2.14 Literature: Blood Brothers (Willy Russell): 30-minute Pack

AQA 8702 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain how Russell presents Mrs Lyons as an increasingly anxious character as the play goes on.

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

2 Explain how Russell presents the friendship between Mickey and Edward when they first meet as children.

(Total for Question 2 is 8 marks)

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3 Write about how Russell uses dramatic methods such as song, direct address and doubling, rather than pure realism, to tell the twins' story.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

4 Analyse how Russell uses the Narrator to build tension and a sense of fate across the play.

(Total for Question 4 is 8 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.14 Literature: Blood Brothers (Willy Russell): 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation: analyses how Mrs Lyons' behaviour becomes more controlling and paranoid as the play progresses, with clear reference to the text. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies a relevant change in Mrs Lyons with a generally appropriate comment, with some textual reference. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple or general comment on Mrs Lyons with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Mrs Lyons is first presented as outwardly comfortable and persuasive, able to talk Mrs Johnstone into the agreement at her most vulnerable moment
- as the play progresses she becomes increasingly obsessive about keeping Mickey and Edward apart, going as far as moving the family away from the area
- her mounting fear that the truth will emerge, or that the superstition she herself invented will come true, presents her as trapped by her own deception
- her growing instability isolates her from her husband and makes her seem, by the play's later stages, one of the more troubling and pitiable figures rather than simply a villain

Question 2

Level 4 Clear, well-supported explanation: analyses how the boys' instant, easy connection despite their different backgrounds supports a nurture-over-nature reading, with well-chosen textual reference. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear explanation: explains the boys' early friendship with relevant textual reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies a relevant point about the friendship with some textual reference. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple or general comment with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the boys form an instant, easy connection despite having been raised in completely different homes, suggesting shared nature rather than upbringing initially draws them together
- their childhood pact to become blood brothers is deeply poignant for the audience, who already know the boys are literally brothers by blood
- small early differences in the boys' confidence, vocabulary and behaviour hint at how their different upbringings are already shaping them, even within an otherwise equal friendship
- the friendship's innocence and warmth at this stage makes the later, class-driven separation of the two boys feel more clearly unjust and avoidable to the audience

Question 3

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured response: sustained analysis of several non-naturalistic methods and their combined effect across the whole play, with judicious reference and confident subject terminology. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear response: explains at least two dramatic methods and their effect, with relevant reference. **7-9**

Level 2 Some response: identifies a relevant dramatic method with some supporting reference. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: makes a simple, undeveloped point about staging or method with little or no reference. **1-3**

Indicative content:

- songs are used to summarise time passing or to comment on events, rather than simply advancing the plot in a naturalistic way
- the Narrator's direct address to the audience repeatedly breaks the illusion of realism, inviting the audience to judge the situation rather than simply become emotionally absorbed in it
- the doubling of the twins' childhood scenes, showing Mickey and Edward behaving almost identically despite their different homes, draws attention to nurture rather than nature as the deciding factor
- these non-naturalistic devices work alongside more naturalistic domestic dialogue scenes, so the audience is kept aware of the play's wider social message even during its most intimate, personal moments

Question 4

Level 4 Convincing, well-supported analysis: analyses more than one method used by the Narrator (direct address, repeated warnings, movement through time) and their combined effect, with precise reference and subject terminology. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear analysis: explains how at least one significant Narrator technique builds tension or fate, with relevant reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some analysis: identifies a relevant Narrator technique with a generally appropriate comment. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited analysis: makes a simple or general comment on the Narrator with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the Narrator steps outside individual scenes to address the audience directly, repeatedly reminding them of the debt hanging over the family and the danger the superstition represents
- his ability to move quickly between different points in time keeps the audience aware that events are heading towards a fixed, foreshadowed outcome rather than an open one
- his warnings recur at moments when the twins nearly discover the truth, sharpening tension each time without resolving it
- his detached, almost fatalistic tone can be read as the voice of superstition or fate itself rather than a neutral storyteller, blurring the line between narration and prophecy

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