

Teaching Ideas

Section E: Working With Specific Moments in the Play

Teaching Suggestions	Accompanying Handouts
<p>In small groups, students could be asked to look at the first three sections of the play. One person should take the role of director, whilst the others should be actors. They should prepare a performance of these scenes using the directorial suggestions starting on page 34 to help.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directing the Start of the Play: Act One: opening sections, page 34
<p>Still within their groups of three, students could be asked to create performance of the scenes chosen on pages 35 and 36. Students could read these scenes and then consider how much more we learn about the characters as the play progresses. They could then be asked to create a performance of these scenes using the directorial suggestions on page 35 and page 36 to help.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directing Act One: The Two Mothers, page 35 Directing Act One: Mickey Aged Seven, page 36
<p>Students could then be asked to explore various scenes from Act Two.</p> <p>The class could be split into small groups and each group should be given one of the accompanying resources.</p> <p>Each group should create a performance of the extract they have been assigned on their sheet, one person in the group must take responsibility for the directing.</p> <p>Select the best performances of each of the two extracts and the class should then watch the different performances. As a class discuss how effective the groups were in staging their performance ideas for the second act of the play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directing Act Two: Mickey and Linda Aged Fourteen, page 37 Directing Act Two: The Final Scene, page 38
<p>After completing the practical explorations of these extracts, students could be asked to complete the written activities. This will test their understanding of the extracts and ensure that they have complete performance interpretations for the main characters in this play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pages 39-48

All of the above student resources are also available in printable pdf form on the CD-ROM.

Directing Act One: The Beginning

Task

Look at the opening three sections of the play, up to Mrs. Johnstone going to work. In groups you should create a performance of these scenes. One person must work as the director to ensure that the following ideas are incorporated into your performance.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Opening section - Narrator and Mrs. Johnstone showing the closing scene of the play.

How will you light the opening? The author is not specific, should Mrs. Johnstone and the Narrator be in darkness and then the Narrator step forward into a spotlight? As the lights come up we see the final moments of the play and then the lights fade again. The audience needs to see what is about to happen. In the following darkness the stage should be cleared.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Staging Aspects

How will you use the stage to quickly switch between the Narrator exiting and then reappearing as the Milkman? Should Mrs Johnstone carry out some housework - say brush the step, humming during her work? Should there be offstage sound effects - children playing? How will you signify that the Narrator is a milkman? Should he wear a white coat over his Narrator's costume? Should he wear a cap and carry milk bottles?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mrs. Johnstone's Tone and Tempo

When singing directly to the audience, what tone should Mrs. Johnstone use? Should she sound tired and frustrated by her life and her circumstances? Is she depressed? Is she angry? What do you want her to convey to the audience in this scene about how she is feeling?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: The Narrator's Tone and Tempo

It is useful to look at the Narrator's tempo because his lines are often short, questioning and in verse. Is this to involve the audience in the plot? Is it to convey a sinister nature to the character or to the story? Should he relish the sinister nature of the plot? Should he take pauses between each full stop and question or should he deliver his lines quickly? What do you want his tempo to reveal about his character and purpose in the story?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mrs. Johnstone enters.

When the audience first see Mrs. Johnstone and the Narrator what impressions should they have of them? Should they instantly be aware he is the villain or a friend to the audience, and she is the heroine or the villain? How should their appearances at the start of Act One help to convey certain impressions for the audience?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: The Narrator's Vocals

When the Narrator first speaks, you will need to consider what his voice conveys about his character. Will he speak in a tone that conveys a dark nature, the harbinger of doom? Or will you fool the audience into thinking he is harmless, friendly? Should he look sinister but speak as if he is not? Should he seem to be the audience's friend? Should he move around the stage, slowly or quickly? What impression do you wish the Narrator to convey?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Sound Effects

Will you use any sound effects or music to accompany the opening scene of the two dead boys? Should you use mournful music to convey the tragedy or will total silence convey more? Remember that it is important that the audience realise what is about to happen and that they should view the play with this in mind.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Audience knowledge of what is still to come.

The Narrator is a device for conveying knowledge to the audience. The audience will always be aware that a tragedy is about to happen. In spite of this prior knowledge, do you think that the audience will still be shocked when the boys are killed at the conclusion of the play? Is it the author's intention to shock the audience? If you believe that it is his intention to shock, why do you think that he wants to shock? How will you ensure that, although you are giving the audience all of the information needed, you will still shock the audience at the end?

Directing Act One: The Two Mothers

Task

Look at Act One - Mrs Johnstone arriving at work to the agreement being sealed. In groups you should create a performance of these sections. One person must work as the director to ensure that the following ideas are incorporated into your performance.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mrs. Johnstone's working relationship with Mrs. Lyons.

What should the initial relationship between the two women be? Are they employer and employee? Should it be clear that Mrs Lyons is the boss? Are they friends? Is the relationship warm or distant? Should the relationship be clear to the audience? Are they similar women with similar mannerisms, accents, etc?

Is the initial impression important, and why?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Comic Interludes

How will you treat the comic interludes in the play? Will the audience need a definite signal that we are changing the mood or will you launch straight into the new mood? The Narrator needs time to change into the Gynaecologist, how will this be achieved? Should the Narrator exit and re-enter whilst Mrs. Johnstone stays on stage? Could a chorus member bring a white coat and stethoscope on stage for him? Is it important to maximise the comedy aspect of the scene, and how will you achieve this?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: The Agreement

How should the two women portray the agreement? Initially Mrs. Lyons portrays it as a sensible solution to both their problems, Mrs. Johnstone has doubts, and Mrs Lyons pleads with her. They then sing through the pros and cons. The agreement is reached. How will you show the changing moods? Should the audience be shocked?

Does the mood change again when the Bible is produced?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: The Heartbeat.

This is one of the most important scenes in the play. How will you introduce the heartbeat sound, will the lighting change? Is it important that the audience realise the significance of the scene? Do you want them to be shocked and fear the consequences of the agreement?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Superstition

There is a continuing, important thread of superstition running through the play. How will it be highlighted? Does it need to be highlighted? When it is introduced should the mood change noticeably? Should Mrs Johnstone abruptly stop speaking followed by a long silent pause, when Mrs. Lyons puts the shoes on the table? Should the Narrator speak in a sinister tone? - 'There's shoes upon the table.....'

Is the author saying that not heeding superstitions may be the cause of the coming tragedy?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Twins!

Following the exit of the gynaecologist, how does the mood change? Should the audience see a change of mood? Has the relationship between the two women changed from the initial impression? Should Mrs. Lyons be seen as scheming and pushy? Should Mrs Johnstone be seen as weak? Or, is Mrs Lyons just desperate to have a child and is Mrs. Johnstone desperate to provide for at least one of her children? Are either of the women selfish or is the agreement a sensible conclusion? Are there any doubts that need to be shown to the audience?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Staging Aspects

These extremely important scenes set the story line and confirm to the audience that a path has been set to tragedy. Careful thought needs to be given to sound effects, lighting, relationships between characters, movement, etc.

How should the scene end? The direction is for an abrupt halt of the heart beat followed by the sound of crying babies. Should there be a prolonged pause before the Nurses arrive? Should the audience be given time to absorb what has happened?

Directing Act One: Mickey Aged Seven

Task

Look at Act One - the scene between Mrs. Johnstone and seven year old Mickey. In groups you should create a performance of this scene. One person must work as the director to ensure that the following ideas are incorporated into your performance.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: The entrance of Mickey

This is our first glimpse of Mickey, at age seven. How will you portray his age? Will you have a child actor or will you have an older actor dressed as a child? What clothes would a child from a poor working class family wear?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mickey's Vocals.

How should Mickey sound? Should he have a 'Scouse' accent. as the text indicates, or should his accent suit the location of the production? He seems boisterous, so should he be loud?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mickey's Movements

He is a seven year old returning from play and eager to tell his 'mam' about his morning. Should he be boisterous? Will he move around the stage or should he remain in one position? How will he react when Mrs. Johnstone hugs him? Are the audience supposed to find him comical and are they supposed to like him? How will you convey this by movements?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mickey's Relationship With His Mother.

There is obvious affection between the two, how will you show this affection? How should a seven year old behave towards his mother? Should he be excited and impatient when telling her about his day? How will you show this? Could he be jumping up and down, standing on one foot, interrupting his mother? Should he continually tug on her arm to get her attention?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mrs. Johnstone's love for Mickey.

There is obvious love for her son, how will you convey this to the audience. Should she give him all of her attention? Should she look proud of her son? How will you convey this to the audience? Could she continually hug, touch her son, pat his hair, straighten his clothes?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mickey's Clothes.

Assuming the actor is older and playing down to seven years old, how will you dress him? What would a working class child from Liverpool in the 1950s wear? How will you signify his age by his clothes? Will you dress him in short trousers? Should the clothes be scruffy, threadbare?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Humour

Liverpool is said to be full of comedians, how will you ensure that the play has sufficient humour to counterpoint the tragedy? Is it necessary or desirable to make the counterpoint? Is tragedy heightened by humorous counterpoint?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mickey's Recital.

How will you portray a bored seven year old boy? Should he move about restlessly whilst reciting or should he remain still and talk to the audience? Is he talking to the audience directly? The recital is comical and needs to be delivered with this in mind. Should he gesture to the audience as if letting them into his world?

Maybe he could sit cross legged, and directly engage the audience. Although he is complaining, the text is funny and needs to be delivered in an innocent direct manner. Lots of actions to show the audience what he is talking about. One production actually had him spit gum up into the air and then catch the gum in his mouth on the way down, when he talked about Sammy being able to spit. The audience gasped with genuine shock and then laughed and applauded. In this scene Mickey needs to impress his character upon the audience, he needs to 'blow the audience away', how will you do it?

Directing Act Two: Mickey and Linda Aged Fourteen

Task

Look at Act Two - Mickey and Linda on the hill. In groups you should create a performance of this scene. One person must work as the director to ensure that the following ideas are incorporated into your performance.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mickey's appearance.

How will you show the audience that he is older? Should he now wear short or long trousers as part of his school uniform? Still scruffy and dishevelled? Collar undone, school tie loose around his neck?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Linda's appearance.
Linda is obviously a lot further advanced in her adolescence. How will her clothes show this? Should she wear a tight white shirt open at the neck, showing lots of cleavage, short skirt and totally inappropriate high heels? Linda is the leading light in this relationship and she knows it.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mickey's movements.

Mickey is now an adolescent, how will you show this? He is obviously not yet comfortable around girls, should he move awkwardly? How will you convey his still not completed transformation from a child to a young adult? Is the audience supposed to find this comical and how would you convey the comedy?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Linda's movements.

Is Linda aware of her own sexuality? How will you make it clear to the audience that Linda likes Mickey? *'(Holding out her helpless arms) Me foot's stuck. Honest.'* Is she helpless or does she want Mickey to think she is? She puts his hands on her waist and says *'Oh Mickey, be gentle, be gentle...'* Would she throw her arms around his neck and stand on one leg with the other leg bent in the classic kissing pose? Is she just *'takin the piss'* or is she showing her love for Mickey but is frustrated because Mickey is still an awkward adolescent? How will you show her awakening sexuality?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Tone and Tempo

The audience is being shown the two characters on the cusp of adulthood and although this scene is a comic interlude, it is important that we recognise their growing love and affection for each other. How can you use vocals to help convey the comedic aspect and the serious aspect of couple at this particularly awkward age? Should Mickey be petulant and Linda attempt to appear older than her years?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Positioning on stage.
Should Mickey be walking out in front and Linda be lagging behind? Is Linda faking her difficulty in walking to make Mickey come back and help her? Mickey, annoyed has to retrace his steps, but is he really annoyed or is he confused by his feelings for Linda? Is Linda manipulating the situation and how will you convey this to the audience?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Their relationship.

It is important that this scene portrays the growing relationship between Linda and Mickey. It has to be tender and at the same time funny. It has to convey the disparate stages of adolescence between Linda and Mickey. It should show Linda's ease with her feelings for Mickey and Mickey's confusion in his growing sexuality.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Staging Aspects

They are in the countryside. How will you convey this to the audience? Will you change the set? Will you use sound effects, say, birdsong? Will you use lighting to convey sunlight? How will you convey that it is a hill that they are walking up? Exaggerated movements?

Directing Act Two: The Final Scene

Task

Look at the final scene of the play. In groups you should create a performance of this scene. One person must work as the director to ensure that the following ideas are incorporated into your performance.

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mickey's appearance

You should think carefully about Mickey's final appearance because it will create lasting impressions for the audience? Should he seem completely worn down and altered because of his experiences? Is he recognisable? How should his appearance compare to the boy we met in Act One? Has he now changed?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Mrs. Johnstone's Appearance.
Should she look older, worn down and defeated by her life?
Should it be clear to the audience that despite all of her efforts to overcome her problems, she has not been able to avoid her fate or her destiny?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: The Narrator's Vocals

Consider the Narrator's final lines, should he give the impression that he did warn you what would happen but nobody listened to him? Should he give the impression that what has taken place was inevitable and unavoidable? How should he deliver the final lines - with sympathy or world weariness? Think about the tone, is he happy, sad or indifferent? Is he being sarcastic, because he is the one that did warn everybody?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Sound Effects

How will the shooting sound? Should it be a surprise to the audience? Will the audience be surprised? If you wish to surprise, how will you ensure that the noise of Mickey's gun and the police guns surprise and shock the audience? Should the shots be really loud? After the sound of the guns, should there be a silent pause, will this allow the audience to absorb the shock?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: The Narrator's Tone and Tempo

When the Narrator directly asks the audience, '*And do we blame superstition for what came to pass? Or could it be that we, the English, have come to know as class?*' How should this be delivered? Is it an accusatory question, implying that they haven't even noticed the poverty and unemployment problems? Is it a soft gentle question encouraging the audience to think about the issue of class and relating it their own lives?

When he says '*Did you ever hear the story of the Johnstone twins..... ?*' should he sound world weary and quieter than the first two lines? Should these lines be sympathetic? Should it just sound like repetition?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: Messages and Impressions

What do we wish the audience to think at the end of the play? Although all of the clues were given, do we still want them to be shocked and surprised? Do we wish them to feel cheated because there was no happy ending? Do we want them to be so disconcerted that they will leave the theatre thinking about the issues raised? Or, do we wish them to feel as if they have seen a tragedy and later on they will start to think about the issues raised? Do you wish the audience to leave in tears or do you wish them to be angry? Can the way that we show the final scene affect how the audience react?

DIRECTORIAL IDEAS: The Company

Why do you think the author ends the play with the Company on stage? Is this a normal way of finishing a play or a musical? Is it the author's way of telling the audience that although it was a tragedy - unusual for the genre - it was still a musical?

Student Responses

Task Look at Act One - Mickey aged seven. Describe a suitable costume for the actor playing Mickey in this section. In your answer refer to the period, garments, colour and how costume choice, hair and make-up would emphasise elements of the character.

Student Responses

Task

Look at Act One - Mickey aged seven. Describe a suitable costume for the actor playing Mickey in this section. In your answer refer to the period, garments, colour and how costume choice, hair and make-up would emphasise elements of the character.

I have decided that the actors playing children will all be 'overage' and they will act the younger ages. It is important, from their first glimpse of Mickey, that the audience realises that, whilst the actor is much older than seven, he is meant to be aged seven. It is probable that the audience will not suspend disbelief, but it is only important that they know that Mickey is seven, they do not have to believe it. In order to help the audience to be aware of his age in this scene, his costume will be that of a seven year old.

The costume should be that of a small boy from a working class, single parent family in Liverpool in the early 1960s. Mickey is allowed to play out on the streets of Liverpool, unlike the children of today. Therefore:

- Scruffy, dishevelled appearance, unkempt short hair, grubby knees;*
- Dirty white, long-sleeved shirt, no buttons on frayed cuffs;*
- Short, school type trousers, grey in colour, too tight for actor's size, patched on rear;*
- Black, scuffed school shoes, one lace undone, rumpled school socks;*
- Grey, short-sleeved, woollen sweater, fraying at hem.*

His poverty should be obvious and attention to detail is everything for this character, as he will be in juxtaposition with the wealth of Edward and the Lyons family. He needs to be an almost feral child and the costume should reflect that he is allowed to roam the streets of Liverpool. His make-up should also emphasise this point; tanned but mucky legs and arms and ruddy cheeks.

His clothes should all be slightly too small in order to convey the use of 'hand-me-down' clothes in the poor family. The tightness of the clothes will also help the audience, as no matter how we try to hide the fact that the actor is too old, they will not entirely suspend disbelief. The intention is to surprise the audience; whilst the character is supposed to be a child, he is obviously not a child. It is theatre and it is not reality, the character is exaggerated and is a caricature of a seven year old child.

Student Responses

Task

Look at Act One - the opening scene from the death scenario to the exit of the milkman. As an actor how would you communicate the role of Mrs. Johnstone to an audience in this section? In your answer you should refer to character motivation, performance ideas on voice, movement and gesture and interaction with other characters.

Student Responses

Task

Look at Act One - the opening scene from the death scenario to the exit of the milkman. As an actor how would you communicate the role of Mrs. Johnstone to an audience in this section? In your answer you should refer to character motivation, performance ideas on voice, movement and gesture and interaction with other characters.

This scene establishes the plot up for the audience; we hear her history and see her difficult circumstances, we see her happiness and her unhappiness.

The first song tells a sad story mixed with sympathy and affection. This is one of the main musical sections and as she starts to sing she should be centre stage with the chorus appearing behind her, as she sings the first verse, a handsome man (her husband) in evening dress appears and stands behind her, he taps her on the shoulder and, as she sings 'And we went dancing,' he sweeps her off her feet and they dance together, with the chorus dancing around them. At the end of the song she comes back down to earth again.

Mrs. Johnstone is the central character of the play, she is the mainstay of her family and their only means of survival. She needs to be strong but vulnerable, and at the same time she is aware of her position in the scheme of things. She was a pretty girl who enjoyed life and is now tied to her children, whom she loves.

As the main character she needs to dominate the stage and hold the continuity together. The audience need to quickly realise her precarious position and realise that she is doing what she can to keep her family together. Although she seems downtrodden, she needs to have a certain dignity.

She is thirty but looks more like fifty. She should therefore be world-weary and sometimes seem put-upon. The audience should immediately feel sympathy for her position. Her spirit shines through when singing to the audience and when talking to her children, but her subservience is shown when talking to the milkman and trying to extend her credit. She will do what is needed to ensure money and food for her children. She seems to be 'street-wise' but will later reveal the superstitious side of her nature.

When singing she should command the stage as she is the main character, but when she is belittling herself for the sake of her family, she should seem meek and slightly reticent. The tone and level of her voice should vary according to her circumstances. When happy she should glide around the stage and when sad and worried she should wring her hands.

She shows her happy memories: 'He told me I was sexier than Marilyn Monroe.' And she shows her vulnerability: 'Yean't stop the milk. I need the milk. I'm pregnant.' She does not, however, show her vulnerability to her children.

Mrs Johnstone needs to be a strong, character who is doing her best for her children in extremely difficult circumstances. She devotes all of her being to improving the lot of her children.

Student Responses

Task Look at Act One. As an actor, how would you portray the role of Mrs. Lyons to an audience, in this section? In your answer, you should refer to character motivation, performance ideas on voice, movement and gesture and interaction with other characters.

Student Responses

Task

Look at Act One. As an actor, how would you portray the role of Mrs. Lyons to an audience, in this section? In your answer, you should refer to character motivation, performance ideas on voice, movement and gesture and interaction with other characters.

In her first scene, Mrs. Lyons seems very nice and friendly. She is middle class, she lives in a nice house, her husband has a good job and she can afford to employ a cleaner. She can afford to buy new shoes. She will have a middle class accent - posh Scouse if the play is set in Liverpool, rather like that of Shirley Valentine.

Her clothes and movement will reflect her position in life, neat hair, smart clothes and genteel movements. She seems happy to have Mrs Johnstone as an employee but also seems to want to stay on friendly terms with her, rather than treating her as an underling, as a more upper-class employer may well have done. Mrs. Lyons symbolises the difference in circumstances between the two families and the difference in class.

Her first obvious problem that spoils her seemingly idyllic life is the fact that her husband works away from home for long stretches of time. When Mrs. Johnstone mentions that she will be glad when he's back, Mrs Lyons should pause, turn away as if upset, and unwrap the parcel. The audience should be aware that not everything is rosy in the life of Mrs. Lyons.

Mrs. Lyons then, haltingly, tells Mrs. Johnstone that she cannot have children. The audience should now feel sympathy for her, especially when Mrs. Johnstone says that 'My husband used to say that all we had to do was shake hands and I'd be in the club.'

When she realises that Mrs. Johnstone is expecting twins, she takes control of the conversation and persuades her to give up a child. She uses logic and quick fire interrogation to hurry Mrs. Johnstone into a decision. We need to recognise a slightly different, perhaps darker, more manipulative side to Mrs. Lyons.

Later on we see this darker side when she utilises Mrs. Johnstone's superstitions to keep her quiet.

We need to believe that whilst she may sometimes seem like the villain of the piece, she is herself a victim of her circumstances, and we need to feel some sympathy for her.

Student Responses

Task

Look at Act Two - Edward returns from university. Describe a suitable costume for the actor playing the role of Edward in this section. In your answer refer to the period, garments, colour and how costume choice, hair and make-up would emphasise elements of the character.

Student Responses

Task

Look at Act Two - Edward returns from university. Describe a suitable costume for the actor playing the role of Link in this section. In your answer refer to the period, garments, colour and how costume choice, hair and make-up would emphasise elements of the character.

It is important that Edward's costume in this scene contrasts with his costume when we last saw him. Edward is now at university and has begun to pick up the mannerisms of a student. In the early 1970s students were still a rare sight, unlike the present day only a minority of the secondary school population passed into university education. Only the best GCE pupils progressed into the VI form and then only the best A Level pupils progressed into university. Further education at that time consisted of universities, polytechnics and technical colleges, the latter two were seen more as training for trades and certain industries. There was a certain status and image to being a university student.

The majority of students at Oxbridge were, at that time, still from the upper privileged classes and a middle class boy would probably have dressed in the same fashion as, and looked similar to, the majority. The stage directions are for duffel coat and college scarf and might have been a camel coloured duffel coat and striped college scarf. The prevailing fashion was casual/smart and the ensemble might have been completed with grey trousers and black shoes. Under the coat it was fashionable for a student to wear a black polo neck sweater. Edward's hair would have been slightly long and wavy, if he was copying the upper class students (Hugh Grant-like).

Edward's appearance needs to be different from when we last saw him. Previously he would have worn better clothes than Mickey and Linda, because of his family's better circumstances, but now we need to see that he has moved up to yet another level. His superior education is now shaping his look. We also need his look to contrast with that of Mickey, so that the growing social gap is obvious.

He is now much more experienced, a man of the world achieving everything that he ever wanted and everything that was ever expected of him. He is now the exact opposite of Mickey. His clothes must reflect this.

Student Responses

Task

Look at the final scene. Describe a suitable costume for the actor playing the role of Mrs. Johnstone in this section. In your answer refer to the period, garments, colour and how costume choice, hair and make-up would emphasise elements of the character.

Student Responses

Task

Look at the final scene. Describe a suitable costume for the actor playing the role of Mrs. Johnstone in this section. In your answer refer to the period, garments, colour and how costume choice, hair and make-up would emphasise elements of the character.

Mrs. Johnstone's clothes for the final scene should be her street clothes - the clothes that she would wear for going to the shops. A mother of children in the 1970s, even though a single parent poor family, would have strived to 'keep up appearances'. She may be poor but that would have been no excuse for not being clean and tidy. Women in the worst city slum housing would have still made sure that their front steps were scrubbed clean and the pavement outside their house brushed clean.

Her clothes may have been drab and threadbare but they would have been clean and tidy - dark coat that wraps around her tightly, tan coloured nylon tights and low-heeled shoes. Her pride in appearance might have included a silver brooch on her coat, however cheap the brooch. Her hair would have been simple, manageable and tidy as when she did her work she would not want it to get in her way. Her make up would have been simple as she would not have had money to spend on make-up products.

She should look older than before and perhaps a headscarf will suggest ageing. She is still in poverty and her life has, even after all her trials and tribulations, taken another turn for the worse. She is still downtrodden and she cannot avoid her destiny and the destiny of her sons.

The final scene needs to be powerful, this is the moment of tragedy brought home to the audience. The audience knew at the beginning what was likely to happen, and nothing that any of the characters did could alter the inevitable end. In spite of the prior knowledge, the audience needs to be shocked at the ending, they need to be brought up short and need to recognise the appalling fate of the mother and her family, despite the best endeavours of Mrs.

Johnstone. Her appearance should reflect this. The audience need to recognise a women who has striven to rise above her circumstances and has, in spite of her best intentions and numerous sacrifices, suffered the worst kind of tragedy. Was it her fault, should she never had made the pact, should she have