita is getting her education slowly and she is succeeding.

Rita is from Liverpool, is 26 year old and married. She is a ladies' hairdresser and is very entertaining and lively. Rita shows that she is nervous by offering a cigarette to Frank. We know that Frank is an unreliable and untrustworthy because although he says: " I don't smoke-I made a promise" he doesn't keep his promise, he accepts the offer. " I hate smoking' on me own. An' everyone seems to have packed up these days! They're all afraid of getting cancer'.

Rita knows the effects of smoking; this shows that she is intelligent and that you don't need to be educated to be intelligent. In Frank's office, there is a nude painting hung on the wall of his room. As Rita enters the room, she spots the picture and asks: " Is it supposed to be erotic? "- Straight away this shows that Rita is sexually confident unlike Frank who replies: " actually I haven't looked at it for about ten years"- Frank's depression and addiction to alcohol has made him sexually unfulfilled although he has a girlfriend. Language is another dramatic device that is used by Russell to show the different status between Rita and Frank.

Rita's language is informal and offensive; she uses words like- " tits" and " fuck". It shows the audience that Rita is an uneducated woman, rude and that she hasn't got appropriate manners for an interview. Whereas, Frank is very formal and uses Standard English, showing that Frank is well educated

and has manners. You will expect this type of language from Frank because he is a lecturer and he is a high status man unlike Rita.