

Themes – A theme is an idea or message that runs throughout a text.

Social Class and Wealth – The themes of class and money are dominant as they both control the actions of characters and significantly impact upon their lives. For example, the catalytic deed – Mrs Johnstone giving one of the twins away – comes about because she simply cannot afford to keep them both. Class then heavily influences the paths that Mickey and Edward then follow.

Class- Mickey has less opportunities, poor education and an unsecure job- he is involved in drugs, depression and crime because of his poverty.

Fate and Superstition – The voice of fate is provided over and over again throughout the play by the Narrator, who reveals even at the outset that the two will die. Mrs Lyons plays on Mrs Johnstone's belief in superstition in order to keep her away from Edward. However ridiculous and made-up it sounds, it eventually comes to pass, almost as if the false threat is in itself a sin.

Nature vs Nurture – As Mickey and Edward are twins, they are genetically (nature) as similar as can be. Therefore, Russell is suggesting that it is in fact nurture (their upbringing) that causes their contrasting behaviours, actions, and mannerisms. It is clear that Russell feels that unjust society is the heaviest influence in where people end up.

Coming of Age – Although much of the play focuses on dark and complex ideas, one of the lighter themes within the play is the theme of the boys 'coming of age.' Although the play ends tragically, much of it deals with the boys growing up, evolving from young boys, to teenagers, to men. As they mature, their experiences and preoccupations notably shift.

Education- Due to class, education is offered differently to the two boys- with Edward being in a private, boarding school and Mickey a comprehensive school where Mickey is poorly educated.

Russell's Dramatic Devices		Features of tragedy
Dramatic Irony	The audience is aware throughout the play that Mickey and Edward are twins, but they do not know this until the very last scene.	Tragic Hero - A main character cursed by fate and in possession of a tragic flaw (both Mickey and Edward display some features of tragic heroes).
The fourth wall	The Narrator and Mrs Johnstone break the fourth wall when they speak to the audience directly at the beginning and end of the play.	Hamartia - The fatal character flaw of the tragic hero (their upbringings/differences, and also their bond between one another).
Stage directions	The precise directions detailing how Mickey, <i>'uncontrollable with rage'</i> , <i>'waves'</i> the gun around before it explodes at Edward.	Catharsis - The release of the audience's emotions through empathy with the characters.
Dramatic tension	The events leading up to the final scene, including Edward and Linda's affair, and Mickey finding out, help to build the dramatic tension.	Internal Conflict - The struggle characters engage with over incidents/flaws. (Mrs Johnstone's regret at giving one of her twins away).