

HIGGINS

*(With professional exquisiteness of modulation)* I walk over everybody? My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering. I never had the slightest intention of walking over anybody. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.

MRS. PEARCE

But, sir, you can't take a girl up like that as if you were picking up a pebble on the beach.

HIGGINS

Why not?

MRS. PEARCE

Why not? But you don't know anything about her! What about her parents? She may be married.

ELIZA

Garn!

HIGGINS

There! As the girl very properly says: Garn!

ELIZA

Who'd marry me?

HIGGINS

*(Suddenly resorting to the most thrillingly beautiful low tones in his best elocutionary style)* By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I've done with you.

ELIZA

Here! I'm goin' away! He's off his chump, he is. I don't want no balmies teachin' me.

HIGGINS

*(Wounded in his tenderest point by her insensibility to his elocution)* Oh, indeed! I'm mad, am I? Very well, Mrs. Pearce, you needn't order the new clothes for her. Throw her out! *(He deftly retrieves his handkerchief)*

MRS. PEARCE

Stop, Mr. Higgins! I won't allow it. Go home to your parents, girl.

ELIZA

I ain't got no parents.

HIGGINS

There you are. "She ain't got no parents." What's all the fuss about? The girl doesn't belong to anybody, and she's no use to anybody but me. Take her upstairs and—

MRS. PEARCE

But what's to become of her? Is she to be paid anything? Oh, do be sensible, sir.

HIGGINS

*(Impatiently)* What on earth will she want with money? She'll have her food and her clothes. She'll only drink if you give her money.

ELIZA

*(Turning on him)* Oh, you are a brute. It's a lie; nobody ever saw the sign of liquor on me. *(To PICKERING)* Oh, sir, you're a gentleman; don't let him speak to me like that!

PICKERING

*(In good-humored remonstrance)* Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feelings?

HIGGINS

*(Looking critically at her)* Oh, no, I don't think so. Not any feelings that we need bother about. *(Cheerily)* Have you, Eliza?

MRS. PEARCE

Mr. Higgins. I must know on what terms the girl is to be here. What is to become of her when you've finished your teaching? You must look ahead a little, sir.

HIGGINS

What's to become of her if I leave her in the gutter? Answer me that, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS. PEARCE

That's her own business, not yours, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS

Well, when I've done with her, we can throw her back into the gutter, and then it will be her own business