Sheila: (*trying to be light and easy*) You be careful – or I’ll start weeping.

Gerald: (***smiling***) Well, perhaps this will help to stop it. (*He produces a ring case*.)

Sheila: (***excited***)Oh – Gerald – you’ve got it – is it the one you wanted me to have?

Gerald: (*giving the case to her*) Yes – the very one.

Sheila: (*taking out the ring*) Oh – it's wonderful! Look – mummy – isn't it a beauty? Oh – darling -

(*She kisses Gerald* ***hastily*.**)

Eric: steady the buffs!

Sheila: (*who has put the ring on,* ***admiringly***) I think it's perfect. Now I really feel engaged.

Mrs Birling: So you ought, darling. It's a lovely ring. Be careful with it.

Sheila: Careful! I'll never let it go out of my sight for an instant.

Mrs Birling: (***smiling***) Well, it came just at the right moment. That was clever of you, Gerald. Now, Arthur, if you've no more to say, I think Sheila and I had better go into the drawing room and leave you men-

Birling: (*rather heavily*) I just want to say this. (*noticing that Sheila is still admiring her ring*.) Are you listening, Sheila? This concerns you too. And after all I don't often make speeches at you -

Sheila: I’m sorry, daddy. Actually I was listening.

(S*he looks attentive, as they all do. He holds them for a moment before continuing*.)

**TASK #1** – ‘Look mummy…’ – What does this quotation tell you about Sheila’s character?

**3. ‘The Ring’**

**TASK #4** – What kind of character is Eric here?

**TASK #2** – What do you think the ring symbolises here?

**TASK #3** – ‘I’ll never let it go out of my sight for an instant’ – Considering what happens later in the play, what is the significance of this line?

**TASK #6 –** ‘(He holds them for a moment before continuing)’ – Why does Mr Birling do this?

**TASK #5** – Consider the stage directions that have been highlighted. What do they tell you about the atmosphere of this scene? Why does Priestley want to set this atmosphere?

**Status –** Identify vocabulary which suggests that Lennie admires George.

What does this suggest about both men’s status in the relationship?