

Order of events in her life:

1. She grew up in the country - her parents died
2. Mr Birling sacked her after she led a group of women on strike over low wages. After this she was unemployed for two months. After a breakout of influenza Eva is given a job at Milward's but she is soon dismissed after Sheila claims she was laughing at her, despite it being in the heat of the moment.
3. Six months before her death, Gerald had been seeing Eva under the name of Daisy Renton. Gerald told Sheila he was busy at work. Eva was given a room at one of Gerald's friends' apartments whilst they were away on holiday.
4. Eric met her at the Palace Bar and they slept together on two different nights. She later meets him to tell him that she is expecting a baby. Eric offers to marry her but she refuses and claims that he does not love her. He steals £50 from the family business to support her.
5. Through desperation, Eva applies to a women's charity of which Mrs Birling is at the chair. She uses Mrs Birling's name on the application form which infuriates Mrs Birling and her story is no longer believed. Her case is dismissed and no help is given.
6. She killed herself by drinking a strong disinfectant.

All these details of her life are logged in a diary which is what the inspector uses when interrogating the Birling household.

Role of women

Eva is an important person in the strike, but then she is sacked. Eva Smith appears to exercised some power, however bridge fly, during the strike at Birling's factory. She was one of the "four or five big leaders" who was trying to get rates of pay increased. Eric says that she must have had a "bit more spirit than the others" and is impressed by what he hears of her. Nevertheless, Eva's spirit is not enough to carry the strike and it soon collapses. She is then quickly shown the cost of speaking out when Arthur Birling sacks her.

Eva gets a job in a dress shop (Milward's), but is sacked for upsetting Sheila. Eva has no power but Sheila exerts power because she is if a higher class.

Eva has no money and no job. Gerald looks after her, and the makes her his mistress. Gerald has all the power, as he is a man, and of a higher class, giving Eva no choice but to abide.

Eric takes advantage of Eva's miserable situation. He makes her pregnant and she refuses to accept any more money when she discovers it is stolen. Eric has overall power and only a glimpse of Eva's power is seen when she takes control and refuses.

Eva asks Mrs Birling's charity/committee for help but is refused. Mrs Birling is a powerful, authoritative figure due to her social status and deems Eva powerless.

Eva commits suicide. Eva has control over her own life, in which she decides to take it.