

# Evaluation of key quotes – an inspector calls essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Sheila:

“ Sorry! It’s just that I can’t help thinking about this girl – destroying herself so horribly – and I’ve been so happy tonight”

Sorry! Is an exclamatory sentence which helps to display the distress of what has happened to Eva, it also shows that she truly cares. Another section of this quote that also displays that she cares is ‘ can’t help thinking’. The small dashes represent pauses, this in my opinion shows that she is in distress and is unable to express herself fully. By using the emotive words ‘ destroying’ and ‘ horribly’ Sheila is showing that she is upset by what Eva felt was her only way out, it also displays one of the many contrasts included in this play. Finally when she says ‘ happy’ she is referencing the celebration of the engagement, it also shows me that she is comparing her own night to the one Eva had.

“ I’ll never, never do it again to anybody”

The repetition of ‘ never’ emphasises the change within Sheila. It displays her guilt and shows that she has accepted responsibility for her actions as she has truly realised what she has done to Eva.

“ You’re squiffy”

This quote displays the slang terms of the set period, it is the first mention of Eric towards his drinking and suggests he drinks a little bit too much. It also points out the brother, sister relationship between Eric and Sheila. In my opinion it also shows that Sheila is comfortable in joining in with the banter.

“ We really must stop these silly pretences.”

This displays that Sheila clearly understands the message the Inspector is trying to get across, and in doing this characterises Sheila as being the only character capable of seeing the truth. This from my point of view displays the division forming between Sheila and her mother. This quote also clearly displays one of the key themes that everyone should stop lying because the Inspector already knows the truth.

“ I suppose we’re all nice people now.”

This quote is portrayed in a sarcastic tone which shows Sheila’s bitterness towards the rest of the family’s reaction to the Inspector. I feel that this shows how appalled she is that her parents and Gerald believe they have done nothing wrong simply because they believe that no girls have died and that she wants them to acknowledge their appalling behaviour.

Mr Arthur Birling:

“ If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we’d had anything to do with, it would be very awkward now wouldn’t it.”

When he says ‘ If we’ he is in my opinion addressing and questioning the audience. In addition to this the use of the word ‘ responsible’ it is highlighting a key theme and also the lack of responsibility from Mr Birling. The repetition of ‘ every’ creates emphasis and has more of an impact. I think that by saying this Mr Birling is also trying to exert authority over the Inspector.

“ Look Inspector, I’d give thousands...”

I find it ironic that Mr Birling denied a mere two shillings for Eva Smith but is now offers to pay thousands. Regardless of the fact that it may be sincere the offer is meaningless due to the fact that it is not possible to save Eva now. It also shows me that Mr Birling feels that he can solve any of his problems with money.

“ I speak as a hard-headed business man.”

Priestley’s word choice for Mr Birling in this quote emphasises the lack of feeling. It also displays that he is quite a hard-hearted man who has real pride in his hard won success through his business.

“ If you don’t come down on these people they’ll soon be asking for the earth!”

Mr Birling uses hyperbole in this to suggest the workers are asking for too much, and in my opinion he wants to make the Inspector and the audience believe that the workers are asking too much which also helps to see how little he cares about the people who work for him.

“ Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable.”

This quote is clear dramatic irony when Mr Birling is talking about the titanic, as the audience know that it was sinkable. This also displays the arrogance of the wealthy as they believe their wealth will last forever. In my opinion I

think that the titanic is somewhat of a metaphor for the family and their privileged position.

“ Look at the way he talked to me...”

The tone of this quote is indignant and shocked which shows that Mr Birling feels his social status entitles him to different treatment.

“ That was the police. A girl just died – on her way to the infirmary.”

This is the twist in the tale, and has a big impact on all of the family. The characters that this has the biggest impact on are Mr Birling, Mrs Birling and Gerald as they now have to face the reality of their actions. This quote completely destroys the three characters denial.

Mrs Sybil Birling:

“ Girls of that class.”

This quote shows that Mrs Birling thinks that she is socially and morally superior and suggests she is a bit of a snob. It suggests that the poor are by definition almost worthless. The emphasis on ‘ that’ also shows her disgust towards the working class.

Gerald Croft:

“ She was very pretty – soft brown hair and big dark eyes”

Gerald's language here stresses the contrast between Eva and 'the women of the town' who he calls 'hard eyed' and 'dough-faced'. By stressing the positive aspects of Eva, it makes her mistreatment even more cruel.

Eric Birling:

"You're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble"

This reveals the lack of love that Eric has for his family. This also displays that not only is Mr and Mrs Birling hard-hearted towards the working class but also that they are inadequate parents. Mr Birling says that Eric has been spoilt, and is clearly more concerned with covering up Eric's wrongdoings to avoid a social scandal rather than be a parent.

"That doesn't matter to me."

Eric's guilt for what he has done is not altered by Mr Birling and Gerald's theories of innocence. Eric is clearly not willing to bury his head in the sand and pretend he has done nothing wrong, he wants to take responsibility for his actions and isn't afraid of this.

Inspector Goole:

"Burnt her insides out of course"

The Inspector provided a very vivid and discomfiting description of Eva's death by using the word 'burnt'. When he says 'of course' it makes what happened seem so obvious, and it also suggests that he has experience.

“ We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.”

Priestley uses the Inspector here to address the audience and portray the core message of responsibility; this is because it applies to both the characters and the audience. This directly contrasts with Mr Birling’s message of ‘ every man for himself’

“ Each of you helped to kill her.”

Priestley uses a climax to emphasise that our actions have consequences. The Inspector sums up, showing that the morally neglectful actions of the upper class family have condemned a working class girl to her death. The emphasis on ‘ you’ suggests that nobody within the Birling family is without blame.