THE ENTIRE PLAY BROUGHT TO LIFE IN FULL COLOUR!

Classical Comics

An Inspector Calls

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL
J. B. Priestley

Original Text
Quick Text
BUT THIS IS THE POINT.
I DON’T WANT TO LECTURE
YOU TWO YOUNG fellows
AGAIN.

BUT WHAT SO
MANY OF YOU DON’T
SEEM TO UNDERSTAND NOW,
WHEN THINGS ARE SO MUCH
EASIER, IS THAT A MAN
HAS TO MAKE HIS
OWN WAY --

-- HAS TO
LOOK AFTER HIMSELF
-- AND HIS FAMILY TOO.
OF COURSE, WHEN HE
HAS ONE --

AND SO
LONG AS HE DOES
THAT HE WON’T
COME TO MUCH
HARM.

BUT THE
WAY SOME OF
THESE CRANKS TALK
AND WRITE NOW, YOU’D
THINK EVERYBODY HAS
TO LOOK AFTER
EVERYBODY
ELSE --

-- AS IF WE
WERE ALL MIXED UP
TOGETHER LIKE BEES
IN A HIVE -- COMMUNITY
AND ALL THAT
NONSENSE.

BUT TAKE MY
WORD FOR IT, YOU
YOUNGSTERS --

-- AND
I’VE LEARNT
IN THE GOOD HARD
SCHOOL OF
EXPERIENCE --

-- THAT A MAN
HAS TO MIND HIS OWN
BUSINESS AND LOOK
AFTER HIMSELF AND
HIS OWN --

-- AND --

DING-
LING-ING

SOMEBODY
AT THE FRONT
DOOR.

DING-
LING-ING

EDNA’LL
ANSWER IT.

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SPECIAL OCCASION. AND FEELING CONTENTED, FOR ONCE, I WANTED YOU TO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF MY EXPERIENCE.

DON'T KNOW HIM. DOES HE WANT TO SEE ME?

YES, SIR. HE SAYS IT’S IMPORTANT.

ALL RIGHT, EDNA. SHOW HIM IN HERE.

GIVE US SOME MORE LIGHT.

HERE, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

ONLY SOMETHING WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WHEN YOU WERE OUT. A JOKE, REALLY.

WELL, I DON’T THINK IT’S VERY FUNNY.

WHAT’S THE MATTER WITH YOU?

SURE TO BE, UNLESS ERIC’S BEEN UP TO SOMETHING, AND THAT WOULD BE AWKWARD, WOULDN’T IT?

I’M STILL ON THE BENCH. IT MAY BE SOMETHING ABOUT A WARRANT.

VERY.

HERE, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

ONLY SOMETHING WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WHEN YOU WERE OUT. A JOKE, REALLY.

WELL, I DON’T THINK IT’S VERY FUNNY.

WHAT’S THE MATTER WITH YOU?

SPEECH, AN INSPECTOR? WHAT KIND OF INSPECTOR?

A POLICE INSPECTOR.

HE SAYS HIS NAME’S INSPECTOR GOOLE.

PLEASE, SIR, AN INSPECTOR’S CALLED.

WELL, HAVE ANOTHER GLASS OF PORT, GERALD - AND THEN WE’LL JOIN THE LADIES. THAT’LL STOP ME GIVING YOU GOOD ADVICE.

YES, YOU’VE PILED IT ON A BIT TONIGHT, FATHER.
Thank you, sir.

Yes, sir. Only recently transferred.

Inspector Goole.

Mr. Birling?

Yes. Sit down, inspector.

Thank you, sir.

Have a glass of port – or a little whisky?

No, thank you, Mr. Birling. I’m on duty.

Sit down, inspector.

Have a glass of port – or a little whisky?

No, thank you, Mr. Birling. I’m on duty.

You’re new, aren’t you?

I was an alderman for years – and Lord Mayor two years ago – and I’m still on the Bench – so I know the Brumley Police Officers pretty well – and I thought I’d never seen you before.

Quite so.

Well, what can I do for you? Some trouble about a warrant?

No, Mr. Birling.

I thought you must be.

Yes, sir. Only recently transferred.
Yes, she was in great agony.

They did everything they could for her at the infirmary, but she died.

Suicide, of course.

Yes, yes.

Horrid business. But I don't understand why you should come here, inspector --

Yes, yes.

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.

Well, what is it then?

I'd like some information, if you don't mind, Mr. Birling.

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

Yes, yes. Horrid business. But I don't understand why you should come here, inspector --

We'll, what is it then?

I'd like some information, if you don't mind, Mr. Birling.

Yes, yes. Horrid business. But I don't understand why you should come here, inspector --

My God!

I've been round to the room she had, and she'd left a letter there and a sort of diary.

My God!
Like a lot of these young women who get into various kinds of trouble, she'd used more than one name.

But her original name - her real name - was Eva Smith.

Eva Smith?

Do you remember her, Mr. Birling?

No - I seem to remember hearing that name - Eva Smith - somewhere, but it doesn't convey anything to me, and I don't see where I come into this.

She was employed in your works at one time.

Oh - that's it, is it?

Well, we've several hundred young women there, y'know, and they keep changing!

This young woman, Eva Smith, was a bit out of the ordinary.

I found a photograph of her in her lodgings, perhaps you'd remember her from that.
ANY PARTICULAR REASON WHY I SHOULDN'T SEE THIS GIRL'S PHOTOGRAPH, INSPECTOR?

AND THE SAME APPLIES TO ME, I SUPPOSE?

NEITHER CAN I.

I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT COULD BE.

AND I MUST SAY, I AGREE WITH THEM, INSPECTOR.

IT'S THE WAY I LIKE TO GO TO WORK.

ONE PERSON AND ONE LINE OF INQUIRY AT A TIME.

OTHERWISE, THERE'S A MIDDLE.

I SEE. SENSIBLE REALLY.
You've had enough of that port, Eric!

I think you remember Eva Smith now, don't you, Mr. Birling?

Yes, I do. She was one of my employees and then I discharged her.

Is that why she committed suicide?

When was this, father?

Just keep quiet, Eric, and don't get excited. This girl left us nearly two years ago. Let me see - it must have been in the early autumn of nineteen-ten.

Yes. End of September, nineteen-ten.

That's right. Look here, sir. Wouldn't you rather I was out of this?

I don't mind you being here, Gerald. And I'm sure you've no objection, have you, inspector?

Perhaps I ought to explain first that this is Mr. Gerald Croft - the son of Sir George Croft - you know, Crofts Limited.

Mr. Gerald Croft, eh?
I hope so.

Oh – all right.

Loo – there’s nothing mysterious – or scandalous – about this business – at least not as far as I’m concerned.

Yes. Incidentally we’ve been modestly celebrating his engagement to my daughter, Sheila.

Then I’d prefer you to stay.

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?

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

Why not?
A chain of events.

If we were responsible for everything that happened to everybody we’d had anything to do with, it would be very awkward, wouldn’t it?

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.

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?

Very awkward.

By jove, yes, and as you were saying, dad, a man has to look after himself –

Yes, well, we needn’t go into all that.

Go into what?

Oh – just before you came – I’d been giving these young men a little good advice.

We’d all be in an impossible position, wouldn’t we?
NOW — ABOUT THIS GIRL, EVA SMITH, I REMEMBER HER QUITE WELL NOW. SHE WAS A LIVELY GOOD-LOOKING GIRL — COUNTRY-BRED, I FANCY — AND SHE’D BEEN WORKING IN ONE OF OUR MACHINE SHOPS FOR OVER A YEAR, A GOOD WORKER TOO.

IN FACT, THE FOREMAN THERE TOLD ME HE WAS READY TO PROMOTE HER INTO WHAT WE CALL A LEADING OPERATOR — HEAD OF A SMALL GROUP OF GIRLS.

They were averaging about twenty-two and six, which was neither more nor less than is paid generally in our industry.

They wanted the rates raised so that they could average about twenty-five shillings a week. I refused, of course.

But after they came back from their holidays that August, they were all rather restless, and they suddenly decided to ask for more money.

They were averaging about twenty-two and six, which was neither more nor less than is paid generally in our industry.
Why?
Did you say "why"?

Yes. Why did you refuse?

Well, Inspector, I don’t see that it’s any concern of yours how I choose to run my business! Is it now?

It might be, you know. I don’t like that tone!

But you asked me a question before that, a quite unnecessary question too.

It’s my duty to ask questions.

I’m sorry, but you asked me a question.

And if I’d agreed to this demand for a new rate we’d have added about twelve per cent to our labour costs. Does that satisfy you? So I refused, said I couldn’t consider it.

Well, it’s my duty to keep labour costs down --
We were paying the usual rates and if they didn’t like those rates, they could go and work somewhere else. It’s a free country, I told them.

It isn’t if you can’t go and work somewhere else.

Quite so.

Look – just you keep out of this. You hadn’t even started in the works when this happened.

I told them to clear out.

It isn’t if you can’t go and work somewhere else.

Quite so.

Not if it was just after the holidays, they’d be all broke – if I know them.

Right, Gerald, they mostly were, and so was the strike, after a week or two. Pitiful affair.

Well, we let them all come back – at the old rates –

except the four or five ring-leaders, who’d started the trouble. I went down myself and told them to clear out.

And this girl, Eva Smith, was one of them.

She’d had a lot to say – far too much – so she had to go.
What did you say your name was, inspector?

G/o_Ole.

I don’t s/e_E much of him.

You couldn’t have done anything else.

He could. He could have kept her on instead of throwing her out. I call it tough luck.

RUBBISH!

If you don’t come down sharply on some of these people, they’d soon be asking for the earth.

I should say so!

They might.

But after all it’s better to ask for the earth than to take it.

WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS, INSPECTOR?

Goole. G. Double O-

L-E.

HOW DO YOU GET ON WITH OUR CHIEF CONSTABLE, COLONEL ROBERTS?

I don’t see much of him.
Perhaps I ought to warn you that he's an old friend of mine, and that I see him fairly frequently. We play golf together sometimes up at the West Brumley.

I didn't suppose you did.

No, I mean about this girl – Eva Smith. Why shouldn't they try for higher wages?

Well, I think it's a damn shame!

We try for the highest possible prices, and I don't see why she should have been sacked just because she's a bit more spirit than the others.

No, I mean about this girl – Eva Smith. Why shouldn't they try for higher wages?

You said yourself she was a good worker. I'd have let her stay.

Unless you brighten your ideas, you’ll never be in a position to let anybody stay or to tell anybody to go. It’s about time you learnt to face a few responsibilities.

That’s something this public-school-and-varsity life you’ve had doesn’t seem to teach you.

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Well, we don’t need to tell the inspector all about that, do we?
No, she didn’t exactly go on the streets.

What’s this about streets?

Oh – sorry, I didn’t know. Mummy sent me in to ask why you didn’t come along to the drawing-room.

I don’t see we need to tell the inspector anything more. In fact, there’s nothing I can tell him.

I told the girl to clear out, and she went, that’s the last I heard of her.

Have you any idea what happened to her after that? Get into trouble? Go on the streets?

No, wait a minute, Miss Birling.

We shall be along in a minute now, just finishing.

I’m afraid not.

There’s nothing else, you know. I’ve just told you that.

No, wait a minute, Miss Birling.

What’s all this about?

Nothing to do with you, Sheila. Run along.

I don’t see we need to tell the inspector anything more. In fact, there’s nothing I can tell him.

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There’s nothing else, you know. I’ve just told you that.

No, wait a minute, Miss Birling.

What’s all this about?

Nothing to do with you, Sheila. Run along.
I'm a police inspector, Miss Birling. This afternoon a young woman drank some disinfectant, and died, after several hours of agony, tonight in the infirmary.

Well, don't tell me that's because I discharged her from my employment nearly two years ago. That might have started it.

Yes, I think you were. I know we'd have done the same thing.

Oh — how horrible! Was it an accident?

No, she wanted to end her life. She felt she couldn't go on any longer.

Oh — how horrible! Was it an accident?

Well, don't tell me that's because I discharged her from my employment nearly two years ago.

Did you, dad?

Yes, she had been causing trouble in the works. I was quite justified.

Yes, I think you were. I know we'd have done the same thing.

Sorry! It's just that I can't help thinking about this girl — destroying herself so horribly —

DID YOU, DAD?

Sor/ry! It's just that I can't help thinking about this girl — destroying herself so horribly —

So/rry! It's just that I can't help thinking about this girl — destroying herself so horribly —

AND I'VE BEEN SO HAPPY TONIGHT.

OH I WISH YOU HADN'T TOLD ME.