

Mari's character and
use of language in
scene seven of "the
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Throughout *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, Cartwright presents the character of Mari Hoff as irresponsible and vulgar, especially through his use of colloquial language. Scene Seven certainly supports this view, but also introduces her vulnerability: a trait that the audience must understand before the play can be comprehended. When Cartwright opens the scene he immediately presents Mari's affection and adoration for Ray, since she refers to him as 'Darling' and 'goes to embrace him', which indicates a strong emotional attachment. Earlier in the play Mari has been presented as a sexual character both physically and verbally, through neologisms such as 'wizzle and mince' which proves her apparent sexual allure. However, Mari's physical attraction to Ray is made clear since 'Ray is dressing', which implies that he was previously undressed to 'roll about'. Since Cartwright portrays that Mari has an emotional attachment to Ray as well as physical, she instantly appears more vulnerable to the audience, which allows the audience to feel pathos towards her. Furthermore, Ray's feelings towards Mari are made clear when he rejects her 'embrace' because he has 'got to dash'; putting his chance for fame and fortune in front of his relationship with Mari. Evidently Ray does not know Mari very well, since he does not anticipate her misinterpretation of 'She is the one' and does not notice her 'desperate' tone. Therefore, Cartwright's justification of Mari's emotional attachment with Ray's aloof and careless comments could foreshadow Ray's rejection of Mari in the latter part of the play, when he states 'you're too loud and you stink of drink...wise up and fuck off'. Furthermore, Cartwright's use of ellipsis in 'It's like...' signals to the actor to use a thoughtful tone whilst speaking, which Mari could have interpreted as romantic fantasising.

Certainly Mari enjoys her own fantasy in the latter part of the scene when <https://assignbuster.com/maris-character-and-use-of-language-in-scene-seven-of-the-rise-and-fall-of-little-voice/>

she likens herself to Cinderella through the reference ' I shall go to the ball', which conveys her, perhaps deliberate, naivety. Moreover, Cartwright's repetition of Mari's ' yes' in addition to the exclamation mark in response to Ray's ' She is the one. Do you know what I mean' certainly emphasises her excitement and her desperate need for a devoted male companion. Perhaps Ray is deliberately ambiguous about who is ' the one' so that he can retain his access to Little Voice through her mother. Certainly this view is supported by the ambiguous ' It's not just my future, it's yours' and implied when he later admits ' All you've ever had that I want sits up there [in Little Voice's room]'. In this case Mari is not naïve but gullible, considering his increasingly distant behaviour towards her, presented by a progression from ' They laugh and carry on [rolling about]' to him rejecting an ' embrace' because he has ' got to dash'. Furthermore, Mari's ' selfishness' is confirmed through the violent verb ' snatches' when she ' snatches [the] headset up [and] hold it out to him [Billy]' when Billy interrupts her conversation with Ray. Indeed, the continual interruptions combined with Mari's ' desperate' efforts to develop the conversation with Ray have a comical effect on stage, which would enhance the comical value of the dramatic irony. Furthermore, Mari's ridiculous determination conveys her rudeness, since she ' slams [the] door' in Billy's face despite the fact that he is already shy and timid. Ray's horse racing imagery - ' it's like at the races when you've found yourself a little nag no one's noticed but you know you're onto a certainty and you're feeling, this is it!' is continued by Mari. ' You were off,' she says, in a desperate attempt to demonstrate that they are on the same page; they ' go together so well'. However, the irony is that they are on completely different pages, and Mari's attempt to show they are on the same page merely

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pushes them further apart. Perhaps Mari's sudden formal tone after her misinterpretation of Ray's message could build upon Mari feeling like 'a queen' in Ray's presence; he not only makes her feel like royalty but act like it too. Cartwright's use of pretentious language, such as 'utterance' and 'sayeth' emphasises the self-worth that Mari now feels as a result of the misinterpretation. Furthermore, Cartwright's grotesque imagery of Mari walking whilst her dirty washing is 'trailing...behind her' likens her to a bride, with a bridal train. Although the use of imagery presents a tragedy, on stage it would appear very comical, following the play's tragicomedy genre.

Perhaps Mari's simile 'It's like there's a circus parade passing over my paps' best expresses her excitement and delight when presented with the opportunity of marriage to Ray, and in turn financial security. Indeed, she comments that she has been 'saved' and is now 'secure' both financially and emotionally. Mari's simile is emphasised by her 'hitting her chest' as if to calm down her heart beat. The contrast between the fast pace of a 'circus parade' and her marvelling comment 'What a life, life can be' portrays how fake the entire situation is; Mari is dramatizing it and posing in front of her neighbour, Sadie. Moreover, music is an important motif throughout *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* and is used in scene seven. Jackson 5's 'I want you back' is played by Sadie and they 'dance till they have to stop'. Ironically, the song that is played depicts a man who asks for 'one more chance' to show his ex-lover that he still loves her and win her back. Surely Mari does not understand the irony of the lyrics and so the song acts as further evidence that Mari is completely oblivious to real meanings. The song is completely inappropriate for a supposed marriage proposal, yet Mari

commands Sadie to 'get Jackson 5 on'. Therefore, the idea that Mari does

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not truly listen but hears the upbeat tempo of the song adds to the audiences' understanding of her as a character. Interestingly, although the 'music [is] blaring' the fuse does not blow and cause a blackout, presenting the view that the blackouts that Little Voice causes are more symbolic than logical. The grotesque imagery of Mari having a 'twat-bone feeling' about her and Ray illuminates her coarse nature, as well as her desperate desire to find a man who will commit to her. Indeed, Mari proves the reliability of her 'twat-bone' by stating that she 'can predict rain with that', which does not seem very promising, given the frequent rain in Northern England, where the play is set. In addition, although Mari would like to marry Ray, she does not seem able to be her complete self around him, since she 'better get dressed up' for when he returns. Surely when two people are close enough to marry and devote their lives to each other, they are close enough to wear casual clothes in each other's company. Therefore, the level of artificiality still present by this stage foreshadows the downfall of Mari's and Ray's relationship, and presents Mari as superficial. In essence, scene seven presents Mari as more than just a vibrant, vulgar character and shows the depths of her imagination and desires. Surely the fact that Mari was so convinced that Ray wanted to marry her suggests that she hoped that it would happen, and so was very quick to jump to conclusions. Furthermore, Cartwright reveals Mari's vulnerable side in order to explain the reasons for her superficial and coarse personality, and provoke the audience to feel pathos for her in the latter part of the play. The pathos that is felt for Mari because of Cartwright's use of dramatic irony is multiplied when Mari acts obviously more confident and happier as a result of the misunderstanding.

Indeed, Mari uses formal diction, such as 'I shall be down shortly' and '<https://assignbuster.com/maris-character-and-use-of-language-in-scene-seven-of-the-rise-and-fall-of-little-voice/>

ascends' the stairs, suggesting a grand and elegant movement. Since Mari appears to have improved as a character because of Ray, she becomes instantly more vulnerable, so the audience can relate to her more, and in turn truly understand her character.