

Plot

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| 1 | Act 1 | The Birlings are celebrating Sheila and Gerald's engagement, Birling makes a speech to the men, the Inspector arrives, Birling confesses he fired Eva, Sheila confesses that she was responsible for Eva's dismissal from Milwards. |
| 2 | Act 2 | Gerald admits to 'rescuing' Eva and then leaves to clear his head, Mrs Birling admits to refusing Eva aid, Mrs Birling argues that the father should be brought to justice (Eric is the father), Eric enters the room. |
| 3 | Act 3 | Eric admits to drinking and forceful sex with Eva, Eric admits he stole £50 from Birling, the Inspector delivers a polemic speech to the Birlings and exits. Gerald returns, Sheila and Eric feel guilty, Mr and Mrs Birling refuse to take responsibility, the Birlings and Gerald convince themselves the inspection was a hoax. The telephone rings, the Birlings are informed that a young girl has committed suicide and an inspector is on his way. |







Context

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| 1 | Priestley | Fought in WW1. Socialist and member of the Labour Party. Concerned about social inequalities. Influential in developing the idea of the welfare state. |
| 2 | Historical | Set in 1912 at the end of the Edwardian era. Titanic sank in 1912. WW1: 1914-1918. WW2: 1939-45. First performed 1945 in Soviet Union. First performed 1946 in Britain. |
| 3 | Political | Liberal party in power in 1912. Labour party in power in 1945. Formation of the 'Welfare State' 1945-1951. In 1912 only men over 21 with property could vote. 1903-1914 saw the rise of the Suffragette movement. 1918 all men over 21 and women over 30 who met a property qualification could vote. 1928: All people over 21 could vote. |
| 4 | Social | 1912: 10% of the population owned 90% of the wealth. No government assistance available. Charities were the only source of help for the poor. |
| 5 | Literary | Fits three possible genres: Morality play, Well-made-play, Crime thriller (see Bitesize) |

Characters

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| 1 | Inspector | Authoritarian, omniscient, influential, socialist, moralist. |
| 2 | Mr Birling | Haughty, greedy, ignorant, obstinate, egotistical. |
| 3 | Mrs Birling | Conceited, prejudiced, callous, obstinate, arrogant. |
| 4 | Gerald | Charming, deceitful, manipulative, ingratiating, static. |
| 5 | Sheila | Envious, petulant, impressionable, repentant. |
| 6 | Eric | Reckless, dishonest, culpable, repentant. |
| 7 | Eva | Vulnerable, impoverished, exploited, symbolic, victim. |

Themes

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| 1 |  | Social responsibility | "If I could help her now, I would." (Sheila) "We did her in all right" (Eric) "We are responsible for each other." Inspector Goole |
| 2 |  | Age | "The famous younger generation who know it all." (Birling) "Why, you hysterical young fool - get back - or I'll -" (Birling) "We often do on the young ones. They're more impressionable" (Inspector) |
| 3 |  | Class | "As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!" (Mrs B) "If you don't come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth." (Birling) "He's a notorious womaniser as well as being one of the worst sots and rogues in Brumley." (Gerald) |
| 4 |  | Gender | "I hate those hard-eyed dough-faced women." (Gerald) "...not only something to make 'em look prettier - but - well, a sort of sign or token of their self-respect." (Birling) "And you think young women ought to be protected against unpleasant and disturbing things?" (Inspector) |
| 5 |  | Socialism | "The money's not the important thing." (Eric) "We are members of one body." (Inspector) "Why shouldn't they try for higher wages? We try for the highest possible prices." (Eric) Key images: Beehive, chain |
| 6 |  | Capitalism | "It's my duty to keep labour costs down." (Birling) "A man has to make his own way - has to look after himself" (Birling) "Probably a socialist or some sort of crank" (Birling) Key image: Titanic |

Dramatic Devices

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| 1 | Dramatic Irony | The audience knows more than characters. |
| 2 | Sounds | Doorbell, telephone interrupt the Birlings comfort and complacency. |
| 3 | Lighting | "pink and intimate" to "brighter and harder" when the Inspector arrives. Interrogating morals, cutting through the lies and pretence. |
| 4 | Entrances/ Exits | Increase tension e.g. Eric walks in just as the audience realise that he is the father. Gerald's 'exit' in Act 2 prevents his remorse developing. |
| 5 | Props | Photograph: All Eva? Symbolic of the faceless poor that the wealthy pretend not to see. Sheila's ring as a symbolic of patriarchal control. |
| 6 | Stage directions | Indicate character attitudes, development, relationships setting and mood. |

Key Vocabulary

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| 1 | Socialism (Political theory) | Collective ownership of resources. |
| 2 | Capitalist | Private ownership of resources. |
| 3 | Didactic | Direct moral instruction. |
| 4 | Polemic | Verbal or written attack. |
| 5 | Patriarchal | Society controlled by men. |
| 6 | Fourth wall | The space between the actors and the audience. |
| 8 | Morality | Principles of right and wrong. |
| 9 | Caricature | Exaggeration of characteristics usually to ridicule. |