

## Act One



Read Act One of the play before completing this worksheet, if you haven't read the Act then this will be a 'spoiler alert'

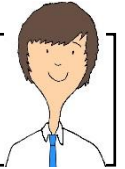
The Narrator reveals the entire story of the Johnstone twins from birth to death at the opening of the play.

Think about the Narrator as a dramatic device – a character created by Russell to tell the story and manipulate the audience's response to it. *'Foreshadowing'* is just one example of a *'dramatic device'*.

What is foreshadowing?

Foreshadowing is a technique used by authors to provide clues for the reader to be able to predict what might occur later in the story. In other words, it is a literary device in which an author/playwright drops subtle hints about the plot developments to come later in the story.

*"Shakespeare used a similar structural technique in both 'Macbeth' and 'Romeo & Juliet', revealing the fates of the central characters at, or near, the start of the play. In 'Romeo & Juliet', Shakespeare uses a chorus – similar to the narrator in 'Blood Brothers' to do this".*



The very first few lines of Blood Brothers are a kind of prologue, summarising the story of the play and revealing that the twins will both die. A reader's or an audience's interest is often sustained by wanting to find out how a story ends. However, the opening of Blood Brothers encourages the audience to ask how and why the twins die, and to be aware throughout the play that their deaths will be the result of all the character's choices and actions that we see on stage.

There are several uses of the dramatic device -'foreshadowing'. Give two examples from the opening of the play.

The Narrator introduces Mrs Johnstone saying **'An did y' never hear of the mother, so cruel / There's a stone in place of her heart'** (pg. 5). How would this make the audience or yourself feel towards Mrs Johnstone & type of person she is?

Russell seems to be suggesting that society might jump to the conclusion that a mother who gives away a child must be cold and heartless. However immediately after this, the narrator focuses the scene on the circumstances that drove Mrs Johnstone to that decision. Does this change the audience's opinion, how would the audience now feel towards Mrs Johnstone?

Why do you think Russell uses the Narrator to play parts of the Milkman and the Gynaecologist? (pg.6 & 9)