

# How does Willy Russell portray the change in Rita?

Literature



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'Educating Rita' A play set in the 1980s we meet Rita a 26-year-old Hairdresser from Liverpool. Rita has a great desire to learn she feels she wants to know herself, as she has no idea who she is, she is currently working as a hairdresser but she knows she wants more but hides this desire with the buying of materialistic items. Rita's husband Denny very much wants a baby as at the age they are the social expectation is to have a had a baby and be married, but Rita wants to know herself first so hides her birth control pills and takes them secretly.

Rita " wants a better way to live her life" this to her husband Denny means a new house or an open plan sitting room as you see him constructing in the play. However, a better way to live her life to Rita means an education a new 'High Brow' lifestyle not just a new house in Formby, as her husband suggests. Rita decides to go to a once a week tutorial at an open university in English literature she tries to enter the office of her tutor but the door is stuck and is very hard to open this symbolises how hard it is to get into university for a working class woman like Rita, but Rita keeps trying symbolising her determination to learn.

When Rita enters the office she meets Frank is an alcoholic that hates his job and students " You're a crazy mad piss artist that wants to thorough his students through the window" This says that Frank is an alcoholic and does not like his job. " There's no suppose about it look at those tits! "... " Is it supposed to be erotic? " Her Rita states that its is Erotic material " the pornography of its day" rather open her mind to other ideas she states that this is erotic frank is an objective person someone that will back up his points with evidence and has his mind open to any other ideas, Its very beautiful"

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This says that Frank does not see a clearly erotic painting as erotic but feels there must be a hidden beauty behind this.

In Frank's office there is a large window that has not been opened for around ten years, the window symbolises escape for both Rita and Frank. The Scotch also symbolises escape for Frank. There are many ways that suggest a difference in Frank and Rita's lifestyle. Firstly, Frank asks Rita "do you know Yeats" Rita immediately thinks he means "the wine lodge".

This shows the difference in cultures how Frank's lifestyle includes reading and writing poetry Rita's lifestyle includes drinking and going to wine lodges. At this point in the play Rita makes her first attempts at learning and is easing her way into the Open University. Rita oils the stuck door handle this symbolises that she is easing the way for a working class woman getting into university this symbolises her determination to learn and beat stereotypes.

Rita walking into the office looks out the window and says "I love that lawn down there, when it's summer do they sit on it?" Rita is talking about the university students the "proper students" Rita has had a desire to learn ever since she was a child but the social expectation was to not or they "might have to write an essay on it" So she would just ignore it. "There was always something in my head tapping away telling me I might have got it all wrong. But I'd just play another record or buy another dress and stop worrying" The tapping noise in Rita's head is a metaphor and symbolises her hidden desire to learn.

She also says she hasn't bought another dress in 12 months this says that she has resisted the tapping noise and brought her desire to reality by <https://assignbuster.com/how-does-willy-russell-portray-the-change-in-rita/>

coming to the Open University. Rita as a child always wanted to go to a private school but was expected to grow up as factory fodder this is autobiographical of Willy Russell's childhood. This play has many autobiographical scenes it really reflects Willy Russell's life through Rita. Rita has a go at writing her first academic essay; she shows a lot of frustration as she writes her essays at work because her husband Denny objects to her educating herself.

Rita feels "out of step" as her husband is always pressuring her to have a baby. Rita starts to break free by attending a summer school in London at first she does not want to go she at this point has left Denny and lost all contact with her working class side of 'Susan'. Rita Shows a lot of courage and makes a large attempt at learning and has become less dependent on Frank before 'Frank fed Rita' now Frank has more of a dependency on Rita and is afraid that Rita will leave him. Rita feels younger "I know I can be young like them down there"

Rita is only 26 but has been living with Denny likes she's 40 has settled down at not had much freedom. Rita at summer school almost changes entirely she stops covering up the lack of knowledge with humour and makes an attempt to get that knowledge. Rita changes her personality on the inside and outside she gets a new wardrobe, as she knows who she is, has reformed in a way.

Rita has finally found herself through English literature Frank does not like this change "I think I'll change my name, from now on I insist on being called Mary Shelley do you understand that allusion Rita? This allusion that Frank is

Mary Shelley gives you the idea that Frank feels he has created a monster like Mary Shelley's novel 'Frankenstein'. Frank feels he has drifted away from the working class Rita he knew. "I don't want to talk irrelevant rubbish anymore." Irrelevant rubbish is something that was the only thing Rita had to talk about. Rita knows she now has choices something she has never experienced. "I might go to France. I might go to my mother's. I might even have a baby." This says that Rita has found herself and has become an educated objective person.