



CHAPTER 1

*George Bernard Shaw:
Pygmalion*



Introduction

i The Author: George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950)

George Bernard Shaw was a renowned Irish playwright, essayist, and novelist. He was also an inspired theatre director of his own works. He was regarded as the second greatest English playwright only after Shakespeare. In 1925, he became the Nobel Laureate “for his work which is marked by both idealism and humanity, its stimulating satire often being infused with a singular poetic beauty.” Shaw was a prolific writer and his oeuvre includes 60 plays, 5 novels, 3 volumes of music criticism, 4 volumes of dance and theatrical criticism, and heaps of social commentary, political theory, and correspondence.

Shaw was born into a poor Protestant family in Dublin, Ireland, on 26 July 1856. He never felt himself to be in a complete sense either an Englishman or an Irishman. Shaw’s childhood was characterized by extreme coldness and inhuman isolation. His father was a drunkard and the wife and children were estranged from him. At 15, Shaw’s mother and sisters left for London and Shaw remained in Dublin with his father for another five years. He entered upon the dignities of junior clerkship in a land agent’s office. Unsatisfied with being a cashier at home, he moved to London in 1876.

His mother, a talented musician, who later became an independent musician in London, first introduced him to music and art and gave him some ideas about feminism. Shaw educated himself by frequenting libraries, galleries, and free concerts and worked doggedly to become a writer.

His apprentice works were five unsuccessful novels, the last of which, *An Unsocial Socialist* (1887), was the first to be printed. Later, with the encouragement from William Archer, the prominent journalist and drama critic, Shaw turned to playwriting. Through Archer, he became a music critic for a London newspaper. In 1895 he became the drama critic for *Saturday Review*. Shaw believed in the didacticism of art which can reflect human life, reveal social problems, and educate the common people. He launched scathing criticism against the Neo-Romantic tradition, the fashionable drawing-room drama, and the well-made play. He was noted for wit, bitterness, and brilliance in his commentaries on drama. His drama criticism is entitled *Our Theaters in the Nineties* (1931).

Shaw came under the influence of Henry George and William Morris and took an interest in socialist theories. He believed in gradual social reform. In 1884 he joined the Fabian Society and became one of its most influential members.

Shaw’s long years of practice in theatre criticism and playwriting stressed the importance of theatre, which he believed was “as important as the Church was in the Middle Ages.” He

had a strong faith in art, which, in his view should serve social purposes by reflecting human life, revealing social contradictions, and educating the common people. Being a serious critic of drawing-room drama and well-made plays, Shaw was a disciple and champion of Henrik Ibsen. He published *Quintessence of Ibsenism* in 1891 to introduce the Norwegian socialist dramatist Ibsen to the English audience. In the book's 1913 edition, he added new chapters on Ibsen's dramatic innovations in his later symbolic and psychological plays. These innovations include the discussion element in his plays, his disuse of old stage tricks in favor of ambiguous characters and circumstances, and the combination of art and spiritual revelation.

Shaw's plays aim to expose social problems and disseminate his ideas. His early plays were termed as Unpleasant Plays, which were severe criticisms of the contemporary social, economic, moral, and religious evils. He published his first collection *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* in 1898, which included the combative, "unpleasant" works *Widowers' Houses* (1892), *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1894), and *The Philanderer* (1907); and the milder, more tongue-in-cheek plays *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1894), *The Man of Destiny* (1895), and *You Never Can Tell* (1896). 1898 was a turning point in Shaw's literary life; since then he has been centrally associated with the intellectual revival of the English theatre.

Widowers' Houses, first presented on 9 Dec. 1892 at the Royal Theatre, is a grotesquely realistic exposure of slum landlordism. Its dialog already shows considerable use of the special and inimitable Shavian style he was rapidly perfecting. In the preface to the play, Shaw describes the people in the play as "abnormally vicious or odious," and "the didactic object of my play is to bring conviction of sin." *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, a four-act play premiered on 5 Jan. 1902 by the Stage Society of New Lyric Club in London, is a comic satire about the economic oppression of women, exposing the economic incentives to prostitution in a capitalist society. It broke the tacit conspiracy of silence about the world outside the middle class.

Shaw was a follower of Thomas Carlyle and the mystic Life Force. He was keenly interested in the science of eugenics and believed in the human need to evolve. Life Force was the force of cosmic vitality, which Shaw believed existed in all living things. It was always striving to evolve into something greater, to become divine. It was embodied in the figure of superman. His milder play, *Man and Superman: A Comedy and a Philosophy* (1903), which was his first box-office success, is his dramatic expression of Life Force. The play is Shaw's audacious conjunction of the 19th-century parlor comedy and a challenging drama of ideas. Shaw held that eugenics offered an effective remedy to social problems. He remarks in the hero's "Revolutionist's Handbook" included as an appendix to the published play, "The only fundamental and possible Socialism is the socialization of the selective breeding of Man: in other terms of human evolution."

Shaw also believed in the emancipation of women. He was in full support of woman suffrage, saying "Woman's mind is exactly like man's mind." He wrote *The Intelligent Women's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1927) as a political primer for women, who had just gained suffrage in Britain. *Candida* (1895) deals with female equality. Shaw has created some unconventional female figures on the stage, known as New Women. Shaw's super women are independent, intelligent, strong-minded and have the initiative to act. Shaw's ideas in politics, economics, and sociology

were also effectively expressed through his numerous pamphlets, speeches, and lectures.

Shaw's important works also include *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), *Major Barbara* (1905), *Heartbreak House* (1920), and history play *Saint Joan* (1923). *John Bull's Other Island* is his only play with Irish themes, a satire of British opinions concerning his native Island. *Major Barbara*, a three-act play, centres on the argument between Major Barbara, an officer of Salvation Army, and her father Andrew Undershaft, a successful munitions maker, which ends with Barbara's devastating disillusionment and conversion to her father's doctrine. It is a dazzling investigation of social conscience and reform. *Heartbreak House* is an anguished allegory of Europe before the First World War. It records the decline of Britain as a world power. While writing the play, Shaw saw Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) and was immensely influenced by the playwright. The despair that the cultured, witty, charming group of people show in Shaw's play echoes the despair and inaction of Chekhovian characters. *Saint Joan*, "A Chronicle Play in 6 Scenes and an Prologue or Preface," is about a 15th-century peasant girl who claimed to have experienced visions of the saints and led French army to victory against the English, and who then was put to death but was cleared of her heresy 25 years after her execution and canonized by the Roman Catholic Church at the present.

Shaw was also interested in adapting Shakespeare's plays. He wrote *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898), a history play with a lot of contemporary resonance, and a puppet play *Shakes versus Shaw* (1949) centering on the bickering between the two playwrights, Shakespeare and Shaw, about who is the better writer, showing the anxiety of influence.

Shaw's drama ushered in a new era into English stage. His plays were labelled as Shavian Drama of Ideas or New Drama. They were featured by lengthy argumentative prefaces and stage directions, discussing the themes and interpretations of his works; argument on stage; and mouthpiece characters, who are the representatives of ideas, the points of view that shift and alter during the play. Action is reduced to a minimum, while the dialog and the interplay of the minds of the characters maintain the interest of the audience. Arnold Silver has a different view of Shaw's characters. He observes:

The characters, rather than serving merely as mouthpieces through which he expounded his philosophy, were the means by which he released the pressure of his own inner conflicts and explored them. His humor was the means by which he sought to make those conflicts tolerable. (9)

Shaw's plays deal with a wide range of themes. They express the playwright's indignation against oppression and exploitation, against hypocrisy and lying, against prostitution and slavery, against poverty, dirt, and disorder, against ponderous intellectual institutions, and demonstrate a hope for reforms and a better society.

Shaw was also active in theatre. He directed his own plays at the Royal Court theatre. From 1904 to 1907, 701 out of 988 productions were of Shaw's plays. This was known as "the Bernard Shaw Boom at the Court Theatre."

In 1938, Shaw was awarded an Oscar, for his contributions to literature and for his work on the film *Pygmalion*, based on his play of the same name.

Shaw married the wealthy Charlotte Payne-Townsend in 1898. In 1906 they bought the New Rectory, Ayot St. Lawrence, which was at first used only for long week-ends and holidays and then became their permanent home, where they enjoyed tranquility. They also travelled a lot as Shaw's wife loved travelling.

As early as 1925, Shaw expressed indignation against the imperialist atrocity in Shanghai and supported the Chinese people's anti-imperialism patriotic movement. Since then he had kept a close eye on China's national independent movement and anti-Japanese war. Shaw came to China in 1933, visiting Shanghai and Beijing. He met with Mei Lanfang, showing a great interest in the traditional art form in Peking Opera. The important founders of Chinese modern *Huaju* such as Hong Sheng and Huang Zuolin were influenced by Shaw. The introduction of Shaw to China started in the early 20th century. His plays were produced on the Chinese stage in 1921, 1949, and 1991. There was also a celebration to honor the 100th anniversary of Shaw's birth in China in 1956, with the publication of the collections of Shaw's plays, translated by Yang Xianyi and Lao She, etc.

On 2 Nov. 1950, Shaw died of complications stemming from the injury of falling from a tree at Ayot St. Lawrence. Contemporary stage has seen frequent reworking on Shaw's plays and he remains an influential figure in the world theatre.



Generic Context

Shavian Drama of Ideas or New Drama

One of George Bernard Shaw's greatest contributions to modern drama is establishing drama as serious literature, no less important than the novel. "Drama is no mere setting up of the camera to nature; it is the presentation in parable of conflict between man's nature and his environment; in a word, of problem." For Shaw, drama is an important medium to reveal and discuss social problems, aiming at social reforms. Shaw's dramatic practice and theory is termed Shavian Drama of Ideas or New Drama. This new form of drama stood against the melodrama in the Edwardian times.

The end of the 19th century witnessed a flourish of various ideas of reform, such as socialism and feminism. People began to be excited by ideas, analyze them, and use them as weapons against the established tradition. Out of this historical context emerged New Drama. Influenced by Henrik Ibsen, Shaw began to address prevailing social contradictions in his dramatic work, promoting the development of New Drama. Eric Bentley remarks that "In a drama of ideas, the ideas are questioned, and it is by the questioning, and could only be by the questioning, that the idea becomes dramatic, for seldom or never is there drama without conflict" (qtd. in Puchner 93).

The Shavian Drama of Ideas subverts the worn-out drama convention of the Victorian Age and sets up new conventions. Plot and character are less important than the idea of the play. The dramatic conflict in his play is one of thought and moral belief rather than one of physical passion.

Political, economic, moral, or religious problems are the major concerns of his plays, through which Shaw expresses his indignation against all kinds of inequality, injustice, and exploitation. Thus, Shaw's plays are known as problem plays.

As Shaw is primarily interested in doctrines, his characters are the embodiment of ideas and points of view, which are under heated discussion in the play. The exchange of conflicting views takes primacy over mere stories. Action, which is emphasized by Aristotle in *The Poetics*, is reduced to a minimum, while conversation and the interplay of the minds of the characters draw the attention of the audience. His plays are full of repartees and concise aphorisms.

Shaw's published plays are featured with long argumentative prefaces and lengthy stage directions, illustrating the purpose of his dramatic writing and helping direct the provoking ideas at the audience.

Shaw calls his plays the comedy of ideas because his plays have a comic vein. With his extroverted flair and comedic talents, Shaw usually resorts to the comic devices for a better theatrical effect, in order to make the stark themes more palatable. Thus, his plays have the hallmark of being both provoking and entertaining. In France he has been called the Molière of the 20th century.

Today, critics acknowledge that Shaw's use of the play form as a means of debate, pure and simple, is one of his great strengths.



Appreciation of the Play

i Guided Reading of *Pygmalion* (1912)

George Bernard Shaw first conceived of the plot and the cast of *Pygmalion* in 1897 when he told Ellen Terry that he wanted to write a play for Mrs. Patrick Campbell. The play was written in 1912 and its German translation was produced in Vienna and Berlin and received critical acclaim. On 11 April 1914, it opened at His Majesty's Theatre and enjoyed success, which firmly established Shaw's reputation as a popular playwright. In critics' view, the success of *Pygmalion* marked the "climax of his career as a writer of comedies." The original English production provoked controversy over Liza's use of mild profanity "bloody," the first time on the stage at His Majesty's Theatre. The audience and critics as well as the characters in the play were shockingly surprised by that utterance.

The title of the comedy suggests a classical play, a very famous tale from Roman poet Ovid's epic *Metamorphoses* (c. 7 A.D.). This myth concerns Pygmalion who, disgusted with real-life

women, falls in love with one of his sculptures, Galatea. Pygmalion makes a sacrifice to Venus, the goddess of love, wishing to bring life to the statue. And his wish is granted by Venus. This fascinating story has been a constant inspiration for writers. Shaw converted the myth into a modern Cinderella story and probed into the fate of the heroine after her transformation. Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879) possibly influenced Shaw's play.

The central character, Liza Doolittle, a flower girl, has an accidental encounter with Henry Higgins in Covent Garden in the evening, who turns out to be an expert in Phonetics. The next morning Liza comes to see Mr. Higgins and asks him to help her speak gently so that she can work in a flower shop. Mr. Higgins and his friend Colonel Pickering make a bet that Mr. Higgins can pass Liza off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party in three months. Mr. Higgins allows Liza to move in and take lessons. Mrs. Pearce, Mr. Higgins's housekeeper, is not happy with the arrangement and pleads him to consider what will become of Liza after the experiment.

After some time, Mr. Higgins takes Liza to his mother's at home reception and Liza proves to be quite a lady with her perfect pronunciation and manners. Mrs. Higgins is exasperated at her son for his inconsideration for Liza's well-being. Later, at an Embassy party in London, Liza succeeds in passing off as a Hungarian aristocrat. Mr. Higgins is victorious, but finds little pleasure in outwitting the foolish guests. When they are back from the party, Liza is angry with Mr. Higgins's inconsideration of her future. She derides him for his selfishness and demands of him, "What's to become of me?"

Liza leaves Mr. Higgins and takes shelter in Mrs. Higgins's house, while Mrs. Higgins scolds Mr. Higgins and Colonel Pickering for their childishness and the careless manner in which they treat another human. To the disappointment of the audience, Shaw ends the play with no possibility of romantic relationship between Mr. Higgins and Liza. And in the published version of the play in 1916, Shaw added an afterword giving an account of what Liza does after leaving Higgins and her plan to marry Freddy, a gentleman who she has met several times and who has courted her, and support herself by teaching phonetics.

The play is interwoven with the comic story of Liza's father, a dustman who comes into money and is miserable about that because people come to him with the hopes of borrowing money.

This new version of Cinderella story does not end with a happy marriage between the hero and the heroine; instead the heroine leaves the hero and determines to seek an independent life. The indeterminate ending of the play sets the audience to think what will become of Liza. Liza is a very impressive girl, who corresponds to Shaw's new women image. Energetic and intelligent, Liza demands respect from people around her. She wants herself to be treated as a human being, not as an experiment subject. Her transformation involves her new power of speech and newly gained independence. Liza's transformation confirms Shaw's belief in the power of "nurture" over "nature," the conditioning effects of social circumstances.

The play demonstrates Shaw's interest in the role of language in the English class system. England is a class-rigid country and obsessed with accent. People are usually judged by their appearances and their accents. The linguistic signals become a social identity. Higgins's successful transformation of Liza, which contradicts the class rigidity of the Victorian and Edwardian society,

shows Shaw's belief in the highly subjective construction of social identities. What essentially determines a person's values and identity? Class, ethnicity, race, religion, education, gender, language... The play provokes the audiences to think about the benchmarks that are used to divide and exclude people and encourages them to break down the barriers.

Act 5 is selected for close reading.

ii Excerpt from *Pygmalion* with Notes

Pygmalion

ACT V

Mrs. Higgins's drawing-room. She is at her writing-table as before. The parlor-maid¹ comes in.

THE PARLOR-MAID [*at the door*] Mr. Henry, mam, is downstairs with Colonel Pickering.

MRS. HIGGINS. Well, show them up.

THE PARLOR-MAID. They're using the telephone, mam. Telephoning to the police, I think.

MRS. HIGGINS. What!

THE PARLOR-MAID [*coming further in and lowering her voice*] Mr. Henry's in a state², mam. 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 they've finished with the police. I suppose he's lost something.

THE PARLOR-MAID. Yes, mam [*going*].

MRS. HIGGINS. Go upstairs and tell Miss Doolittle that Mr. Henry and the Colonel are here. Ask her not to come down till I send for her.

THE PARLOR-MAID. Yes, mam.

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

HIGGINS. Look here, mother: here's a confounded thing³!

MRS. HIGGINS. Yes, dear. Good-morning. [He checks his impatience⁴ and kisses her, whilst the parlor-maid goes out]. What is it?

HIGGINS. Eliza's bolted⁵.

MRS. HIGGINS [*calmly continuing her writing*] You must have frightened her.

1 parlor-maid: 客厅女仆

2 in a state: 处于激动 [焦躁] 的情绪中, 着急的, 焦急不安的; 肮脏的, 凌乱的

3 Here's a confounded thing! 遇到麻烦了!

4 check his impatience: 抑制住烦恼的心绪

5 bolt: 冲出去, 逃跑

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 wasn't 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 distractedly⁶ across the room*] But I can't find anything. I don't know what appointments I've 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 ottoman⁷*].

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

MRS. HIGGINS [*rising in indignant amazement*] You don't 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 difficulties⁸. 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 vexed⁹*].

HIGGINS. But we want to find her.

PICKERING. We can't 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 conversation¹⁰.

THE PARLOR-MAID. Mr. Henry: a gentleman wants to see you very particular¹¹. He's been sent on from Wimpole Street.

HIGGINS. Oh, bother! I can't 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 up¹² 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*].

6 distractedly: 心烦意乱地

7 ottoman: (无靠背、无扶手的)长软椅,卧榻

8 make a lot of difficulties: 造成了很多麻烦

9 vexed: 烦恼的,生气

10 break off the conversation: 打断谈话

11 A gentleman wants to see you very particular. 一位先生有要紧的事要见你。

12 spring up: 跳起来

HIGGINS [*eagerly, going to his mother*] Genteel¹³ relatives! Now we shall hear something. [*He sits down in the Chippendale chair*¹⁴].

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-coat¹⁵, with white waistcoat and grey trousers. A flower in his buttonhole, a dazzling silk hat, and patent leather shoes¹⁶ 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 reproach¹⁷.

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 half¹⁸. Why would she buy me clothes?

MRS. HIGGINS. Good-morning, Mr. Doolittle. Won't you sit down?

DOOLITTLE [*taken aback¹⁹ as he becomes conscious that he has forgotten his hostess*] Asking your pardon, ma'am. [*He approaches her and shakes her proffered hand²⁰*]. Thank you. [*He sits down on the ottoman, on Pickering's right*]. I am that full of what has happened to me that I can't think of anything else²¹.

HIGGINS. What the dickens²² has happened to you?

DOOLITTLE. I shouldn't mind if it had only happened to me: anything might happen to anybody and nobody to blame but Providence²³, as you might say. But this is something that you done to me²⁴: yes, you, Henry Higgins.

13 genteel: 文雅的, 有礼貌的, 有教养的; 上流社会的, 有派头的

14 Chippendale chair: 奇彭代尔式椅子

15 frock-coat: 男大衣, 礼服大衣

16 patent leather shoes: 漆皮鞋

17 accost him with vehement reproach: 以严厉责备的口吻向他打招呼 accost: 走过去跟……讲话, 跟……搭讪 vehement: 热烈的; 激越; 慷慨

18 not half: 根本不是

19 be taken back: 大吃一惊

20 proffered hand: 伸出的手 proffer: 提供, 贡献, 提出

21 I'm that full of what has happened to me that I can't think of anything else. 我满脑子全是我出的事, 顾不上想别的了。

22 the dickens: <口> [用于加强疑问语气] 究竟

23 Providence: 天道, 天意; 上帝, 神

24 读者会发现剧中 Doolittle 和 Eliza 的对白中有很多不合语法规则的句子。这是因为两人出身卑微, 没有受过什么教育。萧伯纳在剧中再现了人物鲜活的语言, 也凸显了他所要探讨的关于语言与阶级的关系的主题。

HIGGINS. Have you found Eliza? That's the point.

DOOLITTLE. Have you lost her?

HIGGINS. Yes.

DOOLITTLE. You have all the luck, you have. I ain't 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 morality²⁵.

HIGGINS [*rising intolerantly*²⁶ and *standing over Doolittle*] You're raving²⁷. You're drunk. You're mad. I gave you five pounds. After that I had two conversations with you, at half-a-crown²⁸ an hour. I've 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 blighter²⁹ 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 for³⁰. 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 knowledge³¹, 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.³² Just give him the chance he wanted to show that Americans is not like us: that they recognize and respect merit in every class of life, however humble. Them words is in his blooming³³ 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*³⁴ *suddenly*] What a lark³⁵!

PICKERING. A safe thing for you³⁶, Doolittle. They won't ask you twice.

25 deliver me into the hands of middle class morality: 把我交到满嘴仁义道德的中产阶级手中

26 intolerantly: 无法容忍

27 rave: 胡言乱语; 愤怒地说

28 crown: 克朗(英国 25 便士的硬币, 英国旧币制的 5 先令硬币)

29 blighter: 可耻[讨厌]的人(尤作为轻蔑、诋毁词语); 老家伙

30 done for: 不中用的; 完蛋

31 to the best of your knowledge: 据你所知

32 It put the lid on me right enough. 可把我整苦了。put the lid on: <口>是对……的决定性打击, 使(希望等)完蛋

33 blooming: <俚>十足的, 讨厌的, 该死的

34 brightening: 高兴的, 快活的

35 What a lark! 真有趣!

36 a safe thing for you: 你放心好了

DOOLITTLE. It ain't the lecturing I mind. I'll lecture them blue in the face³⁷, I will, and not turn a hair³⁸. 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 nigh³⁹ everybody for money⁴⁰ when I wanted it, same as I touched you, Henry Higgins. Now I am worried; tied neck and heels⁴¹; and everybody touches me for money. It's a fine thing for you, says my solicitor⁴². 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 pram⁴³ in the dust cart⁴⁴, he got me off⁴⁵, and got shut of me⁴⁶ and got me shut of him as quick as he could. Same with the doctors: used to shove⁴⁷ 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 can't live unless they looks after me twice a day. In the house I'm not let do a hand's turn for myself⁴⁸: somebody else must do it and touch me for it. A year ago I hadn't a relative in the world except two or three that wouldn't speak to me. Now I've fifty, and not a decent week's wages among the lot of them. I have to live for others and not for myself: that's middle class morality. You talk of losing Eliza. Don't you be anxious: I bet she's on my doorstep by this: she that could support herself easy by selling flowers if I wasn't 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. That's where you'll come in; and I daresay that's what you done it for.

MRS. HIGGINS. But, my dear Mr. Doolittle, you need not suffer all this if you are really in earnest⁴⁹. Nobody can force you to accept this bequest⁵⁰. You can repudiate⁵¹ it. Isn't that so, Colonel Pickering?

PICKERING. I believe so.

DOOLITTLE [*softening his manner*⁵² *in deference to*⁵³ *her sex*] That's the tragedy of it, ma'am.

37 blue in the face: 脸色发青, (气得、累得)说不出话来,脸红脖子粗

38 not turn a hair: 面不改色,神色自若,不动声色

39 pretty nigh: 几乎

40 touch sb. for money: <口>用不正当的手段获得,借钱

41 tied neck and heels: 从头到脚捆绑起来

42 solicitor: 律师

43 pram: 童车

44 dust cart: 垃圾车

45 get sb. off: 使某人脱身

46 get shut of sb.: 摆脱掉某人

47 shove: 推,猛推;推开

48 do a hand's turn for myself: 自己动手做事

49 in earnest: 认真地,诚挚地;正正经经

50 bequest: 遗赠;遗产,遗赠物

51 repudiate: (正式地)否认;拒绝接受;拒不履行(法律义务)

52 soften his manner: 说话的口气和态度缓和下来

53 in deference to: 遵从;考虑到

It's easy to say chuck⁵⁴ it; but I haven't the nerve⁵⁵. Which one of us has? We're all intimidated⁵⁶. Intimidated, ma'am: that's 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, accuse the deserving poor might as well be millionaires for all the happiness they ever has. They don't know what happiness is. But I, as one of the undeserving poor, have nothing between me and the pauper⁵⁷'s uniform but this here blasted three thousand a year that shoves me into the middle class. (Excuse the expression, ma'am: you'd use it yourself if you had my provocation). They've got you every way you turn: it's a choice between the Skilly of the workhouse⁵⁸ and the Char Bydis of the middle class⁵⁹; and I haven't the nerve for the workhouse. Intimidated: that's what I am. Broke⁶⁰. Bought up⁶¹. 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 that's what your son has brought me to. [*He is overcome by emotion*⁶²].

MRS. HIGGINS. Well, I'm very glad you're 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*⁶³ *resignation*⁶⁴] Yes, ma'am; I'm expected to provide for⁶⁵ everyone now, out of three thousand a year.

HIGGINS [*jumping up*] Nonsense! he can't provide for her. He shan't provide for her. She doesn't belong to him. I paid him five pounds for her. Doolittle: either you're an honest man or a rogue⁶⁶.

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: don't be absurd. If you really want to know where Eliza is, she is upstairs.

HIGGINS [*amazed*] Upstairs!!! Then I shall jolly⁶⁷ soon fetch her downstairs. [*He makes*

54 chuck: 抛弃, 抛

55 nerve: 勇气, 气魄

56 intimidate: 恐吓, 威胁

57 pauper: 穷人, 贫民; 贫穷

58 workhouse: 济贫院, 贫民院

59 It's a choice between the Skilly of the workhouse and the Char Bydis of the middle class. 你就得在斯库拉和卡律布迪斯这两个杀人魔怪之间通过, 也就是说在贫民院和中产阶级之间找一条生路。(斯库拉和卡律布迪斯是希腊神话中的两个海上魔怪, 海船从他们之间通过是异常危险的。此处喻指左右为难。be caught in a dilemma)

60 broke: 破产的, 跨了; 缺乏资金的

61 buy up: 全部买下, 大量买进

62 He is overcome by emotion. 他情绪激动。

63 melancholy: 忧郁的, 悲伤的

64 resignation: 顺从, 听从; 无可奈何

65 provide for sb.: 供养

66 rogue: 流氓, 无赖

67 jolly: 很, 非常

resolutely for the door].

MRS. HIGGINS [*rising and following him*] Be quiet, Henry. Sit down.

HIGGINS. I—

MRS. HIGGINS. Sit down, dear; and listen to me.

HIGGINS. Oh very well, very well, very well. [*He throws himself ungraciously⁶⁸ on the ottoman, with his face towards the windows*]. But I think you might have told me this half an hour ago.

MRS. HIGGINS. Eliza came to me this morning. She passed the night partly walking about in a rage⁶⁹, 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 up⁷⁰ again*] What!

PICKERING [*rising also*] My dear Mrs. Higgins, she's been telling you stories. We didn't treat her brutally. We hardly said a word to her; and we parted on particularly good terms. [*Turning on Higgins*]. Higgins did you bully⁷¹ her after I went to bed?

HIGGINS. Just the other way about. She threw my slippers in my face. She behaved in the most outrageous⁷² way. I never gave her the slightest provocation⁷³. 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 affectionate⁷⁴, I think. Isn't she, Mr. Doolittle?

DOOLITTLE. Very tender-hearted⁷⁵, ma'am. Takes after me.

MRS. HIGGINS. Just so. She had become attached to you both. She worked very hard for you, Henry! I don't 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-irons⁷⁶ 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.

68 ungraciously: 不礼貌地, 没教养地, 粗暴地

69 in a rage: 一怒之下, 气冲冲, 怒冲冲

70 bound up: 跃上, 跳起来

71 bully: 恐吓, 威逼; 欺负

72 outrageous: 粗暴的; 无法容忍的; 反常的

73 provocation: 挑衅, 挑拨; 激怒, 招惹

74 affectionate: 深情的, 挚爱的; 重感情的, 有感情的

75 tender-hearted: 心肠软的, 慈善的

76 fire-iron: 拨火棍, 火钩

MRS. HIGGINS. You didn't 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 didn't make speeches to her, if that's what you mean.

PICKERING [*conscience stricken*⁷⁷] Perhaps we were a little inconsiderate⁷⁸. Is she very angry?

MRS. HIGGINS [*returning to her place at the writing-table*] Well, I'm afraid she won't go back to Wimpole Street, especially now that Mr. Doolittle is able to keep up the position you have thrust on⁷⁹ her; but she says she is quite willing to meet you on friendly terms⁸⁰ and to let bygones be bygones.

HIGGINS [*furious*⁸¹] 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 manners⁸² for this creature that we picked out of the mud. [*He flings*⁸³ *himself sulkily*⁸⁴ *into the Elizabethan chair*].

DOOLITTLE [*remonstrating*⁸⁵] 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 don't want Eliza to have the shock of your news until she has made it up with⁸⁶ these two gentlemen. Would you mind?

DOOLITTLE. As you wish, lady. Anything to help Henry to keep her off my hands⁸⁷. [*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, mam. [*She goes out*].

MRS. HIGGINS. Now, Henry: be good.

77 conscience-stricken: 内疚的, 受良心谴责的, 良心受到触动, 良心有愧

78 inconsiderate: 不替别人着想的, 不体谅别人的; 轻率的, 考虑不周的

79 thrust on: 强迫接受, 强加给

80 on friendly terms: 关系友好地, 融洽

81 furious: 狂怒的, 暴怒的, 愤怒的

82 put on our best Sunday manners: 拿出最隆重的礼节来

83 fling: (尤指生气地) 猛扔

84 sulkily: 不高兴地, 阴沉地

85 remonstrate: 规劝, 告诫; 抗议

86 make it up with: 和解

87 keep her off my hands: 不让她来纠缠我

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 don't look at all nice in that attitude.

HIGGINS [*pulling himself together*⁸⁸] I was not trying to look nice, mother.

MRS. HIGGINS. It doesn't matter, dear. I only wanted to make you speak.

HIGGINS. Why?

MRS. HIGGINS. Because you can't speak and whistle at the same time.

*Higgins groans*⁸⁹. *Another very trying pause*⁹⁰.

HIGGINS [*springing up, out of patience*] Where the devil is that girl? Are we to wait here all day?

*Eliza enters, sunny, self-possessed*⁹¹, *and giving a staggeringly*⁹² *convincing exhibition of ease of manner. She carries a little workbasket, and is very much at home*⁹³. *Pickering is too much taken aback to rise.*

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

HIGGINS [*choking*⁹⁴] 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, isn't it? [*She sits down on his left. He sits beside her*].

HIGGINS. Don't you dare try this game on me⁹⁵. I taught it to you; and it doesn't take me in⁹⁶. Get up and come home; and don't be a fool.

*Eliza takes a piece of needlework from her basket, and begins to stitch*⁹⁷ *it, without taking the least notice of this outburst*⁹⁸.

88 pull oneself together: 振作起来; 端正坐好

89 groan: 呻吟

90 trying pause: 一阵令人难堪的沉寂

91 self-possessed: 镇静的, 冷静的; 沉着的, 有自制力的

92 staggeringly: 难以置信地, 令人震惊地

93 very much at home: 毫不局促, 毫无拘束不安的感觉

94 choking: 憋闷的, 透不过气来的; 语塞

95 try this game on me: 在我身上玩这种把戏

96 take in sb.: 欺骗

97 stitch at: 缝纫

98 outburst: (蒸汽, 怒气等的) 爆发, 发作

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 haven't put into her head or a word that I haven't put into her mouth. I tell you I have created this thing out of the squashed⁹⁹ cabbage leaves of Covent Garden¹⁰⁰; and now she pretends to play the fine lady with me.

MRS. HIGGINS [*placidly*¹⁰¹] Yes, dear; but you'll sit down, won't you?

*Higgins sits down again, savagely*¹⁰².

LIZA [*to Pickering, taking no apparent notice of Higgins, and working away*¹⁰³ *deftly*¹⁰⁴] Will you drop me altogether now that the experiment is over, Colonel Pickering?

PICKERING. Oh don't. You mustn't think of it as an experiment. It shocks me, somehow.

LIZA. Oh, I'm only a squashed cabbage leaf.

PICKERING [*impulsively*¹⁰⁵] 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 didn't behave like that if you hadn't been there.

HIGGINS. Well!!

PICKERING. Oh, that's only his way, you know. He doesn't mean it.

LIZA. Oh, I didn't mean it either, when I was a flower girl. It was only my way. But you see I did it; and that's what makes the difference after all.

PICKERING. No doubt. Still, he taught you to speak; and I couldn't have done that, you know.

LIZA [*trivially*¹⁰⁶] 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?

99 squash: 挤入; 受挤压

100 Covent Garden: 考文特花园 (伦敦中部一个蔬菜花卉市场)

101 placidly: 温和地

102 savagely: 粗野地; 凶猛地

103 work away: 不停地连续工作

104 deftly: 灵巧地, 熟练地, 敏捷地

105 impulsively: 感情冲动地

106 trivially: 琐细地; 很一般的, 微不足道地

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*¹⁰⁷]. 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 showed you thought and felt about me as if I were something better than a scullery-maid¹⁰⁸; though of course I know you would have been just the same to a scullery-maid if she had been let in the drawing room. You never took off your boots in the dining room when I was there.

PICKERING. You mustn't mind that. Higgins takes off his boots all over the place.

LIZA. I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isn't it? But it made such a difference to me that you didn't 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 don't grind your teeth¹⁰⁹, 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 first¹¹⁰.

MRS. HIGGINS. Henry! Henry!

PICKERING [*laughing*] Why don't you slang back at¹¹¹ him? Don't stand it. It would do him a lot of good.

LIZA. I can't. I could have done it once; but now I can't go back to it¹¹². 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. That's the real break-off with¹¹³ the corner of Tottenham Court Road. Leaving Wimpole Street finishes it.

107 resume doing: 重新开始, 继续

108 scullery maid: 女帮厨, 厨房打杂的女工

109 grind one's teeth: 咬牙切齿

110 I'll see you damned first. 我先要看你下地狱。

111 slang back at sb.: 辱骂某人

112 I can't go back to it. 我不能走回头路了。

113 break-off with: 与……断绝关系

PICKERING [*much alarmed*¹¹⁴] Oh! but you're coming back to Wimpole Street, aren't you? You'll 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 into¹¹⁵ the gutter in three weeks without me at her elbow¹¹⁶.

*Doolittle appears at the centre window. With a look of dignified reproach*¹¹⁷ 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 won't relapse, will you?

LIZA. No: Not now. Never again. I have learnt my lesson. I don't 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*¹¹⁸ at the spectacle of¹¹⁹ her father's splendor¹²⁰] A—a—a—a—ah—ow—ooh!

HIGGINS [*with a crow of triumph*¹²¹] Aha! Just so. A—a—a—a—ahowoo! A—a—a—a—ahowoo! A—a—a—a—ahowoo! Victory! Victory! [*He throws himself on the divan*¹²², *folding his arms*¹²³, and *spraddling arrogantly*¹²⁴].

DOOLITTLE. Can you blame the girl? Don't look at me like that, Eliza. It ain't my fault. I've come into 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's¹²⁵, Hanover Square¹²⁶. Your stepmother is going to marry me.

LIZA [*angrily*] You're going to let yourself down to¹²⁷ 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 victim¹²⁸. Won't you put on your hat, Liza, and come and see me turned off?

114 alarmed: 慌张; 惊恐; 惶惶

115 relapse into: 复发; 陷入; 堕落为

116 at her elbow: 在她身边

117 dignified reproach: 严厉的责备

118 utterly: 全然, 完全地, 彻底地

119 at the spectacle of: 看到

120 splendor: 华丽; 光辉; 显赫

121 a crow of triumph: 胜利的欢呼 crow: 欢呼

122 He throws himself on the divan. 他往长沙发上一倒。divan: (可作床用的) 矮沙发

123 fold his arms: 抱起双臂

124 spraddle arrogantly: 傲慢地叉开双腿 spraddle: 叉开腿站立, 跨越

125 St. George's: 圣乔治教堂

126 Hanover Square: 汉诺威广场

127 let oneself down to do sth.: 让自己做某事

128 Middle class morality claims its victim. 成了中产阶级道德观念的牺牲品。

LIZA. If the Colonel says I must, I—I'll [almost sobbing] I'll demean¹²⁹ myself. And get insulted for my pains, like enough¹³⁰.

DOOLITTLE. Don't be afraid: she never comes to words with¹³¹ anyone now, poor woman! respectability has broke all the spirit out of her¹³².

PICKERING [*squeezing*¹³³ *Eliza's elbow gently*] Be kind to them, Eliza. Make the best of it.

LIZA [*forcing a little smile for him through her vexation*¹³⁴] Oh well, just to show there's no ill feeling¹³⁵. I'll be back in a moment. [*She goes out*].

DOOLITTLE [*sitting down beside Pickering*] I feel uncommon nervous about¹³⁶ the ceremony, Colonel. I wish you'd come and see me through it.

PICKERING. But you've 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 ain't the natural way, Colonel: it's only the middle class way. My way was always the undeserving¹³⁷ way. But don't say nothing to Eliza. She don't know: I always had a delicacy about telling her¹³⁸.

PICKERING. Quite right. We'll leave it so, if you don't mind.

DOOLITTLE. And you'll come to the church, Colonel, and put me through straight¹³⁹?

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 condescension¹⁴⁰, ma'am; and my poor old woman would take it as a tremendous compliment¹⁴¹. She's been very low¹⁴², 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 shan't 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 brougham¹⁴³ with me. Colonel Pickering can go on with the bridegroom.

129 demean: 使降低身份, 使卑下; 委屈

130 like enough: 很可能

131 come to words with sb.: 与某人吵架, 斗嘴 words: 争论, 口角

132 Respectability has broken all the spirit out of her. 为了得到别人的尊重, 她那种不饶人的神气没了。

133 squeeze: 挤, 捏

134 vexation: 烦恼

135 There is no ill feeling. 没有恶感。

136 feel uncommon nervous about: 感到特别紧张不安

137 undeserving: 不配得到的, 不该得到的

138 have a delicacy about telling her: 体谅她而说不出口 delicacy: 体贴, 体谅, 考虑周到

139 put me through straight: 渡过难关

140 condescension: <正>屈尊, 俯就

141 compliment: 恭维

142 low: 沮丧的, 发愁的

143 brougham: 布鲁厄姆马车