

**National
Theatre**

Dixon & Daughters

Learning Guide

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About

This learning guide supports the National Theatre's production of **Dixon & Daughters**, directed by **Róisín McBrinn**, which opened on **25 April, 2023** at the **National Theatre**.

Our packs are designed to support viewing the recording on the **National Theatre Collection**. This pack provides links to the UK school curriculum and other productions in the Collection. It also has a plot synopsis with timecodes to allow you to jump to specific sections of the play.

Here you'll find all the information you need to enable you to study the production and write about it in detail. This includes notes about all the key elements from performance style to design. You'll also find pointers for further research.

Background Information

Recording Date – 17 May, 2023

Location – Dorfman Theatre, National Theatre

Age Recommendation – 15+

Cast:

Mary Bríd Brennan

Briana Alison Fitzjohn

Ella Yazmin Kayani

Julie Andrea Lowe

Leigh Posy Sterling

Bernie Liz White

Creative Team:

Director Róisín McBrinn

Set & Costume Designer Kat Heath

Lighting Designer Paule Constable

Sound Designer Sinéad Diskin

Movement Director Sarita Piotrowski

Fight Director Bethan Clark

Teaching Information

This production is particularly suitable for:

- Drama and theatre students who are studying Clean Break as contemporary practitioners as part of an A Level course.
- Anyone with an interest in the idea of theatre as a means for social change.
- Anyone with an interest in theatre which explores the female experience.

In particular you might like to explore:

- The relationships between the cast of female characters.
- The way in which the play explores themes of violence against women and why it is important to tell this story onstage.
- How the design and technical elements support the narrative.



Production Notes

The following notes have been compiled to help guide you through the significant design and performance aspects as you watch the production, or to remind you of them after you have watched it. You may also want to make your own notes and form your own opinions on the effectiveness of these aspects as you explore the production.

Contextual Information:

- This production was produced in conjunction with Clean Break – a theatre company who work with people who have been affected by the justice system, which does not necessarily mean having spent time in prison.
- The production has a Self-Care Guide which can be accessed here, for plot synopsis, content warnings and suggestions on how to process any difficult emotions as a response to watching the performance.
cleanbreak.org.uk/media/uploads/dixon-and-daughters-self-care-guide.pdf
- Clean Break present a statistic that 2/3 of women in prison have experienced domestic violence. *Dixon and Daughters* unravels the many different aspects of surviving domestic violence.

Production Notes

Key design Elements: Set

- The set suggests the ground and first floor of a small house. We can see the lounge/dining room, kitchen and staircase on the ground floor, and two bedrooms (either side of the stairs) on the first floor.
- The kitchen is particularly detailed and functional as various characters move through the kitchen completing everyday domestic activities. A gauze separates the upstage kitchen from the living room to enable the audience to see both rooms at once. The kitchen tap is functional – it is used during the performance to provide water for drinks.
- In the living room there is a floral armchair and pouffe. A low coffee table is in front of the sofa, with a rug underneath it. This green patterned rug is important later in the play when it reveals that there is evidence of violence underneath it (bloodstains). The cushions on the sofa are velvet effect. A wooden magazine rack is on the stage right end of the sofa. There is a grey armchair with a small coffee table next to it.
- There is a dresser stage left, in the corner between the drop leaf table (in front of the window far stage left), the dining table and chairs, and the lampshade. The lampshade is written on later in the play and therefore needs to be visible to all members of the audience.
- Mary's bedroom is on the first floor of the house, stage left. The double bed is in profile to the audience. A dressing table and fitted wardrobe can be seen in the upstage part of the bedroom. There is also a nightstand downstage upon which there are framed photographs, and a reading light is clipped to the bed's headboard. There is a white duvet cover on the bed, decorated with large pink roses.
- There is a lot of naturalistic detail, such as the wicker laundry basket at the top of the stairs.

Production Notes

Key design Elements: Costume

- All costume is naturalistic.
- Bernie wears an olive coat with a burgundy scarf, a polo neck jumper dress with black leggings and brown boots. She has a brown bag that matches her boots. When Bernie arrives during the fight between Brianna and Leigh, she is wearing traditional pajamas which are navy with white piping, brown Ugg boots and a long puffer-style jacket.
- Julie's jumper is a coral colour, worn with blue jeans and silver jewelry. She later wears a pink strappy top which reveals large bruises on her arms, the suggestion being that she is the victim of domestic abuse. Later in the play she wears a grey onesie printed with white, pink and pale blue hearts. There is an irony to this choice, given the lack of love and prevalence of abuse within the family. Julie has a costume change later – she now wears ripped light blue jeans and a brown, long-sleeved t-shirt.
- Ella is wearing a crop top and a fluffy green cardigan with combat trousers and white trainers. Later she wears brown tracksuit bottoms with a blue denim jacket and a ruched brown top underneath the jacket. Ella's costumes demonstrate a youthful fashion sense. Her next costume includes a white Reebok t-shirt, grey hoodie and black tracksuit bottoms.
- Mary wears a white and grey patterned top with black trousers and brown slip-on shoes. She has a green anorak. She has a costume change which sees her in light grey slacks, an animal print blouse underneath a cream, knee-length cardigan.
- Briana wears a brown poncho which is lined with fake fur. She has a brown belted dress and wears black leggings under her dresses. She has purple varnished nails. Briana later enters wearing a purple dress, with a poncho and a gold chain-style belt.

- When Leigh first appears, she is carrying a very dirty blue sleeping bag, and wears brown trousers, black sliders and white socks on her feet. She has a dirty green parka coat and a grey Nike t-shirt. A few scenes later, her hair has been combed and she is wearing clean clothes – black leggings, a pink t-shirt and pink socks.



Production Notes

Key design Elements: Lighting

- Specials (a lighting device used for a very specific purpose) are used to suggest the light and movement coming from the television when the women watch *The Chase*.
- The living room is often lit with a warm wash to suggest the light provided by a domestic lightbulb. When Bernie is making Mary's dinner in the kitchen, the living room light is dimmed slightly and the lights in the kitchen are made more intense (note the lights on the inside corners of the kitchen) so that we can see the action taking place in there.
- At one point in the play (00.17.51) a single bright light shines from upstage through the open front door, straight into the audience's eyeline. It is disturbing and unsettling, creating a sense of tension and foreboding.
- Notice that in the morning (00.29.41) the light comes in from the stage left window, suggesting the early time of day as Julie eats her cereal. The small lamp stage right is sometimes lit.
- At 00.38.53 the washing machine seems to emit a bright strobing light which gives a sense of foreboding – perhaps an insight into the effect Leigh's presence is having on the family.



Production Notes

Key design Elements: Sound

- Recorded sound effects are used, including the theme tune and conversation from *The Chase* – a popular daytime quiz show. This is diegetic sound – sound that the characters themselves would hear during the scene.
- Some sound is distorted and/or echoed to create an unsettling effect on the audience.
- Unsettling string music is played in the opening moments of the play to suggest that the reunion (Mary's return from prison) is not going to be as pleasant as expected. Electronic music is heard towards the closing moments of the play, which again form a distinct mood and atmosphere as the enormity of the play sinks in for the audience.

Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Wigs, Hair and Make-Up

- The bruises on Julie's arms suggest domestic violence: they are vivid purple and green.
- Stage blood is used when Leigh's hand is cut during the fight between her and Brianna.
- Leigh appears to have self-harm scars on her forearms.



Production Notes

Performance Style

- All of the actors use a Northern English accent.
- Although the sound and lighting are sometimes non-naturalistic, the style needs to be mostly naturalistic in order to prevent the serious subject matter being overshadowed by special effects that might distract the audience.



Production Notes

Key Moments

- The exposition of the play, and an introduction to the family dynamic takes place between 00.00.01 to 00.10.47
- The front door opens mysteriously and a bright light is shone through it at 00.17.58. The sound of eerie wind-type noises is heard whilst the lights are in black out, and then fade up on Mary in her bedroom as she phones the Samaritans and then looks at a photograph on the bedside table, before turning her light out to go to sleep. The scene ends at 00.21.24
- Brianna (formerly known as Tina to her family) arrives at 00.21.59 and talks to Julie before going upstairs to Mary's room. The scene ends at 00.29.25.
- Julie talks to Paul on the phone, which leads into the arrival of Briana, the fight with Leigh and the knife, and the various disclosures and discoveries between the different members of the family: 00.47.03–01.15.32. Listen to the eerie string sounds and wind noise, as Briana creeps into the house, and note how the dialogue speeds up and the pace intensifies as various truths are revealed.
- Ella and Mary talk between 01.17.57 and 01.24.32 Ella talks about her tutor making her uncomfortable and Briana questions why it is the women who must tolerate it.
- Mary talks to Briana and then takes action on the stains on the carpet: 01.28.04 until the end of the play.

Plot Synopsis with Timecodes

Act 1, Scene 1: 00:00:12

The light flickers in a spare room in Thorpe Edge, no one has slept in it for years, most people that go into the room get a bad vibe. Bernie, Mary's eldest child, enters with Mary to look for her sister Julie and daughter Ella, who are hiding in the living room. Bernie stresses that if they are hiding they shouldn't bother Mary's not in the mood. Mary has returned home from spending 6 months in prison.

Mary seems happy to see Ella, but knows that since she's been away, something has been going on in her house. They all try to make Nanna comfortable, by offering to make her some food and tea, but nothing seems to get Mary settled. Mary asks Bernie if Julie has been staying at the house, if she has it isn't something Mary would be happy about. Bernie reassures Mary that it was 'only the odd night' and when Mary asks 'what's wrong with her house' Bernie claims not to know 'I don't know she will have to tell you that herself won't she'.

After checking on her bedroom Mary sweeps into the living room in a rage directed towards Julie, because all of her bits and bobs are rearranged and not how she left it. Julie denies staying at the house and Mary asks 'did he kick you out did he?' referring to Julie's partner Paul, with whom she has an on and off relationship. Both Julie and Bernie try to lead their mum to believe that nothing has been going on, Mary cannot believe she is being lied to by her daughters, after everything she's gone through during the last 6 months; 'Being moved around and treated like a criminal'. She tells Julie that she wouldn't last a night in prison.

Julie decided to tell her mum that she made the right steps to leave an abusive relationship, Mary asks why but then quickly decides she isn't interested and doesn't want to know, Julie doesn't feel supported by Mary. Mary and Julie get into a dispute, as Mary reminds Julie of how she's been supported, as well as telling her that her drinking habit is her own fault.

MARY: No one forced you to drink you know, no one lifted the bottle to your lips.

Mary can't seem to understand how much where she lives has changed in the span of 6 months, due to regeneration ('the Laundry is all boarded up.'). Mary begins to grow concerned about everyone in the community talking about her sentencing and her husband, Dixon.

Mary is in complete disbelief that Bernie and Julie don't go to visit their dad's grave. 'He's still your dad.' Mary is concerned about the 'muck' still on Dixon's vandalised gravestone, with a stiff brush for the decking, Mary sounds determined to make the gravestone nice again.

MARY: I'll have it looking brand new and if anyone tries to stop me-

Mary tries to kick Julie out because she continues to disprove of and question Mary's logic and memories of Dixon, who Mary claims was a good person, and that her time in prison was based on lies. Julie wished that her mum had done some soul searching and reflecting whilst away in prison, however, here is when Mary reveals that she 'got guilty for doing nothing.' Mary refuses to change the way that she thinks and continues to hold on to a created reality, Julie tries to get her Mum to have remorse, show some empathy, to say sorry. Mary blames Julie for her sentence because Julie kept her mouth shut in court.

Julie tells Mary that Tina, aka Brianna, has moved back to Bradford. Julie reveals that Tina now goes by the name Brianna, and emphasises that the name was changed by deed poll. Bernie then reveals that she has also seen Brianna. Ella tells Nanna a story about her flatmate, which her mum Bernie encourages, to lighten the current mood.

It's hot so Julie takes her jumper off and when she does, her body is covered in bruises, physical abuse, done to Julie by her ex-boyfriend, Paul. Bernie snaps at Julie to cover up because she's afraid of Ella bearing witness. Mary threatens Julie, letting it be known that she doesn't want anything to do with Brianna.

MARY: If I find out Tina has step foot in this house whilst I've been locked up in that cell, I swear to God I will never call you my daughter again.

Act 1, Scene 2: 00:18:18

Mary's bedroom, night.

Mary can't sleep so decides to phone the Samaritans.

Mary calls to speak to a specific 'Listener' with curly blonde hair, Shirley. She's still grieving and feels no support from her family and needs someone to talk to. Mary falls asleep and wakes up in the dead of night with a nightmare so surreal it causes her to call out 'what do you want'.

Act 1, Scene 3: 00:21:58

Brianna comes to the house to get her laptop charger, she's curious to know if Mary has asked about her. Julie is scared of the consequences if Mary wakes up and finds Brianna in the house, she doesn't want to upset her mum. Brianna, who has left her old self behind and has replaced negative patterns of thinking for positive ones, can't help but let her presence be known by writing her name, 'I' dotted with a love heart. Brianna knows this is just as much her home as any of Mary's biological daughters and settles down to complete some work on her laptop.

Julie tells Brianna that her ex-boyfriend Paul is constantly calling, Brianna reminds Julie that if she hasn't had a drink she is stronger than she thinks she is. Brianna encourages Julie to consider the days she's gone without a drink, and to give herself a pat on the back for the achievement. Julie is extremely anxious so Brianna shares with her a self-care tip, and pushes Julie to say an affirmation.

BRIANNA: "I'm not a victim", say it. "I may have been challenged, hurt, betrayed, beaten and discouraged but I'm not defeated".

When Julie tells Brianna to keep her voice down, Brianna isn't happy and lets Julie know that she kept her voice down for 37 years. Brianna recalls a story of when she spoke up about abuse and her teacher Ms. Henshaw told her not to rock the boat, or she will get sent back to Inglewood house.

Brianna wants Mary to know that she has changed her name and the meaning behind it, she asks Julie to relay information to Mary but Julie is reluctant. Brianna wants to see Mary to speak to her about the case, what happened, and that she has changed her life, but Julie doesn't think it's the right time to do so. Brianna begins to become frustrated and she leaves because she can no longer concentrate. As Julie checks her phone in the living room, Brianna sneaks back into the house and up the stairs into Mary's bedroom, where she stands over her, and watches her sleep.

Act 1, Scene 4: 00:29:45

Bernie comes to take Mary to her appointment with the parole officer. Julie hasn't seen Mary this morning, Bernie calls up to see if Mary would like a tea but gets no response.

Bernie asks Julie who's in their father's cab office as she's not starting until 1pm. Julie is battling with wanting alcohol and the texts from her abusive ex.

JULIE: He's asking what I want for my birthday.

Julie makes an excuse for Paul, that he is going to anger management and Bernie has to remind her that he's said that before, and even when he attended the appointment, he abused a differently-abled person outside of Morrisons; a clear pattern of coercion and an indicator that Julie was a victim to both domestic violence and narcissistic abuse.

Ella enters the house and sits next to her Auntie Julie, who questions her about her reading week and how long she plans to keep up the act when she's dropped out, Ella is the first person in her family to go to university. Julie pushes for Ella to tell her the reason that she dropped out but Ella doesn't want to

ELLA: I don't want to talk about it.

Meanwhile, Bernie discovers that Mary is not in the house. Bernie blames Julie for Mary going missing, she says some harsh things to Julie and calls her useless. Julie defends herself, her motherhood, and lets Bernie know that it isn't her fault what happened to Michael.

Mary enters the house with Leigh, her cellmate when she was in prison. Leigh has been living on the streets, she hasn't been able to have a bath for a while. Mary washes her clothes and goes to fix Leigh an egg sandwich. Mary is open to Leigh staying as long as she likes. Bernie and Julie rush into the kitchen to find out from Mary who she is. Julie and Bernie don't trust Leigh's intentions, but Mary doesn't care. Leigh recognises Ella from Mary's notice board.

Act 1, Scene 5: 00:39:20

Mary and Bernie return home from Mary's appointment, Leigh is on the landing. Bernie discovers that Brianna has written on the lampshade in the living room. Bernie takes a picture to send to Julie to ask how it got there. Mary talks to Leigh.

MARY: What's wrong with the spare room?

Leigh couldn't get any rest in the spare room and begins to freak out, Mary consoles Leigh, and says that it's ok for her to sleep in her room. Leigh asks Mary if she has heard back from a letter they both wrote, when they both took initiative to ask for more crisp flavours for inmates.

Bernie must rush off to her second job, Mary doesn't understand why she doesn't just work for Dixies full time. Mary blames Julie for running her late husband's business into the ground. Bernie tries to stick up for Julie, letting Mary know that that's where Julie currently is. Mary is convinced that none of her children care for her, she is still troubled by what happened in court. Bernie argues with her.

BERNIE: It was a court of law not the top of a bus.

Mary still argues that it was all lies and feels as though her daughters were not on her side. In prison nobody spoke to Mary other than Leigh, she was isolated. Leigh had Mary's back inside, spoke to her, made her feel seen, so Mary feels that Leigh acts as a better daughter than Bernie and Julie.

Bernie goes to leave but remembers a confusing memory from her childhood that she wants clarity on. Mary goes silent and avoidant and stands to leave for a cup of water. Bernie wants to know where she is going, Mary feels like she is in another prison.

MARY: Am I not free to stand up in my own house now?

Bernie flees and Mary gets herself some water and reflects on what just happened. Mary begins to break down. Later on that evening, we hear Julie on the phone to Paul telling him that it won't work, she's not coming home no matter how hard he tries.

Act 1, Scene 6: 00:48:51

Leigh wakes up screaming that there's a figure peering over her. It's Brianna who has come to have the conversation with Mary, it's about time they spoke about what really happened. Mary does not want Brianna in the house or anywhere near her. Mary threatens to call the police on Brianna but Brianna insists that they have the conversation. Mary knows that she is not leaving until they speak.

BRIANNA: I'm not going anywhere.

Mary locks herself in her room with Leigh and urges Julie, who has been drinking alcohol again, to call Bernie to come and deal with the situation.

Mary goes upstairs to lock herself in her room with Leigh. Mary and Leigh use Mary's chest of drawers to lock Brianna out. Meanwhile, Brianna is adamant on staying until Mary comes out of her bedroom. Mary refuses to leave until 'she's out', Mary continues to acknowledge Tina, but not the reinvented and emotionally mature version Brianna.

Bernie is coming over and Julie has been drinking again this evening. It has again become excessive. There's a lot that Brianna would like to get off her chest, including the fact that Brianna didn't think that Mary would get a custodial sentence, but a suspended one. Julie feels it's because of Brianna, why she was down the pub in the first place. Brianna tries to calm herself with affirmations.

Brianna is not in a rush; she has been waiting for years to hear Mary say that she believes her. Julie can't believe that's what she is waiting on.

JULIE: Because she's never gonna say that y'know.

Brianna has visualised it so it must come to fruition. Brianna lets Julie know that she also deserves the truth, her abuse also needs recognition from Mary, this would allow Julie to begin healing. Julie, remaining in denial, is asked by Brianna to move the living room table.

Brianna unveils a large unwashed, untouched bloodstain, from when she suffered physical abuse from her father. This is the first time she has spoken out about what happened. Brianna tells them of the severe abuse that she suffered whilst living in the house.

BRIANNA: If this house could speak.

Mary notices the light on at Sandra's. Leigh notices a picture of Mary and Dixon, and cannot believe that Mary married him.

Brianna's patience wears thin and she decides to go upstairs to confront Mary. Leigh and Mary resist Brianna's entry. Brianna feels that Mary lied in her witness statement (in 1993 when the case first went to trial) because of pressure from Dixon. Mary escapes the room and runs downstairs away from Brianna. Leigh smashes the frame of Mary and Dixon's wedding photo, so that she can get access to a sharp piece of glass. Brianna tells Mary she never wanted her to get a custodial sentence, and urges Julie to tell Mary a long kept secret.

It's heated. Brianna, Julie and Mary are all going back and forth. All of Brianna's points are contested and denied by Mary, Julie is in the middle and gives the sense that she doesn't want to be involved. One last "Tina" from Mary and Brianna can no longer keep what's bottled up inside; she knows exactly why Mary brought her to live with her in 1981. The lack of acknowledgement causes her to grow extremely frustrated. Leigh leans over to try to stab Brianna, Brianna tries to defend herself and Leigh ends up getting stabbed with glass.

Bernie runs into the house looking for Brianna, who is in disbelief at her own actions. Brianna worked so hard on overcoming the effects of childhood abuse. Leigh flees the house, Bernie tries to hold Brianna back but fails. Brianna runs upstairs in shame and locks herself into Mary's bedroom to try and calm herself down. Bernie chases after Leigh whilst Julie goes upstairs to try and speak to Brianna. Brianna breaks down.

Act 1, Scene 7: 01:01:00

Mary is in the living room taking in what just happened. Ella, Bernie, Julie and Leigh scurry in; Leigh is bleeding out, the bleeding won't stop. Bernie doesn't know how to properly wrap a wound, Mary suggests they need a proper paramedic. Brianna can hear what's going on downstairs and is a trained first responder so she goes downstairs to offer her help. Leigh is reluctant and doesn't want Brianna anywhere near her.

Leigh allows Brianna to help with reluctance

LEIGH: I can't believe I'm letting you do this, I must be f***ing mad.

Mary wants Brianna out of the house when she's done bandaging up Leigh. Brianna lets Mary know that she only wanted to talk to her. Mary says Brianna had a strange way of going about it. Brianna tries to initiate the conversation again, letting Mary know that she knows the real reason why Mary came for her in 1981. Mary threatens a

restraining order against Brianna. Brianna says she knows that Mary got her because she knew that Bernie and Julie were in danger.

Mary doesn't like the fact that Brianna and Leigh begin to get along, she wants her out. Julie sticks up for Brianna

JULIE: This is more of Brianna's house than it is hers.

Mary doesn't want to hear it and tells Julie to get out as well. Ella steps in.

ELLA: Oh Nanna, don't say that, that's horrible.

Mary wants Julie to speak up if she has something to say. Julie doesn't want to because she knows that Mary knows what happened when she was a child. Bernie tries to do damage control and asks Ella to put the first aid box away, as well as trying to get Mary back to bed. Brianna is urging for the truth, Julie is hesitant, Ella knows something's up and, again, everything is about to crumble.

It is revealed that Dixon not only abused Brianna, but also led to Mary spitting in Brianna's face. In the aftermath of the revelation, Bernie has run out the room furious. Bernie is hurt that Mary knew and Ella has had to hear this. Leigh asks Mary if she was afraid of Dixon, Mary then begins to talk a bit about his coercive mental abuse. The 40-minute rule that Dixon gave Mary to go to the shops was only the tip of the iceberg of the abuse she faced; Mary suffered consequences when she wouldn't do what Dixon said.

Julie leaves the room when Mary tries to justify Dixon's behaviour.

MARY: Other times he was alright, you know.

Brianna suggests that Dixon can no longer hurt them and this is the start of the breakdown of generational trauma. Julie is thinking of going back home to Paul but Bernie pleads with Julie not to and offers for Julie to come and stay with her.

Ella tells her Auntie Julie that she saw Michael, Julie's son, outside of a Tesco in Leeds about a month ago. Julie is surprised and questions Ella about his well-being. Ella

wishes she had said something to him. Julie isn't happy that Ella did not call her, or let her know that she had seen Michael straight away.

Julie learns from Brianna that her new name means 'youthful, soft haired, vivacious and a beautiful flower.' Julie thinks it's a joke at first, but she decides she wants to look up and learn the positive meanings of her name.

Mary gets Ella to convey to Julie that she's no longer going to the cemetery. Julie wants Mary to make the right choices for herself, as well as for her whole family.

Ella enters the living room crying; she too has been carrying a weight on her shoulders, the real reason why she has dropped out of university. Brianna notices something is wrong, Brianna offers a safe space for Ella to speak her truth.

Brianna asks Ella if she has told anyone about the harassment from her tutor, who is abusing their power. Ella told one woman who did nothing to help. Brianna teaches Ella that this is not OK; both staff are violating the university's code of conduct. Brianna empowers Ella to explore the different ways that she can solve this issue, to identify what has happened and to stop making excuses for abuse of power.

Before Julie goes home with Bernie and Ella, she heads upstairs to have a look in the spare room. Leigh is in the living room, opening up about getting back into education, as she would love to work for the NHS, which was a dream she gave up on. Brianna lends a listening ear whilst getting some work done on her laptop.

Leigh tells us about her observations whilst living on the streets; the feelings of loneliness and being isolated from society. As a teen, Leigh got top marks in school but

they used to speak about her having nits (head lice), she didn't know that she had nits; a sign she wasn't being taken care of at home.

Julie goes into the living room to say goodbye. Leigh has fallen asleep, Brianna decides to stay at the house a bit longer to use the Wi-Fi. Brianna urges Julie to take care of herself, Julie shows Brianna her straight back, to prove that she is taking care of

herself. Julie can't believe that she found out that her name means beautiful flower. Mary gets up to go downstairs. She finds Leigh sleeping and that Brianna is still in the house. Brianna offers to put everything back and Mary heads to the kitchen to get a bucket of soap and hot water.

Mary begins to scrub away Brianna's bloodstain; Brianna is in disbelief that Mary is cleaning it up. She stands to her feet and offers to do it.

MARY: I'll do it. I should have done it years ago.

Mary scrubs on the stain until Blackout.

Further Information

If you would like further information to highlight the issues surrounding the show, please see below. **Please be advised there are themes of abuse.**

According to NHS health Scotland, Poverty has a big impact on people's health, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Poverty can also affect behaviour and educational outcomes, Children born into poverty are more likely to experience a wide range of health problems. Those health problems consist of poor nutrition, chronic disease and poor mental health.

The play is set in the Bradford District, the Bradford district ranks as the 13th most deprived local authority in England, (where 1 is the most deprived local authority and 317 is the least deprived). Bradford is the 2nd most deprived in the Yorkshire and Humber region (after the City of Kingston upon Hull). (2019). When the previous statistics were published in 2015, Bradford was ranked the 19th most deprived. Bradford District is ranked 5th most income deprived and 6th most employment deprived local authority in England.

Mary speaks to The Samaritans during the play. The Samaritans work in prisons, schools, hospitals and the rail network to work with people who are going through a difficult time. They also train people, to become listeners and to support communities in times of need. During 2021, around 22,000 people volunteered their time for Samaritans. Almost 20,000 trained listening volunteers responded to calls for help.

Around 2,500 volunteers supported the running of more than 200 branches and locations across the UK and Ireland. Over 1,300 people in prison volunteered as trained 'Listeners'. The Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die from suicide. They support reducing risk factors that make some people more likely to take their own lives. They help to support in reducing suicidal thoughts, as well as ensuring that the people who are at increased risk of suicide are supported.

15% of the District's households are in fuel poverty.

22% of children are living below the poverty line.

13% of working age people have no qualifications.

11% of the working age population claim an out-of-work benefit.

Coercive control can be indirect and subtle. Such control is initially less imposing than physical harm but is still just as threatening, as it follows a similarly dangerous path in terms of outcome. Essentially, forms of persuasion and control (e.g. “if you really loved me you’d spend more time with me”) and the expectation of compliance (e.g. “meet my needs”) are seen as following a circuitous and predictable path.

In this stage coercion is set up in four ways:

1. creating the expectancy for coercive outcomes (e.g. “I’m going to have you committed”)
2. exploiting vulnerabilities (e.g. “he told me it was his car, his money”),
3. wearing down resistance (e.g. “tried to turn people against me”), and
4. exploiting attachment (e.g. “told me I was lying about the abuse”).

In 2007 it was identified that this path as “structural forms that compel obedience indirectly by monopolising vital resources, dictating preferred choices, micro-regulating a partner’s behaviour, limiting their options, and depriving them of support needed to exercise independent judgement.

In effect, structural forms help differentiate physical violence from coercive control in that one sees how the presence of routine barriers may be used to entrap and isolate women (monitoring her time, withholding money, treating them as helpless).

Further Information written by Monaé Robinson, Staff Director on Dixon & Daughters

Find out More

Read:

Self-Care Guide

<https://images.nationaltheatre.org.uk/uploads/2023/04/Dixon-and-Daughters-Self-Care-Guide.pdf>

Watch:

Dixon and Daughters: A Film by Clean Break

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHQvV3wy3to>

In Rehearsals for Dixon and Daughters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDzBxpWK4CE>

Explore:

Learning Hub

You can find more resources for schools and teachers on the National Theatre's Learning Hub. Search by key stage, subject, theatrical style or practitioner and discover an ever-growing library of short films, learning guides and digital exhibitions.

Find out more: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/learn-explore/schools/teacher-resources/>

National Theatre Archive

More materials relating to the production including the costume bible, poster, prompt scripts, programme, stage management reports and more are held at the National Theatre Archive, which is free to visit.

Find out more: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/archive>

We hope that you have enjoyed watching and studying **Dixon and Daughters**. Don't forget that there are many more fantastic productions to explore as part of the NT Collection. We hope that watching this recorded production has made you feel inspired to see and make live theatre. [Why not find out what's happening at your local theatre and how you can get involved?](#)

**National
Theatre**

Thank you