

Mrs Birling - Quote Sheet

BLAME/RESPONSIBILITY

Act 2	<u>"Girls of that class-"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- She dismisses the lower class as an aggregate inferior group that all behave in the same way. She ties blame to social class, as she bases her understanding of morality on the individual's position in the class system.- The collective noun "Girl's" is used to belittle Eva Smith and her social group, having connotations of feebleness and immaturity.
Act 2	<u>"I consider I did my duty"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The noun "duty" could be a tool to explore the disparity in the perspectives of capitalists and socialists, for capitalists, upholding the class system was paramount, thus for Mrs Birling, her duty may be to uphold the class gap by refusing Eva help.
Act 2	<u>"I won't believe it"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- She is incapable of addressing her own, or her family's wrongdoing. This also suggests that her ignorance and blindness previously discussed is a deliberate choice extending from selective belief.

OLDER VS YOUNGER GENERATION

Act 1	<u><i>"Sheila! What an expression! Really, the things you girls pick up these days!"</i></u>	<p>- This exposes her superficially driven codes of conduct as she cares more about etiquette than morality. She is opposed to Sheila's use of colloquial language as it is an emblem of the progressive younger generation that challenge her beliefs. Through using the noun 'girl' Mrs Birling belittles Sheila in order to dismiss her behaviour and portray it as foolish or uncouth, she reinforces the separation between the older generation who are robust to these newer ways of thinking and the younger ones that seem vulnerable to 'pick[ing]' them up as if they were a disease.</p>
Act 1	<u><i>"What's the matter with that child?"</i></u>	<p>- Mrs Birling absolves Eric from his behaviour, although this is an example of dramatic irony as we know in reality he is far from an innocent child.</p>
Act 3	<u><i>He's only a boy"</i></u>	<p>- The diminutive noun "boy" is almost emotive, she is trying to evoke pity for him.</p>

GUILT

<p>Act 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><i>[distressed]</i></u> <u><i>"No- Eric- please- I didn't know- I didn't understand-".</i></u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Her reaction to learning the truth portrays how she would've behaved differently if she had been aware of the circumstances pleading to Eric, the verb <u><i>"understand"</i></u> is pivotal her to depict how subjective welfare organisations are set to fail, and instead should be implemented by an objective government body. - The stage directions <u><i>"distressed"</i></u>, show how unfamiliar she is with being put under social scrutiny, she has been conditioned to be a member of the untouchable upper class.
<p>Act 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><i>"I was the only one who didn't give in to him"</i></u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Her expected guilt is supplemented for unorthodox feelings of pride at the notion of not conceding to guilt. Her overt selfishness is apparent through her boastful attitude to being immune to guilt. This amplifies the suggestion that she represents the cardinal sin of pride, if looking at AIC in terms of a morality play.