

Tally's Blood

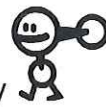
Student Study Pack





Summary

Tally's Blood by Anne Marie Di Mambro is a play set in Scotland and Italy and takes place both before, during and after the Second World War. The play follows the friendship between a young Italian girl living with her aunt and uncle in their café in the west of Scotland and a young Scottish boy. When war breaks out, the tensions and prejudices between the two families heighten as the Italian immigrants in Scotland find their home country at war with their adopted country.



Structure of the play

- The play progresses chronologically. It covers a period of twenty years.
- There are large gaps in the time-line: Act One has scenes set in 1936, 1939, 1943 and 1944. Act Two is set eleven years later in 1955.
- There are 31 scenes, giving the play a cinematic structure. This technique pushes the storyline on quickly, even when there is a break in the time sequence. It builds up a sense of tension.
- One important character, Luigi, has only a very brief appearance at the beginning of Act One, and is in fewer than half the scenes in Act Two.
- One influential character – Massimo's father – does not appear at all but we hear a great deal about him and recognise his influence on his sons and daughter-in-law.
- Two nationalities are involved – Scottish and Italian. Differences in their national characteristics are important but there are similarities, too – religion, family ties, hardships.



Language of the play

- The language is realistic – mostly that of working class Glaswegians.
- Massimo and, particularly, Rosinella occasionally introduce Italian phrases or speech patterns.
- In the scenes set in Italy, the characters sometimes use Italian.
- In one scene the playwright uses the device of having her characters speak in the Glaswegian dialect although they are supposedly speaking Italian. This device enables the audience to understand the dialogue though Hughie cannot.
- The children use vocabulary and sentence structure appropriate to their age.

Timeline



Act 1

Scene 1 – 1936 Italy

Play begins: handing over of a child

Italian language

Mourning bell, black arm band

Introduces: Massimo, Rosinella, Luigi. Lucia.

Scene 2 – years later Scotland

Lucia is now 5

Lucia is spoiled by M & R

Franco is desperate to leave his dad & life in the shop

M & R show deep affection for each other.

Scene 3-6 Scotland

Relationship develops between Franco & Bridget

Tension between M & R over Lucia's behaviour

Lucia more aware of her Italian background, R worried.

L not speaking English at school

Hughie starts job, H & L start argumentative relationship.

H & L share the experience of losing a parent.

Scene 7 -13 Scotland

War breaks out. Franco joins the British army.

Italy enters the war against Britain.

Mob attacks shop & M arrested.

Bridget borrows money. R hostile towards B.

Scene 14- 17 Church & Shop

M's soliloquy

Franco killed in war.

B tells R about F's letter – relationship was serious.

H& L become 'blood brothers'

M in Canada

R tells L about her elopement with M.

Act 2

Scene 1 – Italy 11 years later

M visits his father's house

Luigi manipulator & selfish.

Luigi jealous of M's things.

Scenes 2-9 Scotland

R tries to get L interested in an Italian boy

L asks to go to wedding with H

L angry that her life is managed for her.

H writes love letter to L, R takes it.

L told to return to Italy.

Bridget tells R about abortion of F's baby.

M realised how selfish R has been – big fight.

Scenes 10-14 Italy 1955

L not happy in Italy – forced to work.

R change of heart. Encourages L & H

Luigi refuses H.

R & H hatch a plan

Bridget helped R to change her ways.

M & R back together, L & H together.



Character Relationships

- **Rosinella and Massimo.** Loving, teasing, showing affection in a rough kind of way. No mention of love. They do argue, usually over Lucia. Massimo even slaps Rosinella once. Eventually Massimo comes to recognise Rosinella's selfishness and there is an estrangement between them. However, her conversion to Hughie's cause brings Massimo back to her. He is naturally the head of the household and expects her to accept his decisions. However, he is weak, especially over Lucia, and Rosinella can usually manipulate him.
- **Franco and Massimo.** Strong brotherly affection which survives even their bitter fight over enlistment. Massimo covers for Franco, deceiving their father. Franco is a little jealous of Massimo's break with their father.
- **Franco and Bridget.** Although Franco does enjoy his status as a heroic figure, he does seem to be genuinely in love with Bridget, prepared to risk his father's wrath and boasting about her to Rosinella, in spite of her hostility to Scottish girls.
- **Lucia and Hughie.** They begin as childish sparring partners and they never quite lose this fun element in their relationship. This makes it harder for Hughie to speak up and change the nature of their friendship.
- **Lucia and Rosinella.** Rosinella is devoted to Lucia, forgetting that she may have to lose her some day. Her lack of children of her own makes Lucia all the more important to her. She spoils Lucia and finds it hard to discipline her. Lucia, as a youngster, ruthlessly manipulates her aunt, well aware of Rosinella's devotion to her. As she gets older, she finds Rosinella's care for her becoming stifling and she hurts Rosinella with a bitter outburst.
- **Luigi and the others.** Luigi is driven by self-interest and a desire for possessions. We see some of his sly ability to control others reflected in his daughter. He sees Massimo and Rosinella as legitimate targets, even offering to let them pay for Lucia's wedding to Mario. He uses Lucia as a slave, presumably having treated his wives in the same way.
- **'Daddy' and the others.** Though sulking because Massimo has opened his own shop, Daddy still expects help from him and Rosinella, demanding that the latter cut his toe-nails for him. (A task which she willingly undertakes, recognising her place as a woman in the family.) In Massimo's account of the scene at the camp at Bury, his father becomes a very different person – a small, frightened, lost old man.



Main Characters

Rosinella

Rosinella is often very funny and audiences are likely to feel quite warmly towards her. However, she has two major failings: she is utterly selfish and she is deeply prejudiced against Scotland and the Scots (or perhaps against anything and anyone not Italian).

She does show affection for Massimo, though she doesn't ever speak of it. We see her occasionally teasing him and even punching him in a friendly way. Once, she really slaps him, in reaction to his slapping Lucia.

She shows love for Lucia, but there is possessiveness in it that is dangerous. This may spring from her own lack of children. She feels this is a failure of her womanhood and her Italian blood. She has poured all her mother's love into Lucia, even though she knows Lucia belongs to someone else and will probably go back to Italy. Her selfishness blinds her to the fact that she may be turning Lucia against her.

She has a complete change of heart after she realises that she was responsible for the loss of Franco's baby. She becomes supportive of Hughie and – when her attempt to persuade Luigi to accept him fails – wickedly contrives a scheme to set Lucia free.

Massimo

Massimo has had the strength of character to leave his father's shop and set up on his own. He has both a fatherly and a brotherly attitude to Franco. He works hard, content that it is all done for himself and his family. He has a comfortable affectionate relationship with Rosinella. However, he turns against her when he finally recognises the depth of her selfishness.

He loves Lucia and finds it hard to discipline her. He is so shocked by her swearing that he slaps her, but is immediately contrite. He likes people, seeing the best in them – Bridget, Hughie, other neighbours whom he speaks about.

He is less critical of Scotland than Rosinella but he has a love of Italy that may be stronger than hers. She has always refused to go to Italy with him. He has a romantic attachment to his father's old ruin of a house in Cassino.

He has a generous spirit. We see it in his behaviour towards Lucia, Luigi, Bridget and Hughie. Like Rosinella he regrets not having children of their own, and like her he finds a substitute – Hughie – but he does not have Rosinella's possessiveness and his relationship with Hughie is a good one.

Lucia

As a small child, she is spoiled, demanding, manipulative and assertive. She ruthlessly gets

her own way by crying at will. From the first she is the stronger of the two in her relationship with Hughie. She does not show strong emotion for him, but she rejects all Rosinella's attempts to match her up with an Italian boy. This may be a reluctance to let her aunt decide for her, of course.

She seems at the very least insensitive when Hughie is trying to tell her he loves her. Is she deliberately preventing their relationship getting on to a different level?

Franco

Franco has a fine sense of his own charm; he expects women to fall easily for him. His wooing of Bridget is both accomplished and determined. He resents being under his father's thumb, afraid that he'll be stuck in the shop for the rest of his life. Yet he is reluctant just to walk out. The war gives him a reason and an excuse to go.

He is unscrupulous about deceiving his father over Bridget and about involving Massimo and Rosinella in the deception. He is good with the children. His 'posthumous' letter to Bridget reveals a strong sense of family.

Bridget

Bridget is sensible and self-reliant. Though very much in love with Franco she tries to keep their relationship within the moral limits imposed by society at the time. When it goes wrong she copes with the situation herself, without telling anyone about her illegal abortion. After Franco's death she remains true to him, refusing to get involved with other men. The determination she showed in getting herself an abortion also gives her the strength to stand up to Rosinella over Hughie. Her decision to tell her about the child is the turning point for Rosinella; it brings about a dramatic change in her attitudes.

Hughie

Hughie is, at first, a cheerful, cheeky child, street-wise and independent. As he grows older, he becomes less sure of himself, hiding himself in work. He is too shy to tell Lucia about his feelings of love for her. But he shows real spirit speaking up for himself after the rejection by Luigi.

Luigi

Luigi is not an attractive character. He gives away his daughter to someone else to bring up. Yet he demands her return when he needs her to work for him. He ruthlessly uses his wartime experiences to make Massimo feel sorry for him. He takes all he can get from Massimo and is prepared to take more if he will pay for Lucia's wedding to Mario.

He treats Lucia like a slave and teases her although it is obvious that she is genuinely upset about the spiders and snake. He does not mean to be cruel; he just does not understand her. He finds her a fiancé without even telling her – and his choice depends on what is best financially for him and his sons.



Quick Plan – Rosinella’s Prejudice

Rosinella tries to convince Franco not to begin a relationship with Bridget.

“These Scotch girls...they just go out with you for one thing. Because your faither’s got a shop and they think you’ve got money.”

A1 S2 P24

When Rosinella discovers that war has broken out she tries to comfort Massimo who is worried about being an Italian living in Scotland.

“But it’s got nothing to do with us, Massimo. We’re Italian, we just live here. It’s not our country.”

A1 S7 P50

Rosinella tries to convince Bridget that Franco didn’t really love her.

“Do you think if Italian girls were allowed out, if they got doing all the things you girls do – do you think for one minute Franco would have looked at you?”

A1 S11 P60

Rosinella explains the reasons why Lucia should marry an Italian rather than a Scottish man.

“Because they’re prepared to WORK that’s why. I don’t know anybody works so hard as Italian men.”

A2 S2 P102

Rosinella continues to describe the benefits of marrying an Italian man.

“And the way they love their families. Nobody loves their families like the Italians.”

A2 S2 P103

Rosinella tries to justify not allowing Lucia to go to the wedding with Hughie.

“Listen, hen, you’re Italian, that makes you special. O.K. So the Scotch people let their lassies go anywhere, do anything they like because they don’t care as much.”

A2 S2 P107

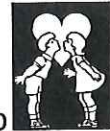
Rosinella realises how her prejudice has had far reaching consequences.

“Hughie son – I’m sorry.”

She starts to cry

A2 S9 P149

Quick plan – Hughie & Lucia’s Relationship



Lucia enjoys bossing Hughie around when they are younger.

‘Who says you can come in here? This is my uncle Massimo’s ginger store.’

A1 S5

Lucia and Hughie’s friendship grows as Hughie’s dad dies and they bond over their loss.

‘My auntie Rosinella says your daddy’s in heaven.’

A1 S6

As they grow up the bond between them deepens, but Lucia still sees Hughie as a friend.

‘You sure you want to become blood brothers?’

A1 S15

In Act 2 Hughie and Lucia’s relationship starts to change as Hughie invites Lucia to the wedding.

‘I want to go to the wedding with Hughie’

A2 S2

Hughie decides he has to tell Lucia how he really feels about her but Lucia doesn't realise.

'I love you'

A2 S4

Lucia realises how much she loves Hughie as she is sent back to live in Italy

'Will you write to me in Italy?'

A2 S7

Hughie goes with Rosinella to Italy to bring Lucia back home to Scotland

'Hughie holds out his arms and Lucia goes into them'

A2 S11

At the end of the play Rosinella helps Lucia and Hughie elope together, just as she and Massimo did years earlier.

'What matters is these two young people love each other.'

A2 S 12



Quick Plan – Rosinella's relationship with Massimo

At the start of the play Rosinella and Massimo have a loving relationship and they care about Lucia, wanting to do the best they can for her.

"Don't get me wrong. I don't grudge the wean a frock...Its just you I'm worried about."

A1 S2 P13

As the play progresses we see that Rosinella and Massimo have different styles of parenting which causes friction, especially when they try to encourage Lucia to speak English at school.

"You don't want them laughing at you, do you?"

A1 S4 P32

Rosinella's very opinionated attitude causes tension between her and Massimo, especially when it comes to Franco seeing Bridget.

"These Scotch girls...they just go out with you for one thing. Because your faither's got a shop and they think you've got money."

A1 S2 P24

When the war breaks out and Massimo is worried, Rosinella doesn't understand his concerns which causes tension in the relationship.

"But it's got nothing to do with us, Massimo. We're Italian, we just live here. It's not our country."

A1 S7 P50

Rosinella is overwhelmed when Massimo returns after so many years and we see the love they have for each other.

"He is trying to say 'nothing will ever part us again' but he can't get it out: Rosinella understands"

A1 S17 P92

In the second act, Massimo finally snaps and tells Rosinella that her selfish attitude is driving them apart.

"You never think of anyone but yourself"

A2 S9 P149

Towards the end of the play, Rosinella realises that her prejudices have driven Massimo away and that she has to make amends.

"What matters is that these two young people love each other."

A2 S12 P163

The audience see at the end of the play how much the characters love each other.

"That's my heart, Rosie. And she's beating just for you."

A2 S14 P177

Sample 8 Mark Answer



This extract deals with racial stereotypes. With close reference to this extract (page 102 & 103) and elsewhere in the play explain how the issue of racism is explored.

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In this extract Rosinella tries to convince why Lucia should marry an Italian man all the while Hughie, the Scottish boy who loves Lucia, is slaving away in the shop while thinking about getting home to see his family. Rosinella says:

“Because they’re prepared to WORK that’s why. I don’t know anybody works so hard as Italian men.”

This suggests that she doesn’t believe Scottish people work as hard as Italians do, highlighting her prejudice against Scots.

Also in this section Rosinella shows her prejudice clearly when she says:
“And the way they love their families. Nobody loves their families like the Italians.”

This line shows that Rosinella believes only Italians love and value their family. Furthermore she feels that Scottish people don’t love their families in the same way again highlighting her prejudice.

Earlier in the play Rosinella shows her racism where she tries to convince Franco not to begin a relationship with Bridget.

“These Scotch girls...they just go out with you for one thing. Because your father’s got a shop and they think you’ve got money.”

Here she claims that Scottish girls are only interested in Italian men for their money, not believing that Bridget only wants Franco because she thinks he is rich.

Toward the end of the play, however, Rosinella realises how her prejudice has had far reaching consequences. Realising the error of her ways Rosinella tries to convince Luigi to accept that Lucia and Hughie should be together.

“What matters is these two young people love each other.”

Here, Rosinella realises the impact her racism has had on the people around her and she wants to ensure that Hughie and Lucia are given the chance at a loving relationship, which Franco and Bridget didn’t have, in part because of her racism.

TALLY'S BLOOD - POINTS OF COMMONALITY FOR THEME

LOVE – FAMILY	LOVE – ROMANTIC	WAR	PREJUDICE	NATIONALITY	EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRANTS	WORK ETHIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love for children may make it difficult to discipline effectively • Working together may cause tension • Expected to work together • Will have open communication • Can expect family to get involved with love-life • Family are expected to help in practical and/or material ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make someone shy • It can be difficult to express feelings • Family will expect to have a say in relationship • May have to break with convention (family/societal rules) in order to be together • Couple are loyal to each other • Love can have an overwhelming effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects will be more devastating than expected • There is little opportunity for neutrality – even if you think you're not involved • It can create resentment that stays long after war has finished • It demands attention during the build up to war • Causes bitterness and prejudice to increase greatly • Causes death and devastation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can bring tragic results – even death • Exists among those who are away from country of birth/ are homesick • Is stirred up by war • Is shown by those who may mean no harm • Is shown against Scottish men and women • Is shown in favour of Italian men and women • Is experienced by adults and children during war • Can create a desire to avoid intermarriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is seen as a reason to keep separate from others • Can be divisive within families when later generations identify with host nation • Nationality is seen as something that is not fixed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will work hard to become successful • Feel the need for financial security • May not feel they belong in country of origin if return • Want to be self-reliant • Expect to experience prejudice • Experience to a great degree during war • Are aware they might be accused of taking jobs from locals • Want to avoid intermarriage • Want to stick together • Use of local dialect indicates they have integrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be observed in young and old • Is seen as something to be prized • Older generation expect children to follow their lead • The men are expected to carry the load to a greater extent • Women expected to work too, but often at home for family • Expectations of long working day can cause stress between generations