

How philip ridley tries
to make sparkleshark
appeal to a modern
teenage audience



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Sparkleshark is a play about teenagers for teenagers. The play is based on nine characters, all around fourteen to sixteen years of age, who live in the East-End of London. They come together on a tower block roof and act out a story, which brings them together although they are very different characters.

The play might appeal to teenagers because it is about them and their interests. Teenagers might not relate to the story that is acted out because it is about dragons and magical things, but the play could appeal because the characters become friends and seem to forget their differences. The SettingThe play is set in the East-End of London on the roof of a tower block. This is an ideal place for teenagers because it is away from adults; it is not very accessible to older or younger people. The fact that the play is set in London may be why the teenagers meet on the roof, there probably aren't many other places to go such as playing fields or open spaces.

There is rubbish on the roof, an old armchair, trolleys, boxes and other discarded furniture, this would appeal to teenagers, as somewhere they did not have to keep clean and tidy. The play is set in mid September at about 4.30 pm and the weather is sunny, the characters are outside making the most of the late summer evening. The charactersThere are nine characters in the play, five main characters and four secondary characters: -Jake is fourteen and slightly built. He is wearing a well worn but neat uniform. His hair is neatly cut.

He is wearing glasses that are held together on the bridge with tape. Jake is very quiet, lacks confidence around other teenagers and likes to keep

himself to himself. We know this about Jake from the quotations: - " Don't this is personal" and Polly says about Jake " All you do is hide between those two big dustbins" At the end of the play Jake is more confident about himself. Russell had wanted to beat Jake up, but they become friends, which also boosts Jake's confidence. Polly is also fourteen. She is wearing school uniform, skirt and blouse.

Polly started at the school at the beginning of the school year. Natasha has taken Polly in hand so she will not become a geek like Jake. We know this about Polly from the quotations: - " Started last week" and Natasha says about Polly " Who saved you from total cred oblivion?" At the end of the play Polly becomes great friends with everybody, especially Jake. Natasha is fifteen and although she goes to the same school as the others her uniform looks different. She wears a bright pink shirt, showing cleavage, heavy make up covering her face and is carrying a gold sequined handbag.

Natasha, from this description seems a bit of a tart and her comments give this away. We know this about Natasha from the quotations: - No girl wears sensible shoes" and " Beauty knows no pain" At the end of the play Natasha has changed a bit, she stops calling Jake a geek. The truth comes out about her and Shane how he was " cool" but they were just not suited. Carol is fourteen and is a copy cat, she copies everything Natasha does and wears; but on Carol nothing quite fits or looks right, she can't pull it off because she is awkward and less confident. Carol wears a lemon coloured shirt, stiletto shoes and is carrying a bag identical to Natasha's.

We know this about Carol from the quotations: - “ Everything I do you copy. You bloody wannabe” At the end of the play Carol is a bit more aware of things and realises she and Russell can be friends. Russell is fifteen; he is good looking and knows it. He is wearing the same school uniform as Jake but his has been reduced to an unbuttoned shirt, trousers and trainers. He is over-confident and bosses round Buzz and Speed.

We know this about Russell from the quotations: - “ Is there any stopping this sex-machine magnet?” and “ Do not adjust your sets girls. You are witnessing perfection” At the end of the play Russell is still full of himself but is no longer a bully. He becomes friends with Jake and wants him to tell another story. The four secondary characters Buzz and Speed are both fourteen, they are wearing the same reduced uniform as Russell but they do not have the body and good looks of Russell. They are tag alongers with Russell like Carol is with Natasha.

Buzz and Speed both try to get the other into trouble with Russell. We know this about Buzz and Speed from the quotations: - “ He kept pushing me Russ” and “ I’m carrying your bag Russ” At the end of the play we are not very aware of Buzz and Speed changing much, they still follow Russell around. Shane is sixteen, has left the school and is the leader of the teenagers, top dog! He is wearing black leather trousers, boots and a red silk shirt. Shane is the dark horse of the group and doesn’t say much. At the end of the play Shane has made up with Natasha and become friendlier towards the others. Finn is Polly’s older brother, he is fifteen and huge everyone is afraid of him because of his size.

Polly calls him her baby brother and says he is gentle. " He's very gentle! Cries easily, if you must know." At the end of the play Finn says the one intelligible word he speaks " Sparkleshark." The way the characters speak All the characters speak in different ways. Jake is polite and quietly spoken whereas Russell is loud and rude.

The girls swear at each other and show off. Philip Ridley uses realistic language i. e. the swearing " Why are you such a bloody bitch all the time". The language becomes funny sometimes; especially when Russell is talking he is so full of his own importance.

" The Winner! Russell the Love Muscle adds Gold Medal for Tower Block Climbing to his long list of trophies." Out of the way, losers-time to greet the fans." This could appeal to teenagers because it is language that they use from day to day and could relate to them. Jake is a polite speaker possibly because he is creative. He is a bit brighter (more intelligent) than the rest of the characters, which could be why he is bullied." You see the tower blocks? Over there! I imagine they're mountains!" Polly also speaks politely and is not afraid to say what she means.

" You should wear sensible shoes." Natasha isn't like Polly or Jake she is a more typical London girl and less likely to conform i. e. the adapted uniform. Carol copies Natasha, not just in her appearance but in her language as well. " You didn't bloody invent stilettos.

" When Russell speaks he speaks in the third person" He blows one a kiss! She faints-" this shows how he thinks he is important, like Royalty! With Buzz and Speed you do not really know what they are truly like because they are <https://assignbuster.com/how-philip-ridley-tries-to-make-sparkleshark-appeal-to-a-modern-teenage-audience/>

always trying to copy Russell. " Kick him Russ" " Punch him Russ" Shane only speaks a little, but what he does say implies he is a bit dim. Finn seems to have a very small vocabulary, Polly is the only character who is not afraid of him, and she explains everything to Finn and even speaks for him. The StorylineThe play is about nine teenagers who act out a story on a rooftop in London. Jake starts the play; he is trying to think of a title to the story he is writing. Polly enters; she is trying to fix the satellite dish so her brother Finn can watch the television.

Jake and Polly start talking about the story Jake has written: Natasha enters after being directed by Finn (in sign language). Natasha does not like Jake and tells Polly he is a geek and says she should not be associating with him. The three talk together and get to know each other a bit better. Carol the " shadow" of Natasha enters and also starts calling Jake a geek.

Natasha and Carol start arguing and call Russell up on to the roof to discuss a kiss. Russell is the school bully and has threatened to beat Jake up. Russell comes up on the roof, but he is not alone, he is followed by Buzz, Speed and Shane. The girls try to hide Jake, but he is seen and Russell and the other boys go for him. The girls all stick up for Jake and tell Russell to leave him alone as he was telling them a story. Polly starts the story off, with nods of approval from Jake.

The story is about a Princess who lives in a castle with her father the King. The castle was under attack, but as a party was being held for the Princess the King was not ready for the attack. Russell was getting bored at this point in the story and started threatening Jake again, so the girls try to stop them

by spicing up the story and making it more blood thirsty; having the Queen murdered and eaten by a pig, to get Russell's attention. It works and so Jake then carries on with the story. All fun was banned from the castle to prevent the King being off his guard again.

One night the Princess (Polly) finds a dead bird, which she buries, but the bird had eaten some seeds that started growing once the bird had been buried; this made the King mad and so he sent the Princess away. The Princess collected up the seeds and left the castle. She went away to a wasteland where she planted the seeds and millions of flowers grew. The wasteland turned into a great forest with lakes and dolphins. One day a Prince (Russell) arrives with his two horses (Speed and Buzz), he sees the Princess and is supposed to find her beautiful and she sets a challenge for him to find something more beautiful than the flowers and then she would leave the forest and live with him in the castle. The Prince finds a beautifully decorated shoe but it's not good enough, then he finds a great crown but it's still not what she is after.

So the Prince goes to the witch (Natasha) the witch gives him a magical potion. The Prince goes and sprays it on to the Princess. It's nice but not good enough. The witch's frog (Carol) tells the Prince to look for a dragons egg. On the Prince's search he climbs up mountains looking for it. The frog tells him to imagine it and then the Prince finds it.

He then takes it to show the Princess but the witch has cursed it because the frog had helped him. Then the Princess took the egg and tried to give it back to the dragon but the dragon (Finn) held her hostage. The Princesses father

came back and said how sorry he was for sending her away so all of them went to fight the dragon to win the Princess back, but the Princess stopped them because the dragon is friendly he only took me because I killed its egg. They all became friends and the Princess and the Prince lived together with the King. All the characters became friends. Russell wants Jake to tell another story but he has to go home for his tea.

They all decide they should become a story telling group and they call themselves Sparkleshark the name of the dragon in the story. Teenagers could find this play enjoyable because its takes them back to there childhood e. g. Dragons, Kings and Queens the land of make-believe.

They could be interested in the characters because they are teenagers like themselves even if they don't act like it. The issues raised There are a few issues raised in the play such as bullying, pecking order and attitudes to the opposite sex. Russell, Speed and Buzz are the bullies, they pick on Jake because he is different from them. They verbally taunt him as well as physically hurt him. Teenagers can relate to this as it goes on a lot and the fact that the bullies do not get their own way because they are manipulated by the girls is one up for non-bullies. The play shows the usual pecking order within groups of teenagers i.

e. the oldest boy Shane is thought of as the leader and the good looking boy is looked up to by the two less attractive boys and the bright but geeky boy Jake is laughed at. The way the girls, Natasha and Carol try to show off to the boys in their appearance and the way they act is also typical of some teenage girls. Other ideas The title of this coursework " Explain how Philip

Ridley tries to make " Sparkleshark" appeal to a modern teenage audience" is difficult to answer because although I can see that he has tried to relate to modern teenagers and their issues I feel he has not been very successful. I would have found it easier to say why his attempts are unsuccessful. The storyline is far too babyish; although Philip Ridley has made the characters in the story acted out similar to the teenagers acting out the roles I feel the bully's would not be so easily swayed and the girls would not so eagerly back up Jake.

They would not so readily loose their street cred. It is a nice idea that teenagers with such obvious differences could all become friends through role-play, but I find it very unbelievable. I didn't think much of the play not long enough to get your teeth into and not very good storyline.