‘An Inspector Calls’ **EXAM ESSENTIALS**

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|  **Arthur Birling** - **greed*** ‘Just a knighthood of course’ (to Gerald)
* ‘The Germans don’t want war’. Dramatic irony.
* ‘Look Inspector, I’d give thousands, thousands…’

**Status** important. Self-made man. Represents patriarchal attitudes & capitalism. Hubris. Tries to bribe Inspector at end.  | **Sybil Birling** - **pride*** ‘-Girls of that class!’ (Eva)
* ‘You’re behaving like a hysterical child’ (to Sheila)
* ‘a piece of gross impertinence – quite deliberate’ (about Eva)

Importance of **etiquette**, ‘proper’ behaviour. Arguably sheltered/naïve. Superior. Thinks lower class should show respect. | **Eric Birling** - **lust*** ‘Why shouldn’t they try for higher wages’
* ‘I hate those fat old tarts’
* ‘It’s what happened to the girl and what we all did that matters’

Slightly **distanced** at start (seated downstage)Drunk (‘you’re squiffy’). Hints of anger & sexual violence. Changes at end | **Sheila Birling** - **jealousy*** ‘these girls aren’t cheap labour, they’re people’
* ‘she was very pretty’
* ‘It’s you two who are being childish – trying not to face the facts’

Represents **typical upper-middle class woman**. Arguably trapped by gender conventions. Shows regret: breaks free |
| **Gerald Croft** - **adultery*** ‘For God’s sake – don’t say anything to the Inspector’
* ‘We’re respectable citizens not criminals’
* ‘Everything’s all right now Sheila. What about this ring?’

Represents **aristocracy** & privilege. Surface image of **respectability**, humility, false modesty. Doesn’t change: status quo kept. | **Edna the parlourmaid*** ‘Ma’am’, ‘sir’
* ‘Please, sir, an inspector’s called”/ ‘It’s Mr Croft’
* “‘All right, Edna. Show him in here. Give us some more light.”

Represents the **invisible** **working-class**. Expected to silently serve. Symbolically lets Inspector in (working class brings social change) | **Inspector Goole** -**morality*** ‘burnt her inside out, of course’/ ‘chain of events’
* ‘We don’t live alone. We are members of one body’
* ‘If men will not learn that lesson, they will be taught it in fire & blood & anguish

Role of **catalyst**: brings change reveals hidden secrets. God-like. Ghost? Could represent voice of Priestley/ morality/1945 | **Eva Smith/ Daisy Renton*** ‘a lively, good-looking girl’ - Mr Birling
* ‘in a way she treated me - as if I were a kid’ Eric
* ‘there are millions & millions of Eva Smiths…’

Represents the **universal oppression** and **suffering** of working-class women. Spirited. Rebels against social expectations. |

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| Stage Directions:* **Props show wealth** & status: champagne glasses
* ‘heavily comfortable but not cosy and home-like’ – **suggests trapped by social status & tradition**.
 | Lighting significance:* ‘Lighting should be **pink & intimate’: nostalgic**, rose-tinted view of life
* ‘brighter & harder when Inspector arrives’: family ‘crimes’ will be revealed
 | Dramatic Irony:* ‘The Titanic, unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable’: **emphasises hubris & entitlement** of higher classes. Makes reader feel outraged & judge Birling
 | Use of Time: * Play ends ‘full circle’: mankind doesn’t change. Idea of **time repeating until lessons learned**
* Inspector arrives as Birling gives capitalist view
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| Disinfectant motif:Motif of poison (bleach) represents **toxic class structure** harming working classes. But fresh start? | The ring motif:**Ring symbolises tradition,** patriarchy, ownership of women. Sheila returns ring. Eva refuses Eric | Form/Genre of play:**Morality play** exploring ideas of right & wrong. Also ‘**Whodunnit**’ crime: popular genre at the time | Set Design/doors:Closed doors can represent barriers. Dining room e**nd Act 1** ‘**door slowly opens’: truth is coming out**. |

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| **Metaphor of ‘walls’**: symbolises class barriers /tradition. ‘Mother, you mustn’t try to **build up a kind of wall** between us & that girl’.  | **Repetition Eva as ‘pretty’**: Gendered world: women judged on looks. **Eva exploited** | **Repetition ‘of course’**: Goole echoes Mr B’s use of ‘of course’ exposes **inevitability** Eva’s death |

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| START of play: **false appearance** of ‘perfect’, idealistic upper-middle class family. Priestley encourages 1945 audience to judge excessive wealth & façade of respectability. **Foreshadowing**: Mr Birling ‘as long as we…don’t…start a public scandal’ ‘Well?’ at end of Act1 echoes voice of audience questioning the family. | HEART of play: **CONTRAST** of reactions of older & younger. Mrs B’s **wall of superiority**: ‘a trifle impertinent’ (to Goole) ‘**You and I aren’t the same people who sat down to dinner here**’, (Sheila to Gerald) signals moment of hope for next generation if honest & open and if gender/social walls broken. | END of play: Act 3 builds to a **climax of Birling façade destroyed**: Mrs B ‘very distressed’, Mr B’s bribery offer, Eric ‘breaking point’. Inspector’s speech: moment **possible redemption** but Mr & Mrs B revert to earlier roles. Gerald’s key role in ignoring lesson (protecting his privilege). End call =‘**they stare guiltily & dumbfounded’** |