

# 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.