

Inspector Calls Key Quotes and Analysis

This colour is the character/act reference, this is for stage directions, this is a quote, this is extra analysis, this is everything else, including just normal analysis, which comes right after a quote or stage direction.

The lighting should be pink and intimate until the inspector arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder.

This stage direction portrays the capitalistic and nonchalant atmosphere in a pink and soft light until later on, suggesting that it is 'rosy', unlike reality, where this sort of lighting is hardly ever present. It suggests that the events inside the household are somehow unrealistic, or sheltered, as most of the characters appear to be (especially Sheila at the beginning), which is why the inspector, who inspects all of this, brings a brighter and harder light, which shines lights on everything, dispelling this rosy atmosphere, replacing it with reality – how it really is. The inspector is in this sense like a literal torch, shining a light on falsehood, so the inspector is the moral correctness in this story.

"Arthur, you shouldn't be saying such things-" –Mrs Birling (Act 1)

This is from the Mrs Birling, a woman of higher class who has married Mr Birling, for his wealth, as she was no longer rich, despite being aristocracy, as not enough people were working on her lands. She is reprimanding him because he complimented a person of a lower class (he was complementing their chef), and highlights how she is 'stuck-up' and sees herself as the better of Mr Birling.

(half serious, half playful) "Yes – except for last summer, when you never came near me" –Sheila (Act 1)

Suggesting that she doesn't fully trust him, despite the fact that they're going to be married soon, but again shows how she is childish, and relatively light-hearted, as she is still 'half playful' even in something which could be seen as quite serious.

"men with important work to do sometimes have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business. You'll have to get used to that, just as I had." Mrs Birling (Act 1)

Highlights the ever-present overarching patriarchal hegemony, which was present at the time this Act was set in (~1910), as it suggests that not only should wives become submissive (*you'll have to get used to that*), but also that men are superior and women have no need to work. Mrs Birling symbolises the women of her generation who believed that, whereas Sheila seems like she will not, as she says *"I don't believe I will"*. Shows discord between the generations.

"You're squiffy" –Sheila, to Eric (Act 1)

Colloquial language, she is saying that Eric is drunk, and highlights their casual brother/sister relationship, a childish one at that, despite them both being over 18 years old. Also shows Eric drinks too much, so is quite immature and doesn't really know self-restraint.

"Oh – it's wonderful! Look – Mummy – isn't it a beauty?" –Sheila (Act 1)

Showing the childish nature of Sheila, despite being in her early twenties, highlighted by here use of the word 'Mummy'. It also suggests that she has a sheltered upbringing. Furthermore, her childish nature is further exemplified by the uncontained excitement, presented by the frequent use of dashes, and how she is very materialistic, as her excitement is entirely as a result of a ring.

"Germans don't want war. Nobody wants war." –Mr Birling (Act 1)

Dramatic Irony, as a number of groups wage war a few years after that play is set, and it helps Priestly (the playwright) go on to discredit the capitalistic Mr Birling right from the start.