

Pygmalion

Act II Scene 1



Higgins Well, I think that's the whole show.

Pickering It's really amazing. I haven't taken half of it in, you know.

Higgins Would you like to go over any of it again?

Pickering No, thank you; not now.

Higgins Tired of listening to sounds?

Pickering Yes, it's a fearful strain. I rather fancied myself because I can pronounce 24 distinct vowel sounds; but your 130 beat me. I can't hear a bit of difference between most of them.

Higgins Oh that comes with practice.

[Mrs Pearce enters.]

What's the matter?

Mrs Pearce A young woman wants to see you, sir.

Higgins A young woman! What does she want?



Mrs Pearce Well, sir, she says you'll be glad to see her when you know what she's come about. She's quite a common girl, sir. Very common indeed. I should have sent her away, only I thought perhaps you wanted her to talk into your machines.

Higgins Oh, that's all right, Mrs Pearce. Has she an interesting accent?

Mrs Pearce Oh, something dreadful, sir, really, I don't know how you can take an interest in it.

Higgins Let's have her up. Show her up, Mrs Pearce.

Mrs Pearce Very well, sir. It's not for me to say.

Higgins This is rather a bit of luck. [to Pickering] I'll show you how I make records. We'll set her talking and then we'll get her onto the phonograph so that you can turn her on as often as you like with the written transcript before you.

Mrs Pearce This is the young woman, sir.

Higgins Why, this is the girl I jotted down last night. She's no use. Be off with you. I don't want you.

Eliza Don't you be so saucy! You ain't heard what I come for yet. Oh, we are proud! He ain't above giving lessons, not him: I heard him say so. Well, I ain't come here to ask for any compliment; and if my money's not good enough, I can go elsewhere. I'm come to have lessons, I am. And to pay for 'em, too: make no mistake.

Higgins WELL!

Pickering What is it you want, my girl?

Eliza I want to be a lady in a flower shop, but they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him – not asking any favour – and he treats me as if I was dirt.

Higgins What's your name?



Eliza Eliza Doolittle.

Higgins How much do you propose to pay me for the lessons?

Eliza Oh, I know what's right. A lady friend of mine gets French lessons for 18 pence an hour from a real French gentleman. Well, you wouldn't have the face to ask me the same for teaching me my own language as you would for French; so I won't give more than a shilling. Take it or leave it.

Higgins It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low – so horribly dirty.

Eliza Ah-ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-ooo! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.

Pickering You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.

Higgins I shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe.

Eliza Ah-ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-ooo!

Higgins Yes, in six months – in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue – I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today: now! This moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs Pearce.