

ACT III

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

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

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

It is between four and five in the afternoon.

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

Oh bother! [*He throws the hat down on the table*].

MRS HIGGINS

Go home at once.

HIGGINS

[*kissing her*] I know, mother. I came on purpose.

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

Nonsense! I know I have no small talk; but people dont mind. [*He sits on the settee*].

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

Well, this isnt a phonetic job.

MRS HIGGINS

You said it was.

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

Does that mean that some girl has picked you up?

HIGGINS

Not at all. I dont mean a love affair.

MRS HIGGINS

What a pity!

HIGGINS
Why?

MRS HIGGINS
Well, you never fall in love with anyone under forty-five. When will you discover that there are some rather nice-looking young women about?

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

MRS HIGGINS
Do you know what you would do if you really loved me, Henry?

HIGGINS
Oh bother! What? Marry, I suppose?

MRS HIGGINS
No. Stop fidgeting and take your hands out of your pockets. [With a gesture of despair, he obeys and sits down again]. Thats a good boy. Now tell me about the girl.

HIGGINS
She coming to see you.

MRS HIGGINS
I dont remember asking her.

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

MRS HIGGINS
Indeed! Why?

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

MRS HIGGINS
And invited her to my at-home!

HIGGINS
[*rising and coming to her to coax her*] Oh, thatll be all right. Ive taught her to

speak properly; and she has strict orders as to her behavior. Shes to keep to two subjects: the weather and everybody's health--Fine day and How do you do, you know--and not to let herself go on things in general. That will be safe.

MRS HIGGINS
Safe! To talk about our health! about our insides! perhaps about our outsides! How could you be so silly, Henry?

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

MRS HIGGINS
Thats satisfactory, at all events.

HIGGINS
Well, it is and it isnt.

MRS HIGGINS
What does that mean?

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

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

THE PARLOR-MAID
Mrs. and Miss Eynsford Hill. [*She withdraws*].

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

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[*to Mrs. Higgins*] How do you do? [*They shake hands*].

MISS EYNSFORD HILL

How d'you do? [*She shakes*].

MRS HIGGINS

[*introducing*] My son Henry.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

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

HIGGINS

[*glumly, making no movement in her direction*] Delighted. [*He backs against the piano and bows brusquely*].

MISS EYNSFORD HILL

[*going to him with confident familiarity*] How do you do?

HIGGINS

[*staring at her*] I've seen you before somewhere. I haven't the ghost of a notion where; but I've heard your voice. [*Drearily*] It doesn't matter. You'd better sit down.

MRS HIGGINS

I'm sorry to say that my celebrated son has no manners. You mustn't mind him.

MISS EYNSFORD HILL

[*gaily*] I don't. [*She sits in the Elizabethan chair*].

MISS EYNSFORD HILL

[*a little bewildered*] Not at all. [*She sits on the ottoman between her daughter and Mrs. Higgins, who has turned her chair away from the writing-table*].

HIGGINS

Oh, have I been rude? I didn't mean to be.

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

The parlor-maid returns, ushering in Pickering.

THE PARLOR-MAID

Colonel Pickering [*She withdraws*].

PICKERING

How do you do, Mrs. Higgins?

MRS HIGGINS

So glad you've come. Do you know Mrs. Eynsford Hill--Miss Eynsford Hill? [*Exchange of bows. The Colonel brings the Chippendale chair a little forward between Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Higgins, and sits down*].

PICKERING

Has Henry told you what we've come for?

HIGGINS

[*over his shoulder*] We were interrupted: damn it!

MRS HIGGINS

Oh Henry, Henry, really!

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[*half rising*] Are we in the way?

MRS HIGGINS

[*rising and making her sit down again*] No, no. You couldn't have come more fortunately: we want you to meet a friend of ours.

HIGGINS

[*turning hopefully*] Yes, by George! We want two or three people. You'll do as well as anybody else.

The parlor-maid returns, ushering Freddy.

THE PARLOR-MAID

Mr. Eynsford Hill.

HIGGINS

[*almost audibly, past endurance*] God of Heaven! another of them.

FREDDY

[*shaking hands with Mrs. Higgins*] Ah, dedo?

MRS HIGGINS

Very good of you to come. [*Introducing*] Colonel Pickering.

FREDDY

[*bowing*] Ahdedo?

MRS HIGGINS

I dont think you know my son, Professor Higgins.

FREDDY

[*going to Higgins*] Ahdedo?

HIGGINS

[*looking at him much as if he were a pickpocket*] I'll take my oath Ive met you before somewhere. Where was it?

FREDDY

I dont think so.

HIGGINS

[*resignedly*] It dont matter, anyhow. Sit down.

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

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

Am I? Very sorry. [*Beaming suddenly*] I suppose I am, you know.

[*Uproariously*] Ha, ha!

MISS EYNSFORD HILL

[*who considers Higgins quite eligible matrimonially*] I sympathize. I havnt any small talk. If people would only be frank and say what they really think!

HIGGINS

[*relapsing into gloom*] Lord forbid!

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[taking up her daughter's cue] But why?

HIGGINS

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

MISS EYNSFORD HILL

[*gaily*] Is it so very cynical?

HIGGINS

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[*seriously*] Oh! I'm sure you dont mean that, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

[*warningly*] Or of manners, Henry?

THE PARLOR-MAID

[*opening the door*] Miss Doolittle. [*She withdraws*].

HIGGINS

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

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

LIZA

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

MRS HIGGINS

[*cordially*] Quite right: I'm very glad indeed to see you.

PICKERING

How do you do, Miss Doolittle?

LIZA

[shaking hands with him] Colonel Pickering, is it not?

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

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

LIZA

How do you do? *[She sits down on the ottoman gracefully in the place just left vacant by Higgins].*

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[introducing] My daughter Clara.

LIZA

How do you do?

CLARA

[impulsively] How do you do? *[She sits down on the ottoman beside Eliza, devouring her with her eyes].*

FREDDY

[coming to their side of the ottoman] Ive certainly had the pleasure.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[introducing] My son Freddy.

LIZA

How do you do?

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

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

Henry, please! *[He is about to sit on the edge of the table].* Dont sit on my writing-table: youll break it.

HIGGINS

[sulkily] Sorry.

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

A long and painful pause ensues.

MRS HIGGINS

[at last, conversationally] Will it rain, do you think?

LIZA

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

FREDDY

Ha! ha! how awfully funny!

LIZA

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

FREDDY

Killing!

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

I'm sure I hope it wont turn cold. Theres so much influenza about. It runs right through our whole family regularly every spring.

LIZA

[darkly] My aunt died of influenza: so they said.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[clicks her tongue sympathetically]!!!

LIZA

[in the same tragic tone] But it's my belief they done the old woman in.

MRS HIGGINS

[puzzled] Done her in?

LIZA

Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They all thought she was dead; but my father he kept

ladling gin down her throat til she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL
[*startled*] Dear me!

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL
What does doing her in mean?

HIGGINS
[*hastily*] Oh, thats the new small talk. To do a person in means to kill them.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL
[*to Eliza, horrified*] You surely dont believe that your aunt was killed?

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL
But it cant have been right for your father to pour spirits down her throat like that. It might have killed her.

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL
Do you mean that he drank?

LIZA
Drank! My word! Something chronic.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL
How dreadful for you!

LIZA
Not a bit. It never did him no harm what I could see. But then he did not keep it up regular. [*Cheerfully*] On the burst, as you might say, from time to time.

And always more agreeable when he had a drop in. When he was out of work, my mother used to give him fourpence and tell him to go out and not come back until he'd drunk himself cheerful and loving-like. Theres lots of women has to make their husbands drunk to make them fit to live with. [*Now quite at her ease*] You see, it's like this. If a man has a bit of a conscience, it always takes him when he's sober; and then it makes him low-spirited. A drop of booze just takes that off and makes him happy. [*To Freddy, who is in convulsions of suppressed laughter*] Here! what are you sniggering at?

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

LIZA
If I was doing it proper, what was you laughing at? [*To Higgins*] Have I said anything I oughtnt?

MRS HIGGINS
[*interposing*] Not at all, Miss Doolittle.

LIZA
Well, thats a mercy, anyhow. [*Expansively*] What I always say is--

HIGGINS
[*rising and looking at his watch*] Ahem!

LIZA
[*looking round at him; taking the hint; and rising*] Well: I must go. [*They all rise. Freddy goes to the door*]. So pleased to have met you. Good-bye. [*She shakes hands with Mrs. Higgins*].

MRS HIGGINS
Good-bye.

LIZA
Good-bye, Colonel Pickering.

PICKERING
Good-bye, Miss Doolittle. [*They shake hands*].

LIZA
[*nodding to the others*] Good-bye, all.

FREDDY
[*opening the door for her*] Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle? If so--

LIZA

Walk! Not bloody likely. [*Sensation*]. I am going in a taxi. [*She goes out*].

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[*suffering from shock*] Well, I really cant get used to the new ways.

CLARA

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

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

PICKERING

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

CLARA

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[*rising*] Well, after that, I think it's time for us to go.

Pickering and Higgins rise.

CLARA

[*rising*] Oh yes: we have three at-homes to go to still. Good-bye, Mrs. Higgins. Good-bye, Colonel Pickering. Good-bye, Professor Higgins.

HIGGINS

[*coming grimly at her from the divan, and accompanying her to the door*]

Good-bye. Be sure you try on that small talk at the three at-homes. Dont be

nervous about it. Pitch it in strong.

CLARA

[*all smiles*] I will. Good-bye. Such nonsense, all this early Victorian prudery!

HIGGINS

[*tempting her*] Such damned nonsense!

CLARA

Such bloody nonsense!

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[*convulsively*] Clara!

CLARA

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

FREDDY

[*to the heavens at large*] Well, I ask you-- [*He gives it up, and comes to Mrs. Higgins*]. Good-bye.

MRS HIGGINS

[*shaking hands*] Good-bye. Would you like to meet Miss Doolittle again?

FREDDY

[*eagerly*] Yes, I should, most awfully.

MRS HIGGINS

Well, you know my days.

FREDDY

Yes. Thanks awfully. Good-bye. [*He goes out*].

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

Good-bye, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS

Good-bye. Good-bye.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

[*to Pickering*] It's no use. I shall never be able to bring myself to use that word.

PICKERING

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

Only, Clara is so down on me if I am not positively reeking with the latest slang. Good-bye.

PICKERING

Good-bye [*They shake hands*].

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

MRS EYNSFORD HILL

Thank you, dear. Good-bye. [*She goes out*].

HIGGINS

[*eagerly*] Well? Is Eliza presentable [*he swoops on his mother and drags her to the ottoman, where she sits down in Eliza's place with her son on her left*]?

Pickering returns to his chair on her right.

MRS HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

But don't you think something might be done? I mean something to eliminate the sanguinary element from her conversation.

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

[*aggrieved*] Do you mean that my language is improper?

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

[*deeply injured*] Well I must say--

PICKERING

[*interrupting him*] Come, Higgins: you must learn to know yourself. I haven't heard such language as yours since we used to review the volunteers in Hyde Park twenty years ago.

HIGGINS

[*sulkily*] Oh, well, if you say so, I suppose I don't always talk like a bishop.

MRS HIGGINS

[*quieting Henry with a touch*] Colonel Pickering: will you tell me what is the exact state of things in Wimpole Street?

PICKERING

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

With us, of course. Where would she live?

MRS HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

[*slowly*] I think I know what you mean, Mrs. Higgins.

HIGGINS

Well, dash me if I do! I've had to work at the girl every day for months to get her to her present pitch. Besides, she's useful. She knows where my things are, and remembers my appointments and so forth.

MRS HIGGINS

How does your housekeeper get on with her?

HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

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

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

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

HIGGINS

[*assailing her at the other ear*] Yes, by George: it's the most absorbing experiment I ever tackled. She regularly fills our lives up; doesnt she, Pick?

PICKERING

We're always talking Eliza.

HIGGINS

Teaching Eliza.

PICKERING

Dressing Eliza.

MRS HIGGINS

What!

HIGGINS

Inventing new Elizas.

HIGGINS

[*speaking together*] You know, she has the most extraordinary quickness of ear...

PICKERING

...I assure you, my dear Mrs. Higgins, that girl...

HIGGINS

...just like a parrot. Ive tried her with every...

PICKERING

...is a genius. She can play the piano quite beautifully.

HIGGINS

...possible sort of sound that a human being can make—

PICKERING

We have taken her to classical concerts and to music...

HIGGINS

Continental dialects, African dialects, Hottentot...

PICKERING

...halls; and its all the same to her: she plays everything

HIGGINS

...clicks, things it took me years to get hold of; and...

PICKERING

...she hears right off when she comes home, whether it's...

HIGGINS

...she picks them up like a shot, right away, as if she had...

PICKERING

...Beethoven and Brahms or Lehar and Lionel Monckton;

HIGGINS

...been at it all her life.

PICKERING

...though six months ago, she'd never as much as touched a piano--

MRS HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

I beg your pardon. *[He draws his chair back apologetically]*.

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

But what?

MRS HIGGINS

[unconsciously dating herself by the word] A problem.

PICKERING

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

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

HIGGINS

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

MRS HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

[indulgently, being rather bored] Oh, that will be all right, Mrs. Higgins. *[He rises to go]*.

HIGGINS

[rising also] We'll find her some light employment.

PICKERING

Shes happy enough. Dont you worry about her. Good-bye. *[He shakes hands as if he were consoling a frightened child, and makes for the door]*.

HIGGINS

Anyhow, theres no good bothering now. The things done. Good-bye, mother. *[He kisses her, and follows Pickering]*.

PICKERING

[turning for a final consolation] There are plenty of openings. We'll do whats right. Good-bye.

HIGGINS

[to Pickering as they go out together] Let's take her to the Shakespear exhibition at Earls Court.

PICKERING

Yes: lets. Her remarks will be delicious.

HIGGINS

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

PICKERING

Ripping. *[Both are heard laughing as they go downstairs]*.

MRS HIGGINS

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