

MR BIRLING KEY QUOTES

Arthur Birling is a heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties with fairly easy manners but rather provincial in his speech (opening stage directions)

Perhaps we may look forward to the time when Crofts and Birlings are no longer competing but are working together – for lower costs and higher prices. (Act 1)

As a hard-headed business man, who has to take risks and know what he's about – I say, you can ignore all this silly pessimistic talk (Act 1)

I've always been regarded as a sound useful party man. So – well – I gather there's a very good chance of a knighthood – so long as we behave ourselves, don't get into the police court or start a scandal – eh? (Act 1)

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. (Act 1)

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? (Act 1)

This girl. Eva Smith, was one of them, she'd had a lot to say – far too much – so she had to go. (Act 1)

Rubbish! If you don't come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth. (Act 1)

(*angrily*) Inspector, I've told you before, I don't like the tone nor the way you're handling this inquiry. And I don't propose to give you much rope. (Act 2)

(*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— (Act 2)

You must give me a list of those accounts. I've got to cover this up as soon as I can. (Act 3)

(*angrily*) Yes, and you don't realize yet all you've done. Most of this is bound to come out. There'll be a public scandal. (Act 3)

(*angrily*) Drop that. There's every excuse for what both your mother and I did (Act 3)

That fellow obviously didn't like us. He was prejudiced from the start. Probably a socialist or some sort of crank – he talked like one. And then, instead of standing up to him, you let him bluff you into talking about your private affairs. (Act 3)

(*triumphantly*) There you are! Proof positive. The whole story's just a lot of moonshine. Nothing but an elaborate sell! (Act 3)

(*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. (Act 3)

(*pointing to Eric and Sheila*) Now look at the pair of them – the famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke- (Act 3)