

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

**MADE VERY
VERY EASY**

A Very Simplified Version

EVELYN SAMUEL

An Inspector Calls
Made Very Very Easy
First Edition Published by Evelyn Samuel
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REVIEWS

★★★★★ Excellent book

Reviewed 17 January 2021

Very clear and well-written book. Gives an excellent analysis of themes and characters.

Invaluable for study and gaining a clearer understanding of the text. Very highly recommended.

This has been highly helpful to my son with his GCSE studies. Would rate higher if I could!

★★★★★ Informative

Reviewed 20 February 2022

This book has helped me achieve a grade 9 in my English Lit GCSE mocks. This book provides the best information about An Inspector Calls and will help you gain the grade you want.

★★★★★ If you want to get a better level, get this book

Reviewed 8 October 2020

This book is amazing. I bought it for my son, and now I am seeing great improvements in his work.

My son is now addicted to this, and it has helped him so much. My son went from a level 6 to a level 9 student. I thank the author of this book; thank you for making our lives easier for us.

★★★★★ Fantastic resource!

Reviewed 25 August 2021

Easy-to-follow guide. The kids absolutely love it! Recommending it to my friends and family.

★★★★★ Excellent

Reviewed 4 November 2020

This book is extremely helpful and covers all the information you need to help you secure the best grades in your GCSE exam. It has helped me improve my grades drastically.

★★★★★ buy the book

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I recommend this book because it helped me change my grades to a level 8

★★★★★ Very helpful

Reviewed 6 November 2021

Very helpful guide that contains a ton of information.

★★★★★ Very good

Reviewed 25 October 2021

Excellent explanation, easy to understand

★★★★★ Want a Grade 9 in English literature?

Reviewed 6 October 2020

I purchased this for my son in Y11, and he told me the book goes into significant depth and helped him boost his grade by 2 grades. The level of explanation, detail and alternative viewpoints on how you can interpret different quotes, settings, characters, etc. I definitely recommend this book for all GCSE students. My son said that it is better than all other revision guides.

★★★★★ Want a Grade 9 in English literature?

Reviewed 24 July 2021

Good book with full description and explanation, with a great guide that helps with exam questions, and you should get it.

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PRIESTLEY

J. B. Priestley wrote *An Inspector Calls* after the Second World War. In it, he tries to pass on his message of social responsibility through the characters. His main aim was to try to get the rich Capitalist class to help the poor Socialist class.

THE PLAY

- The main theme of the play is responsibility — the idea that “we are members of one body; we are responsible for each other.”
- *An Inspector Calls* is a controversial play because Priestley wanted to express his left-wing socialist views.
- He criticised capitalism and believed capitalists were greedy and lacked social responsibility.
- He wanted a better life for workers like Eva Smith.

CONTEXT

- In **1912**, there was a strong divide between the **rich capitalist class** and the **poor working class**.
- After the war, **class differences had reduced** and society was changing.
- In **1912**, women had **very few rights** and were expected to obey men.
- **Upper-class women** usually married within their own class.
- **Poor women** were often treated as **cheap labour**, like **Eva Smith**.
- By **1946**, women’s roles had changed because they had to **work and help rebuild society** after the wars.
- In **1912**, the rich wanted to **keep the status quo**.
- By **1946**, there was a **strong push for social change**.

CHARACTERS

INSPECTOR GOOLE	Police Inspector
ARTHUR BIRLING	The Business Man
SYBIL BIRLING	His Wife
SHEILA BIRLING	His Daughter
GERALD CROFT	Sheila's Fiancé
ERIC BIRLING	His Son
EDNA	The Maid
EVA SMITH	The worker sacked by Arthur for inciting workers' rights
alias Daisy Renton	sacked from next workplace due to Sheila's jealousy
alias Mrs Birling (Eric's wife)	denied support as a single parent by Sybil
	used and rejected as a mistress by both Gerald and Eric
	[does NOT appear in Play, just talked about]

SYNOPSIS

- Inspector Goole arrives unexpectedly at the Birling family's home during Sheila Birling and Gerald Croft's engagement celebration.
- He calmly but firmly questions each family member about Eva Smith, also known as Daisy Renton.
- The Inspector says Eva has just died by suicide after drinking disinfectant.
- Using Eva's diary and photograph, he exposes the guilt and remorse of those present.
- He reveals that Arthur Birling dismissed Eva for supporting workers' rights.
- Sybil Birling denied her financial help because she wanted to rise above her social class.
- Eric Birling made her pregnant when he was drunk.
- Sheila Birling falsely accused her, contributing to her being fired.
- Gerald Croft abandoned her as his mistress.
- Arguments follow, dividing the family into socialist and capitalist viewpoints.
- Eric and Sheila show sympathy for Eva's treatment and death.
- Arthur, Sybil and Gerald refuse to accept responsibility.
- The Inspector reminds them that everyone is connected in one society.
- As he leaves, he warns, "If men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught in fire."

ACT 1

SUMMARY ACT 1 part 1 to part 5

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[BIRLING FAMILY – DINING ROOM]

- The opening scene sets the mood and pace of the play.
- The Birling family are shown in Mr Birling's wealthy house, surrounded by luxury and comfort.
- Priestley presents them as part of the rich capitalist class.
- Details such as "large suburban house," "prosperous manufacturer," "port wine," "cigar boxes,"
- and "tails and ties" highlight their privilege.
- At first, the atmosphere is happy and celebratory because Sheila is getting engaged to Gerald.
- Sheila and Eric joke with each other, making the scene feel relaxed.
- Mr Birling is presented as a show-off and self-important capitalist-class man.
- He is proud of being a "hard-headed businessman" and his wrong claim that the Titanic is
- "Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable." Shows that he is not always right.
- He boasts about his social status by talking about becoming Lord Mayor or getting a knighthood.
- Before the Inspector arrives, Birling gives a speech about looking after himself and his family.
- Priestley uses this to reveal Birling's selfishness and lack of social responsibility.
- The Inspector's arrival interrupts Birling's confidence and changes the tone of the play.
- Edna announces the arrival of the Inspector and Birling still feels pleased with himself.
- He even thinks the visit may be about a warrant.
- The Inspector is described as powerful and serious, "massiveness, solidity, and purposefulness."
- Birling tries to impress him by mentioning he was "an Alderman for years – and Lord Mayor."

- We can once again note Mr Arthur Birling's need to be socially recognised.
- When questioned by the Inspector, Mr Birling at first could not remember who Eva Smith was.
- He says, "I seem to remember hearing that name – Eva Smith – somewhere."
- After seeing the photograph, Mr Birling admits that he knows her.
- He describes her as "a lively good-looking girl."
- He also admits that he refused her demand for higher wages and then fired her.
- He says, "She'd had a lot to say – far too much – so she had to go."
- The Inspector then questioned Sheila
- Sheila enters the room cheerfully and is confused by what is happening.
- She asks, "What's all this about?"
- She is also curious and asks, "What business? What's happening?"
- Her mood changes immediately when she hears about Eva Smith's death.
- Sheila's reaction is one of sympathy and shock.
- Sheila and Eric respond very differently from Mr Birling.
- Mr Birling is cold and detached, whereas Sheila and Eric empathise with Eva Smith.
- Priestley presents Sheila and Eric as the younger generation and as a vision for future progress because they accept responsibility for their behaviour.
- By contrast, Mr Birling says, "Still I can't accept any responsibility."
- At first, Sheila is naïve and unaware that she was involved in Eva Smith's death.
- When she sees the photograph, she "gives a half-stifled sob, and then runs out."
- This shows that she is visibly shaken and remorseful.
- She later admits, "So I am really responsible."

[INSPECTOR GOOLE REMAINS AT THE DOOR]

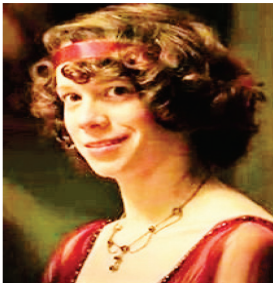
START OF PART 1



MR ARTHUR BIRLING



MRS SYBIL BIRLING



SHEILA BIRLING



ERIC BIRLING



GERALD CROFT

[BIRLINGS AND GERALD AT DINNER]

Priestley gives us a vivid description of the Birlings' house.



- The "fairly large suburban house" shows the Birling family are wealthy and part of the capitalist class.
- The "solid furniture" suggests stability and security in the Birling's household.



- Mr Birling is described as "heavy-looking," suggesting he is physically and morally weighty, and perhaps self-important.
- The house is described as "not cosy and homelike," showing that although the family are rich, there is no warmth or real affection.
- Mrs Birling is described as "a rather cold woman," which reflects her unemotional and detached personality.
- Priestley links the family's personalities to the furniture: both are solid and inanimate, suggesting they are cold, rigid, and lifeless.
- The lighting is "pink and intimate," which suits the cheerful atmosphere of Sheila's engagement.
- However, this warm atmosphere does not last.
- When the Inspector arrives, the tone changes and the play becomes more serious and unsettling.

// The dining room is of a fairly large suburban house, belonging to a prosperous manufacturer. It has a good solid furniture of the period.

The general effect is a substantial and heavily comfortable but not cosy and homelike.

The lighting is pink and intimate until the Inspector arrives, and then changes to brighter and harder.

At rise of curtain, the four BIRLINGS and GERALD are seated at the table, with ARTHUR BIRLING at one end, his wife at the other, ERIC downstage and SHEILA and GERALD seated upstage.

EDNA, the parlour maid, is just clearing the table, which has no cloth, of the dessert plates and champagne glasses, etc, and then replacing them with decanter of port, cigar box and cigarettes. Port glasses are already on the table. All five are in evening dress of the period, the men in tails and white ties, not dinner-jackets. ARTHUR BIRLING is a heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties with fairly easy manners but rather provincial in this speech. His wife is about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior. SHEILA is a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited. GERALD CROFT is an attractive chap about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the well-bred young man-about-town. ERIC is in his early twenties, not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive. At the moment they have all had a good dinner, are celebrating a special occasion, and are pleased with themselves. //

Arthur Birling: Giving us the port, Edna? That's right. (he pushes it towards Eric.) You ought to like this port, Gerald, as a matter of fact, Finchley told me **it's exactly the same port your father gets** from him.

Gerald: Then it'll be all right. The governor prides himself on being a good judge of port. I don't pretend to know much about it.

- The lighting gets brighter and harder, which can be associated with the terrible news that the Inspector is bringing. We see the lifestyle of the rich, Capitalist class with fancy clothes
- 'Tails, and white bow ties, evening dresses and stylish tables set with port, cigar box and cigarettes.'
- Priestley highlights their fancy lifestyle to show us how the poor Socialist class like Eva Smith were struggling without food or jobs, yet the rich of that period lived in such comfort.
- His description of Mr and Mrs Birling is not very flattering, and one can conclude that he writes with a bitter tone – Mr Birling a rather portentous man; his wife, a rather cold woman. Sheila is very pleased with life. We see a gradual change in Sheila from a naïve, innocent young girl to someone strong and mature by the end of the play. Gerald is described as the
- 'Easy, well-bred young man-about-town.'
- Eric, 'not quite at ease, half-shy, half-assertive'.
- They are celebrating the very special occasion – Sheila's engagement. They are very pleased with themselves, but this excitement is short-lived with the arrival of the Inspector.



The BIRLINGS and GERALD CROFT at Dinner

Mr Birling is very proud when he talks about port. He is trying to act like Mr Croft by copying his taste in wine.

"It's exactly the same port your father gets"