An Inspector Calls (1945) J.B Priestley

FORM: PLAY GENRE: CRIME THRILLER/MORALITY

ERA: EDWARDIAN

# Context:

\*Patriachal society

\*The play is set in 1912 and performed in 1945 – world war, womens rights, labour party, Titanic

\*class system

# Priestleys message:

\*Collective responsibility ‘we are all members of one body. We are responsible for each other’

Socialism vs Capitalism

# Methods used:

Stagecraft:

Mr Birling is originally speaking ‘(confidently)’ because he is the male in charge and feels certain of his ideas and status. The inspector makes him speak ‘(impatiently)’ – he does not like the intrusion and loss of authority. Towards the end he speaks ‘(angrily)’ showing the loss of control and order – his perfect lifestyle is falling apart.

‘(cutting in massively)’ – the inspector interrupts showing his authority and dominance

‘(brighter and harsher)’ although the lighting starts ‘pink and intimate’ because they are enjoying a family celebration, the inspectors arrival adds a bright light – they cannot hide and are being interrogated.

The whole play takes place in their dining room – they are ignorant of the world outside and sheltered

Metaphors:

Repetition:

Structure:

Dramatic irony:

‘Fire and blood and anguish’

Cyclical structure:

Cliffhangers:

# Deadly sins:

# Themes:

Responsibility -

Class:

Age:

Gender:

Socialism and capitalism:

Power/authority:

# Things you might have missed:

# Other Key quotes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| **You killed her – and the child she’d have had too** | **Eric blames his mother for the death of Eva. The verb ‘killed’ shows he feels she is directly to blame as if it were murder. He takes some responsibility for his actions, and feels regret, but does not take full blame.** |
| Girls of that class | Mrs Birling judges Eva because of her class. Link to the context – the middle class Birling family value their status and feel that the working classes are beneath them. Link this to the quote ‘these girls aren’t cheap labour ‘ they’re people’ by Sheila. |
| Lower costs and higher prices | Mr Birling shows his Capitalist views – he cares about money, status and his family. This is the same for Mrs Birling and Gerald Croft. They try to use their position to gain power, intimidate the inspector and do not expect to be held to account. |
| We often do on the young ones – they’re more impressionable | The Inspector shows Priestley's view that it is the younger generation who will bring change. Sheila and Eric are the two who change the most. |
| I felt rotten at the time and I feel worse now | Sheila shows her regret/guilt – she also shows that she was already feeling bad about her actions and so was ready for the inspectors message. |
| Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable | Mr Birling gives a long speech at the beginning (showing he values his own opinion) and uses dramatic irony – for example saying the Titanic is unsinkable. This will make him seem foolish to the audience in 1945 who have seen the events in between. |
| There are millions and millions of Eva Smiths | The Inspector shows that Eva is not the only person who needs help – he wants the audience to leave with a conscience and act differently towards those around them |
| The point is you don’t seem to have learnt anything | Sheila is frustrated at her family because they do not seem to change. The older generation and Gerald (upper class) return to their old ways at the end. |