

Plot		Character			Context	
<p>Act 1</p> <p>Set in April 1912, Brumley. The Birling family and Gerald Croft are celebrating Sheila Birling's engagement to Gerald Croft with a dinner. Mr. Birling lectures his son, Eric Birling, and Gerald about the importance of every man looking out for himself if he wants to get on in life. Edna (the maid) announces that an inspector has arrived. Inspector Goole says that he is investigating the death of a young woman who committed suicide, Eva Smith. Mr. Birling is shown a photograph of Eva and, after initially denying recognising the woman in the photo, he remembers firing her for organising a strike over workers' pay. Sheila recalls also having Eva sacked about her manner when served by her in a department store. The Inspector reveals that Eva Smith changed her name to Daisy Renton. Gerald reveals to Sheila he had an affair with Daisy Renton.</p>		Inspector Goole	Priestley's mouthpiece; wants social justice.	Powerful, imposing, and mysterious.	<p>1912</p> <p>Just before the sinking of the Titanic and a couple of years before WW1. British society was completely divided by class. Those with the most money had the most power. Only men who owned property could vote; women couldn't vote. There was not much government support which is why charities were so important.</p> <p>Women</p> <p>Women in 1912, regardless of social class, were seen as second-class citizens – a fact demonstrated by their lack of a right to vote.. The suffragettes fought to bring equality for women.</p> <p>WW1 (1914-1918)</p> <p>WW1 was a vital moment in European history. Survivors were unhappy and felt betrayed by the men who sent them to war. WW1 proved to be a turning point for the campaign for women's right to vote. As men went to the Western Front, women proved how important they were in the fields and armaments factories. By 1918 women over 30 were given the right to vote.</p> <p>1945</p> <p>Following the end of WW2, the majority of the British people, and particularly the working class and returning servicemen and women, did not want a return to pre-war Conservative economic policies which they blamed for the hardship of the 1930s. There was a mood for widespread social change. At the 1945 general election, Winston Churchill was defeated by the Labour Party headed by Clement Attlee. The Welfare State was created.</p>	
		Arthur Birling	Businessman and capitalist who is against social equality.	Arrogant,, selfish, stubborn, prejudiced and overconfident.		
		Sybil Birling	Husband's social superior; believes in personal responsibility.	Cold, selfish and remorseless.		
		Sheila Birling	Changes her views and feels sorry for Eva. Regrets her actions.	Curious, caring, remorseful and sensitive.		
<p>Act 2</p> <p>Gerald explains to the Inspector that he had an affair with Eva but hasn't seen her since he ended their affair. Sheila gives her engagement ring back to Gerald. The Inspector turns his attention to Mrs. Birling. She confesses that she also had contact with Eva but that Eva gave herself a different name. Eva approached a charity chaired by Mrs. Birling to ask for help. Eva was desperate and pregnant but help was refused by Mrs. Birling. She tells Eva that the baby's father should be made entirely responsible. She also tells Inspector Goole that the father should be held entirely responsible and be made an example of.</p>		Eric Birling	Drinks too much; regrets his actions.	Reckless, immature, frustrated and compulsive.		
		Gerald Croft	Businessman engaged to Sheila and politically close to Birling.	Avoids telling the truth.		
		Eva Smith	Comes to represent victims of social injustice.	vulnerable, moral		
<p>Act 3</p> <p>Eric is revealed as the father. He stole money from Mr. Birling's office to provide money to Eva. The Inspector delivers his final speech. After he leaves, the family begin to suspect that he was not a genuine police inspector. A phone call to the Chief Constable confirms this. Next, they phone the infirmary to be informed that no suicide case has been brought in. Mr. Birling, Mrs. Birling and Gerald congratulate themselves that it was all a hoax and they can continue as before. This attitude upsets Sheila and Eric. The phone rings. Mr. Birling announces to the family that a girl has just died on her way to the infirmary and a police officer is coming to question them.</p>		Mr Birling	"I can't accept any responsibility"	"I don't think this is going to do us much good"	"the famous younger generation"	
		Mrs Birling	"you're not supposed to say such things"	"I did nothing I am ashamed of"	"They're over tired. In the morning they'll be as amused as we are."	
		Sheila Birling	"if I could help her now, I would"	"we really must stop these silly pretences"	"And it frightens me the way you talk"	
		Eric Birling	"you're squiffy "	"Eric enters looking pale and distressed"	"you lot may be letting yourselves out nicely, but I can't"	
		Gerald Croft	"You can drink to me"	"You were the wonderful fairy prince"	"Everything's all right now"	
<p>Theatrical Stagecraft: Dramatic Devices</p>		Inspector Goole	"A chain of events"	"who is to blame then?"	"There are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths"	
		Eva Smith	"Burnt her insides out"	"young, pretty and warm-hearted"	"There are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths"	
		Dramatic Irony	The audience knows what the characters don't.			
Stage directions	Instructions for the actors; often revealing of a playwright's intentions.					