Extract: “Davie: (Hesitates)”…”Takes yacht, exits”

By referring to this extract and to at least two other incidents from elsewhere in the play, explain how the characters Alec and Davie change and develop as the plot progresses.

Through effective dialogue, the audience witnesses a change in Alec’s characterisation which, in turn, impacts on his relationship with his father. Up to this point, the playwright has made clear that Alec has full faith in his father making a new sail to resurrect the yacht. However, in this extract, in response to Davie’s promises to actually see this through, with growing realisation Alec blurts out “Ye’ve been sayin that for weeks!” This is the first hint to the audience that Alec is losing faith in Davie as a reliable father figure.

As the plot progresses, a turning point evokes a further change in Alec’s characterisation and accelerates the deterioration of the relationship between the two characters. At the end of Act One, with resignation and a level of acceptance, Alec picks up the yacht and informs his father “Ah’ll shove this in the Glory Hole”. It depicts a significant moment in the changing relationship as Alec’s expectations of his father are slowly diminishing. Alec is becoming more mature in his dealings with the reality of his father’s nature. Despite the yacht having been painted, Alec is confident his father will not fulfil his promise. This turning point marks a significant shift in their relationship.

Furthermore, lighting convincingly portrays the distance growing between these two main characters. Alec dances enthusiastically to records, when suddenly “(Music stops dead, lights go dim)”. The shock generated within the audience mirrors the impact on Alec when he discovers the truth that the electricity has been cut off because his father had failed to pay the bill. This contrasts the nature of their relationship in Act One when there were no secrets between Alec and his father, to the point where Davie openly shared details of having been beaten up due to his gambling debts. This time, Davie hides the significant truth of his situation that he cannot bring himself to share with his son. Thus, lighting subtly evokes the change in relationship between father and son. The absence of light further signifies the growing darkness in each character’s life. Despite the surrounding “dim”, Alec begins to admit to himself that his father is never going to change. Whilst he attempts to elevate himself from the situation, Davie is slowly slipping further in to darkness.