

'An Inspector Calls' – Key Quotes

Mr Birling

"You're just the kind of son-in-law I always wanted" 4

"I'm talking as a hard-headed, practical man of business... there isn't a chance of war" 6

"...unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable" 7

"...there's a fair chance that I might find my way into the next Honour's list" 8

"...we'll try to keep out of trouble during the next few months" 9

"...a man has to make his own way – has to look after himself... community and all that nonsense" 9/10 [key speech, as Inspector arrives]

"I can't accept any responsibility" 14

"It's my duty to keep labour costs down" 15

"She'd had a lot to say – far too much – so she had to go" 15

"How do you get on with our Chief Constable, Colonel Roberts?" 16

"I've got to cover this up as soon as I can" 54

"Probably a Socialist or some sort of crank" 60

Mrs Birling

"When you're married you'll realize that men with important work to do sometimes have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business" 3

"You know of course that my husband was Lord Mayor only two years ago and that he's still a magistrate" 31

"I'm very sorry. But I think she had only herself to blame" 41

"Unlike the other three, I did nothing I'm ashamed of" 42

"Go and look for the father of the child. It's his responsibility" 45

"It wasn't I who had her turned out of her employment – which probably began it all" 46

"She was claiming elaborate fine feelings and scruples that were simply absurd in a girl in her position" 46

"I accept no blame at all"; "I blame the young man who was the father of the child" 47

"You're not the type – you don't get drunk" 50

"I was the only one of you who didn't give in to him" 63

Sheila

"Don't be an ass, Eric" 3

"I've been so happy tonight. Oh I wish you hadn't told me" 17

"I think it was a mean thing to do. Perhaps that spoilt everything for her" 19

"These girls aren't cheap labour. They're people" 19

"I'll never, never do it again to anybody... I feel I can never go there again" 24/25

"Why – you fool – he knows. Of course he knows" 26

"He's been steadily drinking too much for the past two years" 32

"I don't dislike you as I did half an hour ago, Gerald. In fact, in some odd way, I rather respect you more than I've ever done before" 40

"You and I aren't the same people who sat down to dinner here" 40

"Mother, I think it was cruel and vile" 45

"You're beginning to pretend all over again that nothing much has happened" 57

"It doesn't much matter now, of course – but was he really a police inspector?" 58

"I suppose we're all nice people now" 63

"Well, he inspected us all right. And let's not start dodging and pretending now. Between us we drove that girl to suicide" 66

Eric

"He could have kept her on instead of throwing her out" 15

"That might have started it" 17

"I've had a few drinks, including rather a lot of champagne" 22

"I was in that state when a chap easily gets nasty" 52

"I didn't even remember – that's the hellish thing" 52

"She didn't want me to marry her... In a way, she treated me as if I were a kid" 53

"I got it – from the office... I intended to pay it back" 53/54

"...you're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble" 54

"...my child – your own grandchild – you killed them both – damn you, damn you" 55

"It's what happened to the girl and what we all did to her that matters" 65

"You lot may be letting yourself out nicely, but I can't... we did her in all right" 68

Gerald

"I know we'd have done the same thing" 17

"For God's sake – don't say anything to the inspector" 26

"I think Miss Birling ought to be excused any more of this questioning" 27

"Sorry – I – well, I've suddenly realized – taken it in properly – that she's dead" 35

"We went to the County Hotel, which I knew would be quiet at that time of night" 36

"All that she wanted was to talk – a little friendliness" 36

"I didn't install here there so that I could make love to her" 37

"I didn't feel about her as she felt about me" 38

"Is there anything else you want to know – that you ought to know?" 38

"She told me she'd been happier than she'd ever been before" 39

"Everything's all right now, Sheila. What about this ring?" 71

Inspector Goole

"Burnt her inside out... she was in great agony" 11

"What happened to her... a chain of events" 14

"It's better to ask for the earth than to take it" 15

"There are a lot of young women living that sort of existence in every city and big town in this country" 19

"We have to share something. If there's nothing else, we'll have to share our guilt" 29

"She felt there'd never be anything as good again for her" 39

"Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges" 41

"She needed not only money but advice, sympathy, friendliness... you slammed the door in her face" 45

"There'll be plenty of time, when I've gone, to adjust your family relationships" 50/51

"You'll be able to divide the responsibility between you when I've gone" 54

"...each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it" 55

"Croft... he at least had some affection for her and made her happy for a time" 56

"But just remember this... fire and blood and anguish. Good night" 56 [final speech]