

Analyse the opening scenes of "shrek" essay



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The story of " Shrek", the reversal of a traditional fairy tale, uses presentational devices to reverse the audience's expectations. " Shrek" has been described as " the best fairytale never told" this would indicate to the audience that they are in for a real treat. What this statement does not tell the viewer is of the unusual treatment of the fairytale genre, in its content. When you look at the trailers of " Shrek" and its video/DVD box you know that it is going to be a big film as it has an all star cast with big names such as Eddie Murphy, Mike Myers and Cameron Diaz. This gives the audience great expectations of the film.

Many of " Shrek's" factors are the reverse of your average fairytale factors. Some of them even " skit" and insult them. " Shrek" is an animated tale. After " Shrek" was such a big hit it started off a whole new era of fairytale skit films. Films followed including; Ice age and Monsters Inc, where both main characters are friendly monsters. Firstly, the traditional fairytale factors: most classic fairytales start with the line: " Once upon a time" as does " Shrek".

They usually end with the line: " And they lived happily ever after" as " Shrek" does. They usually contain dramatic rescues, magical castles, evil and a twist. Shrek" has all of these features. So what is it that makes " Shrek" different to other fairytales? The answer is " Shrek" reverses the traditional factors of a handsome prince and scary, evil ogre.

Shrek the main character in the film is a friendly ogre. The prince is short, bad tempered and evil. The princess is usually perfect. But not princess Fiona, she has an enchantment on her and at night she turns into an ugly

ogre. The film is first distinguished as " Shrek" during the introduction of " DreamWorks" at the beginning.

The " s" in " DreamWorks" changes to the colour and font of the " s" in " Shrek"; this is amusing. Usually the " DreamWorks" sign stays untouched and is usually used for more serious films. The film starts with Shrek reading a fairy tale book on the toilet. (Shrek speaks with a " friendly" Scottish accent; this shows he is a friendly character) The book is old and has no title; this shows that fairytales are dated.

He reads: " Once upon a time there was a lovely princess but she had an enchantment on her of a fearful sort, which could only be broken by loves first kiss. She was locked away in a castle guarded by a terrible fire-breathing dragon. Many brave knights had attempted to free her from this dreadful prison but none prevailed. She waited in the dragons keep in the highest room of the tallest tower, for her true love and true loves first kiss" After the short and quite quick tale, Shrek quotes: " Yer, like that's ever gonna happen. What a load of" (Toilet flushes) He then turns the page and rips it out. He uses it as toilet paper.

This shows that the film is going to rip apart fairytales and that fairytale books have no meaning to Shrek and should be used as toilet paper. Shrek does not believe in fairytales. At this point tension is built up, as the viewers would be surprised to see Shrek's green hand turning and ripping the page- an element of surprise. The opening scenes of the film are very significant to the whole of the film. The book at the beginning builds up expectations of what the princess is going to be like.

It also tells, very briefly, the outline of the film. From the very first second we see Shrek our sympathies lie with him. He may be an ogre, he is huge, green and ugly but he is no monster. He has a friendly and even kind essence about him. Even though he is presented as a disgusting ogre the audience want Shrek to win and be happy.

From the beginning he is presented as a happy creature. He often laughs and is quite sarcastic. He is not a traditional ogre. Shrek's swamp is perfectly suited for an ogre.

It is in the middle of a wood below a small mountain and Shrek's house is in an opening of flat ground. Greens and browns are used a lot during the play- they are earthly colours. The opening scenes of Shrek start with what could be portrayed as an average day for him. He uses the toilet and then showers in the mud, spits mud on floor and Mike Myers' name appears.

Shrek the title also appears as green slime in the mud. He bathes in the pond and then "farts" which kills a fish. Then Cameron Diaz's name appears in the pondweed. Shrek then brushes his teeth with a substance, which appears to be slime, looks and smiles at the mirror. It then smashes.

Eddie Murphy's name then appears behind the broken mirror. Pen ultimately Shrek searches for something to eat. He finds a slug and John Lithgow's name is written beneath it. All of these features are important for portraying the friendly ogre, Shrek, to the audience. Later that day Shrek is a "beware ogre sign" he then kisses what he believes is his masterpiece and gets his lips covered in paint. This makes the film more humorous and also helps to build on the happy friendly ogre idea.

Shrek settles down for the night. We see him reading a book and lighting the fire via burping on a match. This is the first part where we see how powerful Shrek can be. At this point the first major lighting effect is introduced.

The sun appears to shine diagonally on Shrek's home giving an impression of warmth and homeliness. The villagers are out to get Shrek, as there is a big reward for fairytale creatures. A dozen or so of them equip themselves and set out to capture Shrek, they believe it will be an easy task. Shrek sees them coming and creeps up to scare them.

As the intruders come the lighting becomes darker and the music stops.

This adds to suspense. The intruder's quote: " It is in there, lets get it, No do you know what that thing could do to you? Yer it will grind your bones for its bread. " (Shrek laughs at them from behind) Notice that the intruders do not treat the ogre politely, they refer to Shrek as " it" and " thing". Shrek has no intention of hurting the intruders; he tries to be frightening and just wants to scare them and wants them to leave.

Shrek likes his privacy. Shrek then says: " Well actually that would be a giant. Now ogres there much worse, they'll make soup from your freshly peeled skin, they'll shave your liver, squeeze the jelly from your eyes! (In an aside Shrek says " actually it is quite good on toast") I believe that this aside is very important to the fairy tale skit genre. As Shrek talks to the villagers he walks towards them, they all walk back. This shows how powerful and scary Shrek could and can be.

They are very scared of him. Next in this scene one of the villagers waves his torch at Shrek in order to tame or scare Shrek. He is unsuccessful, and Shrek

puts out his torch like a match. This is relevant as it makes Shrek look different and stronger to the other characters. Shrek then scares the life out of the villagers and roars at them.

There is a close up on Shrek's mouth. He stops screaming and then later the villagers stop. Pen ultimately Shrek reminds the characters when it is there queue to run away. Again this is funny and builds on sarcastic ogre theme.

In this scene Shrek finally picks up a sign, which one of the villagers had dropped. It reads: " Fairytale creatures wanted, rewards" Shrek throws the sign on the floor. This shows that Shrek is not interested in fairytales and does not think a lot of them. The leaflet then takes the story into the next scene.

This is a clever device used by the makers. In the next scene we see the fairytale characters being brought and sold. Here many of the audience's favourite fairytale characters are made fun of and exploited. But everyone still finds this scene amusing.

We see Donkey first. He is scared and begs his owner not to sell him. This is important as our first impression of donkey reflects his role in the play. In this scene donkey refuses to talk and as a result gets away with the sale. In a squabble some fairy dust is thrown over him and he starts to fly.

Everything donkey says goes wrong, as he tells everyone he is flying and then come back down to ground level. He runs away from the guards and bangs into Shrek, he hides behind him. Shrek rescues donkey. Donkey will not leave Shrek alone.

In frustration Shrek tries to scare/ intimidate donkey. He is unsuccessful. As a result of this donkey cracks a joke/ ridicules his breath. Everyone finds this funny: " Really scary, your breath will get the job done because you definitely need some tic-tacs or something because your breath stinks"

Donkey likes to talk, he often sings. The makes of Shrek have devised donkey very well and have thought a lot about which actor would best suite his character, (Eddie Murphy).

Donkey is consistent and continues to question Shrek. Lord Farquaad is introduced in a dark, castle-like tower. This gives an eerie feeling about him. He is torturing a gingerbread man; this tells us that he is evil.

Everyone likes gingerbread men. There are many jokes in the play here are some quotes, which I thought, were very funny, they reflect the friendly ogre theme and build on donkeys funny but slightly irritating character, they are all used in a sarcastic way: " Wow only a true friend would be that honest"- Donkey to Shrek " Its amazing what you have done with such a modest budget"- Donkey to Shrek That's another thing we have in common"- Donkey to Shrek " Of course, (really) NO" Shrek to Donkey It is clear that when Shrek first meets donkey he does not like him. But when donkey tells Shrek that he likes him he is touched. We can tell that Shrek is touched as his voice changes tone, he stops shouting and his ears move back. This statement by Donkey surprises him.

The script to " Shrek" has been cleverly thought up of. It is sarcastic but gets the message across. It is very effective and even includes jokes. I believe that donkeys quote to Shrek reflects the whole morale of the play: " Well you

know what I like about you Shrek? You have got that kind of I don't care what anyone thinks, thing.

I like that, I respect that... " The morale of the play is not to stereotype and to see people/ things for what they are. This statement best reflects this. The music that is played during the play is quite modern and up to date.

It is not like usual fairytale music, which is old and dated. The music is slow, relaxing and quiet to begin with, (Whilst Shrek reads book). But When Shrek is introduced it is very lively and modern. It is loud and gets peoples attention. It helps portray Shrek's image.

Camera angles are used throughout the play to emphasise on things. During the opening scenes there are four main areas where this is used: When Shrek scares the villagers away there is a close up shot of his mouth this gives the impression that he is going to eat them. Darkness creates further unease. When the soldiers sent from lord Farquaad arrive telling Shrek that he needs to move out there is a low angle shot.

This makes Shrek appear threatening as he looks down, towering over these characters, they run away. Tension is built up when lord Farquaad is introduced- his guard is wearing a balaclava and the first shot is of his hands (not his face) - is putting on a pair of gloves as if he means business. Lord Farquaad is made to look tall by the use of camera angles until the last shot where we see how short he is. When lord Farquaad's soldiers arrive to get donkey, a camera shot makes Shrek look very big and the soldiers very small. Lord Farquaad's elevated position is emphasised when the camera moves from ground level upwards to reveal his tower.

High angles are used to make Shrek and donkey seem more vulnerable. Low angle shots are used effectively to show lord Farquaad and his soldiers looking up at Shrek. Mid angle shots are used when Shrek and donkey are relaxing together. Overall I think that the producers of " Shrek" have been successful in preparing the audience for what follows they have also been successful in building up the expectations of the viewer. Shrek by the end of the play is portrayed as having the heart of a handsome prince, gentle, affectionate and soft. All in all Shrek is more like the prince the " good guy" if you will.

The film would appeal to the audience. A donkey and a cuddly green monster, with lots of colours throughout would appeal to children. It would seem humorous to them even though they don't see the twists. The film would also appeal to the elderly as they would understand and recognise the traditional fairytale skit genre and also the toilet humour. The film is designed for a range of audiences.

The film has a soft ending and the producers of the film have made the morale very clear; do not stereotype, see people/ thing for what they are. Again I believe that the statement by donkey to Shrek goes right to the heart of the play: " You have got that kind of I don't care what anyone thinks, thing. I like that, I respect that..

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