

# Extracts from the diary of eva smith



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

5th September 1910

The holidays are drawing to a close. It's been one the best summer holidays ever! It was such a relief to be able to just do what I want to do rather than having to get up, almost in the middle of the night, just to go to work! I've been able to meet up with people from work which was good because at work we don't get to talk much; Mr. Birling being such a slave driver. When we met up, we decided that our pay is just not enough. We can barely survive on the few measly shillings we receive. So we decided to ask for a raise! Not a huge one just from twenty-two and six to twenty-five shillings! It's not much to ask but it would make a difference.

We wouldn't have to continually worry about how we are going to pay for everything. It still wouldn't be quite enough to live in total security but life would certainly be easier. We have taken into consideration that the factory does need to make money, but we haven't asked for much and we will try to work as hard as possible; just to show Birling that we deserve the extra money. During our meeting over pay raises, we decided that there would need to be a few spokespersons. Some people who would go to Birling and ask for the raise. I was elected along with four others. I feel proud to be one of the people who others feel they can rely on to get us a raise.

Although at the same time I feel worried and nervous. Birling isn't the nicest of people in fact he's horrible sometime! He looks down on us workers as though we are scum. He has no consideration for anyone's feelings. The only reason he has become a success is because abuses and exploits anyone and everyone. Treating people like dirt! Doing whatever he can to rise to the top.

Not only am I worried about having to confront Birling but I am also worried about letting them down. What if I don't manage to persuade Birling to give us a raise? They are relying on me! I know we decided that if necessary we will go on strike but it is obvious nobody really wants to have to resort to that.

15th September

We're on strike! We've been on strike for a week now. As I thought he would, Arthur Birling kept his money clenched tightly in his fist. He flatly refused. No compromise! Not even a shilling more! He is a mean, tight fisted man. Does he ever think about anyone else? Does he ever think about anything but accumulating more money? So we walked out. We left just like we said we would. I think Birling thought it was an idle threat, but we meant it all right! When I walked out it wasn't just because he wouldn't give us a pay raise. It was because of his lack of consideration for anyone else.

As I walked out, I felt I was showing him that he can't just abuse people in his quest for money! The others think that walking out will make Birling change his mind, but there's not hope! He doesn't care! I mean he never really thought of us as more than cheap labour! We can be easily replaced there are so many girls like us looking for work. That's why he can pay us so little because there are so many people desperate for work, people that don't care what they are paid as long they have a job. I feel bad now because the others have so much faith in me, but we won't get a shilling more! I can't be sure that I will ever go back to Birling and co. or that I will be able to pay the bills. One thing is for sure though that is that Birling will never change! He'll

never change his mind, his attitude, his way of treating people! He'll always be an evil, money scrounging, business man!

3rd October

I've lost my job at Birling and co. As Birling knew we would, we went crawling back. We couldn't leave for long because of problems with money. So we agreed that we had to go back. Birling said he would take us on again. However, at the old rates. He also said that the spokespeople, the ringleaders as he put it, were not allowed back. Well I was furious! Not allowed back just because we spoke up! Now I realise not only is he mean and tight fisted. He's calculating as well! He planned that, he decided that he would show us that we were weak and that with one swing of his fist he could knock us down, squash us flat.

We meant nothing to him; he used us and then abused us! However, that is in the past; it's the now I have to worry about. I worry I do. For I have nothing: no friends to turn to, no family, no job, no money. I will be able to cope for a month or so, on the little money I have put a side, but not much longer. I'll look for another job, but I'm doubtful I'll find one. Anyhow I'll have to change my name; no one will take you one if you have been fired from your last job.

2nd December

I got a job at Milwards a highly respected shop. I feel bad about being so happy about other people's misfortune. The only reason I got a job at Milwards is because this winter influenza is rife. Milwards had found

themselves short-handed. I saw an advert in their window when I was passing by so I inquired inside and got an interview and now today I find out I've got the job! It's so exciting and relieving; I don't think I could have coped for much longer without a job! The pays quite good as well, better than at Birling and co. I bet Birling thought after he kicked me out of Birling and co. I would use prostitution as a way of earning some money or theft or some other low working class, as he would call it, ways. I didn't; I kept my head above water, just, and now everything is fine. I have a job and money coming in more in fact than I have ever earned before.

27th January 1911

I'm cursed! I really am! I've only been at Milwards for a couple of months and now I've lost my job there as well. Just when I thought I had settled down nicely! I was making friend, doing well! Doing just as Birling would have expected me not to be doing! It was nicer working in a clothes shop rather than in that dirty old factory. It was a new start, a clean slate. Now it's been ruined and I know why. Although I was only told, a customer complained it wasn't difficult to put two and two together. A girl came in to the shop today to try on dresses. The girl picked out one although you could tell straight away that it just wasn't her colourings.

Her mother was against it and so was Miss Francis, another assistant, but she had already decided that she was going to try it on. When she came out of the changing room, she knew that it didn't suit her. Miss Francis asked me to show the girl and her mother something and I held up the dress as though I was wearing it. When I caught a glimpse of myself, in the mirror I realised

the dress quite suited me. I looked across at Miss Francis and for some reason, the girl went mad! Then the next thing I find out I've been sacked and it is obvious that the girl was the reason for it. She was an influential customer and using her position of power she managed to get me sacked.

I don't even really know why, I don't know what made this girl so angry that she wanted to get me sacked. She was obviously just very bad tempered. Now that I have lost my job at Milwards the chance of me getting another is just so remote I won't even bother trying. Again a change of name will be required I don't want people to recognise me from Milwards. Otherwise, they might start asking questions and that is the last thing I need.

12th March

I've met the man of my dreams, my knight in shining amour! We met in the palace variety theatre; I'd gone there as a last resort. I hadn't really thought about what I was doing, it just seemed like the only option left. I was sitting in a corner. Old Meggarty had cornered me and this man, who later revealed himself to be Gerald, came over and rescued me. He was a wonderful gentleman, he was handsome and charming! He asked me if I wanted to leave that horrible place, the music hall. Of course I said yes straight away and he took me along to County Hotel. He asked me my name and at first I nearly said I was called Eva Smith, because he was one of those kind of men that you are so in awe of you forget everything else.

However, at the last minuet I remembered my new identity and told him I was Daisy Renton. I told him my parents were dead and I vaguely touched on Birling and co. and Milwards. I didn't want to tell him too much though. I

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mean if he found out I'd been kicked out of two jobs in the last two years he might not like me and I would have been so embarrassed. I did, though not on purpose, let it slip that I hadn't much money and that I was actually very hungry. I didn't mean to tell him but I just came out and surprisingly he was very wonderful about. He even got some people at County to get me some food! He's such gentlemen so kind and considerate. I fell in love with him as soon as I saw him in the Palace Variety now I find out he has feelings for me as well!

14th March

We met again today. I had to tell him about my situation. I told him that I hadn't any money and that I was going to be kicked out of the back room that I had been staying in. The back room wasn't exactly nice but I was all that I could get. I wouldn't usually ask for money, but if you love someone like I love Gerald you feel there is nothing that you can't share. The best news I could hear from him was that not only was he kind and handsome but he was generous too.

One of his friends had, by a stroke of luck, gone on holiday to Canada for a while and had given Gerald the key. So Gerald insisted I move into one of the rooms at Morgan Terrace. We've only just met and the kindness that Gerald has shown me is overwhelming. For many months now things have been getting more and more desperate and then along came Gerald and now everything is perfect; more than perfect. I have met the man of my dreams, who is everything you could want in a man, and then he gives me food and a home and money. Life certainly can turn around in just a few days!

3rd September

I met Gerald today, but as soon as he walked in I realized that something was wrong. When I saw his face I knew what he was about to say. It was over! Gerald wanted to end it. I knew in my heart that it was coming to an end but I just didn't want to accept it. I told him about how these past few months had been the best of my life. They have; I have never been happier. I'd known that I could never last. Gerald is high up in society and I'm nothing in comparison. We could never have a lasting relationship.

That's why over the summer I had saved some money in preparation for a time when I would go back to surviving on my own. I don't blame, not really. I fell in love from the moment I saw him, that clouded my judgment. I shouldn't have started this relationship in the first place. However, I can't help feeling used. I mean Gerald got what he wanted and then he leaves me when the time suits him. He tried to pay me off as well! I accepted enough money to last me through to the end of the year. Gerald would have preferred me to take more, but I'm not a prostitute; someone who can be used and then paid off.

4th September

I'm going to go to the seaside for a while. In an attempt to try and keep the memory of these past few months fresh in my mind for longer. I feel that from now on things will never be as good; from here it is a downward trudge; to where, I don't know. I'm not sure where I will stay, but it won't be for long.

15th November



I'm back in Brumley again and back in the Palace bar again. This time I went there because I was really desperate. I'd had a few drinks and not much to eat so I was a bit drunk. There were a couple of chaps over by the bar, totally squiffy. I got talking to one, who turned out to be called Eric. He insisted that we went back to where I am staying. When we got to the door I told him that I didn't want him to come in. He was drunk and I really didn't know what he would do so I thought that I could just ask him, nicely, to go away. He, however, would have none of it and started turning rather nasty and threatened to make a scene if I didn't let him in. At this point I was starting to worry, he really was getting violent. So I let him in and well id rather not remember it. It was awful.

29th November

I went to the Palace bar again. I had some drink and I saw Eric there. We talked a bit, he told me about himself and I told him a little about me. He came back to my lodgings again, this time he wasn't violent as he hadn't had all that much to drink.

30th December

I'm pregnant with Eric's child! Things really couldn't much worse: I've a baby, no money, no job. I don't want to have to bring up a child in this dump of a place either.

3rd January 1912

I saw Eric again the other week. I told him the news and he reacted pretty badly. It was obvious that he really didn't want a child either. He suggested

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that we get married, but I didn't want that. I knew I couldn't force him into a marriage that he didn't want to be in. I couldn't make him spend the rest of his life wishing he was married to someone else. It's not fair on him. He gave me and keeps trying to give me money. He stole it though only from his father's office, but he still stole.

That's one reason why I don't want to take money from him. He will only get himself into more trouble if he takes any more money. Another reason I don't want to take any more money is because I don't want to be used. Eric is just like Gerald. They both want to pay me off. I won't accept it though. They can't just pay me and their consciences off. That just isn't an option. I'll have nothing more to do with Eric.

20th March

I had to go to the Brumley Women's Charity Organization, though I don't know why I bothered really. I said that my name was Mrs. Birling and that my husband had deserted me and left me with a child and no money. It wasn't exactly a lie. I do have a child and I don't have any money. When I said my name was Birling it was because I was pretending that I was Eric's wife. I thought they might be more likely to accept my case if they thought my husband had left me. For some reason though one of the women on the committee was very shocked when I said I was called Mrs. Birling. She questioned me about the name and I admitted that it wasn't really my name and I hadn't really been left by my husband. Obviously, lying totally put them off my case and I was refused help.

This is really the last straw. What more can I do? I have no money, no job and a baby on the way. The little help I could have received was refused. There is really much left in life. That's why I have decided to end life. I'm not going to be used, abused, let down and I'm definitely not letting a child into this world. What hope would there be for it? This will be my last entry into this diary as these are the last moments of my life.