



THE CENTRAL MESSAGE AN INSPECTOR CALLS

By reminding the audience about the **inequalities and limitations** of life for 'millions and millions' of people in 1912, and by hinting at the devastating conflicts to come, Priestley emphasises the importance of working together for greater **social change**.

The Central Message

The central message of the play is both a warning and a call for further action: a warning about the consequences of selfishness and a call to continue campaigning for a fairer and more socially responsible society. Remember that the Labour Party was elected in 1945 and the leader, Clement Attlee, made a pledge to provide welfare to all British citizens who needed it. In this this sense – despite the grizzly events that unfold on stage – the play is actually very optimistic.

A Reminder of Inequalities in 1912

- Why is the character of **Edna** important?
- Why are the names **Eva Smith** and **Daisy Renton** significant?
- Why is the suicide of **Eva Smith** described (twice) in such graphic detail?
- Why is it significant that **Eva Smith** is unable to find employment immediately after getting fired?
- Why is the character of **Alderman Meggarty** significant?
- What 'capital' do the **Birlings** possess other than financial wealth?
- What is **Birling's** immediate concern after the **Inspector** leaves?

A Call for Further Action in 1945

- Why does the stage lighting change when the **Inspector** enters?
- Why is the name **Inspector Goole** significant?
- How does Priestley emphasise that the **Inspector** is a credible character (i.e. not a 'crank')?
- What does the **Inspector** mean when he says 'we are members of one body'?
- What is the meaning of the reference the **Inspector** makes to 'fire and blood and anguish'?
- Does it matter if the **Inspector** is a 'fake'?
- What does it mean when people describe the **Inspector** as 'Priestley's mouthpiece'?