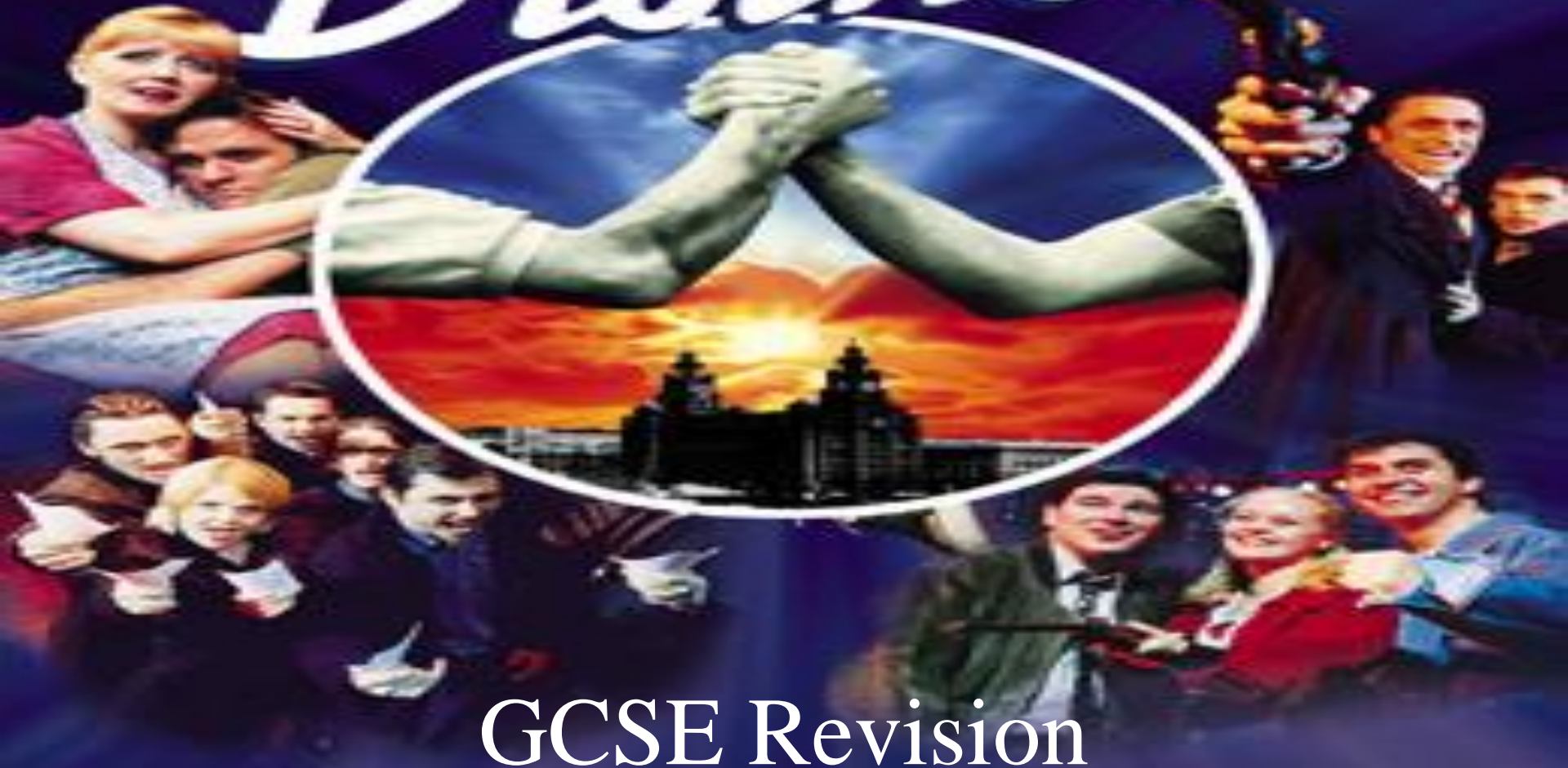


WILLY RUSSELL'S  
**BLOOD**  
*Brothers*



GCSE Revision

# ACT 1

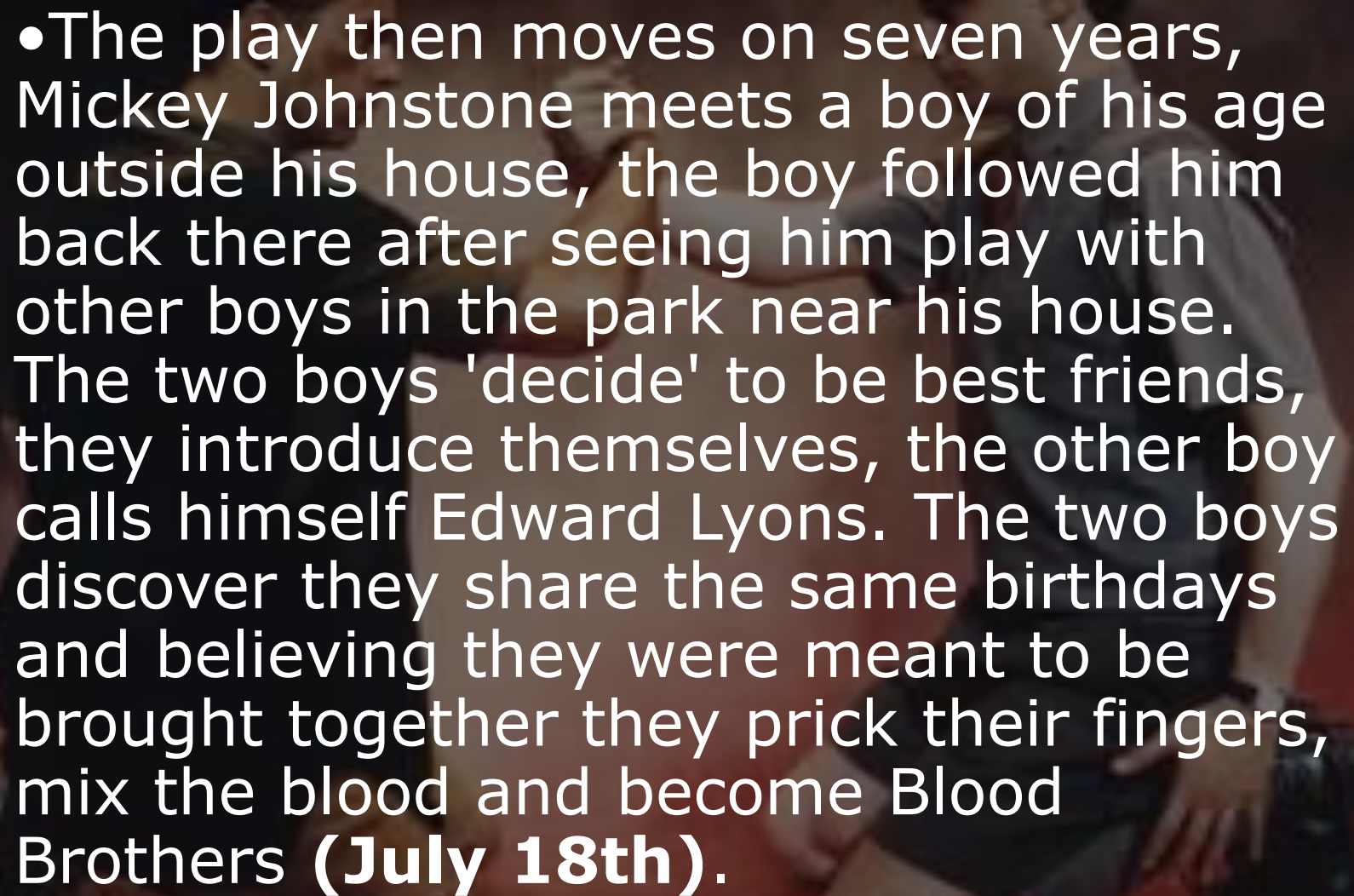
- The play opens on a council chamber, two dead bodies are lying on stretchers surrounded by police and onlookers. As the narrator explains the story, the onlookers slowly start to exit, leaving only the narrator and a grieving woman on stage (**Overture**).

- Mrs Johnstone sings us the story of her life and how she became a mother of seven by the age of 25. She explains how her husband left her for another woman and she is expecting another baby (**Marilyn Monroe**).

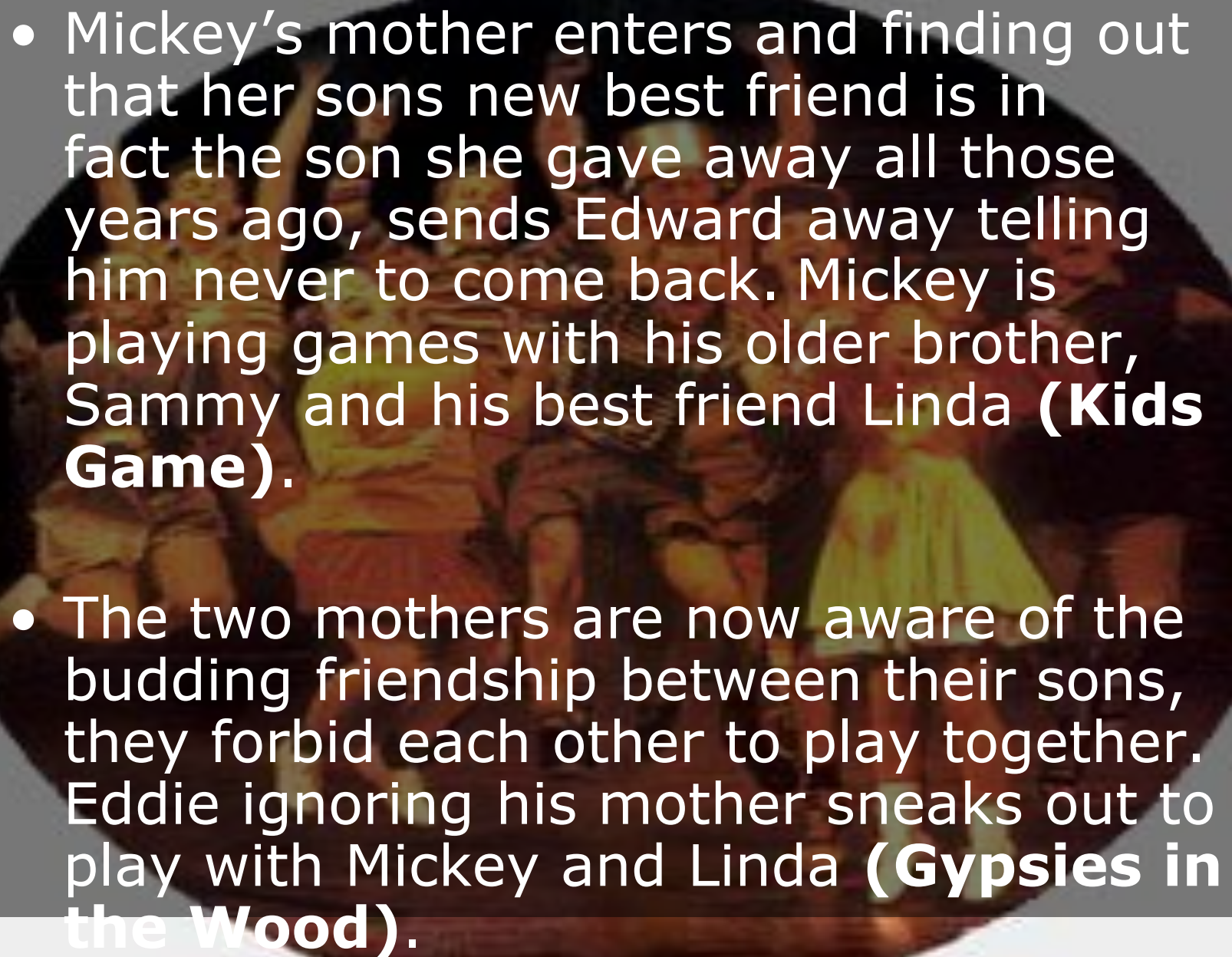


- Mrs Johnstone gets a job cleaning the house of a well off woman, Mrs Lyons, Mrs Lyons' husband is away on business for nine months. Mrs Johnstone learns that she is in fact expecting twins, she is extremely worried that the welfare will take some of her children away as she cannot afford to look after them all. Mrs Lyons learns of this and as she is unable to have children of her own, persuades Mrs Johnstone to give her one of the twins (**My Child**).
- Mrs Johnstone reluctantly agrees as Mrs Lyons says she will be able to see the child every day at work. Mrs Johnstone gives birth to two boys, Michael and Edward. She comes home from the hospital to find men taking away ordered items she couldn't pay for, and sings of how everything slips away from her, even one of her babies (**Easy Terms**).
- During the song Mrs Lyons comes for 'her' baby.

- Mrs Johnstone is at work playing with Edward on her break when Mrs Lyons orders her back to work. Whilst Mrs Johnstone is gone Mrs Lyons tells her husband that Mrs Johnstone's work has deteriorated and she should be sacked. Mr Lyons agrees telling his wife that the house is her domain. Once Mr Lyons has left for work, Mrs Lyons calls down her employee and lets her go giving her money as a bribe. Mrs Johnstone is shocked and outraged saying that if she leaves she will take her son with her, Mrs Lyons tells her she cannot do that as, if twins parted at birth ever learn of the truth they shall both immediately die, according to superstition.
- Mrs Johnstone who is very superstitious, quickly leaves distraught (**Shoes Upon The Table**).



•The play then moves on seven years, Mickey Johnstone meets a boy of his age outside his house, the boy followed him back there after seeing him play with other boys in the park near his house. The two boys 'decide' to be best friends, they introduce themselves, the other boy calls himself Edward Lyons. The two boys discover they share the same birthdays and believing they were meant to be brought together they prick their fingers, mix the blood and become Blood Brothers (**July 18th**).

- 
- Mickey's mother enters and finding out that her sons new best friend is in fact the son she gave away all those years ago, sends Edward away telling him never to come back. Mickey is playing games with his older brother, Sammy and his best friend Linda (**Kids Game**).
  - The two mothers are now aware of the budding friendship between their sons, they forbid each other to play together. Eddie ignoring his mother sneaks out to play with Mickey and Linda (**Gypsies in the Wood**).

- Mrs Lyons is so afraid that Eddie will find out the truth she persuades Mr Lyons it would be best if they moved to the country as their son is starting to mix with the wrong kind of people. Initially Mr Lyons says no but he is persuaded when Eddie is brought home by a policeman. Eddie goes round to the Johnstone's to say his final goodbyes, Mrs Johnstone answers the door, unable to bear the fact she will lose her son again she gives him a locket with a photo of herself and Mickey for him to keep, but makes him promise he will keep it a secret. Eddie then says goodbye to his best friend and gives him a final present, a toy gun before he leaves.



- Mickey out playing sings of his loneliness now Eddie has moved away (**Long Sunday Afternoon**). At the same time, Eddie in his new house sings of Mickey (**My Friend**). The postman enters with a special delivery informing the family they are to be rehoused to the country as the council is tearing their current house down. Mrs Johnstone and the children sing of their new life in the country, Mickey rushes off to find Linda, he finds out she has also been rehoused with her family. Linda joins in the song with the rest of the family (**Bright New Day**).

- At the start of Act 2, Mrs Johnstone enters now living at her new home in Skelmersdale lane. She introduces Sammy, now 16 who has burnt the school down and Mickey, now 14 and in love with Linda. **(Marilyn Monroe 2)**. All Mrs Johnstone's other children have 'got married or moved away' and Donna Marie has 3 children. She hasn't seen Edward for years as he moved away to the country.
- Edward, now also 14 is going to his posh boarding school. However, he gets suspended for not giving a teacher the locket that Mrs Johnstone gave him before he moved away in the first act. Mrs Lyons asks Edward about the locket **(Secrets)** and looks at the picture inside thinking the photograph is of Edward and Mrs Johnstone, although it is Mickey and Mrs Johnstone when they were younger.

- Linda, now also 14 and in love with Mickey and tells him all over the place, Mickey dare not tell her how he feels about her. They both get suspended in class. Now both Mickey and Eddie are suspended from School they bump into each other again, at first not recognising one another and each sing how they wish they could be like one another. **(That Guy)**.
- Edward and Linda are re-introduced and the three of them spend 4 years together, between the ages of 14 and 18 doing everything together and having lots of fun **(Summer Sequence)**.

- Edward realises he is falling in love with Linda, he sings of how Mickey and Linda should be together to Linda and of how he would treat her, hinting at his true feelings (**I'm not Saying a Word**). Edward makes Mickey ask Linda out, and she says yes with no hesitation. Instead of spending Edwards last night together Edward, upset goes home alone while Mickey and Linda go out to celebrate.

- A couple of months after Edward leaves, Linda falls pregnant, Mickey tells his mother and she gives her blessing for them to get married (**One Day in October**) and agrees they can live with her.



When Mickey turns up for work after the wedding he is fired (**Take A Letter Miss Jones**).

He walks round all day every day looking for a new job, but there is nothing, upset and angry he meets Eddie again whilst he is back on Christmas Break. They have a huge argument when Eddie offers Mickey money so he can go out dancing, Mickey is furious that Eddie can still act like a child and not have to face up to responsibility like he does. Mickey tells him to leave him alone, Eddie leaves and both of the men are furious with the other.

- Eddie goes to find Linda and tells her he is in love with her and always has been, Linda admits she feels the same about him, because of this Eddie proposes and Linda tells him about the baby and the wedding. Eddie is in shock and upset, he reluctantly leaves. Meanwhile Sammy tries to persuade Mickey to stand guard while a robbery takes place, Mickey desperate for money agrees.
- In the robbery things go wrong and Sammy accidentally shoots a man and kills him (**The Robbery**).



He flees the scene leaving Mickey. Mickey is sent down for seven years and whilst he is in prison he becomes depressed. The doctor prescribes him pills, these however make him feel low and exhausted.

After many visits from Linda he gets out of jail, but is still taking the pills and is now addicted to them (**Marilyn Monroe 3**).

- Mickey refuses to stop taking his tablets, Linda upset and frustrated calls Eddie at the Council. They meet up, it starts as a friendship but a romance buds (**Light Romance**).
- Mrs Lyons intent on ruining life for the Johnstones' goes to Mickey's workplace and tells him of the close relationship between Eddie and Linda. Mickey, delirious from his pills runs from work to his house and takes a loaded gun to the Council to confront Eddie (**Madman**).

- He runs into the middle of a meeting and holds the gun to Eddie's head. He accuses him of getting everything in life, even Linda, whilst he got nothing. Mickey, extremely upset and confused, breaks down crying. Mrs Johnstone runs into the Council Chamber begging Mickey to not shoot Eddie, revealing that they are in fact twin brothers. At this news Mickey starts screaming that he wishes he had been given away so he could be Eddie. At this point the gun accidentally goes off, shooting and killing Eddie. At the same time the armed police shoot and kill Mickey (**The Council Chamber**).

- As the superstition said, when the twin brothers found out about the others existence they both died simultaneously.
- We are back to the opening scene, two dead bodies lie on the floor of a Council Chamber. The Narrator recaps the story. Mrs Johnstone, crying sings of how she wishes the sad reality of the situation wasn't true (**Tell Me It's Not True**).

Curtain Falls

# Themes

There are many themes used in 'Blood Brothers', the main ones being based on class and superstition.

# Social Class

In this country, class effects how people are able to live their lives and the situations they are in.

- In 'Blood Brothers' Mrs Johnstone lives in a poor end of Liverpool, struggling to bring up eight children on her own and is forced to give one away to keep the others clothed and fed well enough, whereas Mrs Lyons, whom she works for, lives in a large house, very comfortably in a nice part of Liverpool, she wants children but is unable to have any, even though she is rich, unlike Mrs Johnstone.

# Love and Superstition

- Love is a theme, shown by the two women who love their sons but show it in completely different ways. Along with superstition, this is the basis of the whole story and is a theme that continues throughout the whole play, the consequences of most of the happenings can be traced back to superstition.
- It is also the reason for the tragic end of the play.

# Friendship

- There's also the theme of friendship, linked between Mickey, Eddie and Linda and how they are all friends, but it gradually brakes apart, Mickey and Linda's friendship develops into love, and Mickey and Eddie's friendship firstly breaks up when Eddie is forced to move away by his parents, then again later in the play when Mickey becomes depressed he begins to become jealous of Eddie, again leading up to the tragic consequences. Hate then becomes part of the play, as Mrs Lyons comes to despise Mrs Johnstone because of the situation both women are in with the twins.

# Guilt

- Mrs Johnstone is fulfilled with the theme of guilt through out most of the play because of giving her son Edward away to Mrs Lyons, but also Mrs Lyons feels guilt because she has lied to everyone about Edward being her own son, she lied to her husband, friends, family and even Edward himself. Mickey also becomes to feeling guilt because he is so depressed he cannot support himself or his family (Linda and their child) and he has to rely on Linda and Mrs Johnstone to actually support him.