Sheila: (*distressed*) I went to the manager at Milwards and I told him that if they didn't get rid of that girl, I’d never go near the place again and I’d persuade mother to close our account with them.

Inspector: And why did you do that?

Sheila: Because I was in a furious temper.

Inspector: And what had this girl done to make you lose your temper?

Sheila: When I was looking at myself in the mirror I caught sight of her smiling at the assistant, and I was furious with her. I'd been in a bad temper anyhow.

Inspector: And was it the girl’s fault?

Sheila: No, not really. It was my own fault. (*suddenly, to* Gerald) All right, Gerald, you needn't look at me like that. At least, I'm trying to tell the truth. I expect you've done things you're ashamed of too.

Gerald: (*surprised*) Well, I never said I hadn't. I don't see why –

Inspector: (*cutting in*) Never mind about that. You can settle that between you afterwards. (*to* Sheila.) What happened?

Sheila: I'd gone in to try something on. It was an idea of my own – mother had been against it, and so had the assistant – but I insisted. As soon as I tried it on, I knew they'd been right. It just didn't suit me at all. I looked silly in the thing. Well, this girl had brought the dress up from the workroom, and when the assistant – Miss Francis – had asked her something about it, this girl, to show us what she meant, had held the dress up, as if she was wearing it. And it just suited her. She was the right type for it, just as I was the wrong type. She was very pretty too – with big dark eyes – and that didn't make it any better. Well, when I tried the thing on and looked at myself and knew that it was all wrong, I caught sight of this girl smiling at Miss Francis – as if to say: 'doesn't she look awful' – and I was absolutely furious. I was very rude to both of them, and then I went to the manager and told him that this girl had been very impertinent – and – and – (*she almost breaks down, but just controls herself*.) How could I know what would happen afterwards? If she'd been some miserable plain little creature, I don't suppose I’d have done it. But she was very pretty and looked as if she could take care of herself. I couldn't be sorry for her.

Inspector: In fact, in a kind of way, you might be said to have been jealous of her.

Sheila: Yes, I suppose so.

Inspector: And so you used the power you had, as a daughter of a good customer and also of a man well known in the town, to punish the girl just because she made you feel like that?

Sheila: Yes, but it didn't seem to be anything very terrible at the time. Don't you understand? And if I could help her now, I would---

Inspector:(*harshly*) Yes, but you can't. It's too late. She's dead.

**TASK #1** – How does the Inspector demonstrate that he is in control here?

**7. Sheila and Milwards**

**TASK #4** – Highlight everywhere in the extract where Sheila begins to accept responsibility.

**TASK #2** – How does Priestley create sympathy for Eva Smith through Sheila’s description of her?

**TASK #3** – How is Priestley beginning to portray the younger generation in a positive light?

**TASK #6 –** How have the rich and powerful exploited the poor and weak in this scene?

**TASK #5** – Sheila agrees with what the Inspector tells her and begins to accept that what she has done is wrong. What does this tell you about her?

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

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