*The extract below is taken from Act One of the play. The Inspector has recently arrived at the Birling household and informed the family about the death of Eva Smith.*

**INSPECTOR** Two hours ago, a young woman died in the Infirmary. She’d been taken there this afternoon because she’d swallowed a lot of strong disinfectant. Burnt her inside out, of course.

**ERIC** (*involuntarily*): My God!

**INSPECTOR** Yes, she was in great agony. They did everything they could for her at the Infirmary, but she died. Suicide, of course.

**BIRLING** (*rather impatiently*) Yes, yes. Horrid business. But I don’t understand why you should come here, Inspector –

**INSPECTOR** (*cutting through, massively*) I’ve been round to the room she had, and she’d left a letter there and a sort of diary. Like a lot of these young women who get into various kinds of trouble, she used more than one name. But her original name – her real name – was Eva Smith.

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| 1. **Explain** why the Inspector describes the death of Eva Smith in graphic detail
2. **Explain** the effect of the stage direction that precedes Eric’s exclamation
3. **Explain** what ‘cutting through’ means
4. **Explain** how we know Birling’s empathy is insincere
5. **Explain** the significance of the name Eva Smith
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*The extract below is taken from Act One of the play. Birling remembers Eva Smith and recalls dismissing her from her role at the factory, but fails to accept responsibility for her death.*

**BIRLING** (*somewhat impatiently*) Look – there’s nothing mysterious – or scandalous – about this business – at least not as far as I’m concerned. It’s a perfectly straightforward case, and as it happened more than eighteen months ago – nearly two years ago – obviously it has nothing whatever to do with the wretched girl’s suicide. Eh, Inspector?

**INSPECTOR** No, sir. I can’t agree with you there.

**BIRLING** Why not?

**INSPECTOR** Because what happened to her then may have determined what happened to her afterwards, and what happened to her afterwards may have driven her to suicide. A chain of events.

**BIRLING** Oh well – put like that, there’s something in what you say. Still, I can’t accept any responsibility. If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we’d had anything to do with, it would be very awkward, wouldn’t it?

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| 1. **Explain** why Birling is impatient
2. **Explain** what the word ‘wretched’ shows about Birling’s attitude
3. **Explain** what the Inspector means by a ‘chain of events’
4. **Explain** how Birling’s tone changes at the end of the extract
5. **Explain** the reason for the change in tone
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*The extract below is taken from Act One of the play. The Inspector has finished questioning Birling and proceeds to explain what happened next to Eva Smith.*

**SHEILA** (*to Birling*) I think it was a mean thing to do. Perhaps that spoilt everything for her.

**BIRLING** Rubbish! (*to Inspector*.) Do you know what happened to this girl after she left my works?

**INSPECTOR** Yes. She was out of work for the next two months. Both her parents were dead, so that she’d no home to go back to. And she hadn’t been able to save much out of what Birling and Company had paid her. So that after two months, with no work, no money coming in, and living in lodgings, with no relatives to help her, few friends, lonely, half-starved, she was feeling desperate.

**SHEILA** (*warmly*) I should think so. It’s a rotten shame.

**INSPECTOR** There are a lot of young women living that sort of existence in every city and big town in this country, Miss Birling. If there weren’t, the factories and warehouses wouldn’t know where to look for cheap labour. Ask your father.

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| 1. **Explain** what Eva Smith’s lengthy search for work reveals about her circumstances
2. **Explain** how the Inspector makes it clear that Eva Smith had no support
3. **Explain** what the stage direction ‘warmly’ shows about Sheila’s attitude
4. **Explain** what ‘sort of existence’ the Inspector means
5. **Explain** what the term ‘cheap labour’ means
 |

*The extract below is taken from Act Two of the play. Gerald recalls how he encountered Daisy Renton in the Palace Bar with Alderman Meggarty.*

**GERALD** She looked young and fresh and charming and altogether out of place down there. And obviously she wasn’t enjoying herself. Old Joe Meggarty, half-drunk and goggle-eyed, had wedged her into a corner with that obscene fat carcass of his –

**MRS BIRLING** (*cutting in*) There’s no need to be disgusting. And surely you don’t mean Alderman Meggarty?

**GERALD** Of course I do. He’s a notorious womanizer as well as being one of the worst sots and rogues in Brumley –

**MRS BIRLING** (*staggered*) Well, really! Alderman Meggarty! I must say, we *are* learning something tonight.

**SHEILA** (*cooly*) Of course we are. But everyone knows about that horrible old Meggarty. A girl I know had to see him at the Town Hall one afternoon and she only escaped with a torn blouse –

**BIRLING** (*sharply, shocked*) Sheila!

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| 1. **Explain** what Gerald first notices about Daisy Renton
2. **Explain** how we know that Alderman Meggarty’s behaviour is coercive
3. **Explain** what Mrs Birling’s surprise shows about her
4. **Explain** how we know that Alderman Meggarty has a notorious reputation
5. **Explain** what Alderman Meggarty’s behaviour shows about power
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*The extract below is taken from Act Two of the play. Sheila challenges Gerald’s attempt to frame his actions as unselfish and she asks for further details about his affair with Daisy Renton.*

**SHEILA** (*with sharp sarcasm*) Of course not. You were the wonderful Fairy Prince. You must have adored it, Gerald.

**GERALD** All right – I did for a time. Nearly any man would have done.

**SHEILA** That’s probably about the best thing you’ve said tonight. At least it’s honest. Did you go and see her every night?

**GERALD** No. I wasn’t telling you a complete lie when I said I’d been busy at the works all that time. We were very busy. But of course I did see a good deal of her.

**MRS BIRLING** I don’t think we want any further details of this disgusting affair –

**SHEILA** (*cutting in*) I do. And, anyhow, we haven’t had any details yet.

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| 1. **Explain** Sheila’s reference to a ‘Fairy Prince’
2. **Explain** what makes Gerald’s admission ‘the best thing’ he has said so far
3. **Explain** when Gerald originally told Sheila that he had been ‘busy at the works’
4. **Explain** why Mrs Birling says that she doesn’t want to hear any more details
5. **Explain** why Sheila feels it necessary to interrupt Mrs Birling
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*The extract below is taken from Act Two of the play. Mrs Birling attempts to justify her role in the death of Eva Smith after Sheila criticises her actions.*

**SHEILA** (*with feeling*) Mother, I think it was cruel and vile.

**BIRLING** (*dubiously*) I must say, Sybil, that when this comes out at the inquest, it isn’t going to do us much good. The press might easily take it up –

**MRS BIRLING** (*agitated now*) Oh, stop it, both of you. And please remember before you start accusing me of anything again that it wasn’t I who had her turned out of her employment – which probably began it all. (*Turning to the Inspector*.) In the circumstances I think I was justified. The girl had begun by telling us a pack of lies. Afterwards, when I got at the truth, I discovered that she knew who the father was, she was quite certain about that, and so I told her it was her business to make him responsible. If he refused to marry her – and in my opinion he ought to be compelled to – then he must at least support her.

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| 1. **Explain** the ‘feeling’ that Sheila attempts to convey
2. **Explain** what Birling’s concerns about his reputation shows about him
3. **Explain** why Mrs Birling becomes ‘agitated’
4. **Explain** how Mrs Birling attempts to justify her decision to turn away Eva Smith
5. **Explain** who Mrs Birling blames for the death of Eva Smith
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*The extract below is taken from Act Three of the play. Sheila questions the Inspector’s identity after he has concluded his investigation and left the Birling household.*

**SHEILA** (*slowly*) We hardly ever told him anything he didn’t know. Did you notice that?

**BIRLING** That’s nothing. He had a bit of information, left by the girl, and made a few smart guesses – but the fact remains that if we hadn’t talked so much, he’d have had little to go on. (*Looking angrily at them*.) And really, when I come to think of it, why you all had to go letting everything come out like that, beats me.

**SHEILA** It’s all right talking like that now. But he made us confess.

**MRS BIRLING** He certainly didn’t make me confess – as you call it. I told him quite plainly that I thought I had done no more than my duty.

**SHEILA** Oh – mother!

**BIRLING** The fact is, you allowed yourselves to be bluffed. Yes – bluffed.

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| 1. **Explain** what initially makes Sheila wonder about Inspector’s identity
2. **Explain** why Birling dismisses Sheila’s question
3. **Explain** why Birling looks ‘angrily’ at this family
4. **Explain** how we know that Mrs Birling accepts no responsibility
5. **Explain** what mood is revealed by the exclamation mark in Sheila’s final line
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*The extract below is taken from Act Three of the play. The Birling family are convinced that the investigation was a hoax, but there is a divide between how each generation feels about it.*

**BIRLING** (*jovially*) But the whole thing’s different now. Come, come, you can see that, can’t you? (*Imitating Inspector in his final speech*.) You all helped to kill her. (*Pointing at Sheila and Eric, and laughing*.) And I wish you could have seen the look on your faces when he said that.

*Sheila moves towards the door*.

**SHEILA** (*tensely*) I want to get out of this. It frightens me the way you talk.

**BIRLING** (*heartily*) Nonsense! You’ll have a good laugh over it yet. Look, you’d better ask Gerald for that ring you gave back to him, hadn’t you? Then you’ll feel better.

**SHEILA** (*passionately*) You’re pretending everything just as it was before.

**ERIC** I’m not!

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| 1. **Explain** why Birling is ‘jovial’
2. **Explain** why Birling directs his impersonation at Sheila and Eric
3. **Explain** why Birling looks ‘angrily’ at this family
4. **Explain** what ‘frightens’ Sheila about the way Birling talks
5. **Explain** what Birling’s suggestion that Sheila should ask for the ring shows
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