

An inspector calls is a
play by jb prestly
written in 1945



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

An Inspector Calls is a play by J.B. Priestley written in 1945 but set in the past 1915. I am going to write about the production of An Inspector Calls by the director Steven Doltry, who also directed Billy Elliot. I saw this production at the Alhambra Theater in Bradford in May 2003. The main characters are Arthur Birling, Sybil Birling, Sheila Birling, Eric Birling, Edna the Maid, Gerald Croft, and Inspector Goole. Arthur Birling is an old man with two children.

He is the owner of a successful business, ex Lord Mayor of Brummley when royalty visited and thinks he is on the honours list to get a knighthood. He is very pompous. Mrs Birling is on a charity committee and is from a better background than Arthur. She is very proud of herself and has very set views on what people of lower backgrounds are like and what emotions they are capable of.

Sheila Birling is a woman in her early twenties. She has been raised protected from the world and is self-centered. She is about to marry Gerald Croft. She is very sensitive; she cares about people and she can face up to her responsibilities. Edna plays no major part in this play. Gerald Croft is the son of Lord and Lady Croft. He seems to care about people and seems very nice but he acts and agrees with Arthur a lot. He seems to care about Sheila because he will be marrying her. Inspector Goole is meant to be an inspector but there is no proof he is. No one at the station knows him and he does not act like one. He just arrives one day claiming he is. A very controlling man who does not let name-dropping worry him but is sensitive to people who admit they're wrong.

The production that I saw of *An Inspector Calls* was set in a street before the war. The set was a street looking in on a house closed at the beginning but the house opens up to reveal a house full of people celebrating. In the book they are always in a house but in the production they were on the street. The street was dilapidated but the house looked new. I think this was to symbolise a couple of things, maybe it's to show their shady past and lack of guilt on the inside. Maybe it was to show how they perceive the world (the house) and the reality of it (the street). Also, the house is set up so that at some point in the play it can tip forward, destroying plates and the house.

The atmosphere at the beginning of the play was created by three children playing and an old radio they turn on. You also hear old air raid sirens and are chased away by Edna. The family inside the house are celebrating inside the house over a recent engagement of Goff and Sheila. Arthur and Goff step outside and have a talk about all men being for themselves. In the book he says the Titanic is unsinkable but in the play he leaves this out and says nothing about it.

He leaves it out because it would have given a comical spin to it and the speech would have done this. The mood before the inspector arrives is cheery. We know he enters because he casts a shadow over the house and it opens up to reveal the party and how everyone is cheery. The inspector was dressed like Humphrey Bogart. The inspector says he is here to inquire about the suicide of a young woman in the early twenties. He believes they drove him to it. He questions them in order of their accounts with this young woman except for the end where he questions the mother before the son.

In each one he breaks them down first he asks questions Mr Birling. Mr Birling does not see himself self-responsible at all but in fact gives the inspector reason why he was just to fire her. "You're not even sorry now, when you know what happened to the girl?" Mrs Birling still doesn't care about this girl who's last chance was her charity which she not only turned away but forced others to turn away also. Even after learning that she was this girl's last chance before she committed suicide, Mrs Birling gets very angry. It almost becomes a fight she only feels sorry when she learns that it was her son's child.

Mr Gould looks like he is about to hit her but she attacks him but everyone thinks he was going to attack her but that would have been odd because he is meant to be a representative of good or so we are led to believe. The inspector makes his speech "One Eva Smith has gone..."

"More people come on to the stage at the side I think they are meant to represent the world and how we are all together to support help and suffer with each other. "We don't live alone. We are members of one body". He is right in this world we are like the cells in a body all working together to support this world and each other while the inspector is making his speech, the house crashes down there is a lot of smoke noise and broken crockery when the house falls it shows their values being crushed down by the inspector and his questions.

He has laid bare all the hidden secrets it seemed that it was only meant to be symbolic because to them it never really happened. But it represents what happened inside. How all their social, moral and financial barriers had been

striped away to show their true nature. The inspector was and was not an inspector where as he did question them and find the truth but no police man in the area has ever heard of him none no one fits the description.

he seemed to have the experience of an inspector, the look' the feel and the training of an inspector but was not threatened easily by name dropping and old job descriptions. the inspector made them confess to a crime before it was committed so what could he have been?. there is no easy answer to this there is nothing we can say he isn't except normal. he could be from the future sent back not to change the past but to punish the unescapable. he could have been from god to seek retribution for their wrong doings.

he could have been god himself or the unified spirit of the world especially with all the people surrounding them. We can never know how J. B Priestley meant for Mr Gould the play itself was very inspiring the content left you wanting more and it also was well scripted Priestley left you wondering what would happen with the family did they all go back to their normal lives or would they remember they were responsible even would still be alive if they were not so selfish. the actors portrayed the characters very well but i think a bit too much was cut out the director really should have left in the bit about the Titanic in Mr Birling's talk to the boys. the playwright wrote this play because he was a socialist and wanted to demonstrate how we are all linked together by the universe. the play tells us something about ourselves and how we should live with each other.