

ACT THREE

It is Mrs Higgins's at-home day. Nobody has yet arrived. Her drawing room, in a flat on Chelsea Embankment,¹ has three windows looking on the river; and the ceiling is not so lofty as it would be in an older house of the same pretension. The windows are open, giving access to a balcony with flowers in pots. If you stand with your face to the windows, you have the fireplace on your left and the door in the right-hand wall close to the corner nearest the windows.

Mrs Higgins was brought up on Morris and Burne Jones²; and her room, which is very unlike her son's room in Wimpole Street, is not crowded with furniture and little tables and nicknacks. In the middle of the room there is a big ottoman; and this, with the carpet, the Morris wall-papers, and the Morris chintz window curtains and brocade covers of the ottoman and its cushions, supply all the ornament, and are much too handsome to be hidden by odds and ends of useless things. A few good oil-paintings from the exhibitions in the Grosvenor Gallery thirty years ago (the Burne Jones, not the Whistler side of them) are on the walls. The only landscape is a Cecil Lawson on the scale of a Rubens. There is a portrait of Mrs Higgins as she was when she defied fashion in her youth in one of the beautiful Rosettian costumes which, when caricatured by people who did not understand, led to the absurdities of popular estheticism in the eighteenth-seventies.

In the corner diagonally opposite the door Mrs Higgins, now over sixty and long past taking the trouble to dress out of the fashion, sits writing at an elegantly simple writing-table with a bell button within reach of her hand. There is a Chippendale chair further back in the room between her and the window nearest her side. At the other side of the room, further forward, is an Elizabethan chair roughly carved in the taste of Inigo Jones. On the same side a piano in a decorated case. The corner between the fireplace and the window is occupied by a divan cushioned in Morris chintz.

It is between four and five in the afternoon.

The door is opened violently; and Higgins enters with his hat on.

Mrs Higgins (dismayed) Henry (scolding him)! What are you doing here to-day? It is my at-home day: you promised not to come. (As he bends to kiss her, she takes his hat off, and presents it to him).

Higgins. Oh bother! (He throws the hat down on the table).

Mrs Higgins. Go home at once.

Higgins (kissing her) I know, mother. I came on purpose.

Mrs Higgins. But you mustnt. I'm serious, Henry. You offend all my friends: they stop coming whenever they meet you.

Higgins. Nonsense! I know I have no small talk; but people dont mind. (He sits on the settee).

Mrs Higgins. Oh! dont they? Small talk indeed! What about your large talk? Really, dear, you mustnt stay.

Higgins. I must. Ive a job for you. A phonetic job.

Mrs Higgins. No use, dear. I'm sorry; but I cant get round your vowels; and though I like to get pretty postcards in your patent shorthand, I always have to read the copies in ordinary writing you so thoughtfully send me.

Higgins. Well, this isnt a phonetic job.

Mrs Higgins. You said it was.

Higgins. Not your part of it. Ive picked up a girl.

Mrs Higgins. Does that mean that some girl has picked you up?

Higgins. Not at all. I dont mean a love affair.

Mrs Higgins. What a pity!

Higgins. Why?

Mrs Higgins. Well, you never fall in love with anyone under forty-five. When will you

1. Chelsea Embankment. Chelsea is a pleasant residential district along the bank of the Thames. 2. Morris and Burne Jones. William Morris and Burne Jones (1833-1898) were members of a decorating firm noted for fine carvings, stained glass, metalwork, paper hangings, chintzes and carpets. (See the article "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood," page 464.)

discover that there are some rather nice-looking young women about?

Higgins. Oh, I cant be bothered with young women. My idea of a lovable woman is something as like you as possible. I shall never get into the way of seriously liking young women: some habits lie too deep to be changed. (*Rising abruptly and walking about, jingling his money and his keys in his trouser pockets*) Besides, theyre all idiots.

Mrs Higgins. Do you know what you would do if you really loved me, Henry?

Higgins. Oh bother! What? Marry, I suppose?

Mrs Higgins. No. Stop fidgeting and take your hands out of your pockets. (*With a gesture of despair, he obeys and sits down again*). Thats a good boy. Now tell me about the girl.

Higgins. She's coming to see you.

Mrs Higgins. I dont remember asking her.

Higgins. You didnt. I asked her. If youd known her you wouldnt have asked her.

Mrs Higgins. Indeed! Why?

Higgins. Well, it's like this. She's a common flower girl. I picked her off the kerbstone.

Mrs Higgins. And invited her to my at-home!

Higgins (*rising and coming to her to coax her*) Oh, thatll be all right. Ive taught her to speak properly; and she has strict orders as to her behavior. She's to keep to two subjects: the weather and everybody's health—Fine day and How do you do, you know—and not to let herself go on things in general. That will be safe.

Mrs Higgins. Safe! To talk about our health! about our insides! perhaps about our outsides! How could you be so silly, Henry?

Higgins (*impatiently*) Well, she must talk about something. (*He controls himself and sits down again*). Oh, she'll be all right: dont you fuss. Pickering is in it with me. Ive a sort of bet on that I'll pass her off as a duchess in six months. I started on her some months ago; and she's getting on like a house on fire. I shall win my bet. She has a quick ear; and she's been easier to teach than my middle class pupils because she's had to learn a com-

plete new language. She talks English almost as you talk French.

Mrs Higgins. Thats satisfactory, at all events.

Higgins. Well, it is and it isnt.

Mrs Higgins. What does that mean?

Higgins. You see, Ive got her pronunciation all right; but you have to consider not only how a girl pronounces, but what she pronounces; and thats where—

They are interrupted by the parlor-maid, announcing guests.

The Parlor-Maid. Mrs and Miss Eynsford Hill. (*She withdraws*).

Higgins. Oh Lord! (*He rises; snatches his hat from the table; and makes for the door; but before he reaches it his mother introduces him*).

Mrs and Miss Eynsford Hill are the mother and daughter who sheltered from the rain in Covent Garden. The mother is well bred, quiet, and has the habitual anxiety of straitened means. The daughter has acquired a gay air of being very much at home in society: the bravado of genteel poverty.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (*to Mrs Higgins*) How do you do? (*They shake hands*).

Miss Eynsford Hill. How d'you do? (*She shakes*).

Mrs Higgins (*introducing*) My son Henry.

Mrs Eynsford Hill. Your celebrated son! I have so longed to meet you, Professor Higgins.

Higgins (*glumly, making no movement in her direction*) Delighted. (*He backs against the piano and bows brusquely*).

Miss Eynsford Hill (*going to him with confident familiarity*) How do you do?

Higgins (*staring at her*) Ive seen you before somewhere. I havnt the ghost of a notion where; but Ive heard your voice. (*Drearily*) It doesnt matter. Youd better sit down.

Mrs Higgins. I'm sorry to say that my celebrated son has no manners. You mustnt mind him.

Miss Eynsford Hill (*gaily*) I dont. (*She sits in the Elizabethan chair*).

Mrs Eynsford Hill (*a little bewildered*) Not at all. (*She sits on the ottoman between her daughter and Mrs Higgins, who has*

turned her chair away from the writing-table).

Higgins. Oh, have I been rude? I didnt mean to be.

He goes to the central window, through which, with his back to the company, he contemplates the river and the flowers in Battersea Park on the opposite bank as if they were a frozen desert.

The parlor-maid returns, ushering in Pickering.

The Parlor-Maid. Colonel Pickering. (She withdraws).

Pickering. How do you do, Mrs Higgins?

Mrs Higgins. So glad youve come. Do you know Mrs Eynsford Hill—Miss Eynsford Hill? (Exchange of bows. The Colonel brings the Chippendale chair a little forward between Mrs Hill and Mrs Higgins, and sits down).

Pickering. Has Henry told you what weve come for?

Higgins (over his shoulder) We were interrupted: damn it!

Mrs Higgins. Oh Henry, Henry, really!

Mrs Eynsford Hill (half rising) Are we in the way?

Mrs Higgins (rising and making her sit down again) No, no. You couldnt have come more fortunately: we want you to meet a friend of ours.

Higgins (turning hopefully) Yes, by George! We want two or three people. Youll do as well as anybody else.

The parlor-maid returns, ushering Freddy.

The Parlor-Maid. Mr Eynsford Hill.

Higgins (almost audibly, past endurance) God of Heaven! another of them.

Freddy (shaking hands with Mrs Higgins) Ahdedo?

Mrs Higgins. Very good of you to come. (Introducing) Colonel Pickering.

Freddy (bowing) Ahdedo?

Mrs Higgins. I dont think you know my son, Professor Higgins.

Freddy (going to Higgins) Ahdedo?

Higgins (looking at him much as if he were a pickpocket) Ill take my oath Ive met you before somewhere. Where was it?

Freddy. I dont think so.

Higgins (resignedly) It dont matter, anyhow. Sit down.

He shakes Freddy's hand, and almost slings him on to the ottoman with his face to the windows; then comes round to the other side of it.

Higgins. Well, here we are, anyhow! (He sits down on the ottoman next Mrs Eynsford Hill, on her left). And now, what the devil are we going to talk about until Eliza comes?

Mrs Higgins. Henry: you are the life and soul of the Royal Society's soirées; but really youre rather trying on more commonplace occasions.

Higgins. Am I? Very sorry. (Beaming suddenly) I suppose I am, you know. (Up-roariously) Ha, ha!

Miss Eynsford Hill (who considers Higgins quite eligible matrimonially) I sympathize. I havnt any small talk. If people would only be frank and say what they really think!

Higgins (relapsing into gloom) Lord forbid!

Mrs Eynsford Hill (taking up her daughter's cue) But why?

Higgins. What they think they ought to think is bad enough, Lord knows; but what they really think would break up the whole show. Do you suppose it would be really agreeable if I were to come out now with what I really think?

Miss Eynsford Hill (gaily) Is it so very cynical?

Higgins. Cynical! Who the dickens said it was cynical? I mean it wouldnt be decent.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (seriously) Oh! I'm sure you dont mean that, Mr Higgins.

Higgins. You see, we're all savages, more or less. We're supposed to be civilized and cultured—to know all about poetry and philosophy and art and science, and so on; but how many of us know even the meanings of these names? (To Miss Hill) What do you know of poetry? (To Mrs Hill) What do you know of science? (Indicating Freddy) What does he know of art or science or anything else? What the devil do you imagine I know of philosophy?

Mrs Higgins (warningly) Or of manners, Henry?

The Parlor-Maid (opening the door) Miss Doolittle. (She withdraws).

Higgins (rising hastily and running to Mrs Higgins) Here she is, mother. (He stands on tiptoe and makes signs over his mother's head to Eliza to indicate to her which lady is her hostess).

Eliza, who is exquisitely dressed, produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all rise, quite fluttered. Guided by Higgins's signals, she comes to Mrs Higgins with studied grace.

Liza (speaking with pedantic correctness of pronunciation and great beauty of tone) How do you do, Mrs Higgins? (She gasps slightly in making sure of the H in Higgins, but is quite successful). Mr Higgins told me I might come.

Mrs Higgins (cordially) Quite right: I'm very glad indeed to see you.

Pickering. How do you do, Miss Doolittle?

Liza (shaking hands with him) Colonel Pickering, is it not?

Mrs Eynsford Hill. I feel sure we have met before, Miss Doolittle. I remember your eyes.

Liza. How do you do? (She sits down on the ottoman gracefully in the place just left vacant by Higgins).

Mrs Eynsford Hill (introducing) My daughter Clara.

Liza. How do you do?

Clara (impulsively) How do you do? (She sits down on the ottoman beside Eliza, devouring her with her eyes).

Freddy (coming to their side of the ottoman) I've certainly had the pleasure.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (introducing) My son Freddy.

Liza. How do you do?

Freddy bows and sits down in the Elizabethan chair, infatuated.

Higgins (suddenly) By George, yes: it all comes back to me! (They stare at him). Covent Garden! (Lamentably) What a damned thing!

Mrs Higgins. Henry, please! (He is about

to sit on the edge of the table) Don't sit on my writing-table: you'll break it.

Higgins (sulkily) Sorry.

He goes to the divan, stumbling into the fender and over the fire-irons on his way; extricating himself with muttered imprecations; and finishing his disastrous journey by throwing himself so impatiently on the divan that he almost breaks it. Mrs Higgins looks at him, but controls herself and says nothing.

A long and painful pause ensues.

Mrs Higgins (at last, conversationally) Will it rain, do you think?

Liza. The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation.

Freddy. Ha! ha! how awfully funny!

Liza. What is wrong with that, young man? I bet I got it right.

Freddy. Killing!

Mrs Eynsford Hill. I'm sure I hope it won't turn cold. There's so much influenza about. It runs right through our whole family regularly every spring.

Liza (darkly) My aunt died of influenza: so they said.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (clicks her tongue sympathetically)!!!

Liza (in the same tragic tone) But it's my belief they done the old woman in.

Mrs Higgins (puzzled) Done her in?

Liza. Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They all thought she was dead; but my father he kept ladling gin down her throat til she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (startled) Dear me!

Liza (piling up the indictment) What call would a woman with that strength in her have to die of influenza? What become of her new straw hat that should have come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in.

Mrs Eynsford Hill. What does doing her in mean?

Higgins (*hastily*) Oh, thats the new small talk. To do a person in means to kill them.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (*to Eliza, horrified*) You surely dont believe that your aunt was killed?

Liza. Do I not! Them she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin, let alone a hat.

Mrs Eynsford Hill. But it cant have been right for your father to pour spirits down her throat like that. It might have killed her.

Liza. Not her. Gin was mother's milk to her. Besides, he'd poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it.

Mrs Eynsford Hill. Do you mean that he drank?

Liza. Drank! My word! Something chronic.

Mrs Eynsford Hill. How dreadful for you!

Liza. Not a bit. It never did him no harm what I could see. But then he did not keep it up regular. (*Cheerfully*) On the burst, as you might say, from time to time. And always more agreeable when he had a drop in. When he was out of work, my mother used to give him fourpence and tell him to go out and not come back until he'd drunk himself cheerful and loving-like. Theres lots of women has to make their husbands drunk to make them fit to live with. (*Now quite at her ease*) You see, it's like this. If a man has a bit of a conscience, it always takes him when he's sober; and then it makes him low-spirited. A drop of booze just takes that off and makes him happy. (*To Freddy, who is in convulsions of suppressed laughter*) Here! what are you sniggering at?

Freddy. The new small talk. You do it so awfully well.

Liza. If I was doing it proper, what was you laughing at? (*To Higgins*) Have I said anything I oughtnt?

Mrs Higgins (*interposing*) Not at all, Miss Doolittle.

Liza. Well, thats a mercy, anyhow. (*Expansively*) What I always say is—

Higgins (*rising and looking at his watch*) Ahem!

Liza (*looking round at him; taking the hint; and rising*) Well: I must go. (*They all*

rise, Freddy goes to the door). So pleased to have met you. Goodbye. (*She shakes hands with Mrs Higgins*).

Mrs Higgins. Goodbye.

Liza. Goodbye, Colonel Pickering.

Pickering. Goodbye, Miss Doolittle. (*They shake hands*).

Liza (*nodding to the others*) Goodbye, all.

Freddy (*opening the door for her*) Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle? If so—

Liza. Walk! Not bloody likely. (*Sensation*). I am going in a taxi. (*She goes out*).

Pickering *gasps and sits down*. Freddy goes out on the balcony to catch another glimpse of Eliza.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (*suffering from shock*) Well, I really cant get used to the new ways.

Clara (*throwing herself discontentedly into the Elizabethan chair*) Oh, it's all right, mamma, quite right. People will think we never go anywhere or see anybody if you are so old-fashioned.

Mrs Eynsford Hill. I daresay I am very old-fashioned; but I do hope you wont begin using that expression, Clara. I have got accustomed to hear you talking about men as rotters, and calling everything filthy and beastly; though I do think it horrible and unladylike. But this last is really too much. Dont you think so, Colonel Pickering?

Pickering. Dont ask me. Ive been away in India for several years; and manners have changed so much that I sometimes dont know whether I'm at a respectable dinner-table or in a ship's fore-castle.

Clara. It's all a matter of habit. Theres no right or wrong in it. Nobody means anything by it. And it's so quaint, and gives such a smart emphasis to things that are not in themselves very witty. I find the new small talk delightful and quite innocent.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (*rising*) Well, after that, I think it's time for us to go.

Pickering and Higgins rise.

Clara (*rising*) Oh yes: we have three at-homes to go to still. Goodbye, Mrs Higgins. Goodbye, Colonel Pickering. Goodbye, Professor Higgins.

Higgins (*coming grimly at her from the*

divan, and accompanying her to the door) Goodbye. Be sure you try on that small talk at the three at-homes. Dont be nervous about it. Pitch it in strong.

Clara (all smiles) I will. Goodbye. Such nonsense, all this early Victorian prudery!

Higgins (tempting her) Such damned nonsense!

Clara. Such bloody nonsense!

Mrs Eynsford Hill (convulsively) Clara!

Clara. Ha! ha! (She goes out radiant, conscious of being thoroughly up to date, and is heard descending the stairs in a stream of silvery laughter).

Freddy (to the heavens at large) Well, I ask you— (He gives it up, and comes to Mrs Higgins). Goodbye.

Mrs Higgins (shaking hands) Goodbye. Would you like to meet Miss Doolittle again?

Freddy (eagerly) Yes, I should, most awfully.

Mrs Higgins. Well, you know my days.

Freddy. Yes. Thanks awfully. Goodbye. (He goes out).

Mrs Eynsford Hill. Goodbye, Mr Higgins.

Higgins. Goodbye. Goodbye.

Mrs Eynsford Hill (to Pickering) It's no use. I shall never be able to bring myself to use that word.

Pickering. Dont. It's not compulsory, you know. Youll get on quite well without it.

Mrs Eynsford Hill. Only, Clara is so down on me if I am not positively reeking with the latest slang. Goodbye.

Pickering. Goodbye. (They shake hands).

Mrs Eynsford Hill (to Mrs Higgins) You mustnt mind Clara. (Pickering, catching from her lowered tone that this is not meant for him to hear, discreetly joins Higgins at the window). We're so poor! and she gets so few parties, poor child! She doesnt quite know. (Mrs Higgins, seeing that her eyes are moist, takes her hand sympathetically and goes with her to the door). But the boy is nice. Dont you think so?

Mrs Higgins. Oh, quite nice. I shall always be delighted to see him.

Mrs Eynsford Hill. Thank you, dear. Goodbye. (She goes out).

Higgins (eagerly) Well? Is Eliza presentable? (He swoops on his mother and drags her to the ottoman, where she sits down in Eliza's place with her son on her left).

Pickering returns to his chair on her right.

Mrs Higgins. You silly boy, of course she's not presentable. She's a triumph of your art and of her dressmaker's; but if you suppose for a moment that she doesnt give herself away in every sentence she utters, you must be perfectly cracked about her.

Pickering. But dont you think something might be done? I mean something to eliminate the sanguinary element from her conversation.

Mrs Higgins. Not as long as she is in Henry's hands.

Higgins (aggrieved) Do you mean that my language is improper?

Mrs Higgins. No, dearest: it would be quite proper—say on a canal barge; but it would not be proper for her at a garden party.

Higgins (deeply injured) Well I must say—

Pickering (interrupting him) Come, Higgins: you must learn to know yourself. I havnt heard such language as yours since we used to review the volunteers in Hyde Park twenty years ago.

Higgins (sulkily) Oh, well, if you say so, I suppose I dont always talk like a bishop.

Mrs Higgins (quieting Henry with a touch) Colonel Pickering: will you tell me what is the exact state of things in Wimpole Street?

Pickering (cheerfully: as if this completely changed the subject) Well, I have come to live there with Henry. We work together at my Indian Dialects; and we think it more convenient—

Mrs Higgins. Quite so. I know all about that: it's an excellent arrangement. But where does this girl live?

Higgins. With us, of course. Where should she live?

Mrs Higgins. But on what terms? Is she a servant? If not, what is she?

Pickering (slowly) I think I know what you mean, Mrs Higgins.

Higgins. Well, dash me if I do! Ive had

to work at the girl every day for months to get her to her present pitch. Besides, she's useful. She knows where my things are, and remembers my appointments and so forth.

Mrs Higgins. How does your housekeeper get on with her?

Higgins. Mrs Pearce? Oh, she's jolly glad to get so much taken off her hands; for before Eliza came, she used to have to find things and remind me of my appointments. But she's got some silly bee in her bonnet about Eliza. She keeps saying "You dont think, sir": doesnt she, Pick?

Pickering. Yes: thats the formula. "You dont think, sir." Thats the end of every conversation about Eliza.

Higgins. As if I ever stop thinking about the girl and her confounded vowels and consonants. I'm worn out, thinking about her, and watching her lips and her teeth and her tongue, not to mention her soul, which is the quaintest of the lot.

Mrs Higgins. You certainly are a pretty pair of babies, playing with your live doll.

Higgins. Playing! The hardest job I ever tackled: make no mistake about that, mother. But you have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her. It's filling up the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul.

Pickering (*drawing his chair closer to Mrs Higgins and bending over to her eagerly*) Yes: it's enormously interesting. I assure you, Mrs Higgins, we take Eliza very seriously. Every week—every day almost—there is some new change. (*Closer again*) We keep records of every stage—dozens of gramophone disks and photographs—

Higgins (*assailing her at the other ear*) Yes, by George: it's the most absorbing experiment I ever tackled. She regularly fills our lives up: doesn't she, Pick?

Pickering. We're always talking Eliza.

Higgins. Teaching Eliza.

Pickering. Dressing Eliza.

Mrs Higgins. What!

Higgins. Inventing new Elizas.

Higgins. }
Pickering. } (*speaking together*) } You know, she has the most extraordinary quickness of ear:
 I assure you, my dear Mrs Higgins, that girl

Higgins. } } just like a parrot.
Pickering. } } Ive tried her with every
 is a genius. She can play the piano quite beautifully.

Higgins. } } possible sort of
Pickering. } } sound that a human being can make—
 We have taken her to classical concerts and to music

Higgins. } } Continental dialects, African dialects, Hottentot
Pickering. } } halls; and it's all the same to her: she plays everything

Higgins. } } clicks, things it took me years to get hold of; and
Pickering. } } she hears right off when she comes home, whether it's

Higgins. } } she picks them up like a shot, right away, as if she had
Pickering. } } Beethoven and Brahms or Lehar and Lionel Monckton;

Higgins. } } been at it all her life.
Pickering. } } though six months ago, she'd never as much as touched a piano—

Mrs Higgins (*putting her fingers in her ears, as they are by this time shouting one another down with an intolerable noise*) Sh-sh-sh-sh! (*They stop*).

Pickering. I beg your pardon. (*He draws his chair back apologetically*).

Higgins. Sorry. When Pickering starts shouting nobody can get a word in edgeways.

Mrs Higgins. Be quiet, Henry. Colonel Pickering: dont you realize that when Eliza walked into Wimpole Street, something walked in with her?

Pickering. Her father did. But Henry soon got rid of him.

Mrs Higgins. It would have been more to the point if her mother had. But as her mother didnt something else did.

Pickering. But what?

Mrs Higgins (*unconsciously dating herself by the word*) A problem.

Pickering. Oh, I see. The problem of how to pass her off as a lady.

Higgins. I'll solve that problem. Ive half solved it already.

Mrs Higgins. No, you two infinitely stupid male creatures; the problem of what is to be done with her afterwards.

Higgins. I dont see anything in that. She can go her own way, with all the advantages I have given her.

Mrs Higgins. The advantages of that poor woman who was here just now! The manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income! Is that what you mean?

Pickering (*indulgently, being rather bored*) Oh, that will be all right, Mrs Higgins. (*He rises to go*).

Higgins (*rising also*) We'll find her some light employment.

Pickering. She's happy enough. Dont you worry about her. Goodbye. (*He shakes hands as if he were consoling a frightened child, and makes for the door*).

Higgins. Anyhow, theres no good bothering now. The thing's done. Goodbye, mother. (*He kisses her, and follows Pickering*).

Pickering (*turning for a final consolation*) There are plenty of openings. We'll do whats right. Goodbye.

Higgins (*to Pickering as they go out together*) Let's take her to the Shakespear exhibition at Earls Court.

Pickering. Yes: lets. Her remarks will be delicious.

Higgins. She'll mimic all the people for us when we get home.

Pickering. Ripping. (*Both are heard laughing as they go downstairs*).

Mrs Higgins (*rises with an impatient bounce, and returns to her work at the writing table. She sweeps a litter of disarranged papers out of her way; snatches a sheet of paper from her stationery case; and tries resolutely to write. At the third line she gives it up; flings down her pen; grips the table angrily and exclaims*) Oh, men! men!! men!!!



To increase understanding

1. (a) Describe Mrs. Higgins, drawing inferences from what she says and does in this act. (b) What is the attitude of Professor Higgins toward his mother? (c) How does she regard him? (d) Why has Higgins brought Eliza to his mother?

2. (a) Cite passages to show that Eliza has not entirely mastered social amenities. (b) To whom does Eliza seem a complete success? (c) What effect does Eliza produce on Clara?

3. (a) What class of society is Shaw criticizing in this act? (b) Cite lines that show what characteristics of that class he is satirizing.

4. Explain the reason for Mrs. Higgins' anger at the end of the act.



A London production.

ACT FOUR

The Wimpole Street laboratory. Midnight. Nobody in the room. The clock on the mantelpiece strikes twelve. The fire is not alight: it is a summer night.

Presently Higgins and Pickering are heard on the stairs.

Higgins (calling down to Pickering) I say, Pick: lock up, will you? I shant be going out again.

Pickering. Right. Can Mrs Pearce go to bed? We dont want anything more, do we?

Higgins. Lord, no!

Eliza opens the door and is seen on the lighted landing in opera cloak, brilliant evening dress, and diamonds, with fan, flowers, and all accessories. She comes to the hearth, and switches on the electric lights there. She is tired: her pallor contrasts strongly with her dark eyes and hair; and her expression is almost tragic. She takes off her cloak; puts her fan and flowers on the piano; and sits down on the bench, brooding and silent. Higgins, in evening dress, with overcoat and hat, comes in, carrying a smoking jacket which he has picked up downstairs. He takes off the hat and overcoat; throws them carelessly on the newspaper stand; disposes of his coat in the same way; puts on the smoking jacket; and throws himself wearily into the easy-chair at the hearth. Pickering, similarly attired, comes in. He also takes off his hat and overcoat, and is about to throw them on Higgins's when he hesitates.

Pickering. I say: Mrs Pearce will row if we leave these things lying about in the drawing room.

Higgins. Oh, chuck them over the banisters into the hall. She'll find them there in the morning and put them away all right. She'll think we were drunk.

Pickering. We are, slightly. Are there any letters?

Higgins. I didnt look. (Pickering takes the overcoats and hats and goes downstairs. Higgins begins half singing half yawning an air from La Fanciulla del Golden West.¹ Sud-

denly he stops and exclaims) I wonder where the devil my slippers are!

Eliza looks at him darkly; then rises suddenly and leaves the room.

Higgins yawns again, and resumes his song.

Pickering returns, with the contents of the letter-box in his hand.

Pickering. Only circulars, and this coroneted billet-doux for you. (He throws the circulars into the fender, and posts himself on the hearthrug, with his back to the grate).

Higgins (glancing at the billet-doux) Money-lender. (He throws the letter after the circulars).

Eliza returns with a pair of large down-at-heel slippers. She places them on the carpet before Higgins, and sits as before without a word.

Higgins (yawning again) Oh Lord! What an evening! What a crew! What a silly tomfoolery! (He raises his shoe to unlace it, and catches sight of the slippers. He stops unlacing and looks at them as if they had appeared there of their own accord). Oh! theyre there, are they?

Pickering (stretching himself) Well, I feel a bit tired. It's been a long day. The garden party, a dinner party, and the opera! Rather too much of a good thing. But youve won your bet, Higgins. Eliza did the trick, and something to spare, eh?

Higgins (fervently) Thank God it's over!

Eliza flinches violently; but they take no notice of her; and she recovers herself and sits stonily as before.

Pickering. Were you nervous at the garden party! I was. Eliza didnt seem a bit nervous.

Higgins. Oh, she wasnt nervous. I knew she'd be all right. No: it's the strain of putting the job through all these months that has told on me. It was interesting enough at first, while we were at the phonetics; but after that I got deadly sick of it. If I hadnt backed myself to do it I should have chucked the whole thing up two months ago. It was a silly notion: the whole thing has been a bore.

Pickering. Oh come! the garden party was

1. *La Fanciulla del Golden West, The Girl of the Golden West*, an opera by Puccini that opened in New York in 1910.

frightfully exciting. My heart began beating like anything.

Higgins. Yes, for the first three minutes. But when I saw we were going to win hands down, I felt like a bear in a cage, hanging about doing nothing. The dinner was worse: sitting gorging there for over an hour, with nobody but a damned fool of a fashionable woman to talk to! I tell you, Pickering, never again for me. No more artificial duchesses. The whole thing has been simple purgatory.

Pickering. Youve never been broken in properly to the social routine. (*Strolling over to the piano*) I rather enjoy dipping into it occasionally myself: it makes me feel young again. Anyhow, it was a great success: an immense success. I was quite frightened once or twice because Eliza was doing it so well. You see, lots of the real people cant do it at all: theyre such fools that they think style comes by nature to people in their position; and so they never learn. Theres always something professional about doing a thing superlatively well.

Higgins. Yes: thats what drives me mad: the silly people dont know their own silly business. (*Rising*) However, its over and done with; and now I can go to bed at last without dreading tomorrow.

Eliza's beauty becomes murderous.

Pickering. I think I shall turn in too. Still, its been a great occasion: a triumph for you. Goodnight. (*He goes*).

Higgins (following him) Goodnight. (*Over his shoulder, at the door*) Put out the lights, Eliza; and tell Mrs Pearce not to make coffee for me in the morning: Ill take tea. (*He goes out*).

Eliza tries to control herself and feel indifferent as she rises and walks across to the hearth to switch off the lights. By the time she gets there she is on the point of screaming. She sits down in Higgins's chair and holds on hard to the arms. Finally she gives way and flings herself furiously on the floor, raging.

Higgins (in despairing wrath outside) What the devil have I done with my slippers? (*He appears at the door*).

Liza (snatching up the slippers, and hurling them at him one after the other with all

her force) There are your slippers. And there. Take your slippers; and may you never have a day's luck with them!

Higgins (astounded) What on earth—! (*He comes to her*). What's the matter? Get up. (*He pulls her up*). Anything wrong?

Liza (breathless) Nothing wrong—with you. Ive won your bet for you, havnt I? Thats enough for you. I dont matter, I suppose.

Higgins. You won my bet! You! Presumptuous insect! I won it. What did you throw those slippers at me for?

Liza. Because I wanted to smash your face. Id like to kill you, you selfish brute. Why didnt you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God its all over, and that now you can throw me back again there, do you? (*She crisps her fingers frantically*).

Higgins (looking at her in cool wonder) The creature is nervous, after all.

Liza (gives a suffocated scream of fury, and instinctively darts her nails at his face)!!

Higgins (catching her wrists) Ah! would you? Claws in, you cat. How dare you shew your temper to me? Sit down and be quiet. (*He throws her roughly into the easy-chair*).

Liza (crushed by superior strength and weight) Whats to become of me? Whats to become of me?

Higgins. How the devil do I know whats to become of you? What does it matter what becomes of you?

Liza. You dont care. I know you dont care. you wouldnt care if I was dead. Im nothing to you—not so much as them slippers.

Higgins (thundering) Those slippers.

Liza (with bitter submission) Those slippers. I didnt think it made any difference now.

A pause. Eliza hopeless and crushed. Higgins a little uneasy.

Higgins (in his loftiest manner) Why have you begun going on like this? May I ask whether you complain of your treatment here?

Liza. No.

Higgins. Has anybody behaved badly to you? Colonel Pickering? Mrs Pearce? Any of the servants?

Liza. No.

Higgins. I presume you dont pretend that I have treated you badly?

Liza. No.

Higgins. I am glad to hear it. (*He moderates his tone*). Perhaps youre tired after the strain of the day. Will you have a glass of champagne? (*He moves towards the door*).

Liza. No. (*Recollecting her manners*) Thank you.

Higgins (*good-humored again*) This has been coming on you for some days. I suppose it was natural for you to be anxious about the garden party. But thats all over now. (*He pats her kindly on the shoulder. She writhes*). Theres nothing more to worry about.

Liza. No. Nothing more for you to worry about. (*She suddenly rises and gets away from him by going to the piano bench, where she sits and hides her face*). Oh God! I wish I was dead.

Higgins (*staring after her in sincere surprise*) Why? In heaven's name, why? (*Reasonably, going to her*) Listen to me, Eliza. All this irritation is purely subjective.

Liza. I dont understand. I'm too ignorant.

Higgins. It's only imagination. Low spirits and nothing else. Nobody's hurting you. Nothing's wrong. You go to bed like a good girl and sleep it off. Have a little cry and say your prayers: that will make you comfortable.

Liza. I heard your prayers. "Thank God it's all over!"

Higgins (*impatiently*) Well, dont you thank God it's all over? Now you are free and can do what you like.

Liza (*pulling herself together in desperation*) What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? Whats to become of me?

Higgins (*enlightened, but not at all impressed*) Oh thats whats worrying you, is it? (*He thrusts his hands into his pockets, and walks about in his usual manner, rattling the contents of his pockets, as if condescending to a trivial subject out of pure kindness*). I shouldnt bother about it if I were you. I should imagine you wont have much difficulty in settling yourself somewhere or other,

though I hadnt quite realized that you were going away. (*She looks quickly at him: he does not look at her, but examines the dessert stand on the piano and decides that he will eat an apple*). You might marry, you know. (*He bites a large piece out of the apple and munches it noisily*). You see, Eliza, all men are not confirmed old bachelors like me and the Colonel. Most men are the marrying sort (poor devils!); and youre not bad-looking: it's quite a pleasure to look at you sometimes—not now, of course, because youre crying and looking as ugly as the very devil; but when youre all right and quite yourself, youre what I should call attractive. That is, to the people in the marrying line, you understand. You go to bed and have a good nice rest; and then get up and look at yourself in the glass; and you wont feel so cheap.

Eliza again looks at him, speechless, and does not stir.

The look is quite lost on him: he eats his apple with a dreamy expression of happiness, as it is quite a good one.

Higgins (*a genial afterthought occurring to him*) I daresay my mother could find some chap or other who would do very well.

Liza. We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road.

Higgins (*waking up*) What do you mean?

Liza. I sold flowers. I didnt sell myself. Now youve made a lady of me I'm not fit to sell anything else. I wish youd left me where you found me.

Higgins (*slinging the core of the apple decisively into the grate*) Tosh, Eliza. Dont you insult human relations by dragging all this cant about buying and selling into it. You neednt marry the fellow if you dont like him.

Liza. What else am I to do?

Higgins. Oh, lots of things. What about your old idea of a florist's shop? Pickering could set you up in one: he's lots of money. (*Chuckling*) He'll have to pay for all those togs you have been wearing to-day; and that, with the hire of the jewellery, will make a big hole in two hundred pounds. Why, six months ago you would have thought it the millennium to have a flower shop of your own. Come! youll be all right. I must clear off

to bed: I'm devilish sleepy. By the way, I came down for something: I forget what it was.

Liza. Your slippers.

Higgins. Oh yes, of course. You shied them at me. (*He picks them up, and is going out when she rises and speaks to him*).

Liza. Before you go, sir—

Higgins (*dropping the slippers in his surprise at her calling him Sir*) Eh?

Liza. Do my clothes belong to me or to Colonel Pickering?

Higgins (*coming back into the room as if her question were the very climax of unreason*) What the devil use would they be to Pickering?

Liza. He might want them for the next girl you pick up to experiment on.

Higgins (*shocked and hurt*) Is that the way you feel towards us?

Liza. I dont want to hear anything more about that. All I want to know is whether anything belongs to me. My own clothes were burnt.

Higgins. But what does it matter? Why need you start bothering about that in the middle of the night?

Liza. I want to know what I may take away with me. I dont want to be accused of stealing.

Higgins (*now deeply wounded*) Stealing! You shouldnt have said that, Eliza. That shews a want of feeling.

Liza. I'm sorry. I'm only a common ignorant girl; and in my station I have to be careful. There cant be any feelings between the like of you and the like of me. Please will you tell me what belongs to me and what doesnt?

Higgins (*very sulky*) You may take the whole damned houseful if you like. Except the jewels. Theyre hired. Will that satisfy you? (*He turns on his heel and is about to go in extreme dudgeon*).

Liza (*drinking in his emotion like nectar, and nagging him to provoke a further supply*) Stop, please. (*She takes off her jewels*). Will you take these to your room and keep them safe? I dont want to run the risk of their being missing.

Higgins (*furious*) Hand them over. (*She*

puts them into his hands). If these belonged to me instead of to the jeweller, I'd ram them down your ungrateful throat. (*He perfunctorily thrusts them into his pockets, unconsciously decorating himself with the protruding ends of the chains*).

Liza (*taking a ring off*) This ring isnt the jeweller's: it's the one you bought me in Brighton. I dont want it now. (*Higgins dashes the ring violently into the fireplace, and turns on her so threateningly that she crouches over the piano with her hands over her face, and exclaims*) Dont you hit me.

Higgins. Hit you! You infamous creature, how dare you accuse me of such a thing? It is you who have hit me. You have wounded me to the heart.

Liza (*thrilling with hidden joy*) I'm glad. Ive got a little of my own back, anyhow.

Higgins (*with dignity, in his finest professional style*) You have caused me to lose my temper: a thing that has hardly ever happened to me before. I prefer to say nothing more to-night. I am going to bed.

Liza (*pertly*) Youd better leave a note for Mrs Pearce about the coffee; for she wont be told by me.

Higgins (*formally*) Damn Mrs Pearce; and damn the coffee; and damn you; and damn my own folly in having lavished hard-earned knowledge and the treasure of my regard and intimacy on a heartless guttersnipe. (*He goes out with impressive decorum, and spoils it by slamming the door savagely*).

Eliza smiles for the first time; expresses her feelings by a wild pantomime in which an imitation of Higgins's exit is confused with her own triumph; and finally goes down on her knees on the hearthrug to look for the ring.

To increase understanding

1. How does Higgins react to Eliza's success at the garden party?

2. Consider the relationship of Act IV to the development of the play. (a) Is it more important to the development of the plot, exposition of ideas, or development of comedy effects? (b) What two conflicts reach a climax in Act IV? (c) How are they resolved? (d) What must the next act resolve?

ACT FIVE

Mrs Higgins's drawing room. She is at her writing-table as before. The parlor-maid comes in.

The Parlor-Maid (at the door) Mr Henry, maam, is downstairs with Colonel Pickering.
Mrs Higgins. Well, shew them up.

The Parlor-Maid. Theyre using the telephone, maam. Telephoning to the police, I think.

Mrs Higgins. What!

The Parlor-Maid (coming further in and lowering her voice) Mr Henry is in a state, maam. I thought I'd better tell you.

Mrs Higgins. If you had told me that Mr Henry was not in a state it would have been more surprising. Tell them to come up when theyve finished with the police. I suppose he's lost something.

The Parlor-Maid. Yes, maam (*going*).

Mrs Higgins. Go upstairs and tell Miss Doolittle that Mr Henry and the Colonel are here. Ask her not to come down til I send for her.

The Parlor-Maid. Yes, maam.

Higgins bursts in. He is, as the parlor-maid has said, in a state.

Higgins. Look here, mother: heres a con-founded thing!

Mrs Higgins. Yes, dear. Good morning. (*He checks his impatience and kisses her, whilst the parlor-maid goes out*). What is it?

Higgins. Eliza's bolted.

Mrs Higgins (calmly continuing her writing) You must have frightened her.

Higgins. Frightened her! nonsense! She was left last night, as usual, to turn out the lights and all that; and instead of going to bed she changed her clothes and went right off: her bed wasnt slept in. She came in a cab for her things before seven this morning; and that fool Mrs Pearce let her have them without telling me a word about it. What am I to do?

Mrs Higgins. Do without, I'm afraid, Henry. The girl has a perfect right to leave if she chooses.

Higgins (wandering distractedly across the

room) But I cant find anything. I dont know what appointments Ive got. I'm—(*Pickering comes in. Mrs Higgins puts down her pen and turns away from the writing-table*).

Pickering (shaking hands) Good morning, Mrs Higgins. Has Henry told you? (*He sits down on the ottoman*).

Higgins. What does that ass of an inspector say? Have you offered a reward?

Mrs Higgins (rising in indignant amazement) You dont mean to say you have set the police after Eliza.

Higgins. Of course. What are the police for? What else could we do? (*He sits in the Elizabethan chair*).

Pickering. The inspector made a lot of difficulties. I really think he suspected us of some improper purpose.

Mrs Higgins. Well, of course he did. What right have you to go to the police and give the girl's name as if she were a thief, or a lost umbrella, or something? Really! (*She sits down again, deeply vexed*).

Higgins. But we want to find her.

Pickering. We cant let her go like this, you know, Mrs Higgins. What were we to do?

Mrs Higgins. You have no more sense, either of you, than two children. Why—

The parlor-maid comes in and breaks off the conversation.

The Parlor-Maid. Mr Henry: a gentleman wants to see you very particular. He's been sent on from Wimpole Street.

Higgins. Oh, bother! I cant see anyone now. Who is it?

The Parlor-Maid. A Mr Doolittle, sir.

Pickering. Doolittle! Do you mean the dustman?

The Parlor-Maid. Dustman! Oh no, sir: a gentleman.

Higgins (springing up excitedly) By George, Pick, it's some relative of hers that she's gone to. Somebody we know nothing about. (*To the parlor-maid*) Send him up, quick.

The Parlor-Maid. Yes, sir. (*She goes*).

Higgins (eagerly, going to his mother) Genteel relatives! now we shall hear something. (*He sits down in the Chippendale chair*).

Mrs Higgins. Do you know any of her people?

Pickering. Only her father: the fellow we told you about.

The Parlor-Maid (announcing) Mr Doolittle. (She withdraws).

Doolittle enters. He is brilliantly dressed in a new fashionable frock-coat, with white waistcoat and grey trousers. A flower in his buttonhole, a dazzling silk hat, and patent leather shoes complete the effect. He is too concerned with the business he has come on to notice Mrs Higgins. He walks straight to Higgins, and accosts him with vehement reproach.

Doolittle (indicating his own person) See here! Do you see this? You done this.

Higgins. Done what, man?

Doolittle. This, I tell you. Look at it. Look at this hat. Look at this coat.

Pickering. Has Eliza been buying you clothes?

Doolittle. Eliza! not she. Not half. Why would she buy me clothes?

Mrs Higgins. Good morning, Mr Doolittle. Wont you sit down?

Doolittle (taken aback as he becomes conscious that he has forgotten his hostess) Asking your pardon, maam. (He approaches her and shakes her proffered hand). Thank you. (He sits down on the ottoman, on Pickering's right). I am that full of what has happened to me that I cant think of anything else.

Higgins. What the dickens has happened to you?

Doolittle. I shouldnt mind if it had only happened to me: anything might happen to anybody and nobody to blame but Providence, as you might say. But this is something that you done to me: yes, you, Henry Higgins.

Higgins. Have you found Eliza? Thats the point.

Doolittle. Have you lost her?

Higgins. Yes.

Doolittle. You have all the luck, you have. I aint found her; but she'll find me quick enough now after what you done to me.

Mrs Higgins. But what has my son done to you, Mr Doolittle?

Doolittle. Done to me! Ruined me. Destroyed my happiness. Tied me up and delivered me into the hands of middle class morality.

Higgins (rising intolerantly and standing over Doolittle) Youre raving. Youre drunk. Youre mad. I gave you five pounds. After that I had two conversations with you, at half-a-crown an hour. Ive never seen you since.

Doolittle. Oh! Drunk! am I? Mad? am I? Tell me this. Did you or did you not write a letter to an old blighter in America that was giving five millions to found Moral Reform Societies all over the world, and that wanted you to invent a universal language for him?

Higgins. What! Ezra D. Wannafeller! He's dead. (He sits down again carelessly).

Doolittle. Yes: he's dead; and I'm done for. Now did you or did you not write a letter to him to say that the most original moralist at present in England, to the best of your knowledge, was Alfred Doolittle, a common dustman.

Higgins. Oh, after your last visit I remember making some silly joke of the kind.

Doolittle. Ah! you may well call it a silly joke. It put the lid on me right enough. Just give him the chance he wanted to shew that Americans is not like us: that they recognize and respect merit in every class of life, however humble. Them words is in his blooming will, in which, Henry Higgins, thanks to your silly joking, he leaves me a share in his Pre-digested Cheese Trust worth three thousand a year on condition that I lecture for his Wannafeller Moral Reform World League as often as they ask me up to six times a year.

Higgins. The devil he does! Whew! (Brightening suddenly) What a lark!

Pickering. A safe thing for you, Doolittle. They wont ask you twice.

Doolittle. It aint the lecturing I mind. I'll lecture them blue in the face, I will, and not turn a hair. It's making a gentleman of me that I object to. Who asked him to make a gentleman of me? I was happy. I was free. I touched pretty nigh everybody for money

when I wanted it, same as I touched you, Henry Higgins. Now I am worried; tied neck and heels; and everybody touches me for money. It's a fine thing for you, says my solicitor. Is it? says I. You mean it's a good thing for you, I says. When I was a poor man and had a solicitor once when they found a pram in the dust cart, he got me off, and got shut of me and got me shut of him as quick as he could. Same with the doctors: used to shove me out of the hospital before I could hardly stand on my legs, and nothing to pay. Now they finds out that I'm not a healthy man and cant live unless they looks after me twice a day. In the house I'm not let do a hand's turn for myself: somebody else must do it and touch me for it. A year ago I hadnt a relative in the world except two or three that wouldnt speak to me. Now Ive fifty, and not a decent week's wages among the lot of them. I have to live for others and not for myself: thats middle class morality. You talk of losing Eliza. Dont you be anxious: I bet she's on my doorstep by this: she that could support herself easy by selling flowers if I wasnt respectable. And the next one to touch me will be you, Henry Higgins. I'll have to learn to speak middle class language from you, instead of speaking proper English. Thats where youll come in; and I daresay thats what you done it for.

Mrs Higgins. But, my dear Mr Doolittle, you need not suffer all this if you are really in earnest. Nobody can force you to accept this bequest. You can repudiate it. Isnt that so, Colonel Pickering?

Pickering. I believe so.

Doolittle (softening his manner in deference to her sex) Thats the tragedy of it, maam. It's easy to say chuck it; but I havnt the nerve. Which of us has? We're all intimidated. Intimidated, maam: thats what we are. What is there for me if I chuck it but the workhouse in my old age? I have to dye my hair already to keep my job as a dustman. If I was one of the deserving poor, and had put by a bit, I could chuck it; but then why should I, acause the deserving poor might as well be millionaires for all the happiness they ever has. They dont know what

happiness is. But I, as one of the undeserving poor, have nothing between me and the pauper's uniform but this here blasted three thousand a year that shoves me into the middle class. (Excuse the expression, maam: youd use it yourself if you had my provocation.) Theyve got you every way you turn: it's a choice between the Skilly of the workhouse and the Char Bydis of the middle class¹; and I havnt the nerve for the workhouse. Intimidated: thats what I am. Broke. Brought up. Happier men than me will call for my dust, and touch me for their tip; and I'll look on helpless, and envy them. And thats what your son has brought me to. (*He is overcome by emotion*).

Mrs Higgins. Well, I'm very glad youre not going to do anything foolish, Mr Doolittle. For this solves the problem of Eliza's future. You can provide for her now.

Doolittle (with melancholy resignation) Yes, maam: I'm expected to provide for everyone now, out of three thousand a year.

Higgins (jumping up) Nonsense! he cant provide for her. He shant provide for her. She doesnt belong to him. I paid him five pounds for her. Doolittle: either youre an honest man or a rogue.

Doolittle (tolerantly) A little of both, Henry, like the rest of us: a little of both.

Higgins. Well, you took that money for the girl; and you have no right to take her as well.

Mrs Higgins. Henry: dont be absurd. If you want to know where Eliza is, she is upstairs.

Higgins (amazed) Upstairs!!! Then I shall jolly soon fetch her downstairs. (*He makes resolutely for the door*).

Mrs Higgins (rising and following him) Be quiet, Henry. Sit down.

Higgins. I—

1. Skilly . . . Char Bydis of the middle class. Doolittle is referring to Scylla (sil'ə) and Charybdis (kə rib'dis). In the narrow strait that separates Italy and Sicily there is a dangerous rock and a whirlpool, which the ancient Greeks named Scylla and Charybdis. The expression "to be between Scylla and Charybdis" means to be between two evils, either one of which can be safely avoided only by risking the other.

Mrs Higgins. Sit down, dear; and listen to me.

Higgins. Oh very well, very well, very well. (*He throws himself ungraciously on the ottoman, with his face towards the windows*). But I think you might have told us this half an hour ago.

Mrs Higgins. Eliza came to me this morning. She passed the night partly walking about in a rage, partly trying to throw herself into the river and being afraid to, and partly in the Carlton Hotel. She told me of the brutal way you two treated her.

Higgins (*bounding up again*) What!

Pickering (*rising also*) My dear Mrs Higgins, she's been telling you stories. We didnt treat her brutally. We hardly said a word to her; and we parted on particularly good terms. (*Turning on Higgins*) Higgins: did you bully her after I went to bed?

Higgins. Just the other way about. She threw my slippers in my face. She behaved in the most outrageous way. I never gave her the slightest provocation. The slippers came bang into my face the moment I entered the room—before I had uttered a word. And used perfectly awful language.

Pickering (*astonished*) But why? What did we do to her?

Mrs Higgins. I think I know pretty well what you did. The girl is naturally rather affectionate, I think. Isnt she, Mr Doolittle?

Doolittle. Very tender-hearted, maam. Takes after me.

Mrs Higgins. Just so. She had become attached to you both. She worked very hard for you, Henry! I dont think you quite realize what anything in the nature of brain work means to a girl like that. Well, it seems that when the great day of trial came, and she did this wonderful thing for you without making a single mistake, you two sat there and never said a word to her, but talked together of how glad you were that it was all over and how you had been bored with the whole thing. And then you were surprised because she threw your slippers at you! I should have thrown the fire-irons at you.

Higgins. We said nothing except that we

were tired and wanted to go to bed. Did we, Pick?

Pickering (*shrugging his shoulders*) That was all.

Mrs Higgins (*ironically*) Quite sure?

Pickering. Absolutely. Really, that was all.

Mrs Higgins. You didnt thank her, or pet her, or admire her, or tell her how splendid she'd been.

Higgins (*impatiently*) But she knew all about that. We didnt make speeches to her, if thats what you mean.

Pickering (*conscience stricken*) Perhaps we were a little inconsiderate. Is she very angry?

Mrs Higgins (*returning to her place at the writing-table*) Well, I'm afraid she wont go back to Wimpole Street, especially now that Mr Doolittle is able to keep up the position you have thrust on her; but she says she is quite willing to meet you on friendly terms and to let bygones be bygones.

Higgins (*furious*) Is she, by George? Ho!

Mrs Higgins. If you promise to behave yourself, Henry, I'll ask her to come down. If not, go home; for you have taken up quite enough of my time.

Higgins. Oh, all right. Very well. Pick: you behave yourself. Let us put on our best Sunday manners for this creature that we picked out of the mud. (*He flings himself sulkily into the Elizabethan chair*).

Doolittle (*remonstrating*) Now, now, Henry Higgins! have some consideration for my feelings as a middle class man.

Mrs Higgins. Remember your promise, Henry. (*She presses the bell-button on the writing-table*). Mr Doolittle: will you be so good as to step out on the balcony for a moment. I dont want Eliza to have the shock of your news until she has made it up with these two gentlemen. Would you mind?

Doolittle. As you wish, lady. Anything to help Henry to keep her off my hands. (*He disappears through the window*).

The parlor-maid answers the bell. Pickering sits down in Doolittle's place.

Mrs Higgins. Ask Miss Doolittle to come down, please.

The Parlor-Maid. Yes, maam. (*She goes out*).

Mrs Higgins. Now, Henry: be good.

Higgins. I am behaving myself perfectly.

Pickering. He is doing his best, Mrs Higgins.

A pause. Higgins throws back his head; stretches out his legs; and begins to whistle.

Mrs Higgins. Henry, dearest, you dont look at all nice in that attitude.

Higgins (pulling himself together) I was not trying to look nice, mother.

Mrs Higgins. It doesnt matter, dear. I only wanted to make you speak.

Higgins. Why?

Mrs Higgins. Because you cant speak and whistle at the same time.

Higgins groans. Another very trying pause.

Higgins (springing up, out of patience) Where the devil is that girl? Are we to wait here all day?

Eliza enters, sunny, self-possessed, and giving a staggeringly convincing exhibition of ease of manner. She carries a little work-basket, and is very much at home. Pickering is too much taken aback to rise.

Liza. How do you do, Professor Higgins? Are you quite well?

Higgins (choking) Am I—(*He can say no more*).

Liza. But of course you are: you are never ill. So glad to see you again, Colonel Pickering. (*He rises hastily; and they shake hands*). Quite chilly this morning, isnt it? (*She sits down on his left. He sits beside her*).

Higgins. Dont you dare try this game on me. I taught it to you; and it doesnt take me in. Get up and come home; and dont be a fool.

Eliza takes a piece of needlework from her basket, and begins to stitch at it, without taking the least notice of this outburst.

Mrs Higgins. Very nicely put, indeed, Henry. No woman could resist such an invitation.

Higgins. You let her alone, mother. Let her speak for herself. You will jolly soon see whether she has an idea that I havnt put into her head or a word that I havnt put into her mouth. I tell you I have created this thing

out of the squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Gardens; and now she pretends to play the fine lady with me.

Mrs Higgins (placidly) Yes, dear; but youll sit down, wont you?

Higgins sits down again, savagely.

Liza (to Pickering, taking no apparent notice of Higgins, and working away deftly) Will you drop me altogether now that the experiment is over, Colonel Pickering?

Pickering. Oh dont. You mustnt think of it as an experiment. It shocks me, somehow.

Liza. Oh, I'm only a squashed cabbage leaf—

Pickering (impulsively) No.

Liza (continuing quietly)—but I owe so much to you that I should be very unhappy if you forgot me.

Pickering. It's very kind of you to say so, Miss Doolittle.

Liza. It's not because you paid for my dresses. I know you are generous to everybody with money. But it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, isn't it? You see it was so very difficult for me with the example of Professor Higgins always before me. I was brought up to be just like him, unable to control myself, and using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didnt behave like that if you hadnt been there.

Higgins. Well!!

Pickering. Oh, thats only his way, you know. He doesnt mean it.

Liza. Oh, I didnt mean it either, when I was a flower girl. It was only my way. But you see I did it; and thats what makes the difference after all.

Pickering. No doubt. Still, he taught you to speak; and I couldnt have done that, you know.

Liza (trivially) Of course: that is his profession.

Higgins. Damnation!

Liza (continuing) It was just like learning to dance in the fashionable way: there was nothing more than that in it. But do you know what began my real education?

Pickering. What?

Liza (stopping her work for a moment) Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self-respect for me. (*She resumes her stitching*). And there were a hundred little things you never noticed, because they came naturally to you. Things about standing up and taking off your hat and opening doors—

Pickering. Oh, that was nothing.

Liza. Yes: things that shewed you thought and felt about me as if I were something better than a scullery-maid; though of course I know you would have been just the same to a scullery-maid if she had been let into the drawing room. You never took off your boots in the dining room when I was there.

Pickering. You mustnt mind that. Higgins takes off his boots all over the place.

Liza. I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isnt it? But it made such a difference to me that you didnt do it. You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will.

Mrs Higgins. Please dont grind your teeth, Henry.

Pickering. Well, this is really very nice of you, Miss Doolittle.

Liza. I should like you to call me Eliza, now, if you would.

Pickering. Thank you, Eliza, of course.

Liza. And I should like Professor Higgins to call me Miss Doolittle.

Higgins. I'll see you damned first.

Mrs Higgins. Henry! Henry!

Pickering (laughing) Why dont you slang back at him? Dont stand it. It would do him a lot of good.

Liza. I cant. I could have done it once; but now I cant go back to it. Last night, when I was wandering about, a girl spoke to me; and I tried to get back into the old way

with her; but it was no use. You told me, you know, that when a child is brought to a foreign country, it picks up the language in a few weeks, and forgets its own. Well, I am a child in your country. I have forgotten my own language, and can speak nothing but yours. Thats the real break-off with the corner of Tottenham Court Road. Leaving Wimpole Street finishes it.

Pickering (much alarmed) Oh! but youre coming back to Wimpole Street, arnt you? Youll forgive Higgins?

Higgins (rising) Forgive! Will she, by George! Let her go. Let her find out how she can get on without us. She will relapse into the gutter in three weeks without me at her elbow.

Doolittle appears at the centre window. With a look of dignified reproach at Higgins, he comes slowly and silently to his daughter, who, with her back to the window, is unconscious of his approach.

Pickering. He's incorrigible, Eliza. You wont relapse, will you?

Liza. No: not now. Never again. I have learnt my lesson. I dont believe I could utter one of the old sounds if I tried. (*Doolittle touches her on her left shoulder. She drops her work, losing her self-possession utterly at the spectacle of her father's splendor*) A-a-a-a-ah-ow-oo!

Higgins (with a crow of triumph) Aha! Just so. A-a-a-ahowoo! A-a-a-ahowoo! A-a-a-ahowoo! Victory! Victory! (*He throws himself on the divan, folding his arms, and spraddling arrogantly*).

Doolittle. Can you blame the girl? Dont look at me like that, Eliza. It aint my fault. Ive come into some money.

Liza. You must have touched a millionaire this time, dad.

Doolittle. I have. But I'm dressed something special today. I'm going to St George's, Hanover Square. Your stepmother is going to marry me.

Liza (angrily) Youre going to let yourself down to marry that low common woman!

Pickering (quietly) He ought to, Eliza. (*To Doolittle*) Why has she changed her mind?

Doolittle (*sadly*) Intimidated, Governor. Intimidated. Middle class morality claims its victim. Wont you put on your hat, Liza, and come and see me turned off?

Liza. If the Colonel says I must, I—I'll (*almost sobbing*) I'll demean myself. And get insulted for my pains, like enough.

Doolittle. Dont be afraid: she never comes to words with anyone now, poor woman! respectability has broke all the spirit out of her.

Pickering (*squeezing Eliza's elbow gently*) Be kind to them, Eliza. Make the best of it.

Liza (*forcing a little smile for him through her vexation*) Oh well, just to shew theres no ill feeling. I'll be back in a moment. (*She goes out*).

Doolittle (*sitting down beside Pickering*) I feel uncommon nervous about the ceremony, Colonel. I wish youd come and see me through it.

Pickering. But youve been through it before, man. You were married to Eliza's mother.

Doolittle. Who told you that, Colonel?

Pickering. Well, nobody told me. But I concluded—naturally—

Doolittle. No: that aint the natural way, Colonel: it's only the middle class way. My way was always the undeserving way. But dont say nothing to Eliza. She dont know: I always had a delicacy about telling her.

Pickering. Quite right. We'll leave it so, if you dont mind.

Doolittle. And youll come to the church, Colonel, and put me through straight?

Pickering. With pleasure. As far as a bachelor can.

Mrs Higgins. May I come, Mr Doolittle? I should be very sorry to miss your wedding.

Doolittle. I should indeed be honored by your condescension, maam; and my poor old woman would take it as a tremendous compliment. She's been very low, thinking of the happy days that are no more.

Mrs Higgins (*rising*) I'll order the carriage and get ready. (*The men rise, except Higgins*). I shant be more than fifteen minutes. (*As she goes to the door Eliza comes in, hatted and buttoning her gloves*). I'm going to

the church to see your father married, Eliza. You had better come in the brougham with me. Colonel Pickering can go on with the bridegroom.

Mrs Higgins goes out. Eliza comes to the middle of the room between the centre window and the ottoman. Pickering joins her.

Doolittle. Bridegroom! What a word! It makes a man realize his position, somehow. (*He takes up his hat and goes towards the door*).

Pickering. Before I go, Eliza, do forgive him and come back to us.

Liza. I dont think papa would allow me. Would you, dad?

Doolittle (*sad but magnanimous*) They played you off very cunning, Eliza, them two sportsmen. If it had been only one of them, you could have nailed him. But you see, there was two; and one of them chaperoned the other, as you might say. (*To Pickering*) It was artful of you, Colonel; but I bear no malice: I should have done the same myself. I been the victim of one woman after another all my life; and I dont grudge you two getting the better of Eliza. I shant interfere. It's time for us to go, Colonel. So long, Henry. See you in St George's, Eliza. (*He goes out*).

Pickering (*coaxing*) Do stay with us, Eliza. (*He follows Doolittle*).

Eliza goes out on the balcony to avoid being alone with Higgins. He rises and joins her there. She immediately comes back into the room and makes for the door; but he goes along the balcony quickly and gets his back to the door before she reaches it.

Higgins. Well, Eliza, youve had a bit of your own back, as you call it. Have you had enough? and are you going to be reasonable? Or do you want any more?

Liza. You want me back only to pick up your slippers and put up with your tempers and fetch and carry for you.

Higgins. I havnt said I wanted you back at all.

Liza. Oh, indeed. Then what are we talking about?

Higgins. About you, not about me. If you come back I shall treat you just as I have al-

ways treated you. I cant change my nature; and I dont intend to change my manners. My manners are exactly the same as Colonel Pickering's.

Liza. That's not true. He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess.

Higgins. And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl.

Liza. I see. (*She turns away composedly, and sits on the ottoman, facing the window*). The same to everybody.

Higgins. Just so.

Liza. Like father.

Higgins (*grinning, a little taken down*) Without accepting the comparison at all points, Eliza, it's quite true that your father is not a snob, and that he will be quite at home in any station of life to which his eccentric destiny may call him. (*Seriously*) The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another.

Liza. Amen. You are a born preacher.

Higgins (*irritated*) The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better.

Liza (*with sudden sincerity*) I dont care how you treat me. I dont mind your swearing at me. I dont mind a black eye: Ive had one before this. But (*standing up and facing him*) I wont be passed over.

Higgins. Then get out of my way; for I wont stop for you. You talk about me as if I were a motor bus.

Liza. So you are a motor bus: all bounce and go, and no consideration for anyone. But I can do without you: dont think I cant.

Higgins. I know you can. I told you you could.

Liza (*wounded, getting away from him to the other side of the ottoman with her face to the hearth*) I know you did, you brute. You wanted to get rid of me.

Higgins. Liar.

Liza. Thank you. (*She sits down with dignity*).

Higgins. You never asked yourself, I suppose, whether I could do without you.

Liza (*earnestly*) Dont you try to get round me. Youll have to do without me.

Higgins (*arrogant*) I can do without anybody. I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire. But (*with sudden humility*) I shall miss you, Eliza. (*He sits down near her on the ottoman*). I have learnt something from your idiotic notions: I confess that humbly and gratefully. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them, rather.

Liza. Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feelings to hurt.

Higgins. I cant turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you.

Liza. Oh, you are a devil. You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. Mrs Pearce warned me. Time and again she has wanted to leave you; and you always got round her at the last minute. And you dont care a bit for her. And you dont care a bit for me.

Higgins. I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house. What more can you or anyone ask?

Liza. I wont care for anybody that doesnt care for me.

Higgins. Commercial principles, Eliza. Like (*reproducing her Covent Garden pronunciation with professional exactness*) s'yol-lin voylets (*selling violets*), isn't it?

Liza. Dont sneer at me. It's mean to sneer at me.

Higgins. I have never sneered in my life. Sneering doesnt become either the human face or the human soul. I am expressing my righteous contempt for Commercialism. I dont and wont trade in affection. You call me a brute because you couldnt buy a claim on me by fetching my slippers and finding my spectacles. You were a fool: I think a woman fetching a man's slippers is a disgusting sight: did I ever fetch your slippers?

I think a good deal more of you for throwing them in my face. No use slaving for me and then saying you want to be cared for: who cares for a slave? If you come back, come back for the sake of good fellowship; for you'll get nothing else. You've had a thousand times as much out of me as I have out of you; and if you dare to set up your little dog's tricks of fetching and carrying slippers against my creation of a Duchess Eliza, I'll slam the door in your silly face.

Liza. What did you do it for if you didn't care for me?

Higgins (heartily) Why, because it was my job.

Liza. You never thought of the trouble it would make for me.

Higgins. Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? Making life means making trouble. There's only one way of escaping trouble; and that's killing things. Cowards, you notice, are always shrieking to have troublesome people killed.

Liza. I'm no preacher: I don't notice things like that. I notice that you don't notice me.

Higgins (jumping up and walking about intolerantly) Eliza: you're an idiot. I waste the treasures of my Miltonic mind by spreading them before you. Once for all, understand that I go my way and do my work without caring twopence what happens to either of us. I am not intimidated, like your father and your stepmother. So you can come back or go to the devil: which you please.

Liza. What am I to come back for?

Higgins (bouncing up on his knees on the ottoman and leaning over it to her) For the fun of it. That's why I took you on.

Liza (with averted face) And you may throw me out to-morrow if I don't do everything you want me to?

Higgins. Yes; and you may walk out to-morrow if I don't do everything you want me to.

Liza. And live with my stepmother?

Higgins. Yes, or sell flowers.

Liza. Oh! if I only could go back to my flower basket! I should be independent of both you and father and all the world!

Why did you take my independence from me? Why did I give it up? I'm a slave now, for all my fine clothes.

Higgins. Not a bit. I'll adopt you as my daughter and settle money on you if you like. Or would you rather marry Pickering?

Liza (looking fiercely round at him) I wouldn't marry you if you asked me; and you're nearer my age than what he is.

Higgins (gently) Than he is: not "than what he is."

Liza (losing her temper and rising) I'll talk as I like. You're not my teacher now.

Higgins (reflectively) I don't suppose Pickering would, though. He's as confirmed an old bachelor as I am.

Liza. That's not what I want; and don't you think it. I've always had chaps enough wanting me that way. Freddy Hill writes to me twice and three times a day, sheets and sheets.

Higgins (disagreeably surprised) Damn his impudence! (*He recoils and finds himself sitting on his heels*).

Liza. He has a right to if he likes, poor lad. And he does love me.

Higgins (getting off the ottoman) You have no right to encourage him.

Liza. Every girl has a right to be loved.

Higgins. What! By fools like that?

Liza. Freddy's not a fool. And if he's weak and poor and wants me, may be he'd make me happier than my betters that bully me and don't want me.

Higgins. Can he make anything of you? That's the point.

Liza. Perhaps I could make something of him. But I never thought of us making anything of one another; and you never think of anything else. I only want to be natural.

Higgins. In short, you want me to be as infatuated about you as Freddy? Is that it?

Liza. No I don't. That's not the sort of feeling I want from you. And don't you be too sure of yourself or of me. I could have been a bad girl if I'd liked. I've seen more of some things than you, for all your learning. Girls like me can drag gentlemen down to make love to them easy enough. And they wish each other dead the next minute.

Higgins. Of course they do. Then what in thunder are we quarrelling about?

Liza (much troubled) I want a little kindness. I know I'm a common ignorant girl, and you a book-learned gentleman; but I'm not dirt under your feet. What I done (*correcting herself*) what I did was not for the dresses and the taxis: I did it because we were pleasant together and I come—came—to care for you; not to want you to make love to me, and not forgetting the difference between us, but more friendly like.

Higgins. Well, of course. Thats just how I feel. And how Pickering feels. Eliza: youre a fool.

Liza. Thats not a proper answer to give me (*she sinks on the chair at the writing-table in tears*).

Higgins. It's all youll get until you stop being a common idiot. If youre going to be a lady, youll have to give up feeling neglected if the men you know dont spend half their time snivelling over you and the other half giving you black eyes. If you cant stand the coldness of my sort of life, and the strain of it, go back to the gutter. Work til you are more a brute than a human being; and then cuddle and squabble and drink til you fall asleep. Oh, it's a fine life, the life of the gutter. It's real: it's warm: it's violent: you can feel it through the thickest skin: you can taste it and smell it without any training or any work. Not like Science and Literature and Classical Music and Philosophy and Art. You find me cold, unfeeling, selfish, dont you? Very well: be off with you to the sort of people you like. Marry some sentimental hog or other with lots of money, and a thick pair of lips to kiss you with and a thick pair of boots to kick you with. If you cant appreciate what youve got, youd better get what you can appreciate.

Liza (desperate) Oh, you are a cruel tyrant. I cant talk to you: you turn everything against me: I'm always in the wrong. But you know very well all the time that youre nothing but a bully. You know I cant go back to the gutter, as you call it, and that I have no real friends in the world but you and the Colonel. You know well I couldnt

bear to live with a low common man after you two; and it's wicked and cruel of you to insult me by pretending I could. You think I must go back to Wimpole Street because I have nowhere else to go but father's. But dont you be too sure that you have me under your feet to be trampled on and talked down. I'll marry Freddy, I will, as soon as he's able to support me.

Higgins (sitting down beside her) Rubbish! you shall marry an ambassador. You shall marry the Governor-General of India or the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, or somebody who wants a deputy-queen. I'm not going to have my masterpiece thrown away on Freddy.

Liza. You think I like you to say that. But I havnt forgot what you said a minute ago; and I wont be coaxed round as if I was a baby or a puppy. If I cant have kindness, I'll have independence.

Higgins. Independence? That's middle class blasphemy. We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth.

Liza (rising determinedly) I'll let you see whether I'm dependent on you. If you can preach, I can teach. I'll go and be a teacher.

Higgins. Whatll you teach, in heaven's name?

Liza. What you taught me. I'll teach phonetics.

Higgins. Ha! ha! ha!

Liza. I'll offer myself as an assistant to Professor Nepean.

Higgins (rising in a fury) What! That impostor! that humbug! that toadying ignoramus! Teach him my methods! my discoveries! You take one step in his direction and I'll wring your neck. (*He lays hands on her*). Do you hear?

Liza (defiantly non-resistant) Wring away. What do I care? I knew youd strike me some day. (*He lets her go, stamping with rage at having forgotten himself, and recoils so hastily that he stumbles back into his seat on the ottoman*). Aha! Now I know how to deal with you. What a fool I was not to think of it before! You cant take away the knowledge you gave me. You said I had a finer ear than you. And I can be civil and kind to people, which is more than you can. Aha!

That's done you, Henry Higgins, it has. Now I don't care that (*snapping her fingers*) for your bullying and your big talk. I'll advertise it in the papers that your duchess is only a flower girl that you taught, and that she'll teach anybody to be a duchess just the same in six months for a thousand guineas. Oh, when I think of myself crawling under your feet and being trampled on and called names, when all the time I had only to lift up my finger to be as good as you, I could just kick myself.

Higgins (wondering at her) You damned impudent slut, you! But it's better than snivelling; better than fetching slippers and finding spectacles, isn't it? (*Rising*) By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this.

Liza. Yes: you turn round and make up to me now that I'm not afraid of you, and can do without you.

Higgins. Of course I do, you little fool. Five minutes ago you were like a millstone round my neck. Now you're a tower of strength: a consort battleship. You and I and Pickering will be three old bachelors together instead of only two men and a silly girl.

Mrs Higgins returns, dressed for the wedding. Eliza instantly becomes cool and elegant.

Mrs Higgins. The carriage is waiting, Eliza. Are you ready?

Liza. Quite. Is the Professor coming?

Mrs Higgins. Certainly not. He can't behave himself in church. He makes remarks out loud all the time on the clergyman's pronouncement.

Liza. Then I shall not see you again, Professor. Goodbye. (*She goes to the door.*)

Mrs Higgins (coming to Higgins) Goodbye, dear.

Higgins. Goodbye, mother. (*He is about to kiss her, when he recollects something*). Oh, by the way, Eliza, order a ham and a Stilton cheese, will you? And buy me a pair of reindeer gloves, number eights, and a tie to match that new suit of mine, at Eale & Binman's. You can choose the color. (*His cheerful, careless, vigorous voice shows that he is incorrigible*).

Liza (disdainfully) Buy them yourself. (*She sweeps out*).

Mrs Higgins. I'm afraid you've spoiled that girl, Henry. But never mind, dear: I'll buy you the tie and gloves.

Higgins (sunnily) Oh, don't bother. She'll buy 'em all right enough. Goodbye.

They kiss. Mrs Higgins runs out. Higgins, left alone, rattles his cash in his pocket; chuckles; and disports himself in a highly self-satisfied manner.



To increase understanding

1. (a) What circumstances have brought about Doolittle's change of fortune? (b) Cite some of the lines in which Doolittle explains why he doesn't want to become a gentleman. (c) Cite lines in which Doolittle explains why he can't refuse the money. (d) According to Doolittle, what is the difference between the middle class and the undeserving poor?

2. (a) Eliza says that it is manners that make one a lady; but what does she think is the biggest difference between a flower girl and a lady? (b) Cite the lines in which Higgins explains manners.

3. In Acts IV and V Eliza becomes more of a person than a character. Cite speeches or actions in which we can see the human qualities she possesses.

4. (a) Have all the problems presented in the play been resolved? Explain. (b) How do you think the story ends?

5. Shaw called his play a "Romance in Five Acts." Do you consider it a romance? Explain.

6. (a) Explain why Shaw called this play *Pygmalion*. (b) In what way is the title related to the theme?



Better reading Aphorisms

The *aphorism* is a bit of shrewd insight into an important truth expressed in a concise statement; it is a wry observation about life. It is similar to the proverb, maxim, or adage, but differs in its higher degree of intellectual ingenuity and sophistication. The author of an aphorism is generally known, whereas a proverb is usually an anonymous product of folklore. The purpose of a maxim is to teach a moral, but this is not necessarily the purpose of an aphorism. The expression, "Take care of the

pence and the pounds will take care of themselves," for example, is so deliberately instructive that it is classified as a maxim. If an aphorism is instructive at all, it is likely to be in a negative or ironic sense, as is Ambrose Bierce's famous saying, "*Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.*" Another example of aphoristic needling is the following quotation from the educator, R. M. Hutchins: "*We do not know what education could do for us, because we have never tried it.*"

It is paradoxical that we like aphorisms for the same reasons that we distrust them. We enjoy the quick flash of insight that seemingly gives us a complete answer about something. At the same time, we suspect that a complex idea cannot be stated so simply, and that closer scrutiny will undoubtedly show up the aphorism's weak points.

Much of Bernard Shaw's writing, like Francis Bacon's (see page 186), is aphoristic in style. Study

the following passages from *Pygmalion* and answer the following questions about each: What idea does the aphorism express? Will the idea stand up under close scrutiny? Can you present valid arguments to show its weak points?

What is middle class morality? Just an excuse for never giving me anything.

(Alfred Doolittle, Act II)

There's only one way of escaping trouble; and that's killing things. Cowards, you notice, are always shrieking to have troublesome people killed.

(Higgins, Act V)

The poor can't afford to have morals.

(Doolittle, Act II)

. . . the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated.

(Eliza, Act V)