Your notes

GCSE English Literature: revision notes

Leave Taking

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Plot

- Enid Matthews came to London from Jamaica and works hard in low-paid jobs, bringing up her daughters Del and Viv alone.
- Enid wants a secure, respectable future for her daughters. Viv works hard for university; Del rebels.
- Enid visits Mai, an **obeah** woman (a healer), for help. Del becomes pregnant, leaves home and stays with Mai.
- Enid's mother dies in Jamaica, and Enid cannot go home for the funeral. By the end, the family begins to come back together.

Themes and context

- **Identity** and belonging, home, **migration**, mother and daughter relationships, racism, and generations.
- Winsome Pinnock's play was first staged in 1987. It shows the **Windrush generation** who came from the Caribbean and their British-born children.

Characters

- Broderick, Enid's friend, feels let down by Britain. Mai helps the characters face the past.

How to get top marks

- Write about generations. Enid's hopes for her daughters, and what they want for themselves, drive the conflict.
- Use Pinnock's language: changes between patois and Standard English show **identity** and belonging.
- Use Brodie to write about what Britain promised, and what it delivered, for Caribbean migrants.

Key terms

Windrush generation	People who came from the Caribbean to Britain from 1948.
Obeah	A Caribbean tradition of spiritual healing.
Identity	The sense of who you are and where you belong.
Migration	Moving to live in another country.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Where did Enid come from?
2. Who are Enid's daughters?
3. Who is Mai?
4. What does Enid want for her daughters?
5. Who feels let down by Britain?
6. What happens to Enid's mother?
7. When was Leave Taking first staged?
8. Which theme does Enid's distance from Jamaica show?

Answers

1. Jamaica
2. Del and Viv
3. An obeah woman who offers healing and advice
4. A secure, respectable future
5. Broderick
6. She dies in Jamaica
7. 1987
8. Home and belonging

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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