

Level 3 NCEA DRAMA
91512 (3.1) Resource B
Statement of Intention

Student 3: Low Merit
NZQA Intended for teacher use only

Role: Iris
Play: Wednesday to Come
Playwright: Renee

1. Give one key phrase that sums up what you want the audience to understand from your performance.

I want the audience to see that this is a moment of closure for Iris. This is the first and final moment between Iris and Ben and it is the first time Iris has been alone with the body to just talk. Because of this, I want the audience to see that everything that Iris is saying is genuine, she is not saying it for anyone but herself. This is a moment of pure truth so I hope to effectively portray this to the audience in my performance. A direct quote from the sequence that really sums this up is "not supposed to say that to the dead, I know, but it's true". This sums it up as it shows that Iris is being completely honest and getting everything off her chest, she's saying it for herself so whether or not it's seen as disrespecting the dead or not is not really her concern.

2. What is the action line of your scene? How does this fit into the larger play?

Through the larger play leading to this scene Iris had been closed off emotionally, appearing almost blasé about the situation. This scene fits in as the moment where she is able to finally open up emotionally and get everything off her chest about everything she feels she needs to say to Ben before she can say goodbye. The action line of this scene what is really driving Iris to say and do everything she does is the unanswered questions she has for Ben, like she needs the answers to move on, such as "we did well with them didn't we?" she needs reassurance they did a good job with the kids, or "who'll remember us?" one of the most important lines, Iris fears being forgotten and she needs assurance this won't be so.

3. Describe your role, including physical and emotional characteristics, action, attitudes and behaviours, and how your role relates to others.

Iris is one of four generations that is featured in Wednesday to Come. She is the granddaughter of Granma, the daughter of Mary, and the mother of Cliff and Jeanie. The four women of this play are working class, living through the 1930's Depression. The plays focal point is of the arrival of the body or Iris's husband, Ben. Her emotional physical characteristics, her attitude and her behaviour can be seen by her reaction to his body's deliverance. She carries weight in her shoulders and chest to show the emotional baggage she is carrying. She learnt how to be alone and independent when Ben was sent away to a work camp, and now she is alone again now he's dead. She is a strong, proud and independent woman which shows in her posture, head kept high. She is a passionate mother and has long accepted she's lost her husband before to an affair, but now to death, but she resents him for leaving the children behind. Through the extract she gets stranger and surer as she speaks, she goes in with a purpose to say certain things and although is nervous and trying to cope with the body

at first, she is relieved when finished. She is determined, went in with a goal to get closure and she battled through many emotions, pain, anger, frustration to get it.

4. What time and place is your play set? How does the setting relate to key social/historical ideas of the time, the theatre form/period, of key ideas still relevant today?

The play is set in the 1930's New Zealand, during the economic depression. The depression mainly affected New Zealand's international exports, resulting in the average farm's income to drop to a negative. The play is set 'somewhere between Palmerston North and Wellington', the ambiguous location suggests a small town and in New Zealand that would generally be a rural area. As unemployment benefits did not yet exist, the men were sent to 'relief camps' where they were given work: hard labour including building roads. The women were left at home. These historical ideas are reflected in the play with four generations of working class women at home, dealing with the aftermath of the suicide of Iris' husband as a result of the physical and mental toll of the work camp he was sent to. The depression was a period that shaped entire lives rather than just be a part of them and this is seen in the setting of the play; from the small house, the rationed food, the women forced to become independent from their husbands who were sent to work.

5. Describe the situation in the scene you present including key relationships and problems, and how these relate to a key theme of the play as a whole.

The situation of my scene is Iris talking to the body of her husband after he committed suicide. This is the first time she is able to talk to him one-on-one since he died and the last time before he is buried. The main purpose of what Iris does in this scene is to get everything off her chest about things she has not been able to say to Ben before and how she feels about his death. She talk to him about how she doesn't understand how he could leave his children behind, how she always knew about the affair he was having, how she resents that he couldn't deal with what was happening to him leading to his suicide, and how she fears she'll be forgotten. The nature of their relationship can be seen in this speech of hers, she resents him for leaving the children behind and states "we did well with them....." as well as assuring him the kids will never forget him, yet she just accepts the fact he was having an affair and that the marriage didn't work out. My interpretation of this is that Iris loved Ben as a father to her children, but knew she had already lost him as a husband. A key theme of the play is the independent and strong portrayal of the woman, I feel Iris feels as she is stronger than Ben ("it takes a whole lot more to go on living") and she hates that he will be remembered for how he did, while she will be forgotten for everything she's done to keep on living.