

A cream cracker under the settee

Literature



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The production is introduced to us at the start with a slow, lonely atmosphere. This is portrayed through the soft music, and the actual layout of the scene. My aim of this coursework is to analyse the production "A cream cracker under the settee" and show how its actions help support the character's words and situation. The production is based on an old woman named Doris, on the verge of being moved to a nursing home against her own will. She is portrayed to us as a bitter, stubborn old woman who feels her space is being invaded by her carer Zulema.

The true context of who she really is, is shown later on in the production, and it is very different from the original view that we are given. The way she truly is, is shown through her past. The first scene is a shot of a room full of old-fashioned furniture and an old-fashioned layout. The camera is in a diagonal shot of the room showing two arm chairs with the crochet rugs draped over the back of them. Behind the far armchair in the background there is a large window with net curtains, this is the only source of light in the room at the beginning of the scene.

On the right hand side there is a small fireplace, with ornaments on the mantelpiece. You can also see a small sideboard with objects placed on it and a fallen buffet on the floor, with a smashed photo by the side. There are also other objects in the surroundings. The buffet and smashed photo puts forward to the audience that there has been some sort of accident, this grabs the audience's attention and generally makes them want to continue to watch more. The scene is opened with a soft gentle piece of music played by a single French horn; this suggests the monologue has a calm atmosphere.

Doris is sitting in the far armchair rubbing her leg and looking at the floor. The music fades as the camera cuts to a close up of Doris's face and shoulders as she begins to speak, this is so we are focussing on Doris. Doris is looking directly at the camera as if she is actually talking to us. This maybe trying to show that she is a lonely person, and perhaps has no one else to talk to. Her speech is slow. The opening of her speech is based on Doris introducing a second character to the monologue, trying to set the scene and produce a background for the production to be based on.

She talks of how she shouldn't of tried to dust, if she hadn't to try to dust the buffet would never have fallen and she wouldn't have hurt her leg. The character she introduces is Zulema. When she talks of Zulema, she tends to mimic her and talks in a patronising, sarcastic voice, as if Doris was trying to tell us that she feels Zulema treats in a patronising way. As Doris continues to talk about Zulema her tone of voice changes to somewhat more of an angry manner. This creates tension in the scene and the tension is then increased even more by the camera slowly zooming into a close up of Doris's face, as she gets more and more frustrated.

She feels frustrated and angry towards Zulema, as she doesn't like to be told what to do and she feels Zulema is invading her space. Doris is being portrayed in this scene as a stubborn and ungrateful old woman because she is talking in this manner about her home help. This part of the monologue makes you feel very sympathetic towards Doris. As she talks about the Ewbank, she is once again mimicking Zulema, but as she gets more into this dialogue her speech begins to get strained and she begins to stutter.

Her voice tone shows us that she is easily upset and gets tired out very quickly. She then goes on to introduce a third character. This character is very important as it shows her past and eventually portrays what Doris is really like. At this point the camera changes to a more open diagonal shot of the room, which includes the fallen buffet and a smashed photo frame containing a wedding picture of Doris and her deceased husband, Wilfred (the third character). The fallen buffet and smashed photo frame is in the exact position they were when Doris fell.

I think this is trying to show, the audience that Doris was incapable of cleaning up the mess and putting the objects back into their original positions. This dialogue is once again trying to set a scene, it is telling us how Doris ended up hurting her leg and she feels she will be in trouble for it. The camera then goes back onto a close up shot of Doris; she says, " You fell such a fool" at this point she is rubbing her head in what looks like embarrassment. She begins to tell us how she knows what Zulema will say. " Well, Doris, I did tell you" She is talking in a patronising mimicking way again and she also has a slight smirk on her face.

Her facial expression then changes quickly as she touches her leg and says it's a bit numb. She talks of how the fall has shaken her up and she needs to come around, " Shakes you up, a fall" at this point Doris closes her eyes and takes a deep breath and pauses as if she was shaken up and needed to come around. As she comes round she acts as though she has to do to something important. At this point she says, " Shan't let on I was dusting" the camera changes to a diagonal shot of the room showing Doris shoving the duster down the side of the chair this is a real effort for Doris.

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This reveals a childish side to Doris, trying to conceal something that she shouldn't have done. She looks down at the picture of Wilfred on the floor the Camera zooms out to a diagonal shot of just the photo frame. This where Doris's past begins to demonstrate itself. The affect of seeing the smashed photo on the floor is that it makes the viewer realise that the photo still being in the same position as it was after she fell, means that she obviously isn't capable of picking it up and putting it back, so she obviously isn't capable of looking after herself.

The camera goes back to a close up of Doris's face, She says, " Cracked the photo" in a soft upset way, then goes on to say in a stronger more louder tone " We're cracked, Wilfred" as if she was trying to be funny. This illustrates to the audience that Doris isn't always grumpy and stubborn, and that she likes to have a joke and a laugh like everyone else. The way she laughs makes the viewer wonder if she is just trying to make herself laugh even though she doesn't actually feel like it. The camera then goes back to a shot of just Doris's shoulders and face, as she talks about the gate banging.

This is where his character starts to be introduced properly. Doris also mentions Zulema again; yet again she is criticizing her and blaming her for the gate banging. You can tell from Doris's voice that Zulema easily angers her, and as a result of this Doris takes a dramatic pause at this point where she closes her eyes. This represents and shows how she is so angry that she has to take a minute and take a deep breath to calm herself down. After Doris recovers she carries on talking about the gate and Wilfred. During this dialogue she seems to be moaning a lot.

She talks of how Wilfred used to say he'd fix things and never got round to it, and how he'd say, " When I get a minute Doris". She then tries to add subtle humour to the text by saying with a slight laugh and smile, " Well, he's got a minute now, bless him. " She looks at the picture as she is saying this, with a smile; this is trying to show that she loved Wilfred and that she misses him and the time they spent together. She then pauses again and the camera goes to a diagonal shot of Doris, as she rubs her leg and says, " Feels funny this leg.

Not there. " She says this with a slight worried expression on her face, as if she'd not liked to admit it but she knows she's done something bad to her leg. She pauses. The camera then zooms in from the diagonal shot but not a real close up, close enough to focus on Doris but enough to fit a glimpse of the window in. She looks out of the window and once again has something to complain about. As she talks about the leaves in her garden, she ups the tone and speed of her voice as she gets more into the dialogue.

As she gets frustrated she becomes breathless and her speech somewhat more intense, this is showing her anger but how, because of her age she is easily tired and can't do anything too strenuous with her voice. She then quickly changes the matter back to her leg. This is done very cleverly with her speech, " I ought to put a note on the gate. 'Not my leaves. ' Not my leg either, the way it feels. Gone to sleep. " The way Doris keeps bringing the subject of her leg back up shows she is worried about it.

The camera is on a diagonal shot of Doris as she talks of her leg, this is to show Doris rubbing her leg and to show her worried and puzzled expressions

on her face. Doris then pauses as she rubs and grabs at her leg. Doris once again begins to talk of Wilfred, and how it was his idea to get the bush and that she didn't want it. As she talks about Wilfred she looks up as if she was picturing what she was saying. When she is saying what Wilfred used to say to her, she looks at the camera with a smile, " This labour-saving variety is much favoured by retired people.

As she says this she tilts her head to the side and slightly shakes it to suggest that when Wilfred spoke to her this is what he did. To us the viewer this suggests that he had to always been right, this is shown by the head tilt, because the action of tilting the head often means upset or feeling sympathy or feeling sorry for someone. In this case it's suggesting that Doris feels sorry for herself. The camera is slowly zooming in on Doris as she talks more and more about Wilfred. Whenever she talks of Wilfred she always has a smile on his face, this shows is that she was happy when Wilfred was alive.

This makes the viewer think that now Wilfred has gone Doris feels lonely on her own. Doris then decides to move, and see if she can put the kettle on. During this final dialogue of this scene the same music from the beginning is played in the background as she speaks, " I'll move in a minute. See if I can't put the kettle on. Come on leg. Wake up. " The audience see Doris trying her hardest to lift her self off the chair as she is speaking. The music in this scene is very lonesome and adds feeling to the scene, mainly the feeling of sympathy towards Doris. The camera is on a diagonal shot of Doris during this speech.

This is because the audience need to see all the actions of Doris. The scene then goes to a black out. The black is very affective at this point as it is a key time in the play and the lights fading make the viewer want to keep watching to see if Doris made it to the kitchen. With the music still playing the lights come up in the same room and the viewer sees Doris sitting against a side board looking breathless and struggling to move, there's a tiled fireplace to the left hand side of the shot and you can also see the fallen buffet and smashed photo frame and part of the large window in the background.

The only light is the light from the window reflecting on the tiled fireplace. The camera is positioned this way because we need to see that Doris has tried to move (and how far she has moved), and where she is now positioned. When Doris begins to speak there is still the French horn playing on one constant note. This music is played on a low and depressing note this maybe trying to suggest that this is how Doris is feeling. Doris has her head slightly tilted to the side and resting on the sideboard when she lifts it up in disbelief and starts speaking.

She is speaking in disbelief because she noticed a cream cracker under the settee. " Fancy, there's a cream cracker under the settee. How long has that been there? I can't think when I last had cream crackers. She's not half done this place, Zulema. " She says this in a tone of disbelief, her eyes are wide at this point and her mouth as she speaks is also wider. Doris is speaking in disbelief as she is a very clean person and likes her house to be clean. The camera goes in to a semi-close up of Doris. Finding the cream cracker angers

Doris and you can tell that she is angry by not only what she is saying but also how she is saying it.

Her voice level is raised and she begins to shout. Doris is shouting a conversation she believes she will have with Zulema. Doris tends to make up conversations and re-enact conversations that she has had, this is showing that she is lonely and has no one really to talk to. As she is shouting this conversation her voice tone sounds angry and upset as though she was close to tears she also sounds breathless.

The conversation is about her on going will not to go to Stafford House (nursing home), and how finding the cream cracker can be used to her advantage as black mail towards Zulema. I'm going to save this cream cracker and show it to her next time she starts going on about Stafford House. I'll say, 'Don't you Stafford House me, lady. This cream cracker was under the settee. I've only got to send this cream cracker to the director of social services and you'll be on the carpet. Same as the cream cracker. I'll be in Stafford House, Zulema but you'll be in the unemployment exchange. "

This shows how Doris can be conniving and scheming, a different side to her character. The camera goes to a more diagonal shot showing Doris and more of the window in the background.

Doris looks towards the window as she plans of making her way to it to bang on it and alert someone to help her. But she then realises she doesn't know any body round her neighbourhood any more. She then digresses into remembering who used to live there, as she does this she looks up and smiles as though she was trying to think back, and her age begins to show

more because of the types of phrases she uses, " Mr and Mrs Marsden and Yvonne, the funny daughter. " By funny, the audience would portray this as Yvonne maybe having Downs syndrome or another illness like that.

Nowadays people don't tend to say that, as it can be considered as inconsiderate and rude, whereas back then when Doris was younger, people were never as aware of these things as we are nowadays. Doris then goes on to say, " Then she went and folks started to come and go. You lose track. I don't think they're married half of them. You see all sorts. " This is a typical example of her age because as you get older your memory starts to go, and she can't remember who lives opposite her and also she says in a rather disgusted manner that half of them aren't married.

The camera changes to a shot of all of Doris as she picks up the photo frame and says, " Now, Wilfred" It's as though Doris actually believes that Wilfred is still with her in that picture and that she believes that he can hear what she is saying. She then goes on to say that she can nip her leg and nothing. The camera shows her doing this and Doris's facial expression is that of worry. She then pauses. Doris then starts to look up again with a happy smirk on her face as she starts to remember things about Wilfred again.

She talks of all Wilfred's inventions, that never really got past the thinking stage. She talks about them in a joking way, and also once again includes in her dialogue what 'Wilfred' used to say. She says how Wilfred wanted a dog, but she didn't because she didn't want all the little hairs everywhere. She eventually agreed though, but she goes on to say that it never happened just like all Wilfred's ideas, " Never materialised. " The camera suddenly zooms

out to a shot of Doris, the fireplace and part of the window, as she hears someone enter the garden.

She begins to shout " Hello. Somebody coming. Salvation. " She tries to lift her self up a bit so maybe they would see her and help her, but it's too hard. She Begins to wave as she realises it's a young lad. Suddenly she stops waving, the camera zooms in then back out and she looks away from the window then looks back in disbelief as she realises the young lad is using her garden as a toilet. She says in a disbelief manner, " The cheeky monkey. He's spending a penny. " She starts to shout in a strained voice " Hey. Hey. Get out. Clear off. You little demon.

Doris is so shocked by this act that she looks about in astonishment. She then starts to slowly lift her head, and the music from before starts up again in the background, she looks out the window as she realises what she has done, she tries to make her self feel better by saying that she wouldn't have known what to do. Doris then decides to see if she can get to the front door and open it and wait till someone walks past.

A full camera shot of Doris shows her struggling to lift her self up so she can move to the front door, she then says, " This must be what they give them frame things for. With the music still playing the lights fade as Doris is still helplessly struggling to move her self. The music in this scene portrays a dramatic theme to the viewer, it also seems to follow the actions that Doris is making e. g. Struggling. Blackout. The blackout at this point is yet again happening on a high point in the monologue, trying to capture the audiences

attention. With the music still playing the lights fade back in to a dark hallway at the bottom of some stairs.

The camera is on a diagonal shot of the room with a front door straight ahead, the door is very large and the catch is very high up on the door, with a window to the right of the shot with a slight light seeping through. The audience can see the bottom part of the stairs to the left, and a door way to the right. Doris slumped up against the door, with the letterbox above her head looking very tired and worn out. The music begins to fade as Doris begins to speak; the light from the window is on one side of her face.

Doris begins to bring more of her past into the monologue; she talks about a pram that used to be in the hallway. The camera slowly zooms in as she talks about the pram and Wilfred. She says, " You couldn't get past it. Proper prams then, springs and hoods. Big wheels. More like cars than prams. Not theses fold-up jobs. You were proud of your pram. " This shows the audience her age, because of the way she talks about the prams that are around nowadays. She then begins to talk with her eyes closed as she remembers; she has a smile on her face. She pauses with a slight smile on her face, looking at the floor.