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| **Year 11 – Quote Explosion Work: Blood Brothers** | |
| **MRS JOHNSTONE** | |
| “He told me I was sexier than Marilyn Monroe”. | Tragedy and repetitive motif linked to love and fate. Mrs Johnstone is liked for her appearance when she was young. Marilyn Monroe is a tragic figure, well renowned for the lifestyle and sex symbol that she was and the life that she led. It is as if she (Mrs Johnstone) needs confirmation of her attraction from a man. Russell highlights that society is obsessed with looks and appearance. |
| “By the time I was twenty-five, I looked like forty-two” | Drained and tired as a result of poverty and bringing up her children on her own. Reflects the appearance of having a difficult life. Singing – appearance has faded. |
| “during the dance, she acquires a brush, dusters and a mop” stage directions | Shows her husband has left her and she has to take a menial job to survive. She just started working for Mrs Lyons and highlights the inequality and fate of Mickey to also live this repetitive cycle of poverty. She needs the job to provide for her family. |
| “never put new shoes on a table” | Superstition and bad luck is created when this happens, this allows Mrs L to manipulate her as she uses her superstitions against her and persuades her that she should give up a baby or it will bring bad luck. |
| “silver trays to take meals on” / “a bike with both wheels on” – Mrs J & Mrs | She’ll treat them well – Mrs Lyons and be able to provide wealth. Mrs J wants the best for her children and she can’t afford the ones she already has. Connotations of rich – having fancy things anad connotations of poverty not even having the simple things. Duet shows their differences. Mrs L wants to blackmail and manipulate her and it works. |
| “Mrs Lyons shows the Bible to Mrs Johnstone” | Persuades Mrs J by using religious and playing on her superstition to make her give up a child. It is a form of blackmail as she knows that Mrs J won’t go back on a sworn oath, so the bible is symbolic of a pact that can’t be broken. Mrs J would be sinning if she broke it off and this is what Mrs L wants her to think about. |
| “don’t you ever come round here again” / “I’m very sorry, but it’s Edward’s bedtime” – Mrs J and Mrs L | Rising tension with the short and snappy dialogue and the mirroring of the mother’s intention to keep the boys apart. This is towards the start of the play when they first meet. Dramatic Irony as Mrs J and Mrs L know that the boys are twins, but they don’t |
| “She removes a locket from around her neck” | A keepsake of Mickey and herself to Edward could be symbolic of the love she feels for him. This happens before he moves away and later surprises and frightens Mrs L, who slaps him and then immediately regrets this. |
| “bright new day, we’re goin’ away” | Fate – end of Act 1 shows that they have a chance at a new life. Moving to the country and makes you happy for the family. |
| “I curse you! Witch!” – Mrs L to Mrs J | Makes it sound like a threat and shocked and fearful tone. Mrs L is losing her mind and tries to stab Mrs J, which is indicative of the mental health issues she is having as a result of her guilt and fear over losing Edward. Superstition and fate are now involved. Symbolic of the issues she has caused. |
| **THE NARRATOR** | |
| “I’m up to here with hard luck stories” – Milkman/narrator | Fed up of excuses from poor people, like the Johnstone family – his dismissive tone and disregard is obvious here. She is stalling him as she has no money to pay for the milk. Links to Margaret Thatcher taking away free milk for every school child (politics of the time), however reinforces their poverty as milk is a necessity for small children. |
| “the devil’s got your number” – narrator | This is a repetitive motif throughout the play, when the narrator thinks someone has done something wrong in the play. Said in a ominous tone by the narrator. Repetition of this and connotations linked to the devil suggest evil, death and wrongdoing, so this continuous link implies that there is evil stalking the Johnstone family. |
| Did you never hear how the Johnstones died” | Conversational tone at the start of the play. Omniscient narrator inviting us into his confidence in a gossiping manner. Makes you feel interested in the story and foreshadows the ending when the twins die. |
| “the mother, so cruel, there’s a stone in place of her heart” – “a debt is a debt, and must be paid” | Writer intends to show that Mrs J is a tragic figure and she doesn’t have a place in her heart for her kids. Exaggerates and implies she is uncaring and this isn’t the case. She finds it hard but loves “the bones” of every one of her kids. The narrator appears to be judging her choices and finding them wanting. |
| “There’s a mad man” | Mickey has lost his mind and isn’t thinking straight, which may worry the reader as he is a likeable character and we will wonder what he will do next. Reflects insanity and foreshadows that Mickey has the gin and is on the way to kill Edward. Links to death and fate. |
| “Do we blame superstition for what came to pass? Or could it be what we, the English, have come to know as class?” | This links to the superstition of the shoes upon the table – he is asking wider society where the blame lies and what we attribute the blame to. Rhetorical questions – both of these could be major factors in their untimely deaths. Classes are very different and this is highlighted continuously throughout the play. Using directives and appealing to the specific audience allows us to look into our own actions and behaviours and decide whether we too are guilty of this discriminatory behaviour and what that says about us. Are our values wrong? |
| “Did you ever hear the story of the Johnstone twins, as like each other as two new pins” | This makes it sound realistic and like a true story. Offers an insight into the judgemental omniscience of the narrator where Mrs J is concerned. The simile shows that they are exactly the same as each other. Implies that we should have heard the story and invites us to look closely as the tragic tale unfolds. He is the embodiment of the Greek chorus, which Is used to reveal the tragic events. |
| “the music pulsates and builds” stage directions | At the end. Trying to show that the twins lives are coming to an end and creates drama and tension through the beat of the music. A pulse is like a heartbeat and metaphorically when the music ends so does the lives of the twins. |
| **Mickey and Edward (Eddie)** | |
| mam” / “mummy” “pissed off” / “you say smashing things” “ | The way they talk gives away where they are from and symbolically Eddie is from the top of the street and Mickey the bottom and both are directed to remain in their places – this is metaphorical as well as their place in society as well as in the street at a young age. Have a good relationship and are friends, however the way Mickey talks reflect his poor upbringing and the ‘street’ aspect of his behaviour reflects lower class behaviours, which are frowned upon. Even at this point Mickey seems angry and disenfranchised with life, as he sees the unfairness in society, although at 7 this isn’t how he shows this. |
| “we’re blood brothers” Mickey and Edward  “if you cross your fingers and if you count from one to ten” | This is symbolic of them being actual brothers and the dramatic irony is that they are already blood brothers and this childish symbol of cutting themselves is meant to be the strongest bond they can have but leads to them falling out in later years. It makes you feel sympathy for them being separated and shows that they are closer than normal childhood friends. |
| “Peter Pan” | Symbolic of childhood and never growing up. Used during the games, however there is a tragic element to the story and Peter Pan is trapped, just like Mickey and Edward by class. |
| “take a flying fuck at a rolling donut” /“it’s borin’” | Class/social class and inequality. Edward was attending an all boys school and because the teacher tried to take his locket he refused. The teacher used gender stereotypes to imply he isn’t masculine and he was suspended, but this didn’t affect him long term. Colloquial language and general disinterest. |
| “a game of piggy-in-the-middle” | Foreshadows that they will have a love triangle and Mickey and Edward are both in love with Linda. Childhood games and that Linda is stuck in the middle with no easy answer. She loves both of them differently. |
| “workin’ overtime” / “I go away to university tomorrow” | Highlights Mickey s working to get money to provide for Linda and the baby, but that Edward has no responsibility and Edward is talking to Linda. He waits to say and this suggests he was afraid to tell them that he was going away. Reinforces the poverty vs wealth as only wealthy people went to University. |
| “How come you got everything… an’ I got nothing?” | Feel sorry for Mickey at this point as he recognises the inequality and unfairness in his life and feels once again disengaged with life. Mickey’s question is rhetorical and shows that he is deeply unhappy with the status quo and the way their lives have turned out. Mickey is angry and lashes out. He sees the deep divide in society and feels hurt and upset that he had nothing (materialistically and perhaps emotionally) as he recognises that he is deficient in comparison to Edward, as a result of his poor education, the poverty he suffers and the lack of opportunity for someone like him, |
| “I could have been him!” – Mickey | Reinforces his jealousy and anger towards Edward. He wanted to be Edward for the opportunities that this may have brought him. He is complaining about the unfairness and the exclamatory tone suggests that he is outraged about his lack of opportunity. |
| “walkin’ round in circles” – Mickey | Fate – Mickey is unhappy in Act 2. He went to prison and is depressed. He can’t think straight and is on anti-depressants. Symbolic of not being in control or able to change anything as a result of poverty. |
| “I grew up. An’ you didn’t, because you didn’t need to” – Mickey to Edward | Act 2 – Wealth versus Poverty. Reality check for Edward and Mickey – their lives have diverged and Mickey has to be responsible and grown up, while Edward has support, care and money behind him meaning that he can go to University and be young and carefree in contrast to the difficulties faced by Mickey. Mickey is jealous and struggles to understand how their lives are so different. He can no longer see what they have in common. Metaphorical divide in the boys as a result of their different circumstances. |
| “chronically depressed” – Mickey | Edward has everything and Mickey has nothing to be happy about. Eddie and Linda are having an affair, although Mickey doesn’t know this at this point. The tablets – anti-depressants that Mickey takes are dulling his senses and Linda hates them. He has no job and no prospects and is not sorting out his life. His depression started in prison and continues after being released. |
| “You sorted it out. You and Councillor Eddie Lyons” | Eddie has done well with his life, whereas Mickey hasn’t. Mickey feels angry that Eddie has helped them and annoyed with Linda for asking. The directives ‘you’ are accusatory showing he is unhappy with the meddling in his life. He can’t sort it out for himself and feels impotent as a result. |
| Edward is “on a platform” stage directions | Again, Edward is presented as being above Mickey – on a platform implies power, respect and authority, but the tragedy is about to unfold and Mickey will shoot Eddie and then be shot himself. This was foreshadowed from the start and is their fate. |
| **LINDA** | |
| “if you count from one to ten” | Foreshadowing, playing a game as children and it sounds almost creepy as if time is always ready to catch up with them. |
| “I wanna kiss y’, an’ put me arms around y’” | Mickey – playfully speaking to Linda when they get together. He is speaking emotionally but it is clear that he feels uncomfortable talking to her about this. This juxtaposes the eloquent way that Edward tells him to romance Linda. |
| “Who’d tell the girl in the middle of the pair/The price she’ll pay just for being there.” | Rhyming (narrator speaking about Linda) Tells that Linda is stuck between the brothers – a love triangle. Links to death and suggests that she will pay the most, Russell wants us to sympathise with Linda Being in the middle suggests she has a choice but at this point she is sat on the fence, suggesting that she will be the one to blame. Foreshadowing the imminent deaths and perhaps her relationship with Edward. |
| **MRS LYONS** | |
| “give one to me” | Demanding tone from Mrs Lyons, excitable too and an imperative. She is suggesting that Mrs Johnstone should give one of the babies away, which is cunning, manipulating her and against the law. She is so carried away with the idea that she doesn’t think of the consequences. |
| “How can you possibly avoid some of them being put into care?” | Manipulation to encourage her to give her a baby. She is quite devious in her behaviour and it is designed to let her get what she wants. It shows that money doesn’t give you a strong set of morals. |
| “You’ll be locked up” | Threatening tone. She knows that Mrs L is a law abiding citizen and that she won’t jeopardise her current kids and this makes her able to put pressure on her. |
| “It’s just… just this place” | Mrs Lyons mind is cracking under the pressure of her guilt and fear of being found out. Mr Lyons thinks Edward is his and she is terrified of the boys being together and realising their relationship. |
| “has a lethal-looking kitchen knife in her hand” Stage directions | Insanity is shown here when Mrs L finally goes mad and comes at Mrs J because she is fearful that the boys will discover that they are twins. She has also become superstitious and believes her own tale from earlier that if the boys discover they are related they will die. |
| **MR LYONS** | |
| “it’s a sign of the times, Miss Jones” | Workers were being made redundant by Mr Lyons in the factory. The name is a metaphor for all the workers being laid off and could be symbolic of the problems in the country at the time. Shows the inequality and poverty and class divide for people in the 80s. Mr L is singing it and seems unaffected by it, which could link to the businessmen of the time just doing what they had to do to keep their wealth intact. |
| **SAMMY** | |
| “Sammy burnt the school down” | Tragedy but could be seen coming. Sammy is a troublemaker and this could foreshadow the later robbery and incarceration of Mickey. Matter of fact tone implies this is no surprise. |
| **POLICEMAN** | |
| “he was about to commit a serious crime” / “it was more of a prank, really” | In Act 1, the police exaggerate when talking to Mrs Johnstone and make it sound worse than it is and then underplay the severity when talking to Mr Lyons. Reinforces the unfairness in society and the class difference. Edward is the one who was rude and obnoxious to the policeman, but Mickey is the one who appears to be more told off. |