

# Inspector calls

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Generation conflict is a struggle of arguments between two ages, for example Parents versus Children or young versus old. In Act 3 it is a battle of words between the Parents and children, the parents who believe in tradition, materialism and status and the children who are for progress and liberalism. In this Act the Inspector has a huge impact on the children as he influences them to become tolerant, compassionate and teaches them to show respect. This is one of the reasons for why the children are against the Parents, the parents do not believe in respecting each other and once the children come to terms with respect they try to tutor the parents about respect but the parents don't want to hear about it. On the first page of Act 3 Eric reveals to the family that he is the father of Eva Smith's baby and everyone with the exception of Sheila finds out that he also drinks alcohol Mrs Birling shows that she knows nothing about Eric or any of her children for that matter " But I didn't know it was you - I never dreamt it. Besides, you're not the type - you don't get drunk" this quotation from Mrs Birling proves that she doesn't know her children as well as a mother should. Mr Birling who is a dictator in his household is suddenly silenced on page 53 as the Inspector takes control of the house, after Eric asks for a drink Mr Birling explosively shouts and does not allow him to have a drink, but the Inspector feels Eric needs a drink as he firmly says " Yes - I know he's your son and this is your house - but look at him. He needs a drink now just to see him through" this shows that Birling's dictatorship is overcome by the cool attitude of the Inspector. Another example of Mr Birling losing his spotlight to the Inspector is when the Inspector interrupts Birling, Birling bitterly says " I understand a lot of things now I didn't understand before" the Inspector once

again puts a blank wall in front of Birling and says " Don't start on that. I want to get on (To Eric)" this again shows how the Inspector leaves Birling out and treats him the same way Birling treats his children, with disrespect. The biggest conflict in this Act is between Eric and his father as the Act progresses Eric loses more respect for Birling. After Eric tells the Inspector about what happened between himself and Eva Smith, Birling cannot bear to keep quiet this is when the heated argument begins as Birling says harshly " so you had to go to bed with her?" this reminds us of how he treats his children rather than comforting them he tries to belittle them as Eric replies " Well. I'm old enough to be married, aren't I, and I'm not married, and I hate these fat old tarts around the town - the ones I see some of your respectable friends with -" this quote shows that Eric has lost all respect for Birling and exposes hypocrisy. Birling still tries to run the house as he angrily says " I don't want any of that talk from you-" and the Inspector very sharply says " I don't want any of it from either of you. Settle if afterwards" this again shows how the Inspector barges in on Birling's speech On page 53 Eric confesses to stealing money from Birling's office after he tells everyone he gave Eva Smith fifty pounds Birling and then Inspector both extremely curious about where he got the money from this is when Eric miserably tells them " I got it - from the office -" the hyphens in the quotation show how Eric is finding it hard to confess. Birling immediately bursts in " My office?" this again shows that he cares more about his money rather than his son. On the next page Birling again shows his hatred and disrespect towards Eric. Eric tells his father that he will pay the money back and Birling says " we've heard that story before. How could you have paid it back?" this again shows

Mr Birling belittling Eric, he thinks he is completely and utterly useless as if it were impossible for him to pay back the money. On this same page Birling once again shows that he doesn't care for his children but only his reputation " you must give me a list of those accounts. I've got to cover this up as soon as I can" these arguments have shown us that there is no trust between Eric and his father. After the family learn that Eva Smith also visited Mrs Birling at committee for help Eric is eager to find out what happened and Mrs Birling was not quite ready to tell him so the Inspector with calm authority to show that he is in control tells Eric what happened. " I'll tell you. She went to your mother's committee for help, after she'd done with you. Your mother refused that help" hearing this triggered a furious Eric " Then - you killed her. She came to you to protect me - and you turned her away - yes, and you killed her - and the child she'd have had too - my child - your own grandchild - you killed them both - damn you, damn you -" the hyphens in Eric's speech show that his voice is breaking. Eric almost begins to threaten his mother " you don't understand anything. You never did. You never even tried - you -" just as Eric is about to continue Sheila interrupts trying to stop her brother and calm the situation " Eric, don't - don't" this shows us what type of personality Sheila has she isn't hostile and disrespectful towards Eric she is trying to calm him and cure the problem, Birling however furious and intervening says " why, you hysterical young fool - get back - or I'll -" Birling is now threatening Eric referring to physical abuse. The Inspector once again taking charge stops Birling in his tracks. On page 56 the Inspector has a long speech the main bit of his speech is at the end " We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that

the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish. Good night" this conclusive ending makes the Inspector seem prophetic as if he is a messenger of god. As soon as the Inspector leaves Birling pours himself a drink which he hastily swallows and angrily blames Eric " You're the one I blame for this" this shows that the family is once again becoming dysfunctional. Birling is still more worried about his status rather than his family " There'll be a public scandal" " I was almost certain for a knighthood in the next honours list -" Eric who starts laughing at Mr Birling because after everything that's happened he still hasn't learnt his lesson and still only cares about his reputation says " Oh - for God's sake! What does it matter now whether they give you a knighthood or not?" this shows that Eric doesn't care about his father and has lost all respect for him. Birling tries to regain control of the family as he states very clearly to Eric what he can and can't do " And there's going to be no more of this drinking round the town - and picking up women in the palace bar -" Mrs Birling trying to act as if she hasn't done anything adds " I should think not. Eric, I'm absolutely ashamed of you" Mrs Birling is pretending she had no part in the death of Eva Smith, Eric replies to his mother " Well, I don't blame you. But don't forget I'm ashamed of you as well - yes both of you" this once again shows the dysfunction of the family, and it tells us that everyone is ashamed of each other. Sheila takes Eric's side in this struggle and admits that she played her part in Eva Smith's death " I behaved badly too. I know I did. I'm ashamed of it. But now you're beginning all over again to pretend that nothing much has happened -" Sheila begins to attack parents showing them how they are going back to their old selves. Sheila continues to attack

her parents " the point is, you don't seem to have learnt anything" she is confused as to how her parents can be so unaffected by what has happened. Sheila then begins to wonder if the Inspector was really a police Inspector " It doesn't matter much now, of course - but was he really a police Inspector?" Birling replies " Well, if he wasn't, it matters a devil of a lot. Makes all the difference" Mr Birling is happy that there maybe hope and he might not be exposed. Eric's battle with his father continued after the Inspectors exit, Birling starts it off saying " you ought to have stood up to him" Eric replies " Well, I didn't notice you standing up to him" this again shows that Eric has lost respect in his father. Gerald then enters the scene for the second time and Sheila immediately lets him know about the trouble they are in " he put us all through it-" Mrs Birling tries to stop her but Sheila believes Gerald ought to know everything that happened once he left " We're all in it - up to the neck. It got worse after you left" this shows the type of personality Sheila has obtained due to the Inspectors visit, she has nothing to hide unlike her parents and feels everyone should know the truth. Once Mrs Birling tells explains to Gerald about how rude the Inspector was towards her and Mr Birling, Gerald seems to know something " Hm - hm" the whole family look at Gerald inquiringly and Mr Birling very excitedly says " You know something. What is it?" this shows that Mr Birling only takes interest in Gerald when he may have some important information and maybe Birling's status will not be harmed. Gerald tells them about the information he had just learnt " That man wasn't a police officer" Birling is astounded by this news and doesn't know how to react " What" and Mrs Birling wants to make sure that this is correct " Are you certain" Gerald says he is almost certain, and that is why

he came back, Mr Birling becomes very excited " Good Lad! You asked about him eh?" Gerald explains to him how he spoke to a police officer he knows and that the police officer swore that there is no Goole on the force, Mr Birling is still worried about his status " You didn't tell him-" Gerald cuts him up telling him he didn't say anything besides he was having an argument with someone. Gerald then begins to side with the parents " Well, you were right. There isn't any such inspector. We've been had". Birling however still wants to make sure and rings the Chief Constable, Colonel Roberts. Mr Birling finds out from the Colonel that there is definitely no Goole on the force " There's no Inspector Goole on the police. That man definitely wasn't a police Inspector at all. As Gerald says - we've been had", Gerald, Mr Birling and Mrs Birling all believe they were part of a hoax, Mrs Birling goes back to being her arrogant self " I felt it all the time. He never talked like one. He never even looked like one" she is trying to show she has knowledge Sheila still believes her parents are being arrogant as she bitterly says " I suppose we're all nice people now" Eric then shows his anger and frustration with his parents " You're beginning to pretend now that nothing's really happened at all. And I can't see it like that. This girl's still dead isn't she? Nobody' brought her to life, have they?" Sheila takes Eric's side " That's exactly what I feel, Eric. And it's what they don't seem to understand" this shows the brother and sister alliance which has formed. Mr Birling who also begins to lose his cool says " Well, my dear, they're so damned exasperating. They just wont try to understand our position or to see the difference between a lot of stuff like this coming out in private and a downright public scandal" this shows that Birling is still only worried about his status. Mr Birling still believes they

were all a part of a hoax " He wasn't an Inspector" Sheila very angrily replies " Well, he Inspected us all right. And don't let's start dodging and pretending now. Between us we drove that girl to commit suicide". Gerald becomes callous and continues to side with the parents " Look at it. A man comes here pretending to be a police officer. It's a hoax of some kind. Now what does he do? Very artfully, working on bits of information he's picked up here and there, he bluffs us into confessing that we've all been mixed up in this girl's life in one way or another", Eric still believes they drove Eva to her death, but Gerald says " But, how do you know it's the same girl" he starts to think that there is no girl. After Gerald explain his theory to the family Sheila begins to understand what Gerald is trying to say " And I see what you mean now". Gerald is then certain that there is no Eva Smith or Daisy Renton " Then, don't you see, there's still no proof it was really the same girl. He might have showed you the photograph of any girl who applied to the committee. And how do we know she was really Eva Smith or Daisy Renton" Gerald, Mr Birling and Mrs Birling make up excuses and begin to delude themselves into believing that no one has died. From page 70 onwards Sheila becomes the dominant force and does most of the talking, she tells the family " The worst part is. But you're forgetting one thing I still can't forget. Everything we said had happened really had happened. If it didn't end tragically, then that's lucky for us. But it might have done" she tries to teach her parents a lesson but they don't want to hear, Sheila then begins to feel frightened by the way her parents are talking " I want to get out of this. It frightens me the way you talk", Sheila again tries again to show them the errors of their ways but still she fails as they just don't want to know about



anything from her " So nothing really happened. So there's nothing to be sorry for, nothing to learn. We can all go on behaving just as we did" Sheila is incredulous at the fact that her parents have not learnt a single thing. Gerald then tries to comfort Sheila " Everything's all right now, how about this ring?" Sheila refuses the ring " No, not yet. It's too soon. I must think". Birling then begins to point and laugh at Eric and Sheila " Now look at the pair of them - the famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke-" this shows that he still has no respect for his children's feelings, as he was about to continue the telephone rings, the family go completely silent as Birling answers the phone call from the police, he tells the family that a girl has just died after swallowing some disinfectant and a police inspector is on his way to ask some questions, it is all a confusion between dream and reality, and is a mystery as to whether