

The Character of Edward - Transcript

Mickey: 'I'd crawl back to that job for half the pay and double the hours'

Edward: 'Why... why is a job so important?'

Edward: 'If I couldn't get a job I'd just say, sod it and draw the dole, live like a bohemian, tilt my hat to the world.'

Presenter: This scene highlights the core difference between childhood friends Edward and Mickey in Willy Russell's play, Blood Brothers.

Edward's language is dismissive and playful when he says 'I'd just say, sod it' - which shows a pretty stark contrast to the vivid physical metaphor used by Mickey, who says he would 'crawl back' to a job he hates.

It highlights Edward's lack of awareness about the reality of Mickey's life - a naivety that sees their relationship collapse and results in a tragic end.

Edward is first introduced as a kind and generous child, sharing his sweets with Mickey - 'take as many as you want' he says.

As a 'clean, neat and tidy' child, he admires and envies Mickey's freedom and rebellious nature.

Edward shows his innocence when he says...

Edward: 'He was untidy from Monday to Friday.

I wish that I could be like my friend.'

Presenter: Edward's privileged upbringing sees him attend a private school, graduate from Oxford University and land a well-respected job in the city council.

His experience is used by the author to represent life for many within the middle class of the 1980s when the play was written - well off, comfortable.

But the 80s were also a time when many working class communities faced high unemployment.

Edward's childhood innocence soon leads to him becoming a naïve adult, as he can't quite get his head around the lived experience of his old friend.

Yet still, Edward envies what Mickey has and is drawn to Mickey's wife, Linda.

Narrator: 'Their smiles fade as they look at each other. Suddenly they kiss.'

Presenter: Their affair is discovered, which is the final straw for Mickey - and triggers a tragic and violent ending.

Through Edward and Mickey's differing lives, Willy Russell explores the extent to which social class and opportunity can shape a person's life and fate.

What comment do you think the playwright is making, through the main characters, about the impact of social class in 1980s Britain?