Looking at the play as a whole, if each of the following items or ideas were to symbolise something much bigger, what could it be, and why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Why?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eva Smith</td>
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<td>The engagement ring</td>
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<td>The unborn child</td>
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<td>Alcohol</td>
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<td>The disinfectant</td>
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<td>The Titanic</td>
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<td>The Palace Bar</td>
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<td>The Birlings’ dining room</td>
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<td>Edna</td>
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</table>
Priestley uses more than one type of irony in this play. Identify who said each quotation, and discuss how these statements are ironic.

1. **Dramatic irony** - when the audience knows something the characters do not.
   - ‘... the Titanic - she sails next week ... and unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable.’
   - ‘Nobody wants war’
   - ‘... the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish.’
   - ‘Let’s say, in 1940 - you might be having a little party like this - your sons and daughters might be getting engaged.’
   - ‘If you’d take some steps to find this young man ... then you really would be doing your duty.’

2. **Verbal irony** - overstated or understated language used to emphasise a point.
   - ‘I suppose we’re all nice people now.’
   - ‘That was nice for you.’
   - ‘You’re the one I blame for this.’
   - ‘I’ll bet I am.’

3. **Situation irony** - when the events suggest one outcome, but instead we get an unexpected result.
   - ‘We’re respectable citizens and not dangerous criminals.’
   - ‘Sometimes there isn’t as much difference as you think.’
   - ‘Look, Inspector - I’d give thousands - yes, thousands ...’
   - ‘You’re offering the money at the wrong time. Mr Birling.’
   - ‘That was the police. A girl has just died...’

**Choose one of the following questions to answer.**

Try to answer all of them as practice before your exam!

**Q1.** The play was not written or performed until after WW2, but the characters have yet to experience either world war. Why would the knowledge of the two wars have had a greater effect on the audience?

**Q2.** The play has a much broader range of female characters than male characters. Why do you think Priestley chose to do this? Make reference to themes and symbolism in your response.

**Q3.** The play is one of Priestley’s most politically charged works. What are the key messages he wanted his audience to take away with them?

**Q4.** It has been over 100 years since the play’s setting, and over 50 years since the play was first performed. How are the issues still relevant today?

**Q5.** Imagine you are one of the characters in the play. Outline your thoughts and feelings at the end of Act 3, with reference to the setting as well as the plot.