**KEY QUOTATIONS ACT 1**

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| *The dining room of a fairly large suburban house, belonging to a prosperous manufacturer. It has good solid furniture of the period. The general effect is substantial and heavily comfortable, but not cosy and homelike.* |  |
| *The lighting should be pink and intimate until the inspector arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder.* |  |
| *Arthur Birling is a heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties with fairly easy manners but rather provincial in his speech.* |  |
| *[Mrs Birling is] her husband’s social superior* |  |
| *Sheila is a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited.* |  |
| *Gerald... attractive chap, about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy, but very much the easy well-bred man-about-town.* |  |
| *They have all had a good dinner, are celebrating a special occasion, and are pleased with themselves.* |  |
| Birling: You ought to like this port, Gerald. Finchley told me it’s exactly the same port your father gets from him. |  |
| Sheila: (half serious, half playful) Yes- except for all last summer, when you never came near me, and I wondered what had happened to you. |  |
| Sheila (to Eric): You’re squiffy. |  |
| Birling: She’ll make you happy, and I’m sure you’ll make her happy. You’re just the kind of son-in-law I always wanted. Your father and I have been friendly rivals in business for some time now- though Crofts Limited are both older and bigger than Birling and Company- and now you’ve brought us together, and 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. |  |
| Sheila (when given an engagement ring by Gerald): (who has put ring on, admiringly) I think it’s perfect. Now I really feel engaged. |  |
| Birling: Are you listening Sheila? This concerns you too. And after all I don’t often make speeches at you- |  |
| Birling: There’s a good deal of silly talk these days- but- and I speak as a hard-headed business man, who has to take risks and know what he’s talking about- I say, you can ignore all this silly pessimistic talk. When you marry, you’ll be marrying at a very good time. Year, a very good time- and soon it’ll be an even better time. Last month, just because the miners came out on strike, there’s a lot of wild talk about possible labour trouble in the near future. Don’t worry. We’ve passed the worst of it. We employers at last are coming together to see that our interests- and the interests of Capital- are properly protected. And we’re in for a time of steadily increasing prosperity. |  |
| Eric: What about war? |  |
| Birling: Just because the Kaiser makes a speech or two, a few German officers have too much to drink and begin talking nonsense, you’ll hear some people say that war’s inevitable. And to that I say- fiddlesticks! The Germans don’t want war. Nobody wants war, except some half-civilised folks in the Balkans. And why? There’s too much at stake these days. Everything to lose and nothing to gain by war.  Eric: Yes, I know- but still-  Birling: Just let me finish. You’ve a lot to learn yet. And I’m talking as a hard-headed, practical man of business. And I say there isn’t a chance of war. The world’s developing so fast that it’ll make was impossible. Look at the progress we’re making. In a year or two well have aeroplanes that will be able to go anywhere. And look at the way the automobile’s making headway- bigger and faster all the time. And then ships. Why a friend of mine went over this new liner last week- the Titanic- she sails next week- forty six thousand eight hundred tons- forty six thousand eight hundred tons- New York in five days- and every luxury- and unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable. That’s what you’ve got to keep an eye on. |  |
| Birling: in 1940...you’ll be living in a world that’s forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations and all these silly little war scares. There’ll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere- except of course in Russia, which will always be behind naturally. |  |
| Birling: ...We can’t let these Bernard Shaws and H.G Wellses do all the talking. |  |
| Birling: ...there’s a fair chance that I should find my way into the next Honours List. Just a knighthood, of course...I’ve always been regarded as a sound and 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? (Laughs complacently) |  |
| Birling: 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 mxed 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- |  |
| Edna: (opening door and announcing) Inspector Goole.  *The Inspector enters... creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidarity and purposefulness.* |  |
| Birling: I thought you must be [new]. 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. |  |
| Inspector: ...suicide of course |  |