



GCSE
Revision Guide

Themes in the play

Class –

Mrs J struggles to get by whereas Mrs Lyons has a cleaner

The milkman interrupts Mrs J's dreams showing real life doesn't allow her to have dreams

Eddie has sweets and Mickey asks for stuff (sweets, ciggies)

Language is different between the twins and their different classes

Theme of money = Mrs J can't afford the twins but Mrs L can

Theme of money = Mrs L pays Mrs J off when her paranoia sets in and she sacks her & Mrs L tries to pay Mrs J off when her paranoia sets in and she thinks she has moved near her.

Theme of class/identity = way the policeman is different with both twins & parents

Juxtaposing of schooling = class difference

Poor options reduced - when Linda gets pregnant, then Mickey loses his job = middle class (Mr Lyons) is safe so unsympathetic

The social differences between the twins becomes clearer and they argue for the first time and it's over money

Linda is in the poverty trap and the stresses of adult life and her social class pushes her to Eddie to find her 'freedom' like she had as a child

Superstition –

Narrator tells audience the twins' fate is doomed before the show starts (in the prologue). He reminds us of this throughout the whole play

Theme of fate = the boys meet despite both mothers trying their hardest to keep them apart

There's a class change as to who believes in superstition as it's poor first then the rich who panic more.

Narrator uses lots in songs to remind us of the doomed fate

Childhood –

Innocent time of life = play games, nothing is serious

Relationships are easier = Eddie asks Mickey to be his best friend and that's it... whereas later in life, the relationship with Linda gets complex.

Self-conscious of looks as grow up – song 'That Guy' shows this and is ironic as they are more alike than they realise.

Mickey wishes he was Sammy.

Structure in the play

There is a cyclical structure (circular) because the end song repeats the opening lyrics showing that the poor are trapped in a poverty trap and they can't escape from their class in society.

Repetition of first and last lines = emphasises Mrs Johnstone's grief & the tragedy was going to happen.

Action moves from one part of play to another with no scene breaks = unusual for a play = adds to pace which is heading for a dramatic ending that they know about.

Lack of scene breaks = Russell can show parallel scenes e.g the school scenes and police scenes – this works well when on about twins as it shows the different paths due to class.

Time jumps are used instead of scene breaks – birth, seven, fourteen.

Stage directions describe what's happening rather than dialogue – these add dramatic effect and tell us how actions are done

Songs - are like soliloquys and give audience info of feelings etc

Songs – move plot along

Songs – display themes (Only Mine Until) and motifs (Marilyn Monroe)

Narrator is the story teller – many characters can't see him... those that can, he could be a metaphor for the devil

Russel structures the events and scenes so that when Mrs J has had the twins, the debt collectors are waiting for her = parallels that she can't afford belongings just like she can't afford both twins

The game foreshadows later events of the robbery and the deaths of the twins

Twins meet again – 'That Guy' has same melody to 'My Child' showing the bond between the two and the likeness they have

Russell uses the montage of 'The Summer Sequence' to make the children grow up. He makes them have happy events but also uses dark undertones like 'lamb in spring' which reminds us there won't be a happy ending because lambs are innocent to what will happen; just like these twins .

Mickey turns to crime and there's a great structural device used where 2 conversations are going on. One between Linda and Eddie and the other between Mickey and Sammy. This cross over of conversations highlights a crossroads Mickey is at in his life. The other crossroads here is if Eddie tries to take Linda from Mickey

The pace of the action builds up = the dramatic tension builds up... we see this by the use of ellipses (breaking off

sentences) and also the repetition from the narrator of the word 'TODAY' which demonstrates that all we have been witnessing is resulting to what will happen now.

Settings in the play

Liverpool vs Skelmersdale

Liverpool = one of highest unemployment rates in 1980s – crime, gangs and riots were growing.

Skelmersdale was a new town created in the 60s where a town was extended and redeveloped to provide more housings. Some people rehoused saw this as a bad thing, others saw it as an opportunity

Language in the play

Mrs J and the poor uses: Non-standard English and spelling = 'Gis a sweet'

Dialect – 'Mam' 'Our Donna Marie'

Omission 'D' they call Y' Eddie?'

Bad Language

Mrs L and the rich uses: Formal Language = 'Old Chap'

More Educated = 'Edward' (not Eddie) 'Mummy/Daddy' (not mum or dad)

Mrs Lyons pressures Mrs Johnstone to give her a baby... she uses **imperatives** 'Tell me' and interrupts her so Mrs j can't think

The Narrator uses **language that links to situation** as he says 'thought conceived' and 'deal...born' which both link to the pregnancy

Irony = they become 'blood brothers' when we know they really are blood brothers

Rhetorical question ends the show – making us think if it superstition or class that is to blame for what has happened

Rhyme – Narrator = haunting to remind us of the end

Changes the mood because can be jovial but can become serious about death.

Symbols in the play

Blood Brothers – symbolic moment (ironic) = shows bond between them 7 there's no class prejudice as children

Dancing = happiness but later shows depression (Mickey's 'mind's gone dancing.')

Guns = foreshadows events later (robbery and twins' death) but a toy to start with

Marilyn Monroe = happiness that doesn't last. Aspirations/dreams.

Mood in the play

Mood = The Narrator is a dramatic device. He creates **atmosphere** by words he uses 'price' when the three children are enjoying summers. He creates **pace and panic** by his speech about a 'mad man.' He creates **tension** by the superstition he refers to, also, because people can't see him = unsettles us.

Act 2 is darker than Act 1 even though Mrs J has been rehoused. The Narrator implies the devil is getting closer = tragic ending fast approaching (walking on door, leaning on door, beside you, calling your number up today)

Dramatic tension builds up... by the use of **ellipses** (breaking off sentences) and the **repetition** from the narrator of the word 'TODAY' demonstrates that all we have been witnessing will conclude now

Context in the play

Set in 1960s and progress to 1980s = first female Prime Minister (Margaret Thatcher)

Shrinking pound & price of oil = link to context because of recession

Youth culture emerged in 1960s... all about behaviour. They imitate behaviour they see:

Eddie imitates Mickey & Mickey imitates Sammy

Nuclear family was stereotypical family type

Patriarchal families were stereotypical = Lyons were, Johnstones weren't

Strong class divide... middle class had more opportunities... reflected in education (private & uni), jobs, wealth

Working class (like Johnstones) didn't get these opportunities = low paid jobs

The exam

Intro – that briefly answers the question. Use the phrase in the Q.

Main 1 – PEEL that answers the Q. Point, evidence, what it shows, key word, reader feel, link to society

Main 2 – Is there another part that shows what you have just written about in para 1? If not, PEEL that answers the Q. Point, evidence, what it shows, key word, reader feel, link to society.

Main 3 – Is there another part that shows what you have just written about in para 1 or 2? If not, PEEL that answers the Q. Point, evidence, what it shows, key word, reader feel, link to society.

Conclusion – Answer the Q by summing up your main paragraphs and add any other examples you didn't write about.

Social class quotations

Housing = Mrs J says to Mrs L:

'It's such a lovely house it's a pleasure to clean it'

Mrs L says:

It's a pretty house isn't it? It's a pity it's so big. I'm finding it rather large at present.'

Wanting to move away = Mrs J sings:

'Maybe someday we'll move away and start all over again.'

Think about what stops her doing this...
class

Mrs L says:

'I want to move.' And they do to the country. Think about why they can move that quickly.

Language = Mickey swears:

'I'm not playing now because I'm pissed off' and 'so you fuck off'

Swearing is seen as lower class.

Eddie swears because of Mickey's influence:

'I know what you are, you're a fuck off'

Crime = policeman makes it serious for Mrs J:

'...about to commit a serious crime' and
'you don't want to end up in court again
do you?' '...I warned you last time.'

Policeman makes it less serious for Mr L:

'it was more of a prank really'

Education: Mickey gets suspended as he's
not interested:

'It's borin'' and 'you're both suspended.'

Eddie gets suspended because of a locket
but uses Mickey's influences:

'You can take a flying fuck at a rolling
donut.'

Money / job = Eddie says to Mickey:

'I have money. Lots of it.'

Mickey has to work:

'I had to do overtime'

Mixing of classes = Mrs L tells Eddie:

'I've told you never to go where that boy – boys like that live.' And 'you see why I don't want you mixing with boys like that!'

Mrs J tells Mickey

'Don't you ever go up there. Do you hear me?'

The policeman tells Mr L:

'Make sure he keeps with his own kind'

Implying the working class are dirty.

"I don't want her to hold the baby, Richard. She's... I don't want the baby to catch anything."

Eddie (the upper class) not realising the need/importance for a job

"Why... why is a job so important?"

Education quotations

Language = Mickey swears:

'I'm not playing now because I'm pissed off' and 'so you fuck off'

Swearing is seen as lower class.

Eddie swears because of Mickey's influence:

'I know what you are, you're a fuck off'

Education: Mickey gets suspended as he's not interested:

'It's borin'' and 'you're both suspended.'

Eddie gets suspended because of a locket but uses Mickey's influences:

'You can take a flying fuck at a rolling donut.'

Future:

Eddie goes to university:

'I go away to university tomorrow.'

Mickey is unemployed:

'I would crawl back to that job for half the pay and double the hours.'

Fate and Superstition

"You never put new shoes on the table"

"But y'know the devil's got your number." The narrator suggests the

mothers will be cursed for their unnatural agreement.

“They say that if either twin learns that he was once a pair, they will both immediately die.” Mrs. Lyons create a superstition that will prove to her haunt her... and ultimately come true!

“Wherever I go you’ll be just behind me.” Mrs. Lyons words to Mrs. Johnstone. Actually, fate keeps throwing them together.

“We could be blood brothers” = irony because actually blood related.

“We made an agreement, a bargain. You swore on the bible.”

