

## KEY WORDS

*Dismissive, Egocentric, Disingenuous, Complacent*

# Gerald Act 3

## SPARED BY THE INSPECTOR

- The inspector is less harsh on Gerald than the other characters in the play, acknowledging that he **"at least had some affection for her [Eva] and made her happy for a time."** This is interesting if we investigate Priestley's personal life (linking to AO3 here by relating to context) as Priestley had affairs in his own marriage. Consequently, he **refrains from displaying infidelity** as one of the most **pertinent misconducts** within the text.

- As a reliable, **omniscient** source, the audience are **conditioned to mirror** the beliefs of the inspector and respect his views, this provides an opportunity to applaud Gerald's somewhat **philanthropic** (charitable) behaviour towards the working class and encourage this **socialist attitude**.

## COMPARISON

Through noticing the **lessened scathing** tone of the Inspector to Gerald, compared to Mr Birling for example, this could hint to how the Upper class, regardless of their moral examination by a objective individual, will always be less **detrimentally impacted**- their wealth creates an inevitable barrier between them and the real world and it's consequences.

## DISMISSIVE

- Gerald conducts the play to follow a **cyclical structure**, focussing back on his and Sheila's engagement. This is reflective of his unwillingness to change and his **overarching desire to regain alleviate himself from guilt and responsibility**.
- He is quick to **suppress and downplay** the events of the evening stating **"Everything's all right now, Sheila. (Holds up the ring.) What about this ring?"** exposing his remorse seen earlier in the play as **specious and performative**.
- The use of the noun **"ring"** as a **metonym** for marriage displays Gerald's materialistic view of marriage, it ignores any sense of emotion or love. He **reverts to this symbol of traditional power and possession** in order to reassert himself; he finds comfort in the **ingrained societal beliefs** which make life 'easy' for him.
- This is a disappointing character arc for the audience to witness as there are times when he displays a glimmer of genuine care for Eva, yet he is quick to overlook this in order to excuse himself from his misconduct and regain a high social standing.

## TOP TIP



**AO2: metonymy is an example of a high-level language technique, it refers to when a noun or an attribute of something is used in place of its actual name another example could be referring to the British monarchy as 'the Crown'.**

## EXPOSING THE INSPECTOR

- Priestley's use of dramatic exit allow Gerald's true feelings to remain **ambiguous** as we are led to **scrutinise** whether he is shying away from responsibility and guilt or acting out of sorrow.
- When Gerald exists in Act Two he is in a position of weakness; he seems **governed by his emotions** claiming he is ***"rather more - upset - by this business than I probably appear to be"***. Whilst this does offer a glimpse of hope that Gerald does feel remorseful for his actions, act three teaches us that this was an **act of sophistry**.
- Upon first impression, Gerald's **fragmented speech** suggests genuine shame and sorrow, yet it later seems that perhaps this was **deliberate and forged**. When he returns, he exposes that his time away was merely an opportunity to rid himself of responsibility for Eva's death as he was seeking to expose the inspector as a fraud.
- He announces ***"(slowly) That man wasn't a police officer."*** The stage directions "slowly" allow him to regain power and assert himself over everyone else in the room, perhaps to compensate for the **effeminate emotions** he exhibited upon leaving.
- Alternatively, this slow reveal of the information places more **gravitas** on its importance which could be **indicative of the immense sense of relief** he felt from it.

## PRIESTLEY'S INTENTIONS

- Gerald serves to bridge the gap between the older and younger generation, whilst Gerald is closer to Eric and Sheila in terms of age, he is closer to the Birling parents in terms of ideology. This **critiques complacency** and displays how the 'middle generation' which would comprise much of Priestley's audience can be equally as immoral as their elders- it is an **allegory** to teach them that they must actively engage and pursue political and social development.
- By offering the audience **ephemeral opportunities to sympathise with Gerald** (when he displays momentary remorse) their overarching contempt for him at the end of the play is strengthened. It is apparent that he prioritises his **egocentrism** over any **glimpse of compassion** that he may exhibit which shows a conscious decision to **uphold capitalist views** despite being shown their flaws out of selfish intent.

## TOPIC SENTENCES

- Gerald exhibits a dominating desire to alleviate himself from any responsibility or association with the misconduct in order to preserve his own image, he drives the play to follow a cyclical structure. This is emblematic of the ignorant capitalist belief that immorality can be overlooked if social reputation is upheld.
- Priestley utilises Gerald to bridge the gap between the older and the younger generation, the development of his character is designed to disappoint and evoke animosity from the audience as whilst he does exhibit some compassion, he prioritises his self-image over morals. He is emblematic of how difficult it is to change ingrained societal beliefs.