

ENGLISH LITERATURE

An Inspector Calls

QUOTATION	CHARACTER	THEME
"you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else [...] community and all that nonsense."	Mr Birling	Responsibility
"I still can't accept responsibility"	Mr Birling	Responsibility
[miserably]: "So I'm really responsible?"	Sheila	Responsibility
"It was my own fault."	Sheila	Responsibility
"Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges."	Inspector Goole	Responsibility
"First, the girl herself.... Secondly, I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have."	Mrs Birling	Responsibility
"each of you helped to kill her."	Inspector Goole	Responsibility
"Now, Sheila... When you're married you'll realise"	Mrs Birling	Gender
"And you think young women ought to be protected against unpleasant and disturbing things?"	Inspector Goole	Gender
"became at once the most important person in her life"	Gerald	Gender
"You were the wonderful Fairy Prince. You must have adored it"	Sheila	Gender
"as if she was an animal, a thing, not a person."	Inspector Goole	Gender
"She was pretty and a good sport"	Eric	Gender
"You seem to have made a great impression on this child"	Mrs Birling	Generational Divide
"We often do on the young ones. They're more impressionable"	Inspector Goole	Generational Divide
"I want to get out of this. It frightens me the way you talk"	Sheila	Generational Divide
"You're ready to go on in the same old way."	Sheila	Generational Divide
"the famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke -"	Mr Birling	Generational Divide
"They'll be plenty of time, when I've gone to adjust your family relationships"	Inspector Goole	Family
my child – your own grandchild – you killed them both – damn you, damn you"	Eric	Family

KEY THEMES

Responsibility

Capitalism versus Socialism

Generational Divide

Social Class

Gender

Family



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CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY



Arthur Birling
Head of Birling family,
capitalist businessman



Sybil Birling
Birling's snobby wife



Inspector Goole
A police inspector sent to
investigate Eva Smith's suicide



Gerald Croft
Sheila's fiancé, and son of
Birling's business rival



Sheila Birling
Birling's daughter and



**Eva Smith / Daisy
Renton**
A young working-class
woman with connections



Eric Birling
The youngest Birling

QUOTATION	CHARACTER	THEME
"You've a lot to learn yet. And I'm talking as a hard-headed, practical man of business."	Mr Birling	Capitalism versus Socialism
"I tell you by that time you'll be living in a world that'll have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations and all these silly little war scares. There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere."	Mr Birling	Capitalism versus Socialism
"Why shouldn't they try for higher wages? We try for the highest possible prices."	Eric	Capitalism versus Socialism
"That fellow obviously didn't like us. He was prejudiced from the start. Probably a Socialist or some sort of crank."	Mr Birling	Capitalism versus Socialism
"Don't blame her. She comes from an old county family – landed people and so forth – and so it's only natural."	Mr Birling	Social Class
"There are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering, and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, with what we think and say and do. We don't live alone. We are members of one body."	Inspector Goole	Social Class
"But these girls aren't cheap labour – they're people."	Sheila	Social Class
"If you don't come down hard on these people they'll soon be asking for the world"	Mr Birling	Social Class

VOCABULARY TO EXPLORE

Bourgeoisie	Proletariat	Exploitative	Stage Directions
Conscience	Superficial	Unsympathetic	Adverb
Hierarchy	Materialistic	Obstinate	Symbolism
Misogynistic	Industrialist	Arrogant	Hypophora
Omniscient	Collectivist	Perceptive	Hyperbole
Patriarchy	Prejudiced	Moral	Foreshadowing