

An Inspector Calls Summary

The Characters

Mr Birling: father, owner of a local business at a factory

Mrs Birling: Mother, runs a charity

Sheila: Daughter, newly engaged

Eric: Son, alcoholic tendencies

Gerald: Sheila's fiancée, an aristocrat (higher class than the others)

The Inspector: An Inspector (can we even call him that??)- the mysterious man of the hour

Eva Smith/ Daisy Renton: dehumanised and exploited by the Birlings and Gerald.

Act 1

- Act 1 begins in the dining room of the Birling's house which was [heavily comfortable but not cosy and homelike]. They are celebrating the **engagement** of Sheila (Mr and Mrs Birling's daughter), and Gerald Croft (son of the upper-class Crofts). Mr Birling is clearly very **egotistical** (self-centred) and is constantly talking about war and the titanic (dramatic irony).
- The **Inspector then arrives**, interrupting Mr Birling's speech and their celebration of the engagement. The Inspector reveals that a girl named **Eva Smith had committed suicide** from drinking disinfectant. All are shocked, and all deny knowing Eva. After some investigation, it comes to light that Mr Birling knew Eva and in fact **sacked her from his factory for demanding higher wages**. Sheila is very distressed at her father's contributions to her suicide and his dismissive behaviour (her start to change towards socialism).
- It is then revealed that Sheila had a part to play in Sheila's tragic suicide. She got her **sacked from a shop called Milwards**, as she thought that Eva was smirking at her. Sheila is extremely upset at her contribution and shows **intense remorse**. Gerald sees how the Inspector is getting confessions from all of the people in the household, so he decides to confess to Sheila that he **had a relationship with Eva**. He begs Sheila to not tell the Inspector- Sheila says that the Inspector would already know.

Act 2

- (Eric is absent for this whole scene)
- **Gerald admits to his affair with Eva** (she introduced herself to him as Daisy Renton). He met her at **the Palace bar** (hinted to be a place of prostitution). Over the summer, him and Daisy had an affair, but Gerald ended it – he gave her money, so she had enough until the end of the year. **Sheila returns the engagement ring.**
- Mrs Birling is now questioned, and then it was revealed that **Mrs Birling, head of a charity, turned away a girl who was pregnant and desperate** – this was Eva Smith. She tells Eva that the father of the child is responsible. During her investigation, she remains ignorant and has no remorse for Eva's suicide, continuing to support that it is the **father of the child's responsibility.**

Act 3

- It is revealed **that Eric is the father of the child** (Irony) – Eric confesses to this. He met Eva (Daisy) at the Palace Bar, where during the night they were together, she ended up pregnant. As soon as Eric found out about this, **he stole money from Mr Birling's business** to support her and his unborn child. Eva refused to take this money as she was aware that it was stolen – she contrasts the depiction of the lower class being thieving and immoral.
- The Inspector before he leaves delivers a **final speech about responsibility, social inequality and compassion to the Birlings**. This speech is a warning because he states if they don't change, there will be severe consequences to their actions.
- Gerald then returns, after taking a stroll and reveals the information he had found upon his leave – **there was no Inspector Goole at the police force he claimed to be from**. Mr Birling, Mrs Birling and Gerald are [*triumphantly*] celebrating this fact, and celebrating that they will no longer have to hide this "*public scandal*". Sheila and Eric are **appalled at their attitude towards the suicide**, as they believe that the 3 of them are allowing themselves to forget their immoral actions against Eva.
- During their celebrations of not being found out, they receive a phone call. Mr Birling picks up, it is a call from the **local police station to inform him that a young girl has died and is on her way to the infirmary. Another Inspector will be calling...**

Summary of how each was involved with Eva/ Daisy

- **Mr Birling:** got her sacked from his factory for asking for higher wages
- **Sheila:** got her sacked from Milwards as she thought she was smirking at her
- **Gerald:** Had an affair with her over the summer and gave her money
- **Mrs Birling:** refused to help her from her charity even though she was pregnant
- **Eric:** Was the father of her child and stole money from Mr Birling's business to help her
- **The Inspector:** vocalises what happened to her – acting as a vehicle to vocalise her injustice