

ELIZA

ACT 1

SCENE 1

A ROOM IN 27A WIMPOLE STREET, THE HOME OF PROFESSOR HIGGINS. IT IS A COMBINED STUDY, LIBRARY AND BREAKFAST ROOM; THE MEAL BEING TAKEN IN A LARGE WINDOW BAY. ELIZA DOOLITTLE AND HIGGINS ARE PRESENT. THE LATTER IS WEARING A HAT AND OVERCOAT.

HIGGINS: Are you sure, Eliza, I have no appointments this afternoon?

ELIZA: Quite sure. The one made by the lady whose son, in spite of being educated at Uppingham, has developed a north country accent, was cancelled yesterday. Apparently he's run away to join the Army with the lads from whom he acquired it.

HIGGINS: Imbecile.

ELIZA: I suppose one should admire his patriotism.

HIGGINS: The majority of volunteers have no idea of what they are walking into. As for patriotism, did not Johnson say it is the last refuge of a scoundrel?

ELIZA: From what little I know of Johnson, I would say he was a – what is the word? – curmudgeon.

HIGGINS: Well done, Eliza. It is gratifying you now have the confidence to express such an opinion, and the vocabulary to do so – an opinion no doubt similar to the one you have of me.

ELIZA: If that were the case, I might credit you with compensatory qualities.

HIGGINS (DRILY) Very diplomatic. HE TAKES HIS WATCH FROM HIS WAISTCOAT. By George, I'm cutting it rather fine. I'm relying on you to hold the fort while I'm away. Should an emergency arise, you know where to find me.

ELIZA: You've not told me. All I know is that you are giving a lecture for the benefit of one of your mother's charities. I've no idea where.

HIGGINS: Damn it all. Neither have I. I'm to collect my mother and go with her to the venue – probably a church hall somewhere in Shoreditch or a district equally uninviting. HE STARTS TO EXIT. You really should prevent this sort of contretemps, Eliza. HE EXITS.

ELIZA MAKES A HELPLESS GESTURE, AND TAKING UP A BOOK SITS AND OPENS IT. HIGGINS RUSHES IN

HIGGINS: My notes. HE GRABS SOME PAPERS FROM THE TABLE AND PUTS THEM IN AN INSIDE POCKET. You should have warned me. HE EXITS HURRIEDLY

ELIZA STARTS READING. ALFRED DOOLITTLE ENTERS. HE IS WEARING A BLACK HOMBERG HAT AND A GREY OVERCOAT WITH AN ASTRAKHAN COLLAR.

ELIZA (NOT QUITE SERIOUSLY). Good afternoon, Father, are you quite well?

ALFRED Come off it, Eliza. Of course I'm well. The Guv'nor not in?

ELIZA: He's gone to give a lecture.

ALFRED: Pity. I was hopin' to tap him for a fiver.

ELIZA: For what purpose?

ALFRED: A couple of things actually. While I'm away your stepmother wants to go an' live with her sister in 'igh Wycombe so as to be clear of the raids.

ELIZA: While you're away?

ALFRED: s'iright. I've gone an' joined the blinkin' Army.

ELIZA (INCREDULOUSLY): You never volunteered?

ALFRED: Oh yes I did. Mind you, I'd had a few drinks to tell the truth. All the lads in the pub were on about goin' to give the bloomin' Kaiser what for.

ELIZA: Were you not too old?

ALFRED: Woulda been if I'd told 'em the truth. These days they're not too fussy, I can tell ya.

ELIZA: What will you do concerning your commitment to give six lectures a year?

ALFRED: Give 'em when I'm on leave, or at a pinch to the French.

ELIZA: Many of whom will not understand a word.

ALFRED: What matters as long as I give 'em?

ELIZA: And the second thing?

ALFRED: Eh?

ELIZA: For what purpose do you need money apart from paying the fare to High Wycombe?

ALFRED: A bit of a farewell party. What else.

ELIZA: Are you no longer getting the interest from the shares Ezra Wannafeller left you?

ALFRED: Well, the fact is me and the missus've bin livin' above our means recently and at present we're what you might call financially embarrassed.

ELIZA: How true is the old saying 'A fool and his money are soon parted'.

ALFRED: 'ere, you watch your tongue, my girl. Don't think that now you're livin' in the lap of luxury you can get uppity with me.

ELIZA: Professor Higgins says that one should seize every opportunity to enrich one's conversation with an apt quotation – preferably in Greek or Latin – two disciplines with which I am not acquainted.

ALFRED: Blimey, Eliza, you talk as if you'd swallowed a bleedin' dictionary.

ELIZA: Thanks to Professor Higgins.

ALFRED: Professor Higgins this: Professor Higgins that! That's all I hear from you. Anybody'd think he was Gawd Almighty.

ELIZA: I owe him so much, Father.

ALFRED: That's all very well, but ain't it time he popped the question?

ELIZA: I have no expectation of that.

ALFRED (WITH A LEER): p'raps in a way you two are already married - without the benefit of clergy, as the sayin' goes.

ELIZA (INDIGNANTLY): The Professor is a gentleman.

ALFRED: As far as I'm concerned that amounts to bugger all. Oh no doubt they lifts their top''ats when they meet a lady, an' takes their gloves off before givin' their wives a black eye. Bu what abaht when they puts a maid in the family way and turns her aht without a penny? I was talkin' to a bloke the other week. Retired now, but 'ad bin a valet (HE PRONOUNCES THE 'T') to some of the top aristocracy. Caw, what goes on in some of the best 'ahses ud make your hair curl. Talk abaht a game of General Post at night - the hostess connivin' at it by arrangin' the bedrooms nice an' 'andy. An eye opener for me, I can tell you. Take it from me, Eliza, a man is judged by the company he keeps, a gentleman by the number of fancy women. Add that quotation to your collection.

ELIZA: I dare say the valet (SHE OMITTS THE 'T') was only too willing to take money from the people he now betrays.

ALFRED: Be a damn' fool if he did'n. Lumme, if I had my time over again, I'd try for that sort of job.

ELIZA(WITH CUTTING SARCASM): With your qualifications I'm sure you would get one.

ALFRED: There's gratitude - after all I've done for you.

ELIZA: Such as offering to sell me to Professor Higgins for five pounds - fifty if he wanted me for an immoral purpose.

ALFRED: How the 'ell did you know that?

ELIZA: By eavesdropping at the door.

ALFRED: So there goes my chance of gettin' a loan from you. HE TURNS TO EXIT.

ELIZA: Wait. SHE EXITS.

ALFRED MOVES TO THE DICTAPHONE AND SWITCHES IT ON.

ELIZA'S VOICE ON THE DICTAPHONE: She walks in beauty like the night
of cloudless skies and starry skies
and all that's best of dark and bright
meet in her aspect and her eyes
thus mellowed to that tender light
which heaven to gaudy day denies.

And on that cheek, and on that brow
so soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
the smiles that win, the tints that glow
but tell of days in goodness spent,
a mind of peace with all below
a heart whose love is innocent.

HIGGINS'S VOICE ON DICTAPHONE: Thank you, Eliza. Byron, a romantic *malgre lui* incidentally, never heard a better rendering.

ALFRED: I agree, Guv'nor. I'll bet he didn't. HE SWITCHES OFF THE DICTAPHONE> ELIZA ENTERS AND GIVES HIM A FIVE POUND NOTE.

ELIZA: Take this as a gift. And it's not the wages of sin.

ALFRED: As if I'd ever think it was. A daughter in a million, you are - like I always said. Well, I'd better get back an' break the good news to the missus. HE STARTS TO EXIT.

ELIZA: Father. HE PAUSES AND TURNS. Good luck in France.

ALFRED: By the way things are goin' accordin' to the papers, I'm goin' to need it. HE EXITS

ELIZA IS ABOUT TO START READING WHEN SHE SEES A BATCH OF NOTES ON THE FLOOR OF THE WINDOW BAY. SHE PICKS THEM UP AND GASPS AS SHE REALISES HIGGINS HAS TAKEN THE WRONG NOTES. SHE PUTS THE NOTES IN AN ENVELOPE AND TUGS THE BELL-PULL. RUBY ENTERS,
RUBY: You rang, Miss Eliza.

ELIZA (HANDING HER THE ENVELOPE AND COINS FROM HER PURSE): The Professor has taken the wrong notes. Take a taxi and deliver these to his mother's house without a moment's delay. You do know where Mrs. Higgins lives?

RUBY: Yes, Miss Eliza. I've been there before. SHE EXITS,

ELIZA PICKS UP HER BOOK. AFTER A BRIEF INTERVAL, FREDDY ENTERS.

FREDDY: My lucky day, Eliza. I hoped you would be alone.

ELIZA: Hello, Freddy. What brings you here at this hour of the afternoon?

FREDDY: Well, actually, I have two tickets for a matinee at the Gaiety. I thought you might like to come with me.

ELIZA: I would like that very much, but unfortunately the Professor has asked me to remain on duty, as it were, during his absence.

FREDDY: I say, I do think that's a bit much. Surely Mrs Pearce would be able to deal with any chance visitors or enquiries? She did it quite capably before you came here.

ELIZA: I'm sorry, Freddy, but that is not the point. Having been requested to deputise for him, I simply can't do otherwise.

FREDDY: Well I think it was bally inconsiderate of Henry to expect you to be penned indoors on a day like this, I really do.

ELIZA: I really don't mind. It will give me an opportunity to do some reading.

FREDDY: That looks as if it might be jolly heavy going. What is it?

ELIZA: John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* - some of the most beautiful prose ever written.

FREDDY: Not my cup of tea, I'm afraid. Conan Doyle and Rider Haggard are more in my line - oh, and Kipling, of course.

ELIZA: You don't know what you are missing.

FREDDY: There's one thing I do know, Eliza - that you are the most lovely girl I've ever met.

ELIZA: Nonsense,

FREDDY: No it's not. Every day since the first time I saw you, I've thought about you and hoped we could be more than friends.

ELIZA: If it could be avoided, I'd not on any account hurt your feelings, but I have to be quite frank and tell you what you wish is not possible. Even if I were to feel that way about you, it still would be out of the question. For one thing your mother never would forget my background and the deplorable exhibition I made of myself during my first visit to Mrs. Higgins. To her I'd be always the girl who sold flowers from the gutter.

FREDDY: I know I'm not much of a catch - a bit of an ass actually, but no man will ever offer you more devotion.

ELIZA: Go and choose someone in your own class. There must be plenty of girls who would be quite eager to marry you - that admiral's daughter, for instance. Evelyn, is it, or Elaine. Both very beautiful, intelligent, and rich.

FREDDY: If I can't have you, Eliza, I'll have no other. I suppose I should've known I would stand no chance against Henry.

ELIZA: The Professor is a confirmed bachelor. To him I am simply a successful experiment.

FREDDY: Yet in spite of that you love him.

ELIZA: That, Freddy, is jumping to a conclusion. Love has not been mentioned..

FREDDY: Then what?

ELIZA: Gratitude. You who have never known poverty, been cold or hungry can have no conception of what I owe him for lifting me out of the gutter, teaching me the attributes of a lady, and introducing me to the things that make life worth while - music, art, the world's finest literature, and for giving me almost exclusively the benefit of the Socratic mind.

FREDDY: I say, Eliza, isn't that rather over the odds?

ELIZA: No eulogy could be.

HIGGINS DASHES IN AND BEGINS A FRANTIC SEARCH

HIGGINS: You let me take the wrong notes, Eliza.

ELIZA: The right one's should've reached your mother's home by this time. I found them on the floor and sent Ruby with them immediately.

HIGGINS: On the floor? Who put them there?

ELIZA: Not I.

HIGGINS: Which implies I did. An absurd suggestion. I'm positive I left them on the table.

ELIZA: Another mystery.

HIGGINS: Which I have no time to solve. Already I am half an hour late. My mother will accuse me of culpable negligence, and the natives of Shoreditch or wherever it is will be baying for my blood. HE BEGINS TO EXIT, PAUSES AND IF SEEING FREDDY FOR THE FIRST TIME. What the devil are you doing here, wasting Eliza's time when you should be doing something to help the war effort?

FREDDY: Such as.

HIGGINS: I've no idea. There must be something even a congenital incompetent of your calibre could do. HE EXITS HURRIEDLY.

FREDDY: That settles it. There are only two places for a congenital incompetent - the cemetery or the trenches.

ELIZA (ANXIOUSLY): You'll not do anything foolish?

MRS PEARCE ENTERS.

MRS PEARCE: There's a young woman asking to see you, Eliza. A very common person, and judging by her finery a disreputable one. She says she was told to come here. Her name is Lottie Colby.

ELIZA: In that case I'd better see her. She might be someone in whose voice the Professor is interested and about whom he forgot to tell me. I'll see her as soon as Mr Eynsford-Hill leaves.

MRS PEARCE (WITH A SNIFF): How the professor meets such low people is beyond me.

FREDDY (RISING): I'll not keep your gutter bred guinea pig waiting.

ELIZA: I was one myself not many years ago.

FREDDY: Oh gosh! I could kick myself for saying that.

ELIZA: I am sure you could.

FREDDIE (MOVING TO DOOR): I'll let you know what I intend to do.

ELIZA: For my sake do nothing in your present mood.

FREDDIE EXITS AND ALMOST IMMEDIATELY MRS PEARCE USHERS IN LOTTIE COLBY

LOTTIE (NOT IMMEDIATELY RECOGNISING ELIZA): Oh, I ast to see Eliza Doolittle.

ELIZA: I am Eliza.

LOTTIE: Well strike me pink, so you are!

ELIZA: What can I do for you, Lottie?

LOTTIE: You don't remember me?

ELIZA (STUDYING HER FACE): Now I do. You occasionally bought a buttonhole from me.

LOTTIE: S'right. A bunch of vi'lets. You'd let me 'ave 'em at half price. My patch was near where you sat. Everybody in the Market knew Lottie Colby.

ELIZA: Take a seat and tell me why you are here.

LOTTIE: It's because of wot yer Dad told me. When, by the way. I did'n recognise you, I thought the old sod was 'avin' me on.

ELIZA: We'll soon know.

LOTTIE: Well, we was in the pub – not togevvver mind – and I 'appened to say I would like to get a better class of customer, so's I could make enough to leave the game an' p'raps get a job of some sort. I never really liked bein' on the streets, but 'avin' took over from me muvver when I was fourteen, I could'n see no way aht. I can't, says your Dad, but the first fing to do is to learn to talk proper – “Ow the'll am I goin' to do that?” I says an' he told me abaht your professor “Go to 27A, Wimpole Street” he says, “an ask to see me daughter, Eliza. It'll cost you a bob or two, but you'll end up speakin' like a duchess. So 'ere I am”.

ELIZA: At the moment Professor Higgins is out. It is he who will decide if he is not too busy to take you as a pupil. Much will depend on the quality of your voice and if he thinks it can be improved. Voices that interest him play a large part in his making a decision. The next problem might be the charge about which I will speak on your behalf. His normal fee, I imagine, would be quite beyond your means.

LOTTIE: I thought there might be a bleedin' catch in it.

ELIZA: For a preliminary test I'll now make a brief recording of you SHE REMOVES THE EXISTING RECORD AND, LOADING A NEW ONE FROM THE CUPBOARD, SWITCHES ON THE DICTAPHONES.

LOTTIE: Whatcha want me to si?

ELIZA: Anything you wish.

LOTTIE: Can't fink of nothing..

ELIZA: Never mind. Repeat this after me. Horses and asses habitually eat hay avidly even when not exceptionally hungry.

LOTTIE: S'truth, I don't know as I can remember that, let alone si it.

ELIZA: Try.

LOTTIE (WITH EMPHASIS ON THE FIRST ASPIRATE): Horses and Hasses eat 'ay heven if not hexceptionally hungry. There, how was that?

ELIZA: Not very good, but no worse than my first effort. SHE SWITCHES OFF THE DICTAPHONE.

RUBY ENTERS AND HANDS ELIZA THE ENVELOPE CONTAINING NOTES.

RUBY: I was told to bring it back, Miss Eliza.

ELIZA: By Mrs. Higgins?

RUBY: Bya young reverend gentleman who came to the door.

ELIZA: Did you not tell him they were the notes the Professor left behind?

RUBY: Yes, I did, and he said the Professor had gone to get them himself, so I'd better take them back. Those were his very words.

ELIZA: A clerical gentleman you say?

RUBY: A curate I imagine.

ELIZA: Thank you, Ruby, you did your best.

RUBY: Will the Professor be angry with me?

ELIZA: It might be as well to keep out of his way for a while when he returns. I'd certainly not like to be in the curate's shoes.

RUBY: Nor I, Miss Eliza. SHE EXITS.

WLIZA: That will be for today, Lottie. As soon as Professor Higgins makes a decision I'll let you know what it is. If you'll give me your address I will come myself.

LOTTIE: I can't let you do that, Eliza. The place is not fit for a louse, let alone a lady like you.

ELIZA: I'm not a lady, and never shall be. Inside I'm still a flower girl – one lucky enough to be of interest to two educated gentlemen.

LOTTIE: But you always were a lady at heart. Several of the girls remember as 'ow you'd lend them a bob or two when business was bad, an' not badger 'em to get it back.

ELIZA: Probably to ensure my own safety. In Lissom Grove and Covent Garden it pays to have a little insurance.

LOTTIE: Garn. SHE AND ELIZA MOVE TOWARDS THE DOOR. I can tell it ain't goin' to be easy.

ELIZA: Nothing worth doing is. Mainly it will be up to you.

LOTTIE EXITS. ELIZA SHAKES HER HEAD.

Eliza: Alfred Doolittle, as I once told Professor Higgins, you should be stuffed with nails.

BLACKOUT

THREE HOURS LATER, ELIZA IS READING. HIGGINS ENTERS

HIGGINS: You look somewhat apprehensive, Eliza.

ELIZA: I was rather afraid you might be in a towering rage.

HIGGINS: Needlessly. You should know by this time that would be foreign to my nature.

ELIZA: After twice losing your notes, it would not have been unjustified.

HIGGINS:

A blessing in disguise actually. Resigned to the fact that fate and a moronic member of the Cloth had destined the populace of Bermondsey not to hear my lecture on warfare from one thousand B.C. until the present day, and that the first draft of my monograph entitled *The Parson's Voice in Prayer and Exhortation*, which I had taken by mistake would not interest them, I decided to tell them about my *Universal Alphabet*. For an audience that comprised many who sign their name with a cross, this proved to be so popular I was given a standing ovation.

ELIZA: What happened to the curate?

HIGGINS: Ah, the curate. Both he and my mother were a little upset when I told him I would not have expected such asinine behaviour from a man of his calling. He then decided not to come with us and departed in what one with a flair for a *bon mot* might term high dudgeon.

ELIZA: Very disquieting for your mother.

HIGGINS: Oh, he'll go back. The pull of my mother's financial support will be irresistible.

ELIZA: I think it quite possible that Freddy will not. He took what you called him very seriously.

HIGGINS: That'll not keep him away while you are here.

ELIZA: It might now I've made it quite clear I'll never marry him. I hope most sincerely he'll do nothing drastic.

HIGGINS (DERISIVELY): Freddy do something drastic? He'd not have the initiative

ELIZA: He said there are only two places for a congenital incompetent – the cemetery or the trenches.

HIGGINS: Hm. An eventful afternoon

ELIZA: I have even more news for you.

HIGGINS: Really?

ELIZA: My father has enlisted.

HIGGINS: When not sober, I imagine.

ELIZA: That he admits. Thirdly, I interviewed a prospective client.

HIGGINS: Anyone interesting?

ELIZA: Not one you would want to take on.

HIGGINS: On account of what?

ELIZA: Of your not wanting a second Eliza Doolittle. The only difference between us being that I sold flowers, she her body.

HIGGINS: We must not be influenced by what your father would call 'middle class morality'. Did you know her?

ELIZA: Superficially.

HIGGINS: I might have found her voice interesting.

ELIZASWITCHES ON THE DICTAPHONE.

LOTTIE'S VOICE: Whatcha want me to si?

ELIZA'S VOICE: Anything that comes into your head.

LOTTIE'S VOICE: Can't fink uv nuthin'

ELIZA'S VOICE: Never mind. Repeat this after me. Horses and asses habitually eat hay avidly even if not exceptionally hungry

LOTTIE'S VOICE: S'truth, I don't know as I can remember that, let along si it.

ELIZA'S VOICE: Try.

LOTTIE'S VOICE: Horses and hasses eat 'ay havidly, heven if not exceptionally 'ungry. How was that?

ELIZA SWITCHES OFF THE MACHINE

HIGGINS: What induced her to come here?

ELIZA: In conversation with my father, she said she would like to get superior clients to be able to save enough money to start a new kind of life. To advise her to come here was, I think, on my father's part a cruel joke.

HIGGINS: Do you think such a creature deserves to be given a chance?

ELIZA: Having been given one myself, I have to say yes.

HIGGINS: There is, of course, the question of sincerity of her expressed intention to abandon the world's oldest profession. Can it be relied on?

ELIZA: Experience has taught me most men and women, both young and old, regard truthfulness as a virtue too precious for daily use.

HIGGINS: I was of the opinion that cynicism was my prerogative.

ELIZA: Reading fosters it. Consider, for example, the hypocrisy of diplomats.

HIGGINS (PUTTING UP A RESTRAINING HAND) Not now, Eliza. Let us concentrate on your interviewee. Did she say what she was prepared to pay?

ELIZA: Thinking her chance of receiving tuition negligible, I did not discuss that question, but I did warn her your normal fee would be beyond her means.

HIGGINS: Having achieved all I desire in your case, there is no need for me to do an encore. But what a challenge it would be for you. I recall you once said you would set up as my rival.

ELIZA: You would be prepared to let me deputise for you?

HIGGINS: Why not? No harm will have been done if you fail.

ELIZA: But would it be fair to Lottie? Her name, by the way, is Lottie Colby.

HIGGINS: Has life been fair to her up to now? Is it likely to be in the future? What lies ahead but the probability of her contracting some foul disease, becoming a drink sodden, starved, sub-human, and dying before she is fifty. By George, Eliza, the thought of you of all people plucking a firebrand from the burning begins increasingly to intrigue me.

ELIZA: Teaching her to speak is one thing, but without the other advantages I've had I doubt if it will lift her out of the gutter soon enough to save her.

HIGGINS: Point taken. Therefore an immediate change of environment is imperative.

ELIZA: Which will require money.

HIGGINS: I never have indulged in philanthropy, and I have no intention of starting.

ELIZA: So we do nothing?

HIGGINS: Wait. Pickering was prepared to pay for your lessons. I've no doubt he could afford to pay, say five shillings a week, for a flat, and a pound to twenty-five shillings for food. If not, my mother could. To give her too much might result in her spending it on gin. Which leaves the problem of clothes.

ELIZA: Thanks to your generosity I have enough to give her what is necessary.

HIGGINS: In return we shall need Miss Colby's promise to behave with decorum and, when ready, find suitable employment to make financial aid unnecessary. No backsliding will be tolerated and at the very first sign of it we shall wash our hands of her.

ELIZA: I suggest we have her agreement in writing.

HIGGINS: That would indicate a lack of trust.

ELIZA: And also no lack of commonsense.

HIGGINS REMOVES HIS JACKET AND PUTS ON A VELVET ONE. HE THEN SITS AND REMOVES HIS BOOTS. ELIZA, HAVING ANTICIPATED HIS ACTIONS, BRINGS HIS SLIPPERS FROM UNDER THE TABLE.

HIGGINS: Thank you, Eliza. What would I do without you?

ELIZA: You could train a puppy.

CURTAIN. END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

ELIZA AND HIGGINS ARE AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE. HE IS READING *THE TIMES*.

ELIZA: Is there any better news?

HIGGINS: None. Huge losses again a Neuve Chapelle. More submarine activity. And for the first time the Huns are using poison gas.

ELIZA: Barbarians.

HIGGINS: To meet them one would not think so. In Berlin I have enjoyed their hospitality. It is said, however, that deep in every one of them lies a brutal and aggressive tendency.

ELIZA: Are we going to lose this war?

HIGGINS: I suppose eventually with the Empire behind us we shall pull through, but in my opinion it will be a close run thing, with unprecedented losses on both sides. That is, of course, if they do not succeed in starving us into submission - a distinct possibility.

ELIZA: I always understood our Navy was superior to theirs.

HIGGINS: So the writers of patriotic music hall songs would have us believe. From a reliable source I have learnt their gunnery is more accurate and the hulls of their ships more impenetrable.

ELIZA: I wonder how Freddy and my father are getting on?

HIGGINS: Your father, I think, would soon adapt to the circumstances as well as the next man. Being without imagination, he'll not worry until danger is imminent and inevitable. Regarding Freddy, it will either make or break him.

ELIZA: It is rumoured food rationing and conscription will be introduced next year..

HIGGINS: As they should have been from the start. To allow two years to pass without controls on food was short-sightedness *in excelsis* - typical of the blundering idiots at present in power.

ELIZA: Will conscription affect you/

HIGGINS: Seeing that I am not yet in the Bard's sixth age, I am sure it will.

ELIZA: Being subjected to discipline will not suit your temperament.

HIGGINS: Especially as at heart I am a conscientious objector.

ELIZA: So?

HIGGINS: Either I go to prison or serve in a non-military capacity.⁹

ELIZA: No other option?

HIGGINS: Not unless, as Pickering suggested in his letter, I join his outfit which is involved with the interrogation of prisoners, and some work that at present is a top secret. Incidentally, he sent his kind regards to you.

ELIZA: I'll never forget his kindness.

HIGGINS: Had he been younger, he would have proposed marriage.

ELIZA: To me – a common flower girl?

HIGGINS: To my Galatea.

BLACKOUT. END OF SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

LOTTIE, DRESSED NEATLY IN ELIZA'S CLOTHES, IS SEATED OPPOSITE ELIZA.

LOTTIE: Before we start, who's this Colonel Pickerin' wot's payin' for all this?

ELIZA: A friend of the Professor's. A very kind and generous gentleman.

LOTTIE: I s'pose 'e'll want the usual in return?

ELIZA: No, indeed he will not! You must understand, Lottie, as far as you are concerned that kind of thing is over.

LOTTIE: Oh.

ELIZA: You must understand also that what you are undertaking will mean you will have to start as if you were at school again. At times when your head is aching and your patience is exhausted, you will feel inclined to drop the whole thing. If you think it will be too difficult for you, say so now, and go back on the streets.

LOTTIE: Wot, an' leave that flat? Not likely.

ELIZA (SMILING): That is a good start. In your position I would have used the sanguinary epithet. On one occasion I actually did.

LOTTIE: Wot the'ell's that?

ELIZA: Not bloody likely.

LOTTIE: I never thought I'd 'ear that from you, Eliza.

ELIZA: You'll not hear it again. Now the first problem with which we have to cope is the control of aspirates.

LOTTIE: Which is?

ELIZA: Sounding aitches were necessary, and not sounding them when not required.

LOTTIE: So that's what the horses and 'ay was about.

ELIZA: This time it will be more difficult.

LOTTIE: Oh lor'.

ELIZA (SELECTING A CARD FROM A BOX AND READING): Heavily armoured men, heartily encouraged by the Fifth Henry, arrived eventually at Agincourt. During the ensuing battle hundreds of arrows flew heavenwards and fell on enemy heads.

LOTTIE SITS WITH HER MOUTH OPEN. ELIZA SWITCHES ON THE DICTAPHONE AND HANDS LOTTIE THE CARD.

LOTTIE: I ain't never goin' to get that right.

ELIZA: Yes you will – in time.

LOTTIE: Right. Here goes. Heavily armoured men, 'eartily hencouraged by the Fiff 'enary arrived eventually at Agincourt. During the ensuing battle 'undreds of harrow flew heavenwards and fell on enemy 'eads.

ELIZA: Again, but not so fast and say Fifth not Fiff. Watch my lips and tongue. Fifth.

LOTTIE: Fifth. Fifth

ELIZA: Good. Now the whole thing again.

LOTTIE: Heavily armoured men, heartily encouraged by the Fifth Henry arrived eventually at Hagincourt. During the hensuing battle 'undreds of arrows flew heavenwards and fell on henemy 'eads. 'Ow'd I do.

ELIZA: Judge for yourself. SHE PLAYS THE RECORDING.

LOTTIE'S VOICE: Heavily harmoured men, heartily encouraged by the Fifth Henry, arrived at Hagincourt. During the hensuing battle 'undreds of arrow flew heavenwards and fell on henemy 'eads.

LOTTIE: Bloomin' awful.

ELIZA: Don't worry. What I want you to do is take this card with you and repeat those words until you get them right.

LOTTIE: How long will that take?

ELIZA: That will depend on your persistence. I would suggest you do it fifty times and then have a break. The more times you do it, the easier it will become. But on no account stop doing it. To be able to say that correctly will be a big step forward.

LOTTIE: I'll have to see 'ow it goes.

ELIZA: The next problem will be the vowel sounds.

LOTTIE: Wass that?

ELIZA: There are five vowels – represented by the letters a,e,i,o,u. Each must be given its full value. Take W,a,l,e,s, for instance. What do those letters spell?

LOTTIE: Wells.

ELIZA: Not Wells - Wales. Wales.

LOTTIE: Wales.

ELIZA: Correct. For the time being, however, concentrate on the aspirates.

LOTTIE: I'll get it right even if I have to say it a fousand times.

ELIZA: One other thing I must mention. Personal hygiene.

LOTTIE: Never 'eard of it.

ELIZA: Keeping clean.

LOTTIE: I wash me face every day.

ELIZA: But how often do you have a bath?

LOTTIE: Dunno really. Twice, Three times a year.

ELIZA: At least once a week is essential

LOTTIE: Once a week!

ELIZA: Is thee a bathroom where you are living?

LOTTIE: Yeah, but there ain't no 'ot water. The blinkin' fing that ought to supply it don't work.

ELIZA: I'll speak to Professor Higgins about it. Meanwhile you must go to the public baths.

LOTTIE: Spend money to wash? Don't seem right. I'll make do wiv a saucepan and basin.

ELIZA: Another thing. The scent you use will not do.

LOTTIE: Blimy, what's wrong wiv it/? It cost a bob a bottle.

ELIZA: Every thing possible. It is far too strong, and as you will realise later, in very bad taste. Actually a little eau de Cologne is all that is required. One other thing. You should not apply rouge. Luckily your old way of life has not yet ruined your complexion.

LOTTIE: Is that all/

ELIZA: Yes, I think it is. Then when you are really presentable I shall take you where you will hear English spoken as it should be - to the public gallery of the House of Commons, and as a special treat to the theatre. I suppose, as it was with me, you've never been to one.

LOTTIE: No I ain't. Although once I went to the Empire 'opin' to pick up a bit of business on the Promenade. Never made it though. They chucked me out.

ELIZA: To thank God for my good fortune I sometimes go to St. Paul's. You could come with me.

LOTTIE: Not me. Religion an' me parted company when I was a kid.

ELIZA: Why?

LOTTIE Well, like a lot of kids I liked listening to the Salvation Army's band, and when I was about nine I 'eard as 'ow they 'ad a good blowout at Chrissmus with turkey and pudden, so I decided without lettin' my old woman know, else she'd have give me a hiding, to go to their citadel. Which I done for a year an' then the dirty bugger what beat the big drum tried to take liberties with me - and that was that. There ain't no God, so all the prayin' an' hymn singin' don't make no difference at all.

ELIZA: My brief does not include theology, but when this course is nearing completion I hope you will let me explain why you are wrong.

LOTTIE: 'Cause of what's bein' done for me, how can I refuse/

ELIZA: I think that will be enough for today.

LOTTIE: When shall I come again?

ELIZA: In a week's time. That will give you plenty of time to practise.

LOTTIE PREPARES TO LEAVE. HIGGINS ENTERS.

HIGGINS: Well, Miss Colby, how do you like starting school again?

LOTTIE: To tell you the truth, sir, what with haspirates, personal 'ygeine, and vowels, me 'ead don't know if I'm comin' or goin'.

HIGGINS: I am sure that is how Eliza felt after her first lesson. HE TAKES THE CARD FROM HER HAND. Ah, I see the hurricanes have abated and Spain is having a dry spell.

LOTTIE (PERPLEXED): I must be goin' barmy.

HIGGINS: Not at all. Just return to your new *pied a terre*, and make yourself a cup of tea and you will be as a giant refreshed with wine. HE TAKES HER ELBOW AND ESCORTS HER TO THE DOOR. Well done, Eliza. Your new test piece has my full approval.

ELIZA: The old one reminded me too forcibly of my own struggle.

HIGGINS: Will she make the grade?

ELIZA: I'm not sure. Much will depend on how industrious she is when not here. The next session should reveal how much homework she has done.

HIGGINS: Oh, by the way, you are going to have a distinguished visitor.

ELIZA: I can't think who.

HIGGINS: I met Phipps-Manvers from the Embassy. He told me Prince Ivanovich, the one with whom you danced at the Embassy ball, is in London on a diplomatic visit. He has apparently made enquiries about you and wishes to see you.

ELIZA: Why would he want to do that?

HIGGINS: Knowing his reputation as a Casanova, I don't think two guesses would be required. Therefore a little deception will be necessary to ensure he does not have an opportunity to be alone with you. I know the routine only too well.- a visit to the opera, followed by a discreet little supper *a deux*. Need I say more?

ELIZA: I can decline his invitation.

HIGGINS: But not without having a good reason. The point being that every effort must be made to obviate the possibility of offending him. The Government of the Balkan enclave, Czecrekovnia, over which his mother rules, is at present inclined to support England against Germany – a state Westminster is anxious to preserve. A disgruntled Ivanovich might easily result in a changed policy. Hence the need for finesse in dealing with him.

ELIZA: Have you a plan to enable me to keep him at arm's length?

HIGGINS (COMPLACENTLY): Naturally. One which will work provided he does not discover your true identity or where you live, which I understand from Phipps-Manvers so far he has not. You will, therefore, adopt the role of a wealthy heiress whose home in Essex has been badly damaged by enemy action. To recover from the trauma, you are in London for treatment by a specialist who has prescribed a complete rest for at least two months.

ELIZA: My presence in your house will have to be accounted for.

HIGGINS: Why should you not be staying with a second cousin?

ELIZA: What will be the penalty if I fail?

HIGGINS: You and I will spend the remainder of our lives in the Tower.

BLACKOUT

SCENE THREE

IT IS ELEVEN P.M. HIGGINS IS CONSULTING A REFERENCE BOOK. AN AIR RAID WARNING SOUNDS. IT IS A WHISTLE BLOWN BY A PASSING CYCLIST.

HIGGINS: Down the Zeppelins!

A SHORT TIME LATER GUNFIRE IS HEARD. ELIZA WITH A DRESSING GOWN OVER HER NIGHTDRESS ENTERS.

HIGGINS: Eliza. Why are you not with Mrs. Pearce and Ruby in the cellar?

ELIZA: I could not hide there in comparative safety leaving you alone up here to run the risk of being injured or killed.

GUNFIRE INCREASES

HIGGINS: I'd no idea my welfare was of such moment to you.

ELIZA: If it were not after all you have done for me, I would be the most ungrateful woman alive.

HIGGINS: Very touching.

ELIZA (WITH SOME BITTERNESS): Oh I know it pleases you to give the impression you, with your superior mind, are devoid of what in lesser mortals are natural emotions, but one day perhaps you will realise you are as susceptible as the rest of us.

HIGGINS: Time alone will tell, Eliza.

SOUNDS OF EXPLODING BOMBS ARE HEARD

HIGGINS: Under the table! BOTH DIVE UNDER THE TABLE.

SHORTLY AFTERWARDS THE SHOUT OF ALL CLEAR IS HEARD. HIGGINS AND ELIZA EMERGE.

HIGGINS: That irrational act would seem to confirm your statement. How ridiculous to think the table would withstand a large fall of masonry.

ELIZA: We did the only thing possible.

A LOUD KNOCK SOUNDS. MRS PEARCE ENTERS. SHE TOO HAS A DRESSING GOWN OVER HER NIGHTDRESS.

MRS PEARCE: A constable wishes to speak to you, sir.

HIGGINS: Show him in, Mrs. Pearce. TO ELIZA: What the devil does he want?

CONSTABLE ENTERS.

HIGGINS: What can I do for you, officer/

CONSTABLE: It's been reported you are showing a light in your top window. A very serious offence, sir.

ELIZA (QUICKLY AS HIGGINS IS ABOUT TO SPEAK): I'm afraid I'm the culprit, officer. I went up to measure the window for heavy curtains, and must have forgotten to extinguish the candle.

CONSTABLE: Well, bless me, if it ain't Eliza! HE PUTS AWAY HIS NOTEBOOK.

HIGGINS: I'm sorry, officer. You will, of course, have to make a report.

CONSTABLE: Nothing to report, sir. A reflection of the moon on the window. A mistake anyone might make. I'm sorry to have troubled you.

HIGGINS: I suppose, being on duty, you'll not accept a drop of whiskey?

CONSTABLE (LOOKING AT HIS WATCH): Well, sir, I'm off duty at midnight, and I reckon my watch could be slow.

HIGGINS POURS A GENEROUS TOT

CONSTABLE: Your very good health, sir.

HIGGINS: And yours.

CONSTABLE (MAKING FOR THE DOOR) Back to the beat. I can let myself out.

HIGGINS AND ELIZ: Goodnight, officer. CONSTABLE EXITS.

Higgins: Can you account for his Admiral Nelson act?

ELIZA: Easily. He knew I was aware of his tendency not to notice when publicans keep their premises open after closing time. The whiskey you gave him is not the first free drink he's had tonight. Nor, generally speaking does he arrest street-walkers, unless they are creating a disturbance.

HIGGINS: In short, a most improper copper.

ELIZA: Indeed, but tell it not in Gath: publish it not in the streets of Askelon.

HIGGINS (YAWNING): To quote another Samuel – 'and so to bed@.

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

ELIZA: Still no news regarding the Prince's visit?

HIGGINS: No. Phipps-Manvers is puzzled. He has seen his schedule for this week and next. Neither includes it. The extra meetings with the Chiefs of Staff and Asquith necessitated by the news that neighbouring countries were moving towards their borders might be the reason for it.

ELIZA: When does he return to Czecrekovnia?

HIGGINS: In a fortnight's time.

ELIZA: I am hoping against hope the visit will not take place.

HIGGINS: You coped magnificently at the ball. Since which you have acquired even more polish.

ELIZA: There it was not necessary for me to tell so many lies. One wrong answer will destroy my credibility.

HIGGINS: You and I have gone over your story a dozen times, Eliza, and not once have you erred. I am sure that when the time comes you will not shake my theory that all women are the daughters of Ananias.

ELIZA: The possibility of an unexpected question cannot be ruled out.

HIGGINS: You were sufficiently quick-witted to take the blame for my negligence when the arm of the law was stretched out in my direction.

FURTHER CONVERSATION IS INTERRUPTED BY AN OFF STAGE DRUNKEN VOICE SINGING 'PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES'.

ELIZA: My father!

ALFRED (OFF STAGE): Pack up your troubles in yer ol' kitbag
An'smile, smile, smile.
As long as you've a Lucifer to light your fag,
Smile boys, that's the style.
What's the use of worryin'? It never was worth while,
So pack up your troubles in yer ol' kitbag.
An' smile, smile, smile.

MRS PEARCE ENTERS:

HIGGINS: What the blazes is going on, Mrs. Pearce?

MRS. PEARCE: I'm sorry, sir. It's Mr. Doolittle. I tried to stop him from coming in, but he pushed me aside. Said he has a present for Eliza.

ELIZA: Oh no!

HIGGINS: Far be it from me to refuse admittance to a returned warrior. Send him in, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS PEARCE SHAKES A DISAPPROVING HEAD AND EXITS. THE SINGING STOPS. ALFRED ENTERS UNSTEADILY. HIS PRIVATE'S UNIFORM IS MUD STAINED.

ALFRED (DRUNKENLY): A fine way to treat one of His Majesty's soldiers I mus' say.

ELIZA: How dare you come here in such a disgusting state?

ALFRED: Disgusting state. I deny it abs'lutely an' in toto. Anybody'd think I was drunk.

HIGGINS: I think you had better sit down, Doolittle

ALFRED: Tha's a good idea. HE PRODUCES A DIRTY HANDKERCHIEF AND SPREADS IT ON THE CHAIR BEFORE SITTING. Flander's mud. Never saw the like of it. Up to our backsides in it. Poor sods drownin' in it.

HIGGINS: We heard conditions were bad.

ALFRED: Bad 'nough before the bleedin' rain started. Know what we are, Gov'nor? Know what we are?

HIGGINS: Heroes?

ALFRED: Heroes be buggered. Cannon fodder. Ev'ry man jack of 'em.

HIGGINS: You have survived so far. You were at Ypres, I imagine?

ALFRED (PUZZLED): Ypres? Never 'eard of it, Gov'nor. 'Alf a mo'. You mean Wipers. Never expected a gen;leman like you not to know right pro...pro... THE WORD DEFEATS HIM.

HIGGINS: Pronunciation.

ALFRED: That's what I said.

HIGGINS: How long is your leave?

ALFRED: Lemme see. HE COUNTS ON HIS FINGERS. Four days.

HIGGINS: Long enough to give you a little time with your wife.

ALFRED: With the missis/ Not likely. I'm goin' to njoy meself. HE TAKES A PAIR OF ZEISS BINOCULARS FROM HIS POCKET AND HANDS THEM TO ELIZA. I bought a souvenir for you.

ELIZA: From whom did you steal them?

ALFRED: There's gratitude for ya. I got them from a Hun what had no more use for 'em.

ELIZA: A likely story.

ALFRED: 'S'fact. Half his 'ead was blown off.

ELIZA (DROPPING THE BINOCULARS): You robbed a dead man! Have you no respect?

ALFRED: Not for *le sale Boche* I ain't, an' nor would you have if you'd seen what I've seen.

HIGGINS: We have heard of atrocities but were inclined to disbelieve them.

ALFRED: Take it from me, Guv'nor, they're true enough. If we was alone I'd tell ya.

HIGGINS: I appreciate your delicacy.

ELIZA (DREISIVELY): Delicacy?

ALFRED: The trouble with you my girl, is you've got too 'igh and mighty. If I was the Professor you'd feel the weight of my hand. Could'n even send me a packet of Woodbines or a bar of choc'late, could ya. I get better treatment by the mam'zelles. MAKING SURE ELIZA IS NOT WATCHING, WITH A LEER HE GIVES HIGGINS THE 'THUMBS UP' SIGN. Tell you another who' got a bit above herself. Lottie No Drawers. Would'n even come an' have a drink with me. 'Lumme,' I says. 'You sickenin' for somethin'?' 'No, Mr. Doolittle,' she says, talkin' like Eliza. 'I've changed my life style.' Mr. Doolittle, I ask ya. Caw, stone ol' Riley, I was so flabbergasted I fergot to ask her the name of the damn' fool who's dressin' her like a lady.

ELIZA: It is I, and I can assure you she now is adequately clothed.

ALFRED: Well, if she ain't on the old game, why ain't she doin' work to 'elp her country. Come to think of it, why ain't you?

HIGGINS: That is not your business, Doolittle.

ALFRED (BITTERLY): No, I s'pose it ain't, bein' only her father. Private Doolittle's business is livin' in mud an' filth, bein' swore at by sergeants, bein' shot at by someone he can't even see, bein' overrun by rats, tormented by lice, an' moved like a prawn on a chessboard at the whim of brandy swiggin', champagne guzzlin' brass hats miles be'ind the lines, more concerned with their horses an' 'igh class whores than with the safety of the likes of me. Oh, what the 'ell? I'm on a spree in Blighty, so as far as I'm concerned, until Friday it's san fairy ann. HE STOOPS TO PICK UP THE BINOCULARS. If you don't want 'em, p'raps I can get a couple of quid for 'em. OVERCOME BY DRINK, HE FALLS FLAT ON THE FLOOR.

Eliza: Now what do we do?

HIGGINS: Ring for Mrs Pearce and Ruby, and with their help carry him into another room where he can sleep off the effect of having imbibed, as someone said, not wisely but too well. HE TUGS THE BELL PULL. MRS. PEARCE ENTERS. Get Ruby, Mrs. Pearce, and help us to dispose of the body.

MRS PEARCE: Oh my, is he dead?

HIGGINS: Dead drunk.

MRS PEARCE EXITS AND RETURNS WITH RUBY.

HIGGINS: Eliza and I will take his shoulders. You and Ruby his legs. THEY LIFT ALFRED AND EXEAUNT. HIGGINS AND ELIZA RETURN.

HIGGINS: You look pensive, Eliza.

ELIZA: I am thinking of what my father said – about my not working to help the country.

HIGGINS: That was the alcohol talking.

ELIZA: Did not Pliny say truth comes out in wine?

HIGGINS: By Jove, Eliza, I'd no idea you were able to quote Pliny.

ELIZA: Only from a book of quotations.

HIGGINS: The will to do it is what counts. I think it time I taught you Latin.

ELIZA : Do I detect an attempt to divert me from the subject I raised?

HIGGINS: What kind of work have you in mind?

ELIZA: None at present. I thought you might know of something suitable..

HIGGINS: Ah, that presents a problem. Your having received no formal education restricts the scope.

ELIZA: I could work in a factory.

HIGGINS: You could, but have you thought of the possible consequence?

ELIZA: Such as?

HIGGINS: You should know by this time the effect of one's environment. Again to associate on a daily basis with the lower classes might easily result in your unconsciously relapsing into their way of speaking. That would be a tragedy. Others might not notice as I do that generally you still have to think before you speak which gives your diction a rather pedantic quality.

ELIZA: That is true. So what am I to do?

HIGGINS (NOT SERIOUSLY): You could distribute white feathers, the emblem of cowardice to men not in uniform. In Oxford Street yesterday I was accosted.

ELIZA: You were not given one?

HIGGINS: Only my basilisk stare and threat of having the woman arrested for obstructing the pavement prevented it.

ELIZA: I know the hospitals need people, but I could not face suffering every day. I feel so useless.

HIGGINS: Quite unnecessarily. What you have to realise is that the assistance you are giving me is of supreme importance. Not, I admit, in connection with the present conflict, but with the literacy of future generations of writers of English. Think of the benefit millions will derive from my simplified alphabet and spelling long after the Hun has been taught a lesson. Let the masses deal with the present situation. We who have superior gifts have equally important things to occupy our time. Let others serve Mars. You and I labour for Minerva.

ELIZA: You should use your eloquence on Ruby. You know she is leaving to work in the Woolwich Arsenal.

HIGGINS: Let her go. When she finds her complexion becoming as yellow as that of a Chinese she may wonder if the extra money is sufficient compensation.

ELIZA: Perhaps Mrs. Pearce will allow me to help her.

HIGGINS: I don't think she will, and I certainly will not. Damn it all, Eliza, are you determined to ruin what I regard as my life's greatest achievement?

ELIZA: If it means so much to you, I suppose I'd better not.

HIGGINS: I had hoped it was as important to you.

ELIZA (CONTRITELY): I apologise most sincerely. Of course it is important. I'm afraid at times the ghost of Eliza, the flower girl manifests itself.

HIGGINS(COLDLY): Then I suggest you exorcise her once and for all. WITH A CHANGE OF TONE, As everyone knows I am the most tolerant of men, but there are limits, I never expected to find myself in agreement with Nietzsche's dictum that one should always take one whip to women, but conviction is dawning that he might have been right.

ELIZA: The sort of thing to be expected from a hypochondriacal atheist.

HIGGINS: You know about him?

ELIZA: Only what I learnt from the Encyclopaedia Britannica after you once mentioned him.

HIGGINS: You never cease to astonish me. Take for example your vocabulary – as replete with polysyllabic profundity as a bargee’s with profanity. I have always said you are a remarkable woman.

Eliza: Not always. After the ball you called me a heartless guttersnipe.

HIGGINS: I have no recollection of it.

ELIZA: I’ll refresh your memory. SHE TAKES A RECORD FOR THE DICTAPHONE FROM A CUPBOARD AND PUTS IT ON THE MACHINE.

HIGGINS’S VOICE 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.

ELIZA SWITCHES OFF THE MACHINE

HIGGINS: What was your motive in preparing to record my voice before I came in?

ELIZA: I thought it would be a souvenir of a happy occasion. An appreciative word or two would have been sufficient to make me treasure it for the rest of my life.

HIGGINS: I thought when you returned from my mother that unhappy incident was closed?

ELIZA: From this moment it shall be. SHE REMOVES THE RECORD FROM THE DICTAPHONE AND THROWS IT INTO THE FIREPLACE WITH ENOUGH FORCE TO BREAK IT.

HIGGINS: So I am forgiven?

ELIZA: You were as soon as I was wise enough to realise nothing and nobody would ever change your temperament in which irascibility fortunately is outweighed by other admirable qualities.

HIGGINS: The fact that you remain here would seem to indicate you are prepared to tolerate my foible.

ELIZA: For the time being, yes.

HIGGINS: Two years ago I tempted you with chocolates and taxi rides. Now I offer a reward for which thousands would sell their souls. When my work is published, your name as my collaborator shall be associated with it.

ELIZA: Surely that is more than my success, that is if I do succeed, with Lottie would deserve? Incidentally, should we not be trying to find a suitable occupation for her?

HIGGINS: You think she is ready?

ELIZA: Not quite, but it would be as well to have something in mind.

HIGGINS: If it were not for the fact that the suggestion of employing a former *fille de joie* would undoubtedly result in Mrs. Pearce giving notice, she could take Ruby's place.

ELIZA: Understandably, given her principles.

HIGGINS (IN A WHEEDLING MANNER): Perhaps if you were to approach her?

ELIZA: Oh no! As the master of the house it is your duty.

HIGGINS: I have to admit it would take someone with more audacity than I possess to run the risk of again upsetting Mrs. Pearce's idea of propriety.

ELIZA (LIGHTLY): An astonishing admission from a man who treats duchesses like flower girls.

HIGGINS: Very few duchesses, Eliza, have Mrs. Pearce's Calvinistic principles.

BLACKOUT END OF SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

ELIZA AND HIGGINS ARE HAVING BREAKFAST. HIGGINS OPENS AND READS A LETTER.

HIGGINS: If what this anonymous correspondent has written about Lottie is true, there will be no need for us to find work for her.

ELIZA: An anonymous correspondent?

HIGGINS: A very illiterate one.

ELIZA: What has Lottie done?

HIGGINS: What she always has done.

ELIZA: That's incredible!

HIGGINS: Apparently she has been seen taking an officer into her flat after leaving what I think the writer intends to be the Piccadilly Hotel with him.

ELIZA: Probably written by one of her former associates – motivated by jealousy.

HIGGINS: That could be the case. On the other hand, she might have found the lure of obtaining money that way irresistible.

ELIZA: What will you do?

HIGGINS: Nothing until we know the truth or otherwise of this letter.

ELIZA: She said at the start her object in learning to speak correctly was to enable her to get superior clients.

HIGGINS: Which apparently she has done.

ELIZA: If she has, I shall be very disappointed, for I thought she really had reformed.

HIGGINS: Knowing you lived in the same environment, I would have expected you to be more sceptical.

ELIZA: I relied on feminine intuition.

HIGGINS: Which is no more reliable than haruspication

ELIZA: That, Professor Higgins, is Greek to me.

HIGGINS (WILFULLY MISUNDERSTANDING): How strange. It is derived from the Etruscan – divination by examining entrails

MRS PEARCE (WHO HAS ENTERED IN TIME TO HEAR THE LAST REMARK):
Greek or Etruscan, sir, it is not a suitable subject for the breakfast table.

BLACKOUT

SCENE TWO

AFTERNOON. ELIZA IS RETURNING BOOKS TO SHELVES. MRS PEARCE ENTERS.

MRS PEARCE: A Captain Shevich from the Czecrekovian Embassy wishes to see you, Eliza.

ELIZA: Me, Mrs. Pearce? Are you sure?

MRS PEARCE: The gentleman was most emphatic.

ELIZA: Very well. Please show him in.

PRINCE IVANOVICH, WEARING A FLASE 'WILHELM THE SECOND#MOUSTACHE, WEARING A COLOURFUL MILITARY UNIFORM ENTERS.

PRINCE (REMOVING MOUSTACHE): Ah, the charming Miss Eliza Doolittle!

ELIZA (GASPING WITH ASTONISHMENT): Your Highness. I do not understand.

PRINCE (TAKING HER HAND AND KISSING IT) I come incognito very romantic, would you not agree?

ELIZA: And very disconcerting for a lady caught *en deshabelle*.

PRINCE: So you have learnt French since our last meeting.

ELIZA: Only a few words. I have yet to perfect my English.

PRINCE: And I have not found time to learn your Hungarian. HE TAKES A SMALL VELVET COVERED BOX FROM HIS POCKET. My mother requested me to give you this. HE OPENS THE BOX TO REVEAL A JEWEL ENCRUSTED STAR SHAPED ORDER. It is the Order of the Silver Slipper.

ELIZA: Her Majesty is most generous, but I have done nothing to deserve it.

PRINCE (SUGGESTIVELY): I am hoping that omission may be rectified. You will permit me? WITHOUT WAITING FOR HER CONSENT HE PINS ON THE ORDER. It is customary when a lady is so honoured for her to be kissed by Her Majesty. I suppose it would not be *comme il faut* for me so to complete the presentation?

ELIZA: Indeed it would not., Your Highness. Especially as we are alone.

PRINCE: I had hoped that in your native land, as in mine, people would not be inhibited by Victorian prudery which, no doubt, your mother found prevailing when at Court.

ELIZA (REPRESSING AMUSEMENT): If she did, she was far too discreet to mention it in my presence. SHE INDICATES THEY SIT.

PRINCE: I understand your reason for living in London is that your home in the country has suffered a considerable amount of damage.

ELIZA: Yes it has. The whole of the West Wing which contained the portrait gallery is beyond repair and the remainder rendered uninhabitable, as it will have to remain until the war is over.

PRINCE: Perhaps if I were to mention it in the right quarter something might be done for you.

ELIZA: Your Highness is most kind, but I beg you not to do that. Think of the local resentment it would cause if I, a foreigner, were to receive preferential treatment.

PRINCE: Your wish is my command. One gets accustomed to giving an order and having it done as if by a genie in a fairy tale.

ELIZA: Am I right in assuming the origin of the order of the Slipper lies in fiction rather than fact?

PRINCE: Yes, it does. But I'll not bore you by relating the legends

ELIZA: Having received the Order, I simply must hear it.

PRINCE: I shall be as brief as possible, for you and I have other matters to discuss,

EKIZA: Really?

PRINCE: It is the tale of a profligate prince whose way of life left him with insufficient means to give the damsel he wanted to marry the presents she expected from him. He therefore stole from a church a silver chalice and plate which he had a silversmith convert into a pair of slippers that, although lined with wool, hurt the young woman's feet so badly she threw them into the road where a peasant found them and took them home for his wife who also suffered. As time passed the slippers changed hands many times until they reached a man whose daughter from birth had been unable to walk.

ELIZA: Who put them on and was miraculously cured.

PRINCE: Precisely.

ELIZA: What happened to the Prince and the ungrateful wretch who threw the slippers away?

PRINCE: A thing I have no intention of doing for many years to come. I am therefore at liberty to enjoy the company of any lady willing to let me entertain her. Which brings me to the crucial point of inviting you to accompany me this evening to the Royal Opera House and then to have supper with me at the Embassy.

ELIZA: Your Highness, you may imagine my disappointment at having to decline. Unfortunately the specialist in whose hands I am at present has insisted on my having a complete rest for at least another month. To live such a cloistered life, as you might guess, does not suit my temperament. However, having sought advice, it would be foolish on my part not to take it. The effect of the bombing on my nerves, you know

PRINCE: But surely, Miss Eliza, just one little departure from the prescribed treatment would have a bad effect?

ELIZA: I gave my promise.

PRINCE: The English have a saying that promises, like piecrusts, are made to be broken.

AT THAT MOMENT HE IS INTERRUPTED BY CAPTAIN KRASOVSKI BURSTING INTO THE ROOM.

PRINCE: Captain Krasovski, what is the meaning of this intrusion?

KRASOVSKI: Your Highness, our country has been invaded on three front. Her Majesty wishes you to return immediately to take control of the Army. The british Admiralty has placed a ship at your service. It is waiting at Portsmouth.

PRINCE: I'll come at once. KRASOVSKI EXITS.

ELIZA (EXTENDING HER HAND): I shall never forget Her Majesty's kindness.

PRINCE: I hope I too shall be remembered.

ELIZA: Who would forget being thought worthy of a prince's notice?

PRINCE: As it is probable we shall never meet again, I am going to steal what could not be given. HE HOLDS HER ARMS AND KISSES HER CHEEK. ELIZA DOES NOT RESIST. HE EXITS HURRIEDLY

ELIZA (TO HERSELF): How heavily a crown must weigh in times like this.

BLACKOUT

TWO HOURS LATER, ELIZA HAS RESUMED HER TASK OF STACKING BOOKS, AND HAS HER BACK TO THE DOOR WHEN HIGGINS ENTERS. WHEN SHE TURNS, SHE IS SEEN TO BE WEARING THE FALSE MOUSTACHE.

ELIZA (IMITATING THE PRINCE): I have come incognito. Very romantic. Would you not agree?.

HIGGINS: Have you been drinking, Eliza?

ELIZA (REMOVING THE MOUSTACHE): Only the heady wine of romance. But I had a very good reason for feeling inclined that way.

HIGGINS: Am I to understand the Prince came unexpectedly?

ELIZA: About half an hour after you left. He was announced as Captain Shevich.

HIGGINS: After one of his minion had reported my departure no doubt. So what happened?

ELIZA(SHOWING THE BOX AND ORDER): Deputising for his mother, he presented me with the Order of the Silver Slipper.

HIGGINS: There is no Order of the Silver Slipper.

ELIZA: He told me the legend on which it was founded.

HIGGINS: A ploy to aid seduction. I'll wager this is not the first he has 'presented'.

ELIZA: He did say the omission might be rectified when I said I had done nothing to deserve it.

HIGGINS: I warned you the main is a cad.

ELIZA: Does that mean these stones are not real?

HIGGINS: I think not. What are a few thousand pounds to people who have millions?

ELIZA: A few thousand?

HIGGINS: A mere bagatelle.

ELIZA: I would like to return it, but I suppose I dare not run the risk of insulting him?

HIGGINS: Definitely not. If you feel strongly about it, sell it and give the money to charity. My advice would be keep it as a nest egg. Incidentally, how did you keep him at arm's length?

ELIZA: His visit was cut short by the arrival of a Captain Krasovski with the news that Czeckovnia has been invaded and the Queen wished him to return immediately.

HIGGINS: So that settles that problem very satisfactorily.

ELIZA: Does the fate of his country not concern you?

HIGGINS: I see no reason why it should. We now know they'll not be against us.

ELIZA: I was thinking of the peoples' suffering.

HIGGINS: The fields of Flanders are drenched with the blood of thousands of our own men. If one were to let the thought of them disturb one's emotions, one never would have a moment's peace of mind. War is, and always was a hellish business, and will continue to be until fought between remotely controlled automata.

ELIZA: which means never.

HIGGINS: I'd not say that. The impossible of today is the commonplace of tomorrow. I should not, however, have digressed before congratulating you on the way you handled a delicate situation after being taken by surprise. I hope when I tell Phipps-Manvers he will appreciate the admirable way you dealt with it.

ELIZA: You have not yet heard just how delicate that situation was.

HIGGINS (REMOVING HIS BOOTS AND WAITING FOR ELIZA TO HAND HIM HIS SLIPPERS): If there were an Order of the Leather Slipper I would do my utmost to obtain it for you. A KNOCK SOUNDS OFF STAGE. I think that will be Lottie. I saw her heading this way as I came home. I shall leave her in your hands, for I have a feeling I would be *de trop*. HE EXITS

ELIZA (AS LOTTIE ENTERS): Ah, Lottie I hoped you would come. The Professor and were rather concerned.

LOTTIE HAS NEW CLOTHES AND IS WEARING A GOLD CROSS AND CHAIN.

LOTTIE: I s'pose that means you've head?

ELIZA: An anonymous letter came.

LOTTIE: I'd not need two guesses to name who sent it p yjay jealous b... SHE CHECKS HERSELF. Jessie Smedley

ELIZA: It implied you were associating with an Army officer.

LOTTIE: That's true, but not for what you might think.

ELIZA: We were prepared to wait for your explanation.

LOTTIE: Well, for a start I have to tell you 'e's, sorry he's a chaplain.

ELIZA: A clergyman!

LOTTIE: I thought that would surprise you.

ELIZA: Knowing your view of religion, it has indeed.

LOTTIE: We met in St. James's Park. I was sittin' on a seat watchin' the birds when he came along an' seemed glad to rest for a while. Naturally, when he started speaking I thought he was tryin' to pick me up.

ELIZA: Of course.

LOTTIE: But 'e was'n - simply bein' pleasant like. Well, one thing led to another and I learnt he'd been badly wounded, but was expectin' to go back to the Front very shortly.

ELIZA: After being wounded where?

LOTTIE: Bein' a perfect gentleman, he could not go into details, but from what he said I know he's no longer capable of doing you know what. In fact he'd just give the lady he was to marry a chance to break off their engagement - which she had took.

ELIZA: 'Taken', Lottie, not 'took'.

LOTTIE: This had left him down in the dumps, so he was glad to have someone to talk to.

ELIZA: Did you tell him anything about yourself?

LOTTIE: Everything. What I'd been, an' what I was tryin' to do. I don't know what made me do it, but I felt I had to. And would you believe it, he didn't mind a bit, but told me about the woman taken in adultery.

ELIZA: And then?

LOTTIE:: He said he admired the effort I was makin' to lead a better life, and that he would pay for any extra tuition the Professor was willing to give. Then we' 'ad tea at the Piccadilly Hotel.

ELIZA: Since then he has been to your flat.

LOTTIE: Jus' for a cuppa tea after we'd been meeting regular like.

ELIZA: Am I to understand this is a temporary friendly relationship that will end when he returns to the Front?

LOTTIE: Only if I want it to be. As a matter of fact, he'd like to marry me right away, but I want to give him time to change his mind. So what d'you think he done?

ELIZA: I've not the faintest idea.

LOTTIE: Took me to his solicitor an' changed his will in my favour.

ELIZA: You've not met his parents?

LOTTIE: Could'n. They're missionaries in some foreign part I'd never heard of.

ELIZA: It would seem that, like me, you have been very fortunate.

LOTTIE: I know I've not made as much progress as you would've liked me to. Now I really must. Which reminds me, my friend would like to meet Professor Higgins before he leaves.

ELIZA: I'm not sure he will be able to spare the time. I'll ask him. Regarding extra tuition, that should present no problem.

BLACKOUT.

SHORTLY AFTER LOTTIE'S DEPARTURE

HIGGINS: What, Eliza, made you think I would not wish to meet this remarkable reverend gentleman who would seem to be either a saint or a damn' fool.

ELIZA: Because unless it has been to break the Third Commandment I never have heard you mention God.

HIGGINS: Surely that does not imply that I, the most tolerant of men, would not treat a visitor with the utmost politeness. Am I a yahoo, not fit to move in polite society?

ELIZA: You have been known to show no respect for another's feelings.

HIGGINS: Never!

ELIZA: So it will be in order for me to arrange a meeting?

HIGGINS: Of course. Who would not be eager to meet the philanthropic phenomenon. Do you know his name?

ELIZA: Lottie never mentioned it, and I forgot to ask.

HIGGINS: *A lapsus memoriae.* The result, I presume, of entertaining royalty and receiving jewels worth a king's ransom. Enough to upset any young woman's equilibrium,

ELIZA: Especially an ex-flower girl's.

HIGGINS: The most engaging and intelligent flower girl that ever proffered a bunch of violets.

ELIZA: At flattery you and Prince Ivanovich are pastmasters.

HIGGINS (SMUGLY): Having a vocabulary and facility with words second to none, I think I can claim with my customary modesty that the Prince and I are not to be compared.

MRS PEARCE ENTERS.

MRS PEARCE: Lieutenant Eynsford-Hill to see you, sir.

HIGGINS: Show him in, please.

FREDDY IN UNIFORM ENTERS. HE LOOKS ILL, HIS HANDS ARE SHAKING. WHEN SPEAKING HE SEEMS DAZED.

FREDDY: Professor. Eliza.

HIGGINS (SHAKING HANDS) I hoped you would come, old chap. I owe you an apology for what I said at our last meeting.

FREDDY: No need to apologise for telling the truth.

HIGGINS: How are things going over there?

FREDDY: Badly. We advance a hundred yards, lose a lot of men, and retreat two.

HIGGINS: You look rather under par. May I offer you a drink?

FREDDY: Drink? Yes, I think I will have one. Can't sleep. The guns, you know. Not real, but I can still hear them.

HIGGINS POURS A DRINK AND FREDDY SWALLOWS IT WITHOUT PAUSING.

ELIZA: Have you seen a doctor? Surely you need sick leave.

FREDDY: The M.O. gave me some pills. No sick leave for officers who can stand and breathe. Casualty rate too high.

ELIZA: That's inhuman!

FREDDY (SITTING WITHOUT INVITATION): The whole affair is inhuman. Sights no man should see.

HIGGINS (PATTING HIS SHOULDER): You'll have to excuse me, Freddy. My mother has a bigwig coming to her 'at home' and she particularly wants me to meet him. Shall I tell Mrs. Pearce you'll be staying for dinner, or will your mother expect you at her table?

FREDDY: As I've only a couple of days, I suppose I'd better go home.

ELIZA: Only two days?

FREDDY: It's not leave, you see. I'm on a mission for the Colonel.

HIGGINS: Important? Or can't you say?

FREDDY: Vitally. Today I delivered to his fancy woman a bronze copy of Myron's Discobolus he acquired from a partly ruined chateau, and tomorrow I have to collect his shotgun from the gunsmith's.

HIGGINS: One can only hope his knowledge of tactics and strategy is sounder than his morals. HE EXITS.

ELIZA: How is your mother?

FREDDY: My mother? Oh, I suppose she is alright. She never forgave me for enlisting after she had arranged for one of her influential friends to make an opening for me in South America. You've no idea how much I wish I'd listened to her. Anything rather than having to exist in a man made hell.

ELIZA: From what my father said, I gather conditions over there are appalling.

FREDDY: You have to be there to have any conception of how appalling.

ELIZA: Does not being an officer help?

FREDDY (HIS VOICE BECOMING EMOTIONAL): Not in the trenches. How can it when one has to be the first to go 'over the top' and show an example of courage to the men – courage I've not got. HE BREAKS DOWN. I can't go back, Eliza. I can't face it!

ELIZA (MOVING TO PUT AN ARM ROUND HIS SHOULDERS): You have to, Freddy. . You know you have to. God knows I wish with all my heart there was an alternative. Think of what would happen to your mother if you were shot as a deserter.

FREDDY (BITTERLY): Conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman – an officer inefficient he has to rely on his sergeant for guidance, and a gentleman who would sell his soul if it would prevent him from having to return to France.

ELIZA (A FLOWER GIRL'S SUPERSTITION RESURFACING): No, Freddy! You don't know what may happen if you say that!

FREDDY: Don't worry, Eliza. Old Nick is too busy helping the Huns to listen to what I have to say.

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE

HIGGINS IS WRITING. ELIZA IS MAKING NOTES FROM A REFERENCE BOOK

HIGGINS: That letter of condolence you sent to Mrs. Eynsford-Hill.

ELIZA: Yes?

HIGGINS: You did include my expression of sympathy.

ELIZA: Of course. Why do you ask?

HIGGINS: When I passed her on my way to the Museum this morning, she cut me dead.

ELIZA: How strange. Perhaps she did not see you.

HIGGINS: She saw and heard me, and walked on with her nose in the air.

ELIZA: Could it be Freddy's death has affected her mind?

HIGGINS: Mind! I would not have given her credit for having one. Incidentally, her son's death would seem to be an example of how the arbiter of our lives, always assuming one exists, sometimes grants wishes in a way contrary to what the supplicant desires. Freddy wished not to return to France, so he drowns in mid-Channel when the troopship on which he is travelling is sunk by a U-boat.

ELIZA: I would not have expected you, of all people, to believe that.

HIGGINS: I'm not sure I do, but it is as well always to remember Hamlet's immortal words.

ELIZA: So God destroys hundreds to teach one man a lesson?

HIGGINS: I said nothing about God, Eliza. When Apollyon rampages, who can say what dark forces are in his train?

MRS PEARCE APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY, BUT BEFORE SHE CAN SPEAK MRS. EYNSFORD-HILL PUSHES HER WAY INTO THE ROOM. HIGGINS AND ELIZA STAND.

MRS EYNSFORD-HILL (WHO HAS A LETTER IN HER HAND CONFRONTS ELIZA). How dare you after killing my son have the effrontery to send me a letter of sympathy!

ELIZA: I killed your son?

MRS EYNSFORD-HILL: Had it not been for you, he would not be in America.

ELIZA: I assure...

MRS EYNSFORD-HILL: I'll not listen to excuses. Why he should be attracted to someone of your class – a slum bred creature, I shall never understand. SHE TEARS THE LETTER INTO PIECES AND THROWS THEM IN ELIZA'S FACE. Keep your sympathy. HER VOICE RISES HYSTERICALLY. Keep it!

HIGGINS (COLDLY): Normally I would demand an apology for this intrusion and insulting behaviour, but aware of the extenuating circumstances, I shall ask you to leave this house immediately.MRS. EYNSFORD-HILL PUSHES HER WAY INTO THE ROOM. HIGGINS AND ELIZA STAND.

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HIGGINS (COLDLY): Normally I would demand an apology for this intrusion and insulting behaviour, but aware of the extenuating circumstances, I shall ask you to leave this house immediately.

MRS EYNSFORD-HILL: You,Professor Higgins with your supercilious attitude, I know you despised Freddy.

HIGGINS: 'Pitied' would be more accurate. Pitied him for having to be a substitute for his henpecked father .*Requiescat in pace* – the peace he never knew at home.

MRS EYNSFORD-HILL: Don't think that what takes place here is not widely known – the frequent visits from a common prostitute. I can't think why Mrs. Pearce does not leave.

HIGGINS: Be careful, madam. Slander is a serious offence.

MRS. EYNSFORD-HILL: Do you deny that at least once a week a street walker of the lowest type enters this house and stays for an hour?

HIGGINS: It is not necessary for me to confirm or deny anything, but in order to prevent you from spreading lies and landing yourself in a Court of Law, I will tell you the woman in question is a reformed character and now on friendly terms with a clergyman, a gentleman who, I am sure, would not hesitate to take legal action if one word of what you have implied were to reach his ears.

MRS. EYNSFORD-HILL: Liar!

HIGGINS TUGS THE BELL PULL. MRS PEARCE ENTERS.

HIGGINS: Mrs. Pearce, I have asked this lady to leave. If she has not done so in the next three minutes, please call a constable. From this moment she is *persona non grata*.

MRS PEARCE: Very good, sir.

MRS EYNSFORD-HILL: I'll made you regret this. SHE MOVES TOWARDS THE DOOR. You'll find yourself barred from every home, I can assure you, you are now welcome simply for your values as an entertaining freak.

HIGGINS (EQUABLY): The loss will be theirs.

MRS EYNSFORD-HILL EXITS WITH MRS PEARCE.

ELIZA: I'm afraid this will upset your mother. She and Mrs. Eynsford-Hill was such old friends.

HIGGINS: After that episode I don't care if it does.

ELIZA: I am very sorry she is under the impression that I am responsible for Freddy going against her wishes.

HIGGINS: But in no way to be blamed. That he behaved as he did after you made your position clear was his decision. Some might think it heroic.

ELIZA: You do not?

HIGGINS: One does not have to be a psychiatrist to know bloodshed was not his metier. In my estimation a man who does not know his limitation is an ass.

MRS PEARCE ENTERS WITH A VISITING CARD ON A SILVER TRAY

HIGGINS (READING CARD): Captain A.C. Boville, C.O.F.

ELIZA: Lottie's benefactor.

HIGGINS: Undoubtedly. Show him in, Mrs. Pearce.

BOVILLE ENTERS. HE IS IN UNIFORM WITH A CLERICAL COLLAR.

HIGGINS (SHAKING HANDS): How d'you do. HE INTRODUCES ELIZA. Miss Eliza Doolittle.

BOVILLE: Delighted to meet you, Miss Doolittle. THEY SHAKE HANDS AND HE ACCEPTS A CHAIR INDICATED BY HIGGINS. I simply had to come to congratulate you on Miss Colby's transformation. Her improvement during the past fortnight has been truly miraculous.

ELIZA: She has worked exceptionally hard.

HIGGINS: Our miracles, you see, need the recipient's co-operation.

BOVILLE: My fiancée has admitted that at the start hers was not wholehearted

HIGGINS: So it is a fact that you want to marry her?

BOVILLE: It is indeed. At last she has consented to be my wife. But not until the cessation of hostilities.

HIGGINS: Captain. You may tell me to mind my own business if you wish, but are you not taking a big chance on the strength of so short an acquaintanceship?

BOVILLE: My dear sir, where I am going shortly I shall be taking greater chances every minute.

HIGGINS: But not avoidably. I am aware, of course, that Lottie has said she wanted to leave the profession at which she has worked since puberty or possibly before. That being the case, why when old enough to take the initiative did she not find other employment?

BOVILLE: A good point, Professor Higgins, which one would have been naïve not to consider. However, having worked as a curate among the dregs of humanity in the dockyard area of Cardiff, I have found that many people, no matter how unpleasant their occupation, are reluctant to change it. The stevedores, the miner, prematurely aged by toil, never dreams of doing something different. And their children follow in the family tradition. Many, of course, given an opportunity, would through ignorance be incapable of taking it.

HIGGINS: I fear I must be the Devil's advocate and point out that was not applicable in Lottie's case. Even an imbecile could scrub floors, and with servants now working in factories her services would have been welcomed.

BOVILLE: I am sure you have my welfare in mind, but I am convinced my fiancée is a reformed woman. For me it is our future together that counts, not the past. That is a closed book. Does not Luke tell of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repented?

ELIZA: I too believe Lottie is a changed woman.

HIGGINS: I hope most sincerely your convictions will be justified.

BOVILLE (LOOKING AT HIS WATCH): I am sorry this meeting must be a brief one. In the hope of encouraging her to read his novels, I am taking Lottie to see what remains of Dicken's London which is rapidly disappearing.

HIGGINS: And after the next war that little and a great deal of this great city will be gone.

BOVILLE: You do not think this is a war to end wars?

HIGGINS: History and the characteristics of the Germans are against it.

BOVILLE: One can only pray for a change of heart.

HIGGINS: When you and I meet again I hope to have your views concerning certain theological questions - mainly eschatological.

BOVILLE: I shall look forward to giving them. But whether my scholarship will be adequate only time will tell.

ALL SHAKE HANDS AND BOVILLE AND ELIZA EXEAUNT. ELIZA ENTERS.

ELIZA: Saint or damn fool?

HIGGINS: I think the chaplain qualifies for a halo.

ELIZA: Was it necessary for you to express doubt concerning the authenticity of Lottie's reform?

HIGGINS: Someone had to bring him from Nephelokkygia. As far as I am concerned the harlot with a heart of gold is an invention of female novelists.

ELIZA: You were prepared to give her a chance.

HIGGINS: As another experiment. It is possible she may be the exception that proves the rule, but I wanted to be sure the chaplain was *au fait* with the reality of the situation.

ELIZA: Incidentally, where is Nephe;, - whatever it is?

HIGGINS: The Cloud-Cuckoo-Land of Aristophanes. I would have thought that was common knowledge.

ELIZA: At the Garden they would think Aristophanes was a Derby runner.

HIGGINS: An indictment of the standard of compulsory education. Which reminds me that you should learn Greek.

ELIZA: You said you would teach me Latin, but never did.

HIGGINS (BRISKLY): Then by all means let us start now. My train to Southampton does not leave for another hour.

ELIZA TAKES AN EXERCISE BOOK AND PENCIL FROM A DRAWER AND SITS AT THE TABLE.

HIGGINS (RAPIDLY): We start with noun declensions. Each noun declined through six cases – nominative, vocative, genitive, accusative, dative and ablative.

ELIZA: Not so fast, please. I can't do shorthand.

HIGGINS: You should learn, Eliza. I'm sure you have plenty of time for it. What do you do when I'm not here?

ELIZA: When not restoring order to this room, filing correspondence, rescuing documents from the wastepaper basket, transcribing your notes, copying ancient scripts, interviewing prospective clients, searching for references to people of whom few have ever heard, I adopt the lotus position and indulge in transcendental meditation.

HIGGINS (REPRESSING AMUSEMENT WITH A COUGH): Irony, Miss Doolittle, also is my prerogative. Now where were we? For the first declension which is mainly feminine we have 'mensa' – a table.

BLACKOUT

SCENE TWO

EVENING THE SAME DAY. ELIZA IS READING. MRS PEARCE ENTERS.

MRS PEARCE: I am wondering what I ought to do about a meal for the Professor. He said the train would arrive at eight. It is now nine thirty and he is not here.

ELIZA: With so many troop movements taking place, no one can say how long ordinary services will be delayed. I suggest a plate of sandwiches, Mrs. Pearce. It is possible he might get something on the train.

MRS. PEARCE: Let us pray there will be no air raid before he is safely home.

ELIZA: I had hoped he would be able to catch an earlier train.

AT THAT MOMENT A WHISTLE BLOWN OFF STAGE SOUNDS A WARNING. THE SOUND OF DISTANT GUNFIRE FOLLOWS:

ELIZA: Go to the cellar, Mrs. Pearce. I shall wait here until he comes.

MRS PEARCE EXITS. ELIZA MOVES RESTLESSLY ABOUT THE ROOM. THE VOLUME OF GUNFIRE INCREASES AND IS FOLLOWED BY THE SOUND OF EXPLODING BOMBS. AFTER A WHILE SILENCE REIGNS. MRS. PEARCE ENTERS.

MRS PEARCE: Oh my, no sign of the Professor?

ELIZA: None, I feel I should go out to see what has happened. I could walk in the direction of Waterloo Station.

MRS PEARCE: Would it not be wiser to wait here?

ELIZA: I'll give him another fifteen minutes.

MRS. PEARCE: My Scottish blood gives me a feeling something has happened to him.

ELIZA: That being the case, I suppose someone eventually will let us know.

SOUND OF DOOR KNOCKER OFF STAGE

MRS PEARCE: I knew it. I knew it.

MRS PEARCE EXITS AND RETURNS WITH THE CONSTABLE..

Eliza: You have news of Professor Higgins?

CONSTABLE: Yes, Eliza. Luckily I happened to see him, and knowing you'd be getting worried, I've come to tell you he's gone into Westminster Hospital.

ELIZA: Seriously hurt?

CONSTABLE: I don't think he is. Leastways he was able to walk.

ELIZA: Thank God for that!

CONSTABLE: Probably sufferin' from shock. He musta been on the station when the bomb hit it fair and square. The train had only just got in.

ELIZA: I'd better go and enquire.

CONSTABLE: I wouldn't if I were you. Things are pretty bad in that area, and I don't think anyone at the hospital would have the time to deal with visitors. Wait until mod-morning and give them a chance to sort things out. At present it's like a battlefield. Having been too close for comfort, I'm a bit shook up myself.

MRS PEARCE: Come into the kitchen, officer, and I'll make you a cup of tea.

CONSTABLE: Thank you ma'am. I could do with a little something in it.

MRS PEARCE: We still can spare some sugar.

BLACKOUT

SCENE THREE

THE NEXT DAY. ELIZA AND MRS HIGGINS ENTER AFTER VISITING THE HOSPITAL

MRS HIGGINS: I'm afraid, Eliza, that for the next month or so your life will not be a happy one. Learning he'll never hear again has dealt him a terrible blow. Judging by his behaviour during previous illnesses, I expect him to be even more tyrannical than he is normally. I'm so thankful you will be here to help him.

ELIZA: It will give me an opportunity to repay him for all he's done for me.

MRS HIGGINS: Done to boost his ego. Never forget that. Not from any charitable motive.

ELIZA: Whatever the reason, Mrs. Higgins, it was I who benefited. Without his help I still would be sitting under the portico of St. Paul's Church begging passers-by to buy my flowers.

MRS HIGGINS: And without your courage and ability to learn, my dear, my son would not have won his wager. How I regret not being at the Embassy that night. Colonel Pickering told me you looked every inch a princess and behaved like one.

ELIZA: The Colonel is truly a great-hearted gentleman.

MRS HIGGINS: And my Henry is only an oversized brain.

BLACKOUT

SCENE FOUR

HIGGINS IS ALONE. HIS FACE BETRAYS HIS BLACK MOOD. HE POURS A WHISKEY AND SWALLOWS IT AT ONE GULP. HE IS ABOUT TO POUR ANOTHER WHEN ELIZA ENTERS. SHE SINGLES HE SHOULD NOT.

ELIZA (SLOWLY, WITH EXAGGERATED LIP MOVEMENTS): That is not the answer.

HIGGINS: I'll have you know, Eliza, that I'll not be told what I may do or not do, by you or anyone. There never has been petticoat government in this house, and it's not going to start now I'm afflicted. Hindsight tells me I never should have had you to stay here. What is any woman but a disturbing element in a man's life? And don't imagine for one moment that you are indispensable. I managed quite well before you came, and I can do it now. Why don't you go and find another Boville, marry him, and leave me in peace?

ELIZA (MUTTERING WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED DISPLAY OF TEMPER) Why don't you find a sty and live among the other pigs. SHE EXITS AND SLAMS THE DOOR.

HIGGINS (THROWING THE GLASS INTO THE FIREPLACE): Oh God, what have I done! HE PUTS HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS AND WEEPS RECOVERING AFTER A WHILE, HE RINGS FOR MRS PEARCE. MRS PEARCE ENTERS.

HIGGINS: Where is Eliza?

MRS PEARCE GESTURES TO INDICATE SHE HAS GONE OUT.

HIGGINS: Do you know if she is coming back?

MRS PEARCE INDICATES SHE DOES NOT KNOW

HIGGINS: Thank you. That is all. MRS PEARCE EXITS>

HIGGINS RISES, OPENS A DRAWER AND TAKES OUT A REVOLVER. FINDING IT IS NOT LOADED HE SEARCHES FOR BULLETS.

HIGGINS: Where the hell has she hidden them? HE RETURNS THE REVOLVER TO THE DRAWER AND SITS DESPONDENTLY

BLACKOUT

AN HOUR LATER. ELIZA ENTERS CARRYING A FLAT PARCEL.

HIGGINS: I thought I'd lost you.

ELIZA UNWRAPS A CHILD'S SLATE IN A WOODEN FRAME AND A STICK OF WHITE CHALK. SHE WRITES AND HANDS IT TO HIGGINS.

HIGGINS: You'll stay provided I agree to perfect my lip reading and together we learn the manual deaf and dumb language.

ELIZA: Well?

HIGGINS (WITH A SLIGHT SMILE): This will not leave you much time for transcendental mediation.

ELIZA WRITES.

HIGGINS: To quote your father's lamentable French and not spell it correctly simply will not do Eliza.

CURTAIN