**Men Should Weep by Ena Lamont Stewart**

*The extract is from the end of Act I. Jenny has just left; John and Maggie are alone on stage.*

MAGGIE: **(Pointing to the pile of clothes with the little scuffed shoes on top)** John, they’ve

kep him in.

**She starts to cry again: he comforts her.**

JOHN: I wis afraid o that; but it’s better, Maggie, it’s better.

5 MAGGIE: I didna want him kep in; I didna want him left in a strange place! He’ll be feart!

He’ll be crying for his Mammy!

JOHN: I ken, Maggie. I ken. He’ll be crying for his Mammy the way I’m crying for Jenny.

**(Pause)** Ma first bonnie wee girl. Aye laughin. Ridin high on ma shoulders . . .

Tell me a story, Daddy . . . Tie ma soo-lace, Daddy . . . **(Despairing)** An I couldna

10 mak enough tae gie her a decent hame. So! She’s left us! She’s as guid as deid

tae us.

MAGGIE: Naw! Ye’ve no tae say that! She’ll come back.

JOHN: **(Shaking his head)** Naw. Naw. She’s deid tae me.

**He sinks down into a chair and is silent.**

15 If I could hae jist . . . jist done better by ye a. If I could hae . . . **(Head in**

**hands, eyes on floor)** . . . If! If! . . . Every time I’ve had tae say “no” tae you

an the weans it’s doubled me up like a kick in the stomach.

**He lifts his head and cries out:**

Christ Almighty! A we’ve din wrong is tae be born intae poverty!

20 Whit dae they think this kind o life does tae a man?

Whiles it turns ye intae a wild animal. Whiles ye’re a human question mark,

aye askin why? Why? *Why?*

There’s nae answer. Ye end up a bent back and a heid hangin in shame for whit

ye canna help.

Questions

1. Explain why the audience would find lines 1—6 moving in a performance. 2
2. By referring to at least two examples in lines 7—11, analyse how the playwright conveys John’s feelings for Jenny. 4
3. By referring to at least two examples in lines 14—24, analyse how the playwright creates an emotional conclusion to Act I. 4
4. By referring to the extract and to elsewhere in the play, discuss the character of John Morrison. 10

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| **Question** | **Expected Response** | **Max Mark** | **Additional Guidance** |
| 1 | Candidates should explain why the audience would find the opening lines moving in a performance.  2 marks awarded for detailed/insightful comment plus quotation/reference.  1 mark for more basic comment plus quotation/ reference.  0 marks for quotation/reference alone.  (Marks may be awarded 2 or 1 + 1.) | 2 | Possible answers include:  • the “pile of clothes with the little scuffed shoes on top” provides an almost pathetic image of Bertie’s absence, the “little” emphasises he is just a child  • the simplicity of “they’ve kep him in” conveys the distress of a parent separated from her child  • the sight of a mother crying and a father comforting her shows the grief of parents separated from a sick child  • “I didna want … I didna want” suggests a parent who has lost control of the situation • “a strange place!” emphasises the emotion a mother feels for a child removed from family surroundings  • “He’ll be feart! He’ll be crying for his Mammy!” suggests Maggie’s anguish and fears for her son |
| 2 | Candidates should analyse how the playwright conveys John’s feelings for Jenny.  At least two examples should be included for full marks.  2 marks awarded for detailed/insightful comment plus quotation/reference.  1 mark for more basic comment plus quotation/ reference.  0 marks for quotation/reference alone.  (Marks may be awarded 2+2, 2+1+1 or 1+1+1+1.) | 4 | Possible answers include:  • “He’ll be crying … way I’m crying for Jenny” suggests distress at her absence, a primal bond between himself and Jenny  • “Ma first bonnie wee girl” suggests her special place in his affection, that he still sees her as a child  • “Aye laughin. Ridin high …” suggests he has intense happy memories from her childhood; almost idolises her  • the repeated “Daddy” suggests he wants to remember the happy times, when she looked up to him  • “Tell … Tie” shows he recalls fondly the time when she was dependent on him  • “ma soo-lace” shows him fondly remembering her baby talk, suggests he still sees her as the loveable dependent toddler  • “couldna mak enough tae gie her a decent hame” conveys his guilt/shame at not living up to what he hoped for her; self-pity at his failure to impress her  • “So! She’s left us!”—the brisk, decisive exclamations suggest a sudden dismissal of her from his life  • “guid as deid tae us … deid tae me” suggests the finality of his rejection of her for abandoning the family |
| 3 | Candidates should analyse how the playwright creates an emotional conclusion to Act I.  At least two examples should be included for full marks.  2 marks awarded for detailed/insightful comment plus quotation/reference.  1 mark for more basic comment plus quotation/ reference.  0 marks for quotation/reference alone.  (Marks may be awarded 2+2, 2+1+1 or 1+1+1+1.) | 4 | Possible answers include:  • when John “sinks down into a chair” the audience sees a man defeated, drained of hope  • the stumbling, near-incoherence of “If I could hae jist … jist done better by ye a. If I could hae …” suggests he is wracked with guilt at his own failures, his sense of inadequacy  • “(Head in hands, eyes on floor)” gives a picture of a man crushed, overwhelmed, empty  • the repeated cry of “If! If!” sounds like someone wailing about the lack of opportunity in his life”  • “doubled me up like a kick in the stomach” suggests life has dealt him physical as well as financial blows  • when he lifts his head and cries out it’s like someone rising up with a strident challenge to the world  • “Christ Almighty!” is an extremely powerful exclamation/invocation to a higher power  • “A we’ve din wrong” suggests people of his class are powerless, are not guilty of any wrongdoing  • “born intae poverty” gets to the heart of the matter: they are condemned from birth, have no way out  • the impersonal “they” suggests there a division in society between “them and us” • “this kind o life does tae a man” suggests he is stripped of his dignity, robbed of his manliness  • the “Whiles … whiles” construction suggests a relentless suffering at the hands of the oppression of his life  • “a wild animal” suggests loss of human qualities, people can be turned feral  • “a human question mark” is a powerful metaphor suggesting the body is distorted by the pressures  • “why? Why? Why?” comes across almost like a crescendo of anger, anguish at the unfairness of it all  • “There’s nae answer” suggests total despair  • “bent back and a heid hangin in shame” suggests the ultimate humiliation and degradation visited on those like him |
| 4 | Candidates should discuss the character of John Morrison. | 10 | Reference could be made to the following:  • not a “bad” character, just a weak one: displays the chauvinistic mentality of the period, but has an awareness of his responsibility in the hardship the whole family must suffer; yet unprepared to deviate from what he considers to be the male role (“I’m no turnin masel intae a bloomin skivvy! I’m a man!”  • he does love Maggie, and there are poignant “love” scenes between them (the plate of beans, the hat), but he is selective, e.g. won’t accompany her to the hospital  • seems to have good intentions: goes regularly in search of work (but with little apparent determination); carries books, suggesting attempts at self-improvement (but no evidence that anything comes of this)  • consumed by self-pity: can see the situation he’s in, but can only lament it, not strive to change it  • humiliated at the end by: Maggie’s revelation of his sexual appetite during their courtship; Lily’s revelation about how much money she has given; and by having to cede control of the family to Maggie; final image of him is face in hands, totally passive.  Many other references are possible. |