

'chicken run' essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The film 'Chicken Run' is a great example of a film working on two levels. Elaborating on that, many of the references to do with the 'Great Escape' are much to the taste of an older generation. Whereas it still links in and fits in with the storyline perfectly well, and gives it some depth. The young audience find the characters individually funny and entertaining, with their expressive faces and individual voices and personalities. 'Chicken Run' is created and directed by Nick Park and Peter Lord with Aardman Productions and DreamWorks.

There are two main characters in this film, Ginger and Mrs Tweedy. Ginger representing good, and Mrs Tweedy representing evil. The film is based on the escape of a group of chickens, from the property of Mrs Tweedy, who intends on turning them all into pies 'when they're fat enough'. Ginger is the leader and this is portrayed throughout the film using many presentational techniques and devices. The filmmakers have created Ginger as a good character throughout, and Mrs Tweedy as an evil character throughout.

As soon as Ginger is seen on the screen, adventure music is played to portray her as a hero. Ginger is a bright orange colour, showing she is not dull; she is also a lot slimmer than the other chickens, showing she is more fit, more boyish than the others. The first time the audience see her, she is shown in great detail, the contrast of her bright self, to the dull surroundings show that she has that extra something, that she is going to be someone special in this film.

Mrs Tweedy however is always shown in a dull light, with dark colours and tones, she has a low inexpressive voice and a severe hairstyle, showing that

she is a hard, phlegmatic woman. When the audience first lay eyes on Mrs Tweedy there is already tension built up from the dogs chasing Ginger, the music stops and the audience expect something bad. Instead, a low angle shot, which shows that the woman the audience is about to see is superior, but she is also wearing pink fluffy slippers, this reminds the audience that the film is a comedy.

The camera pans up, the light is shining behind Mrs Tweedy which makes her look very dark and leaves her face in shadow which symbolises evil. A close up is done on her face and her expression is very hard and harsh, making her seem to be cruel. Ginger is made to be a lovable character even though she is so strong and individual she is not the stereotypical woman, she is a hero, she is brainy and clever and intelligent. This is shown by the way she takes control, she comforts the others, always helps the others.

When the chickens do something wrong, she's in there like a shot helping them out telling them the right way to do it. Despite being a hero, many long camera shots are filmed of Ginger, just to show how small she really is, however, she is shown as a fast moving shadow which still creates the image of her being an adventurous hero. Close up camera shots on her face, with a determined expression show how enthusiastic and how needy she is to get out of the continuous cycle of being fattened up and turned into pies.

She's very organised and she is such a great leader, the references to the 'Great Escape' really show her in her prime. Often in the film, you can see Ginger taking rolls of paper, spreading them out onto the table and there, all her plans are written and sorted out. You wouldn't expect that from a

chicken, even on a non-realistic film, but this is Ginger, the non-stereotypical female hero. Through out the film, tension is built up around Ginger, it starts off with the dogs in the very first scene; it is a dark night and Mr Tweedy has set his dogs on her.

Heavy dog panting can be heard and close ups of Ginger are shown of her behind the barbed wire and the padlock on the fence to show she is trapped, building up that fear and tension, the need to escape. Ginger although being non-stereotypical does have her feminine side, on more than one occasion; she sits down and cries to herself. Rocky is seen to affect her emotionally; her emotions go through the roof with him. He makes her angry at points with his silly ideas and stupid expressions. When he unexpectedly leaves however, Ginger was brought to her knees and maybe this is what made her realise her feelings for him.

But she still would not let anyone know. She's very insightful; she's trying to help everyone. She can escape at any time but she wants to help everyone, she's very honest. When Rocky comes along, Ginger shows another side of her character, this time it is romantic. Mid-shots of her and Rocky are often shown, and at night alone, with the stars as the background (symbolising love), you see their hands touch, they both jump and pretend it didn't happen. Music and violins play, leading the audience to begin to feel that Ginger has fallen in love as this whole romantic atmosphere has been built up.

When Rocky unexpectedly runs away, and Ginger is left on her own to plan the escape, she is shown as in the depth of despair, she is standing alone in

the middle of the yard at night, all of a sudden the thunder and lightning start and a high shot is taken of her on her own. This despair in the end just motivates her more. Mrs Tweedy, is seen holding an axe to one of the chickens heads in a shadow, this view is close to the beginning, making the audience almost immediately dislike, even hate her.

The axe, can be a weapon of torture, she is also shown later on in the film with a spinning metal plate with spikes on the edge, another torturous instrument, thus creating fear, tension and hatred for Mrs Tweedy from the audience. It is now obvious to see how the audience react to Mrs Tweedy, and the characters are pretty much the same. Mr Tweedy, who at first is made out to be a fierce character is clearly terrified of Mrs Tweedy.

Whenever Ginger is in the same scene as Mrs Tweedy, she is made to look very small in comparison, which also makes her vulnerable and more realistically helpless.

Mr Tweedy holds Ginger himself in the air by the neck, this shows how small she really is. Mrs Tweedy is often shown on screen from a low-angle camera shot. This makes her look so much bigger than the chickens. She is also shown many a time with clenched fists, she intimidates everyone and sometimes makes them feel stupid. Bad, scary music sparks up whenever Mrs Tweedy is in shot; her face reflects in large, dangerous metal objects with a grin, this shows how evil she is, she likes the thought of hurting something or someone, it suggests she enjoys murdering helpless chickens, she enjoys being evil.

The only time Mrs Tweedy shows affection is for the pie-making machine, she caresses it and smiles at it, she seems so happy to have it. Mrs Tweedy makes Ginger look vulnerable, when Ginger is portrayed as such a strong person. To conclude the presentation and portraying of Mrs Tweedy and Ginger as good and evil characters, it all shows that a film is not just about the characters; but the way in which a filmmaker uses the elements of film, language, camera, costume and setting to affect the audience and the story line.

Read also:

Analyse the opening sequence and one other scene of the film 'Gladiator'