

Eric and Mrs Birling's relationship during the play An Inspector Calls essay sample...

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



In the play Eric has a lot to confess, so his confession is very tense for both the audience and the actors on screen. Eric is known as the chief culprit in the play because he played the part of making The Girl pregnant. At the end of Act 2 Mrs. Birling is questioned by the Inspector and we learn that 'A young lad' made The Girl pregnant and that when she went for help from the committee she was turned down by them because she said her name was Mrs. Birling: 'First, she called herself Mrs. Birling' From this we learn that Eric could be the father, and that is why she used that name.

This has caused suspense both on and off stage, because now the audience would be wondering why she used that name and if she heard it from somewhere or if Eric is the father but Mrs. Birling hasn't figured that out yet. Also we learn of Eric's heavy drinking this is told to us by his sister Sheila and her fiancé Gerald Croft: 'He has been steadily drinking too much for the past 2 years.' With this line we learn that all this time Eric has been heavily drinking and has not been able to control himself with his drinking. Tension mounts when Mrs. Birling doesn't believe them: 'It isn't true.'

This is showing us that Mrs. Birling thinks a lot of her son and thinks he cannot do anything wrong: but she is proved wrong by Gerald: 'I'm afraid it is y'know' This now suggests Eric's character a bit more fully to the audience because we can tell he is probably lonely or insecure within himself so he needs the drink to comfort him: also Mrs. Birling has now learnt something new about her son and she is now incredibly shocked. In this act we also learn that The Girl was offered money by the man that got her pregnant and that the money was stolen.

This is tension for the actors on stage because they wouldn't think that Eric was capable of doing this sort of thing we learn this later in the play when Mr. Birling is full of shock. If at this moment the audience have figured out the father is Eric then they are probably wondering where he got the money and how he got it the audience too could be very shocked by learning this, because Mr and Mrs Birling gives the audience the expression that they have bought their kids up in a very strict environment. Nearer to the end of Act 2 there is more tension for the audience because now they are probably guessing that Eric is the father.

They are thinking this because Mrs Birling is blaming the whole thing on the young man: ' I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have. ' And: ' He should be made an example of. ' Sheila knows all of this she knows who the father is and she tries to stop her mother from blaming it all on the young man because then she knows that the Inspector will take action on Eric if Mrs. Birling gives him suggestions: ' Mother-stop-stop. ' She is trying to tell her mum to stop saying all this stuff because she knows what is happening.

She says this line with sudden alarm which is showing us that she has just worked out what the inspector has told Sheila to do. When Eric comes back the front door slams and he walks in looking extremely pale and distressed this could suggest to the audience that he has been out drinking and also that he could be hiding something from everyone. A lot of tension builds up when Eric comes through the door because everyone is staring at him, they

are all probably staring at him with the look of shock and surprise on their faces.

The Audience will also have all their attention on Eric and forget about the other characters that are on stage to: ' And the others are staring at him. ' This is the stage direction for the actors. At this moment there will probably be a really bright spotlight on Eric to grab his attention and to make the beginning of the scene really dramatic. To add to the tension Eric is the first person to speak: ' You know don't you' Then the second person to speak is The Inspector who just simply replies: ' Yes, we know' This adds to tension because Eric knows he has been talked about and this is when it hits Mrs.

Birling that Eric is the father. Eric asks for a drink and his father says no but the inspector says yes. The inspector wants him to do this because he probably thinks that the truth will come out better if Eric has something to drink first. In this Act there is a lot of dramatic Irony because most of Eric's confession is repeated from what Mrs. Birling tells us from her story. Basically Eric's saying the story and the audience can guess what he is going to say next-but still are kept on the edge of their seat to know their families actions.

At this point of the play there is more tension on stage than there is off stage, everyone is at their breaking points especially Eric. Eric's confession was very hard to tell the inspector because he had a lot to own up to and he was in the wrong all the time this is why Priestly left it until the end of the play rather than bring it up in the beginning, his story was also built up by Priestly and it always kept the audience guessing.

Eric learns things from the family-the audience already know all this like: Mrs. Birling knows about his drinking problem, that he stole the money he was going to give Eva Smith, He is the father of the baby. This is making the scene dramatic because we want to know how everyone will react and how he will tell everyone. The confession itself is not as tense as the build up to the confession. Eric says all this very easily and he just lets the truth out like that. The inspector has to ask him questions on the way like: ' When did you first meet this girl? ' ' Where did you meet her? ' ' What happened then? '

This is showing us that Eric is scared to admit what he has done so the inspector has to ask him questions on the way to help him out-but we know he is answering them all truthfully because some of it matches Mrs. Birling's story. In this Act there is a breakdown of relationships between Eric and all members of his family-for one reason or another they all end up arguing. The main reason for this is because trust is broken, this is important because all relationships are based on trust-this is very nerve wracking for the audience because everyone will start showing their true colours.

Eric has either betrayed someone (his father and mother.) or someone has betrayed him (his mother and sister.) Eric thinks Sheila has betrayed him because she tells their parents and the inspector about his drinking problem. Eric responds to this: ' You little sneak' This is showing the audience that Sheila and Eric must have had a good relationship and must have told each other things. Eric calling Sheila this is showing his anger within and that she has broken of the trust he fell even more lonely than before because he knows he can't trust his sister anymore.

His trust has broken with Mr. Birling for a number of reasons: he finds out the money was stolen from his office, he finds out Eric has been sleeping around, he finds out Eric has a drinking problem. When Mr. Birling finds out that his own son stole from him he is shocked and horrified to find out. His stage directions are to say the line angrily and another line like a question but to sound shocked and horrified. To make matters worse Mrs. Birling comes in so Eric stops speaking: ' He does not reply because now Mrs. Birling and Sheila come back. '

This is showing us he is frightened to say all this in front of his mother. Later Mr. Birling explains to Eric that he could have gone to him for help and Eric replies ' Because you're not the type of father a chap can go to when he's in trouble. ' This is a very harsh thing to say to your father especially in the 19th Century. The audience would be shocked by this comment made. This is showing Eric could have been neglected as a child and does not have a very strong relationship with him.

In this act the inspector has to keep stopping the two from fighting and arguing: There'll be plenty of time when I've gone. For you all to adjust your family relationships. ' When he hears about Eric he is disgusted with him: '(harshly) so you had to go to bed with her? ' Mr. Birling saying this harshly to Eric show the shamelessness of his actions and how disgusted he is with him. Mrs. Birling's trust is broken and also she has lost trust in her son because of the three things he done. She is horrified by all this. These stage directions describe how: distressed, with a cry, shocked, alarmed, very distressed now, coming to life, scornfully.

Nearer the end she is feeling better because Eric has been given a punishment. When Eric and Mrs. Birling have a breakdown of relationships they are both at breaking points because they are both finding out the truth about each other. They have both lost each other's trust. Eric finds out that Mrs. Birling has blamed everything on the young man and Eric is horrified. He accuses her of killing her own Grandchild: 'Your own Grandchild-You killed them both.' Eric is blaming his mum for everything that has happened and has known made her feel guilty. He even swears at her: 'Damn you, Damn you.'

In the 19th Century it was rude to speak to your parents like that and 'Damn' was a horrific word to use. He is even about to hit her. This is showing all his anger and the audience would be feeling jumpy and sitting on the edge of their seats: '(almost threatening her)' This is showing he could be making hand gestures towards her showing her a slap or something.

Conclusion Overall I think Eric's and Mrs. Birlings relationship has changed and I don't think they will be able to trust each other again. The most tensing part of the play was the build up to Eric's confession at the end of Act 2 and beginning of Act 3.