

The Children | character descriptions

Characters

Rose

Aged between 60-70, female. Never had children.

She seems to have moved around a lot and has really lived life; she's really benefitted from the benefits her generation have had.

It becomes clear quite quickly that Rose knows the house – she finds the footstool under the chair without looking. It is likely that this is the place that she and Robin were using to have their affair.

She has never been married, but has had lots of boyfriends – some quite serious. It seems she even lived with one. Was this because she never wanted to be tied down? Or because she never met the right one? Or perhaps because the right one – Robin – wasn't available.

It is suggested she sleeps around, but is this just a lazy stereotype? She's certainly not ashamed of her past.

A "funny" sense of humour, as Hazel describes it. It could be described as quirky, ironic, slightly surreal.

Why is she there at their house? It takes her a long time to get to the point. Perhaps scared to discuss it with them? She knows it is a difficult issue, but has already spoken to many others about it. Perhaps she likes Robin and Hazel most of all and has to build up her courage to discuss it. Perhaps she just enjoys their company.

She's a little condescending to Hazel – there's a sense she's trying to butter her up; either because she feels guilty about her affair with Robin (which she actually doesn't seem that concerned about), or because she is trying to win Hazel round to join her.

Brushes things off easily – turns things into a bit of a joke. Makes light of issues and doesn't take things too seriously. Ironic for a nuclear scientist.

Suggests she was the life and soul of the party when she was younger; now, following her cancer scare and the incident, she seems a little more maudlin and introspective. Clearly seems to feel some guilt about working in the nuclear power station.

A cancer survivor; she is happy to discuss it, but brushes it off. Doesn't make a big deal of it. She has lost a breast and her hair is falling out.

Rose used to be a bit of a beauty – Hazel probably felt threatened by her – but that physical beauty has faded somewhat; the cancer and smoking and lack of interest in things like yoga have meant she's not in the same shape as Hazel.

Hazel

Aged between 60-70, female.

She is a mother that has had four children – two girls and two boys. The eldest, Lauren, seems to have been the most difficult as she has had lots of emotional problems. It seems that Hazel has problems letting go of her.

Rose also suggests that Hazel had Lauren intentionally to trap Robin – that idea that implies that Lauren was not wanted, but needed. Even now, Hazel still seems to need Lauren as much as the other way around. Lauren can't let her mother go – a bit discussion at the end of the play.

She used to run a farm with Robin, as well as being a nuclear scientist, which she took very seriously. Says she became attached to the cows and was clearly sad about them dying; so much so, that Robin lies about them.

She's a sensitive, concerned individual. Practical, organised. She says about tidying up that she was the responsible one that always cleared up and never left a mess – which is why it was such a revelation about being about to leave the "mess" in her old farmhouse. This is very indicative of her generation, the Baby Boomers – they did so much good, but when it was discovered that they had fucked up the planet, they never took on their responsibility to tidy it up.

She cares greatly about living. She seems to cling to any signs of life. Practises yoga, and even tells Robin to go and see a doctor when he starts coughing up blood, even though it's clear he's dying. She's a survivor – I think Rose tells her this.

She doesn't have much of a sense of humour; if anything it's quite dry and twisted, e.g. see the line about the parsnip wine.

She seems quite a bitter character and you wonder how much she still loves Robin.

Her physical fitness is good – she does yoga regularly and is probably quite slim and fit.

Robin

Aged between 60-70, male.

Potentially a few years older than the two women, Robin is more childlike, immature – male. Robin also comes across as selfish, self-obsessed.

He behaves particularly silly when Rose turns up, but we are not sure if this is because his old flame has arrived and reawakened something in him or if he is always like this.

It appears he drinks a lot – even in this period of disaster, Robin goes to the effort of making wine – even from parsnip – and quickly drinks two glasses.

In many ways, Robin is quite old-fashioned – his humour and attitude towards women are quite sexist (he calls them girls).

It also emerges that he has continued to have an affair with Rose, even after he married Hazel. Why was this? Was this because she was his true love? And that he only married Hazel because, as Rose suggests, she trapped him into it? Or was it simply because he thought he could continue to get away with it.

Lives a carefree lifestyle and seems less concerned than Hazel with living. He plays games with the tractor on the edge of the land and visits the old farm which is near the edge of the radiation fallout zone. He is more enthusiastic about going back to the power station to help Rose; although, is that because he wants to impress Rose? He also seems to have accepted his illness and forthcoming death. It feels as if Hazel is the one keeping him going, forcibly; is he that bothered about continuing?

He's more earthy, more animalistic than Hazel. They seem an odd couple. He has remained carefree, while she seems to worry about a lot (the toilet flooding!?).

It's implied that Robin used to be a big, charismatic, vivacious character – able to take both of the only two women at the power station. Now he seems much smaller, pettier and a bit sex-obsessed.