

HIGGINS

Good enough for what?

ELIZA

Good enough for ye-oo. Now you know, don't you? I'm come to have lessons, I am. And to pay for 'em too: make no mistake.

HIGGINS

(Stunned) Well!!! *(Recovering his breath with a gasp)*
What do you expect me to say to you?

ELIZA

Well, if you was a gentleman, you might ask me to sit down, I think. Don't I tell you I'm bringing you business?

HIGGINS

Pickering, shall we ask this baggage to sit down, or shall we throw her out of the window?

ELIZA

(Running away in terror) Ah-ah-oh-ow-ow-ow-oo!
(Wounded and whimpering) I won't be called a baggage when I've offered to pay like any lady!

PICKERING

(Gently) What is it you want, my girl?

ELIZA

I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him—not asking any favor—and he treats me as if I was dirt. I know what lessons cost as well as you do; and I'm ready to pay.

HIGGINS

How much?

ELIZA

(Coming back to him, triumphant) Now you're talking! I thought you'd come off it when you saw a chance of getting back a bit of what you chucked at me last night.
(Confidentially) You'd had a drop in, hadn't you?

HIGGINS

(Peremptorily) Sit down.

ELIZA

Oh, if you're going to make a compliment of it—

HIGGINS

(*Thundering at her*) Sit down.

MRS. PEARCE

(*Severely*) Sit down, girl. Do as you're told.

PICKERING

(*Gently*) What is your name?

ELIZA

Eliza Doolittle.

PICKERING

Won't you sit down, Miss Doolittle?

ELIZA

(*Coyly*) Oh, I don't mind if I do. (*She sits down on sofa*)

HIGGINS

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

ELIZA

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

HIGGINS

You know, Pickering, if you consider a shilling, not as a simple shilling, but as a percentage of this girl's income, it works out as fully equivalent to sixty or seventy pounds from a millionaire. By George, it's the biggest offer I ever had.

ELIZA

(*Rising, terrified*) Sixty pounds! What are you talkin' about? I never offered you sixty pounds! Where would I get . . .

HIGGINS

Oh, hold your tongue.

ELIZA

(Weeping) But I ain't got sixty pounds. Oh . . .

MRS. PEARCE

Don't cry, you silly girl. Sit down. Nobody is going to touch your money.

HIGGINS

Somebody is going to touch you with a broomstick, if you don't stop snivelling. Now, sit down.

ELIZA

Aoooow! One would think you was my father!

HIGGINS

If I decide to teach you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you. Here— (He offers her his silk handkerchief)

ELIZA

What's this for?

HIGGINS

To wipe your eyes. To wipe any part of your face that feels moist. Remember, that's your handkerchief; and that's your sleeve. Don't mistake the one for the other if you wish to become a lady in a shop.

PICKERING

Higgins, I'm interested. What about your boast that you could pass her off as a duchess at the Embassy Ball? I'll say you're the greatest teacher alive if you can make that good. I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you can't do it. And I'll even pay for the lessons.

ELIZA

Oh, you're real good. Thank you, Captain.

HIGGINS

(Tempted, looking at her) It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty!

ELIZA

Aoooow! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.

HIGGINS

I'll take it! I'll make a duchess of this draggle-tailed gutter-snipe!