

An Inspector Calls

J. B. Priestley



1912
views
on
women



"a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own - and -"

isolationism

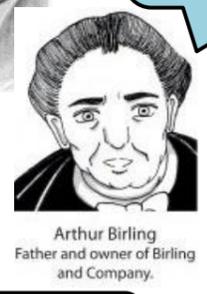
"I thought it would do us all a bit of good if sometimes we tried to put ourselves in the place of these young women"



"What do you mean by saying that? You talk as if we were responsible -"

"If she had been some miserable plain little creature, I don't suppose I'd have done it. But she was very pretty... I couldn't feel sorry for her."

capitalism



Arthur Birling
Father and owner of Birling and Company.



Inspector Goole
A mysterious man who questions each member of the Birling family in relation to Eva Smith's death.

responsibility

proletariat

prejudice



"You used the power you had... to punish the girl."

Daisy Renton

"Why - you fool - he knows. Of course he knows. And I hate to think how much he knows that we don't know yet."

"You think young women ought to be protected against unpleasant and disturbing things?"

"We all started out like that - so confident, so pleased with ourselves until he began asking us questions."

"unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable"

dramatic irony



"They haven't had a suicide for months."

"A girl just died - on her way to the Infirmary - after swallowing some disinfectant. And a police inspector is on his way here."

"A chain of events"



"You could have kept her on instead of throwing her out. I call it tough luck."



"The girl saw me looking at her and then gave me a glance that was nothing less than a cry for help."



Gerald Croft
Engaged to Sheila Birling. His father owns Crofts Limited, a rival company to Birling's.

"So there's nothing to be sorry for, nothing to learn. We can all just go on behaving just as we did."

"You're beginning to pretend now that nothing's really happened at all. And I can't see it like that. The girl's still dead, isn't she?"



Eva Smith
A young woman who unfortunately commits suicide. Her death unravels events and secrets amongst the Birling family.

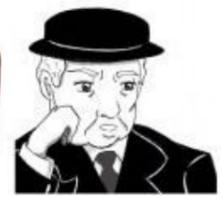
Eva Smith

"Each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it. (He looks from one to the other of them carefully.) But I don't think you ever will."



"Gerald set her up as his mistress and then dropped her when it suited him."

"I became at once the most important person in her life - you understand?"



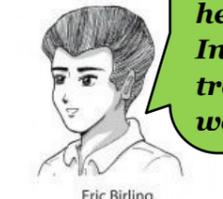
"You and I aren't the same people who sat down to dinner here."

"She felt there'd never be anything as good again for her - so she had to make it last longer."

"But I didn't know it was you - I never dreamt. Besides, you're not the type - you don't get drunk -"



"She didn't want me to marry her. Said I didn't love her - and all that. In a way, she treated me - as if I were a kid."



Eric Birling
Son and youngest of the two Birling children. A very shy man.

socialism

"We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish."



bourgeoisie



Mrs Birling



Sybil Birling
Mother and wife of Arthur Birling.

"Naturally that was one of the things that prejudiced me against her case."

"He was responsible for the girl's condition."

"You know, don't you?"

"You're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble - that's why."

omniscient

"Mother - I begged you and begged you to stop -"



"Mother - stop - stop!"

"You're behaving like a hysterical child tonight."

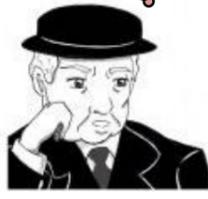


"I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have."

older generation

"Make an example of the young man eh? Public confession of responsibility."

"Who is to blame then?"



"I was perfectly justified in advising my committee not to allow her claim for assistance."

"She was here alone, friendless, almost penniless, desperate. She needed not only money but advice, sympathy, friendliness. You've had children. You must have known what she was feeling. And you slammed the door in her face."

orthodox