

# Act 1 An Inspector Calls

## 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.

## Overview

- 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.

Name	Action/Plot
Mr Birling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Dramatic irony (speaks about the titanic)</li> <li>-Egotistical and speaks in long speeches</li> <li>-Boasts to the Inspector</li> <li>-Denies knowing who Eva is</li> <li>-Realises he sacked her from his factory for asking for higher wages</li> <li>-No sense of guilt or responsibility</li> <li>-Defensive</li> </ul> <p><b>(look at the Act 1 Mr Birling lesson for grade 9 analysis on this)</b></p>
Mrs Birling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Her husbands [social superior]</li> <li>-Speaks less than Mr Birling</li> <li>-Takes Sheila away to let the men speak</li> </ul> <p><b>(look at the Act 1 Mrs Birling lessons for grade 9 analysis on this)</b></p>
Sheila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Speaks little at the beginning</li> <li>-Celebrating her engagement to her fiancée Gerald</li> <li>-Is taken away while the men speak by her Mother</li> <li>-Finds out she got Eva sacked from Millwards and is devastated</li> <li>-She shows remorse and begins to take on The Inspector's socialist beliefs</li> <li>-Gerald confesses he had an affair to her, she refuses to try and hide it as she insists that the Inspector will know</li> </ul> <p><b>(look at the Act 1 Sheila lessons for grade 9 analysis on this)</b></p>
Eric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-He is drunk at the beginning of the act</li> <li>-He agrees with his father's lengthy speeches</li> <li>-Begins to be combative towards his parents once what they did to Eva was revealed and criticises their reactions to it</li> </ul> <p><b>(look at the Act 1 Sheila lessons for grade 9 analysis on this)</b></p>

Name	Action/Plot
Gerald	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-He is clearly of a higher status than the Birling's</li> <li>-Mr Birling tries to impress him with his rambling speeches</li> <li>-Gerald is polite and composed throughout Act 1</li> <li>-He supports Capitalist ideologies when they are spoken about and doesn't show much emotion towards Eva's suicide</li> <li>-He admits to Sheila at the end that he had an affair over the summer and asks her not to tell the Inspector. She rejects and says that he will know anyway</li> </ul> <p><b>(look at the Act 1 Gerald lesson for grade 9 analysis on this)</b></p>
The Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-He is dressed simplistically and doesn't give much information about himself</li> <li>-He comes in and reveals about the girls suicide and proceeds to show the image of her one by one to the Birlings.</li> <li>-He shows Mr Birling first, to which he showed no remorse. He is stern with Mr Birling about responsibility</li> <li>-He then shows Sheila the photo, to which she has an emotion filled reaction</li> <li>-He is calm and composed</li> </ul> <p><b>(look at the Act 1 Inspector lesson for grade 9 analysis on this)</b></p>