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DOOLITTLE

(*Relieved at being so well understood*) Just so, Governor. That's right.

HIGGINS

Mrs. Pearce, Eliza's father has come to take her away. Give her to him.

DOOLITTLE

(*Desperately*) Now wait a minute, Governor, wait a minute. You and me is men of the world, ain't we?

HIGGINS

Oh! Men of the world, are we? You'd better go, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS. PEARCE

I think so indeed, sir! (*She goes with dignity*)

DOOLITTLE

Governor, I've taken a sort of fancy to you. (*Again he wheezes in HIGGINS' face, causing the latter almost to lose balance*) And if you want the girl I'm not so set on havin' her back home again, but what I might be open to is an arrangement. All I ask is my rights as a father; and you're the last man alive to expect me to let her go for nothing; for I can see you're one of the straight sort, Governor. Well, what's a five-pound note to you? And what's Eliza to me?

PICKERING

I think you ought to know, Doolittle, that Mr. Higgins' intentions are entirely honorable.

DOOLITTLE

(*To PICKERING*) Of course they are, Governor. If I thought they wasn't, I'd ask fifty.

HIGGINS

(*Revolted*) Do you mean to say that you would sell your daughter for fifty pounds?

PICKERING

Have you no morals, man?

DOOLITTLE

(*Frankly*) No! I can't afford 'em, Governor. Neither could you if you was as poor as me. Not that I mean

any harm, mind ya . . . but . . . if Eliza is going to get a bit out of this, why not me, too? Eh? Look at it my way. What am I? I ask ya, what am I? I'm one of the undeserving poor, that's what I am. Think what that means to a man. It means he's up agenst middle-class morality for all the time. If there's anything going and I put in for a bit of it, it's always the same story: you're undeserving, so you can't have it. But my needs is as great as the most deserving widow's that ever got money out of six different charities in one week for the death of the same husband. I don't need less than a deserving man, I need more. I don't eat less hearty than he does, and I drink a lot more. I'm playing straight with you. I ain't pretending to be deserving. I'm undeserving, and I mean to go on being undeserving. I like it, and that's the truth. But will you take advantage of a man's nature to do him out of the price of his own daughter what he's brought up, fed and clothed by the sweat of his brow, till she's growed big enough to be interesting to you two gentlemen? Is five pounds unreasonable? I put it to you, and I leave it to you.

HIGGINS

You know, Pickering, if we were to take this man in hand for three months, he could choose between a seat in the Cabinet and a popular pulpit in Wales. I suppose we ought to give him a fiver?

PICKERING

He'll make bad use of it, I'm afraid.

DOOLITTLE

Not me, so help me, Governor, I won't. Just one good spree for myself and the missus, givin' pleasure to ourselves and employment to others, and satisfaction to you to know it ain't been throwed away. You couldn't spend it better.

HIGGINS

This is irresistible. Let's give him ten. (*He goes to his desk for his wallet*)

DOOLITTLE

No! The missus wouldn't have the heart to spend ten, Governor; ten pounds is a lot of money: it makes a