

An Inspector Calls

J.B. Priestley

INSPECTOR:

Stop! Be quiet for a moment and listen to me. I don't need to know any more. Neither do you. This girl killed herself - and died a horrible death. But each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it. But then I don't think you ever will.

Remember what you did, Mrs Birling. You turned her away when she most needed help. You refused her even the pitiable little bit of organised charity you had in your power to grant her.

{Turns to Eric} Remember what you did - you just used her for the end of a stupid drunken evening as if she were an animal, a thing, not a person. No, you won't forget.

{Looks at Sheila} You helped - but didn't start it {Looks savagely at Birling} You started it. She wanted twenty-five shillings a week instead of twenty-two and sixpence. You made her pay a heavy price for that. And now she'll make you pay a heavier price still.

No, I don't think any of you will forget. Nor that young man, Croft, though he at least had some affection for her and made her happy for a time.

Well, Eva Smith's gone. You can't do her any more harm. And you can't do her any good now, either. You can't say 'I'm sorry, Eva Smith.' But just remember this. One Eva Smith has gone - but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, and what we think and say and do.

We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish. Good night.