

Blood brothers by willy russell



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"Blood Brothers", by Willy Russell, is the story of twin brothers born to a working class deserted mother, Mrs Johnston. One twin is called Mickey and one is called Eddie. Mrs Johnston works as a cleaner in Mrs Lyons' middle class home. Mrs Lyons is barren and longs for a child very much. She suggests keeping one of Mrs Johnston's twins and raising it as her own as Mrs Johnston doesn't have the space or money to support another child.

When the children are born they are immediately separated. Despite their mothers' best efforts, Eddie and Mickey meet again when they are seven and become best friends and ironically "Blood Brothers." The twins continue to meet coincidentally throughout their lives until the differences in their upbringing force their friendship to end. There is, however, a last meeting where all secrets are revealed and both lives end in tragedy.

Willy Russell was born and grew up in Liverpool. He left school at 15, with no qualifications. His work reflects his interest in dramatising the lives of ordinary working-class people in an accessible and entertaining way.

Characters

Mickey comes across as a happy person, but is also very wary, as we see when Eddie gives Mickey the sweets. Mickey is surprised that Eddie gives the sweets after only asking once; he thinks that Eddie may have done something to them.

On the other hand, Eddie is a very cheerful child, who does not really have anything to worry about in life, because Mrs Lyons can provide his every want and need. He lives a formal life with Mr and Mrs Lyons, although we do

not hear much of Mr Lyons throughout the play. When he meets Mickey he is really taken back by the language that Mickey uses, we see this when Eddie says,

" P***ed off. You say smashing things don't you? P***ed off. Do you know any more words like that?"

This also shows that Eddie is very interested in the way Mickey speaks, maybe because Mrs Lyons has kept him very secure in his lifetime and has not let him hear anything like this.

On stage I think Eddie may wear posh, top of the range clothes. He would speak in a formal way; he will only speak slang when he is repeating what Mickey has said e. g. " p***ed off".

Mrs Johnstone, who plays the role of the mother in Blood Brothers, seems very innocent and naive at the start of the play. She is also very gullible and believes anything she is told. Some examples of this are when she is told by her ex boyfriend that she is sexier than Marilyn Monroe, it also says in the play that she is 30 but looks 60. During the play Mrs Lyons also tells the mother that if once the twins are separated and they find out that they are twins that they will die, which Mrs Johnstone also believes.

The mother's children also play a big part in her life even though she can only just afford to keep them. She works at Mrs Lyons' house as a cleaner to support her family. She doesn't have any one else bringing in any money to her household as her boyfriend walked out on her. The mother doesn't care that there is only just enough money as she loves every single one of her

children; we can see this in the play when she says " I love the bones off of every one of them". When she is working for Mrs Lyons, she doesn't care if she is pregnant " If I have it at the weekend I won't even need to take a day off" this shows that Mrs Johnstone is eager to support her family as much as she possibly can.

Mrs Johnstone is a very uneducated person as you can tell when she says " Ill still be able to do me work". She would always say " me" instead of " my"; however, she talks like this because of her Liverpool accent.

Mrs Lyons, who adopts one of Mrs Johnstone's newborn twins, has a lot more power than the mother " My husband is due back tomorrow I must have my baby now!" The mother doesn't want to give her baby away but Mrs Lyons is a very persuasive person as we see when she says " If he grew up... as our son... he could have everything". Once Mrs Lyons has the baby she is very possessive of him " Edward is my son. Mine Mrs Johnstone". This shows that Mrs Lyons is determined to get her way all the time.

During the play we also see that Mrs Lyons is a very jealous person as we can tell when she says " You're always bothering over him, fussing over him". This also shows that she is also selfish as she doesn't want Eddie mixing with Mrs Johnstone and her family. She also shows that she is selfish when she says " come on, come on you know it's for the best."

The police woman treats Mrs Johnstone as if she is a lower class than herself. We can see this in the way that the police woman talks to Mrs Johnstone in general. The style and tone that the policewoman talks to the mother also shows this. When the policewoman visits Mrs Johnstone she makes the <https://assignbuster.com/blood-brothers-by-willy-russell-research-paper-samples/>

reason why she is there very clear, the effect that this would have on the mother is to scare her a bit and to keep her children under control.

We can tell the policewoman is fed up of having to visit Mrs Johnstone about her children time after time, as we see when she says " If I have any more trouble from one of yours" she also says " I warned you about your Sammy, didn't I?" Here we can also see the policewoman repeats herself for emphasis and to intimidate the mother. She also repeats herself saying, " and he was about to commit a serious crime, love, a serious crime". In this quote the policewoman also talks to Mrs Johnstone as if she knows her when she says " love". The policewoman uses this to give herself the power in the relationship.

When the policewoman visits Mrs Lyons we can see the difference in the way that she is treated to Mrs Johnstone. The way the policewoman talks to Mrs Lyons shows that she doesn't have as much confidence talking to her, as we can see when she says, " well err thanks for the drink". When the policewoman says " err" we can see that she is uneasy speaking to Mrs Lyons. However, we can see that the policewoman respects Mrs Lyons as she always calls her by her proper name, and is polite to her as we see when she says " sorry if im interfering"

The play begins and ends with the narrator speaking. The final Scene only varies in the last line. " How one was kept one given away" and " They were born and died on the self same day". The line changes at the ends because the twins were shot dead, but at the beginning it is when the twins have just been born and the mother gives one of them away.

Another word for narrator is storyteller, and the narrator in Blood Brothers acts like a story teller because he/she tells us the story before it actually happen in the scene.

The narrator also comments through out the play. A typical thing that the narrator would refer to is what is happening at that moment in the play. He/she tells us what the characters are feeling which could make us feel differently about the characters. At the beginning of the play the narrator basically tells us that the mother is an evil woman. We see this when the narrator says " That woman with a stone in place of a heart". As the play moves on we see the mother's circumstances which shows us that she is not really an evil woman.

This makes us feel sympathetic toward the mother, in the way that the narrator talks about her in the play. Also at the beginning of the play we think that Mrs Lyons is an innocent person but she really is not an innocent person because she says that the twins should never meet because if they do they will die. When the twins do meet she kills them both. The narrator does not really give us an idea what Mrs Lyons is like, which could give us the impression that she is up to something and that something is going to happen.

The narrator's language and the fact that lines are sung means that what they say is not really realistic. But we still listen to what the narrator is saying. The narrator's lines are like a ballad because the narrator sings most of his/hers lines and it is also telling a sad story, although we don't really see what is so sad about the play until the end of it. The effect is that it lets us

know that something is going to happen. The narrator singing sort of brings the audience back to reality, so that they do not get too sunk into the play and so that the message of the play gets across to the audience.

The end of the play is quite dramatic. We know that the play is leading up to something bad and we finally find this out in the final scene but it all happens so fast. When Mrs Lyons enters the room and kills both of the twins so suddenly the audience would be shocked.

Staging

On stage I think Mickey would speak with a lot of slang and informal language. He may dress in old, maybe even second hand clothes. When he moves around the stage he may move very cautious of his surroundings and the people around him. This might be because we know he is a suspicious person so he may think something is going to happen at any moment or someone may do something to him. We can imagine this when he takes one of the sweets that Eddie offers him, trying to work out the catch.

On stage I think Eddie may wear posh, top of the range clothes. He would speak in a formal way; he will only speak slang when he is repeating what Mickey has said e. g. " p***ed off".

The Theatre In The Round is the perfect theatre to perform " Blood Brothers" as it gives a great atmosphere for the musical. A Theatre In The Round gives the actors the opportunity to enter the stage from the audience, during performances this gives an unbelievable effect, it will ensure that the audience stay in focus with the show and will want to watch.

In this show, a lot of emotion is shown in most characters. These characters must show that they have feelings and emotion; they must show this in their gait e. g. a fast walk may show anger. Also, facial expressions are needed to show emotion, a smile would show happiness, a frown would show confusion or anger and a sad face would show unhappiness or sadness.

Stage directions are very important in a show like " Blood Brothers" because there wouldn't be any atmosphere to endure if the actors were stood still, Mickey is a very challenging role which needs to have a lot of emotion, personality and movement. His character needs to be alive at all times because of his personality and lifestyle. Pacing is a very good stage direction for Mickey as he is on edge at most points during the end of the play.

However, although Eddie is also a challenging role to perform it requires less emotion and personality than Mickey. Eddie is more laid back than Mickey as he can afford to do most things, this causes their friendship to end at a certain point in the play. The best stage direction for Eddie is a resting position e. g. stretching in a chair. He is more relaxed as he has a better education than Mickey and he cannot understand how Mickey lives his life. The best analogy for the twins would be that Mickey and Eddie are like two magnets that repel in most ways, however, they attract in some ways because of their genetic resemblance.

Sound & Sound Effects

Throughout the play, there are some very tense moments which will need to be backed up by sound effects. For example, when Mickey approaches Eddie from behind - I am looking at the last scene - he is about to shoot him, there <https://assignbuster.com/blood-brothers-by-willy-russell-research-paper-samples/>

should be some tense, on the edgemusic. However, when he stopped by Mrs Johnstone, he is told that Eddie is his brother. The sound should then change from tense to slow and calm. At this point he is realising why they weren't allowed to meet each other in the beginning and he is realising why they are so alike.

I think that sound is paramount to a play, as it is a necessity for people in the production to learn queues and timing.

Conclusion

I think that the message of the play is that your life is affected by the social class you are from and that it is a lot harder to get anywhere if you are in a lower social class. We see an example of this in the scene with the policewoman, in the way that Mrs Lyons is treated compared to Mrs Johnstone. With Mrs Lyons, the policewoman underplays the seriousness of the crime that Mickey and Eddie had committed as we see when she says "As I said it was probably more of a prank". So Eddie is being let off of it because of his family's higher social class. When the police woman visits Mickey's house it is a completely different scene, the police woman lays down quite hard on Mickey's mum because of her lower social class, and because she is more of an easy target to pick on.

In conclusion I think that Willy Russell is trying to tell people that the higher up your social class, the easier your life will be and the lower down your social class, the harder life will be for you.

For many years now social class has remained quite a big thing. The idea came around in the 1770s at the time of the industrial revolution when jobs were cut and the social divide started. Some people became richer and some became poorer which started the idea of social class.