

# **Pygmalion Book Notes**

## **Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw**

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## Author/Context

George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1856 to Lucinda and George Shaw. His father was a corn merchant who suffered from alcoholism, and his mother was a house wife and singer. Lucinda ran away to London with her voice teacher, George Lee. All her children followed her there. After a fall out with Lee, Shaw's mother pursued an unconventional teaching career in singing using the techniques Lee taught her.

Shaw began working as a clerk in a land agency at the age of fifteen, but abandoned that career before age twenty and resolved to fashion himself as a modern Shakespeare. He came of age as a writer in the late Victorian era, and much of his work demonstrated a rebellion against the morays of the time. Shaw's first essays into the writing profession were as a music and art critic, and his success allowed him to expand the range and style of his criticism. He developed into an extremely prolific playwright, novelist, and lecturer. Shaw was an active Fabian socialist and a supporter of feminists and homosexuals. His aggressive and diverse social commentaries kept him in the public eye throughout his long life. Shaw died in 1950, at the age of 94.

*Pygmalion* is the most famous and perhaps most beloved of Shaw's many plays. Shaw was often criticized for writing plays full of unsubstantial, if witty, banter. With *Pygmalion*, Shaw challenged his critics by making both the subject and the content of the play speech. He used phonetics and Ovid's story of Pygmalion as a means of defending his artistic creation and addressing feminist issues. Several film adaptations have been made of the play, one of which garnered Shaw an Academy Award for best screenplay in 1938.

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# Plot Summary

One rainy evening in London, two gentlewomen, a mother and a daughter, are waiting for Freddy, the son and brother of the pair, to hail a taxi. They're standing under the shelter of a portico crowded with people when Freddy carelessly bumps into a flower girl. The girl attempts to get the mother to buy the flowers her son has damaged, and is successful. She then tries to sell her flowers to another gentleman, when someone in the crowd warns her that a man is taking notes on what she has been saying. She becomes hysterical, believing the man wrongly suspects her of prostitution, but it is discovered that he is merely a phonetician taking down her accent in phonetic script. He demonstrates that he can tell where any man in England was born just by hearing his accent. The gentleman the flower girl originally propositioned introduces himself to the phonetician as Colonel Pickering, an expert in Indian dialects. The notetaker reveals himself to be Henry Higgins, author of the *Universal Grammar* and professional language tutor. They part together for dinner, after Higgins throws a generous handful of coins to the miserable flower girl.

The next morning, Higgins is showing Pickering his laboratory when the flower girl arrives at his house. She announces that she wants to take English lessons in order to speak well enough to work in a shop. The two phoneticians are shocked but amused by her proposition, and Pickering bets Higgins that he cannot transform the flower girl, Eliza, into a convincing duchess in six months. Higgins decides to take the bet and persuades the ruffled Eliza to agree to it. While Mrs. Pearce, Higgins's house servant, takes Eliza to her room and gives her a bath, Eliza's father, Alfred Doolittle, arrives. Higgins guesses that Doolittle has come to blackmail him in some way, and tells Doolittle to take his daughter back. Doolittle does not want his daughter back; he just wants a little money. Higgins suggests that it is immoral to pay for a person, and Doolittle replies saying middle class morality is only an excuse to never give money to the poor. Higgins is amused and gives him some money. Eliza begins her lessons the next day, and she is tutored in the language and manners of a gentlewoman for the next six months.

Eliza's first public test takes place at Higgins's mother's house. Eliza has been instructed only to speak about health and the weather, but Higgins is nervous and in a bad humor. He succeeds in insulting the guests and worrying his mother before Eliza even arrives. The guests happen to be the same gentlewoman, who bought a flower from Eliza during the rainstorm, and her daughter and son. Eliza makes quite a good impression, as her pronunciation and dress are perfect; however, when she tells an off-color story about her family Higgins realizes that she has a lot more to learn. Freddy, the son, is taken with Eliza's beauty and her peculiar ways. Clara, the daughter, is eager to master Eliza's shocking manners, which Higgins explains are in vogue. When all the company leaves, Higgins and Pickering gush over how fun their project with Eliza has been. Mrs. Higgins warns them that they must consider what to do with Eliza when the game is over.

At the end of the six-month period, Higgins and Pickering take Eliza to an Embassy ball. The Ambassador's wife is impressed with Eliza's perfect speech and all the guests marvel at her beauty; however, her crowning success is determined when a translator and former linguistic student of Higgins announces to the Ambassador that Eliza is a Hungarian princess.

Later that evening back in Higgins's study, Pickering congratulates Higgins on his success. Higgins complains that it was a boring task that he will not repeat. Eliza is insulted, and feels that her efforts are unappreciated. She is silent but then in a fit of desperation throws Higgins's slippers at him. He is insulted and says she has nothing to complain about. She says she is leaving and gives him back a ring he previously gave to her. He leaves the room angrily, and she gets her things together and leaves the house. She meets Freddy in the street and they embrace impulsively. She decides to go to Mrs. Higgins in the morning to ask for her advice on what to do.

The next morning, Higgins arrives at his mother's house in a panic. He has reported Eliza missing to the police, and seeks his mother's advice. Before she can tell him that Eliza is in the house, Mr. Doolittle arrives dressed in a wedding suit. He accuses Higgins of ruining his happiness. Doolittle has inherited three thousand pounds a year from an American philanthropist who was told by Higgins that Doolittle was the most original moralist in England. Doolittle laments the new responsibilities he must take on as a member of the middle class, including marrying his girlfriend, but says he cannot resist accepting the money. Eliza comes down and reconciles with Higgins, and they all accompany Doolittle to the wedding. Later, Eliza marries Freddy and opens a florist shop with Pickering's financial assistance.

# Major Characters

**Henry Higgins:** Expert phonetician and spoiled eccentric. Stubbornly self-righteous and willful, Higgins demonstrates his ideals in his brazen disregard for the Victorian rules of conduct. On a bet, he takes on the flower girl, Eliza, as a student. But though he alters Eliza's speech successfully, he cannot succeed in controlling her. He asserts that she is his creation, but she rebels, even threatening to teach others using his methods, at which point she gains his respect.

**Eliza Doolittle:** Poor flower girl turned linguistic protégé. Headstrong and coarse street urchin taken into Professor Higgins care on a bet that he cannot transform her into the verisimilitude of a duchess. Despite her rebellious nature, Eliza becomes fond of her teacher and is upset by his impartiality. She ends up marrying Freddy, a member of the middle class who worships her, and sets up a flower shop with him, successfully crossing class lines.

**Colonel Pickering:** A wealthy bachelor and expert in Indian dialects. Pickering comes to England from India to meet Higgins, and ends up staying in his home and becoming his good friend. When Eliza asks Higgins to teach her to speak proper English, Pickering bets him that he cannot make Eliza pass for a duchess in six months time. Higgins takes the bet, and while he teaches her phonetics, Pickering imparts to her all the finer aspects of social conduct. Pickering also finances Eliza's flower shop after she graduates from their finishing school game. He is the more sensitive and fatherly of the two linguists.

**Mrs. Higgins:** Higgins' mother, and his ideal woman. Mrs. Higgins is a refined, independent woman, who repeatedly tries to reform her son's wild social habits. Higgins visits her often for her company and her advice.

**Alfred Doolittle:** Eliza's father, a common dustman, who begs for change to spend at the pub. He convinces Higgins to give him five pounds for the use of his daughter by surprising and impressing him with his unconventional, compelling morals. Higgins mentions him to a philanthropist who dies and wills Doolittle three thousand pounds a year to lecture for his Moral Reform League. This catapults Doolittle into the middle class, causing him to marry his longtime lover and take on the responsibility of lending money to the people he used to beg from.

## Minor Characters

**Clara:** Mrs. Eynsford Hill's obnoxious daughter, who though failing to inherit the wealth of the privileged has inherited all its snobbery. She discovers that she can gain the respect and friendship of others by being honest with them rather than putting on airs after reading some H.G. Wells. Her discovery is a sort of accident, as her mother and the rest of her acquaintances never bother to point out her shallow insincerity.



**Freddy:** Mrs. Eynsford Hill's son and Eliza's lover. Freddy is accustomed to a middle class lifestyle but, like his sister, lacks a middle class education. He falls madly in love with Eliza and eventually marries her. They try to open a flower shop together, but do poorly until they take some classes in simple mathematics.

**Mrs. Eynsford Hill:** Clara and Freddy's mother. A former member of the upper class, who now attempts to keep up appearances although she is in reduced circumstances. She is continuously bemoaning her situation and coddling her poorly educated children.

**Mrs. Pearce:** Higgins' maid, who disapproves of his poor manners and willful behavior but has become inured to them over time. She attempts to convince Higgins that his arrangement with Eliza cannot be taken lightly, but fails.

**Nepomuuck:** Higgins' former student, a translator, and self-proclaimed master linguist. At the Embassy party, where Higgins hopes Eliza will pass as a duchess, Nepommuck proclaims that she is a Hungarian of royal blood.

**Ezra D. Wannafeller:** Rich American philanthropist, who transforms Alfred Doolittle from a common dustman to a member of the middle class by willing him three thousand pounds a year to lecture for the Wannafeller Moral Reform League.

## Objects/Places

**Constables:** Eliza and Freddy are interrupted while embracing three times by three separate constables during their amorous night walk through the streets of London. After reprimanding them, one of the constables reflects on the vanity of romantic human hopes.

**Flowers:** Eliza is a professional flower girl before she meets Higgins. He will not buy flowers from her but on a whim he gives her a generous handful of money. After her studies with Higgins, she returns to selling flowers but with Freddy's help and in shop.

**Pygmalion:** Pygmalion is the main character of a famous Greek myth. He is a sculptor who disdaining real women, falls in love with a statue of a women that he has sculpted. He asks Venus to give life to his statue, she grants his wish, and the statue becomes the woman, Galatea. The two fall instantly in love in the romantic conclusion of the myth. The title, Pygmalion, is only mentioned once in Shaw's play, at the very end. Shaw says that Eliza never loved Higgins; that his Galatea never loved her creator, Pygmalion.

**Ring:** Higgins buys Eliza a ring, which she gives back to him as an insult. He is upset and hurls the ring into the fire. After he leaves, she retrieves the ring from the fireplace, but then casts it into the chocolate dish.

**Chocolates:** Higgins loves chocolates. He has a dish of them displayed prominently in his study. When trying to convince Eliza to play along with his bet, he lures her with promises of endless chocolates and just as she is about to reply to him he pops one in her mouth, silencing her. Eliza leaves a sentimental ring given to her by Higgins in the chocolate dish before leaving his house.

**Slippers:** Higgins often misplaces his slippers. Eliza gets into the habit of finding them for him. This saves him some annoyance, but he is not particularly grateful. In a fit of unappreciated desperation, Eliza throws the slippers at him on the final night before her departure.

**Cabbage Leaf:** Higgins repeatedly refers to Eliza as a bruised cabbage leaf. After he recreates her, he no longer uses the term.

**Milton:** Higgins speaks of Milton as if he were God in various instances in the book. He tells Eliza on their first meeting that she has no right to live because she has massacred the language of Milton. Later in the play, he comments that he has wasted the treasures of his Miltonic mind on Eliza.

# Quotes

Quote 1: "If the play makes the public aware that there are such people as phoneticians, and that they are among its most important people in England at present, it will serve its turn." Preface, pg. 9

Quote 2: "Nah then, Freddy: look wh' y' gowin, deah," Act 1, pg. 15

Quote 3: "Garn! Oh do buy a flower off me, Captain. I can change a half-a-crown." Act 1, pg. 19

Quote 4: "copper's nark." Act 1, pg. 21

Quote 5: "A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere - no right to live. Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift or articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespear and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon." Act 1, pg. 27

Quote 6: "He is, in fact, but for his years and size, rather like a very impetuous baby 'taking notice' eagerly and loudly, and requiring almost as much watching to keep him out of unintended mischief." Act 2, pg. 34

Quote 7: "It's almost irresistible. She is so deliciously low - so horribly dirty" Act 2, pg. 40

Quote 8: "The moment I let a woman make friends with me, she becomes jealous, exacting, suspicious, and a damned nuisance. I find that the moment I let myself make friends with a woman, I become selfish and tyrannical. Women upset everything. When you let them into your life, you find that the woman is driving at one thing and youre driving at another." Act 2, pg. 50

Quote 9: "Only this morning you applied it to your boots, to the butter, and to the brown bread." Act 2, pg. 51

Quote 10: "I'm willing to tell you. I'm wanting to tell you. I'm waiting to tell you." Act 2, pg. 55

Quote 11: "Well whats a five-pound note to you? And whats Eliza to me?" Act 2, pg. 57

Quote 12: "genteel poverty." Act 3, pg. 70

Quote 13: "Walk! Not bloody likely [Sensation]. I am going to take a taxi." Act 3, pg. 78

Quote 14: "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." Act 3, pg. 82

Quote 15: "It was a silly notion: the whole thing has been a bore." Act 4, pg. 98

Quote 16: " Higgins: [formally] Damn Mrs. Pearce; and damn the coffee; and damn you; and [wildly] damn my own folly in having lavished my hard-earned knowledge and the treasure of my regard and intimacy on a heartless guttersnipe. [ He goes out with impressive decorum, and spoils it by slamming the door savagely.]" Act 4, pg. 105

Quote 17: "The constable shakes his head, reflecting on his own courtship and on the vanity of human hopes." Act 4, pg. 106

Quote 18: "the most original moralist at present in England, to the best of [his] knowledge, was Alfred Doolittle, a common dustman?" Act 5, pg. 115

Quote 19: "you took the money for the girl; and you have no right to take her as well." Act 5, pg. 117

Quote 20: "You find me cold, unfeeling, selfish, don't you? Very well: be off with you to the sort of people you like. Marry some sentimental hog or other with lots of money, and a thick pair of lips to kiss you with and a thick pair of boots to kick you with." Act 5, pg. 130

# Topic Tracking: Feminine Power

## Act 2

Feminine Power 1: Eliza refuses to sit down when commanded impolitely by Higgins to do so, but then is convinced to sit by Pickering.

Feminine Power 2: Higgins rushes Eliza into accepting his rash proposal that she spend the next six months in his house under his tutelage for the sake of whimsical bet, all the while insulting her and ignoring her objections. She attempts to leave at one point, but is silenced by a chocolate Higgins pops into her mouth and seduced by the luxuries he promises her. She speaks her mind but in the end does everything he says including taking a bath, which she dreads.

Feminine Power 3: Mrs. Pearce accuses Higgins of having poor manners. He denies it, but her insistence and detailed accounts force him to admit that he does not have flawless manners.

## Act 3

Feminine Power 4: Mrs. Higgins criticizes her son's vulgar language, but he does not admit he is at fault until Pickering supports her argument.

## Act 4

Feminine Power 5: Eliza becomes enraged by Higgins careless comments after her performance at the Embassy party. She feels her efforts have been disregarded and that she will now leave and be forgotten by Higgins and Pickering, whom she has become fond of. She expresses her anger by throwing Higgins' slippers at him and coldly giving back all the items he had bought her. She enjoys angering him, and later that evening leaves the house without warning.

Feminine Power 6: Freddy is madly in love with Eliza. She discovers him outside Higgins house, and he tells her he often spends his nights pining there. They embrace and he accompanies her around the city for the rest of the night.

## Act 5

Feminine Power 7: Eliza wields her studied grace in an attack on her teacher, Higgins. She subtly insults him with the language and manners that he taught her. She also threatens to use the teaching techniques he used on her to make a living for herself.

Feminine Power 8: Eliza demands that Higgins care for her, which he refuses to commit to. He instead proposes a mutually independent cohabitation, in which both parties are free to leave at any moment, and which requires no even exchange of services or sentiment. Eliza is uneasy with the financial and emotional uncertainty of such a position.



## Sequel

Feminine Power 9: Shaw says that women marry men who can support them and will worship them. Because Eliza is a strong, resourceful woman she makes a compromise and marries Freddy, who cannot support her but will adore her. Shaw concludes that powerful women are not usually interested in marrying powerful men.

Feminine Power 10: Eliza remains Higgins friend and sparring equal into the indefinite future. She sometimes fantasizes about seducing him, but never really loved him in the romantic sense as Galatea loved her creator, Pygmalion.



# Topic Tracking: Language

## Preface

Language 1: Shaw condemns the English language as a phonetic mess, without a standard spoken form, and says that the spoken dialects of English exacerbate class lines. He suggests that phonetic reforms should be considered.

## Act 1

Language 2: The flower girl spontaneously calls the gentleman, who knocks her flower basket out of her hands, Freddy, as a polite address. This use of the name Freddy is unfamiliar to the upper class and his mother disturbed that the flower girl knows her son's name.

Language 3: The flower girl guesses that she is suspected of soliciting because she called a man Captain. She does not know if that address has any other implications in upper class English.

Language 4: The phonetician can guess the origin of every man in the crowd by his accent. He offends a gentlewoman by revealing that she comes from a less reputable part of London than she would like people to know.

Language 5: The phonetician makes his living by schooling those who want to move up the social ladder in the appropriate alteration of their English accent and usage.

## Act 2

Language 6: Eliza's first public test is somewhat of a flop as far as the details of speech go. She talks about the weather in barometrical terms and relates a lurid story, which involves her father pouring gin down her aunt's throat. If that was not enough to give her away, she swears as she goes out the door.

## Act 3

Language 7: The Ambassador's wife greets Eliza as she arrives at the Embassy party, and is intimidated by her perfect English salutation, which puts her "How d'ye do?" to shame.

## Act 5

Language 8: Higgins waxes philosophical, when arguing with Eliza about whether she should continue to stay with him or not. However, much of his speech fails to move her. In the end he decides that he has wasted his "Miltonic mind" on her and tells her to decide for herself.

## Sequel

Language 9: Shaw decides not to leave the conclusion of his play up to his audience's imagination. He says the surplus of romance novels with predictably happy endings has enfeebled many people's minds. It is his power as the writer to give his story a unique and perhaps more meaningful ending.



# Topic Tracking: Manners

## Preface

Manners 1: Shaw says that one very talented phonetician remained obscure because he refused to be polite to his peers in academia. He says that, unlike this phonetician, his character, Higgins, has enough charisma to be successful in society.

## Act 1

Manners 2: The flower girl suggests that the gentlewoman's son, who knocked over her basket of flowers, has not had a proper upbringing in order to goad his mother into buying a bunch of flowers from her. She is successful.

Manners 3: The gentlewoman rudely pushes people aside and insults her own mother repeatedly.

## Act 2

Manners 4: Higgins has the manners of a child. He is selfish and shocking but genuine.

Manners 5: Mrs. Pearce tells Higgins not to swear or wipe his hands on his dressing gown in front of Eliza. He will have to amend his own ways if he wishes to produce a convincing duchess.

## Act 3

Manners 6: Higgins brusquely greets the guests who visit his mother, and then proceeds to ignore them and swear in front of them. His mother says he has no manners.

## Act 4

Manners 7: Both Higgins and Eliza lose their composure. Eliza hurls slippers at Higgins and Higgins hurls the ring she gives back to him into the fire. This is uncharacteristic behavior for both of them, but more so for Eliza who has been the model student of manners for some time.

## Act 5

Manners 8: Eliza criticizes Higgins' lack of manners by thanking Pickering publicly for teaching her everything she knows about being polite. Higgins later tells her that his manners are equal to Pickering's because they both treat a duchess in the same manner as a flower girl.



# Topic Tracking: Morals

## Act 1

Morals 1: The crowd expresses moral indignation to defend the flower girl against any possibly incriminating charges that would suggest she was a prostitute.

Morals 2: The phonetician says the flower girl's ugly use of the language of Shakespeare makes her unworthy of life itself.

Morals 3: Higgins scoffs at the flower girl's request for him to buy a bunch of flowers, but on hearing the ringing of a church bell, he changes his mind and gives her a generous handful of coins.

## Act 2

Morals 4: When Mrs. Pearce shows Eliza her bedroom, Eliza says she is not good enough to stay in such a room.

Morals 5: Pickering questions Higgins' morality regarding women, and Higgins assures him that he has no immoral inclinations and that women are mainly an annoyance to him.

Morals 6: Higgins is loath to give money to Eliza's father, Alfred Doolittle, who comes to see if he can gain anything from his daughter's good luck. Doolittle asks for five pounds in exchange for the use of his daughter, an offer to which Higgins is morally opposed. Doolittle says middle class morality is just an excuse to never give money to the poor.

Morals 7: Doolittle also contradicts the generally accepted virtue of thrift. When Pickering suggests that he will not use the five pounds well, Doolittle says that he will spend it all in one night on food, drink, and entertainment. He explains that if he saves the money he will have to become prudent and then he will lose happiness.

## Act 5

Morals 8: When Mrs. Higgins suggests that Mr. Doolittle can now support Eliza since he has a large income, Higgins threateningly reminds Doolittle that he cannot take Eliza as she has already been paid for.

Morals 9: When an inheritance suddenly raises Doolittle into the middle class, he feels weighed down by the moral code that accompanies his status. Responsibility accompanies money. He feels the need to give money to his old friends and he consents to marry his long-time girlfriend.

Morals 10: Higgins says that his manners are essentially good because he treats everyone the same. He says the only thing that matters is that you respect all humans equally, not that you abide by a set code of actions.

# Preface

Shaw explains that he has chosen to make the hero of *Pygmalion* a phonetician in order to bring to light the need for reform of the English language. English spelling and pronunciation is an impossible, out-dated hodge-podge that has no standard, which can be taught. No one can speak English without another speaker somewhere despising his version of the language.

Topic Tracking: Language 1

Shaw became interested in phonetics in the 1870s. He knew several famous phoneticians. He believed Henry Sweet, a young professor of phonetics at Oxford, to be the most brilliant among them, but when he attempted to draw him into the limelight by giving him an opportunity to write an essay in a prominent magazine, Sweet wrote a libelous article about a man in a position he thought could only be performed by a phonetician. Shaw determined that Sweet was too scornful of academia to ever suffer the politics required to make his theories known. Sweet invented the Current Shorthand, which is mentioned in the third act of the play. This phonetic code could express every sound in the English language distinctly. It never prevailed over the more popular Pitman system of shorthand, even though it was easier to write. Shaw suggests that the English simply enlarge their alphabet to cover all the sounds in the language and change their system of spelling to be as directly related to pronunciation as Spanish is. Higgins, the hero of *Pygmalion*, is not a portrait of Sweet. If Sweet had as much charisma as Higgins he would have been eminently famous. His temperament sentenced him to obscurity. Shaw does not intend Higgins to portray any specific phonetician, only to impress the English people with the important role of phonetics in modern England.

Topic Tracking: Manners 1

*"If the play makes the public aware that there are such people as phoneticians, and that they are among its most important people in England at present, it will serve its turn."*  
Preface, pg. 9

Shaw goes on to boast of the popular success of his play, and assert that, contrary to the suggestions of his critics, all great art must be didactic. Finally, he encourages those readers of his play, who aspire to climb the social ladder by altering their accents, that they can be successful if they study under a phonetic expert.

# Act 1

A young gentlewoman and her mother stand under a portico in Covent Garden, London, avoiding a torrential, evening rainstorm. They are among a group of pedestrians seeking shelter. The daughter complains that her brother, Freddy, should have gotten them a cab by now. Freddy returns without a cab. He tells them he has had difficulty finding a cab, but they insult him and tell him to continue looking. Dashing away, he knocks over a flower girl who is hurrying in for shelter. She says, "Nah then, Freddy: look wh' y' gowin, deah," Act 1, pg. 15 accidentally getting his name right.

He apologizes curtly and runs off. She gathers her scattered bunches of violets and moves under the portico. She is wearing shoddy clothing and is quite dirty. Freddy's mother asks the flower girl how she knew her son's name. The flower girl reproaches her for raising a boy who would spill a girl's flowers without paying for them, and asks if she will pay for them. Her daughter immediately commands her mother not to give the flower girl any money. The mother asks her daughter to allow her to pay for them. The daughter grudgingly gives her mother sixpence to pay for them after the flower girl says she can make change, but the mother does not ask for any change. Instead, she asks for an explanation of why the flower girl knew her son's name. The flower girl denies that she knew it. She says she only said it to be polite. The daughter scorns her mother for throwing away sixpence.

Topic Tracking: Manners 2

Topic Tracking: Language 2

A gentleman runs in from the rain and tells the mother that the rain is only getting worse. As he bends down to unfold his wet trousers, the flower girl asks him to buy a flower. He says he only has sovereign. She says, "Garn! Oh do buy a flower off me, Captain. I can change a half-a-crown." Act 1, pg. 19 He gives her three halfpence for nothing. She is grateful, but a bystander tells her to give him a flower for it because he sees someone who is writing down every word she says. He is implying that the man may be a police informer, who intends to prosecute her for soliciting herself.

The flower girl is terrified and begins to defend herself to the crowd hysterically. She says she is a respectable girl with a right to sell flowers. She gets a lot of attention as the sympathetic crowd tries to calm her down. She finds the gentleman who gave her the halfpence and pleads with him to exonerate her. The notetaker finally steps forward and asks the flower girl what is wrong. Another bystander, noticing the notetaker's fancy boots which signal that he is not an informer, explains to him that the flower girl thought he was a "copper's nark." Act 1, pg. 21 The notetaker asks, with great interest, what a copper's nark is. The bystander gives an inapt definition of an informer. The flower girl remains defensive and hysterical. She demands to know what he has written about her, but when he shows her his notes she cannot decipher them. So he reads a line of her speech back to her in perfect intonation. She then exclaims that it is because she called the gentleman Captain that the notetaker intends to have her charged. The gentleman

denies that he will allow a charge to be made against her, and the crowd rallies in her support.

One bystander points out the notetaker's boots as proof that he is not an informer. The notetaker responds to his comments by asking him how his family is doing in Selsey. The bystander is surprised, and asks how the notetaker knows his family is from Selsey. The notetaker refuses to demystify his knowledge. Instead, he asks the flower girl how she has come so far east, as she was born in Lisson Grove. She is appalled and in tears. The notetaker tells her to be quiet. Skeptical bystanders challenge the notetaker to tell them where they are from, and with each opportunity he more shockingly demonstrates his mysterious skill. Meanwhile, the flower girl pouts and insists that she is a good girl and that the notetaker is not a gentleman. The rain stops and the crowd begins to dissipate. The notetaker offends the daughter and mother but proceeds to call them a cab. However, the rain stops and they walk off to catch a bus.

Topic Tracking: Language 3

Topic Tracking: Language 4

Topic Tracking: Manners 3

Topic Tracking: Morals 1

The gentleman, flower girl, and notetaker remain. The gentleman asks the notetaker how he does his trick. The notetaker says that it is simply phonetics, which is his profession. He claims that he can place a man within six miles. The gentleman asks if he can make money as a phonetician. He responds that his clientele consists of those who want to refine their accents in order to move up the social ladder, and that they will pay well for it. The flower girl has been muttering continually, and the notetaker explosively tells her to shut up. She insists on her right to sit there. The notetaker responds,

*"A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere - no right to live. Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespear and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon."* Act 1, pg. 27

Topic Tracking: Language 5

Topic Tracking: Morals 2

The flower girl is shocked. The notetaker boasts to the gentleman that he could pass this flower girl off as a duchess after three months of tutelage, or get her a job in a shop, which requires better English. The gentleman is not surprised. He tells the notetaker that he is a student of Indian dialects. The notetaker asks him if he knows Colonel Pickering, who is an expert on Sanscrit. The gentleman says that he is Colonel Pickering, and that he has come from India looking for Henry Higgins. The notetaker confesses that he is Henry Higgins, author of Higgins's Universal Alphabet, and that he was going to visit India to meet Colonel Pickering. They decide to have supper together.

As they leave, the flower girl asks Pickering again if he will buy a flower. He again says he has no change.

Higgins derides her, but then when a church bell sounds, changes his mind and throws a handful of money into her basket. She cries out as she counts her newfound wealth. Just then, Freddy pulls up in a taxi looking for his mother and sister. She tells him they have left and takes the taxi home herself. When they arrive in Angel Court the driver asks for a shilling. The flower girl is shocked, and he laughs at her and leaves without the fare. Humiliated, she walks up to her shabby room. An empty birdcage hangs in the corner. She counts her money repeatedly until she realizes that she can plan what to do with it more economically with the light off. So she goes to bed in her clothes.

Topic Tracking: Morals 3

## Act 2

The next morning Higgins gives Pickering an overview of all his work. The scene is set in Higgins laboratory, in which can be found a phonograph, laryngoscope, organ pipes, singing lamp chimneys, tuning forks, etc. Besides the strange accoutrements of the phonetician, the laboratory looks like the comfortable study of wealthy man. There is a fireplace, armchair, and a piano. Higgins is dressed well and appears to be a robust man of about forty. He is eagerly interested in anything scientific in nature, and careless about the feelings of people around him. "He is, in fact, but for his years and size, rather like a very impetuous baby 'taking notice' eagerly and loudly, and requiring almost as much watching to keep him out of unintended mischief." Act 2, pg. 34

### Topic Tracking: Manners 4

Pickering is overwhelmed by all the information he has just gone through with Higgins. He cannot make out the distinctions between all the 124 vowel sounds Higgins has documented. Higgins chuckles and goes over to the piano to get a chocolate. Mrs. Pearce, Higgins housekeeper, enters the study to announce the arrival of an unknown woman. She says the woman has a dreadful accent, and Higgins decides to have her up so that he can record her voice in front of Pickering. Mrs. Pearce brings the flower girl into the study. Pickering straightens himself in the presence of the women. The flower girl has cleaned herself up a bit and is wearing a gaudy hat decorated with orange, blue, and red ostrich feathers. Higgins recognizes her immediately and is disappointed. He already has enough records of the Lisson Grove accent. He tells her to leave. She says she has come to get speech lessons, and intends to pay for them. Higgins and Pickering are amazed. Higgins asks her how much she will pay him, and tells her to sit down. She rebels and demands to be asked politely. Higgins refuses to play her game, but eventually Pickering soothes her. She tells them her name is Liza Doolittle, and says she knows a girl who gets French lessons for eighteen pence an hour. So, she intends to pay no more than a shilling for her English lessons. After some thought, Higgins remarks to Pickering that Liza has offered him two fifths of her day's income which would work out to sixty pounds from a millionaire. He exclaims that it is the biggest offer he has ever gotten. Liza denies that she offered him sixty pounds and begins to get hysterical. He tells her to be quiet and offers her his handkerchief. Pickering suggests a bet. He will pay for all the expenses of Liza's tutelage if Higgins can pass Liza off as a duchess at the ambassador's garden party. Higgins is tempted. "It's almost irresistible. She is so deliciously low - so horribly dirty" Act 2, pg. 40 Liza protests loudly. Higgins gets excited and tells Mrs. Pearce to go and wash Liza and burn all of her clothes. Liza's bewilderment turns into terror and she springs out of her chair and threatens to call the police. Liza says she will not be taught by a crazy man and attempts to leave, but Higgins temporarily soothes her by popping a chocolate in her mouth. Mrs. Pearce suggests that he delineate the terms of their agreement with Liza. Higgins tells Liza to think of chocolates, and taxis, and gold, and diamonds. He tells her she will marry an officer in the Guards. After some more insistence by Mrs. Pearce and Pickering, Higgins tells Liza she will stay in his house and learn proper English and the manners of duchesses for six months. If she is good, she will have a proper bedroom

and all the chocolates and taxi rides she desires, but if she is idle, Mrs. Pearce will wallop her with a broom. At the end of the six months, she will be taken to Buckingham Palace and if it is found out that she is not a duchess she will have her head cut off. Mrs. Pearce decides to take the arrangements into her own hands, and brings the girl upstairs. Liza follows her reluctantly, warning Higgins that she will not stay if she does not like it.

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 1

Mrs. Pearce shows Liza her bedroom and begins preparing a bath. Liza does not think she is good enough to sleep in such an elegant room. She thinks the bathroom is a strange laundry room, but Mrs. Pearce explains that it is where people wash themselves. Liza fears she will catch her death if she gets entirely wet. Mrs. Pearce says that Higgins washes himself every morning. Eventually, Mrs. Pearce has to wrestle Liza into the tub and endure the ensuing screams.

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 2

Topic Tracking: Morals 4

Down in the study, Pickering is questioning Higgins' character with regards to women. Higgins says, "The moment I let a woman make friends with me, she becomes jealous, exacting, suspicious, and a damned nuisance. I find that the moment I let myself make friends with a woman, I become selfish and tyrannical. Women upset everything. When you let them into your life, you find that the woman is driving at one thing and you're driving at another." Act 2, pg. 50 He asserts that he is a confirmed bachelor. Pickering insists that he must be assured of Pickering's character if he is to endorse this experiment. Higgins assures him, as Mrs. Pearce enters.

Topic Tracking: Morals 5

Mrs. Pearce asks Higgins if he will be very careful about the way he treats Liza. He asserts that he is always careful about what he says. She refutes that statement, saying that he is reckless in his speech whenever he is mildly peeved. She tells him he must not swear in front of Liza, and that he must be particularly careful not to say the word that starts with b. The vulgar word she refers to is bloody. He denies that he ever uses that word, except in moments of extreme excitement. Mrs. Pearce says, "Only this morning you applied it to your boots, to the butter, and to the brown bread." Act 2, pg. 51 Higgins passes it off as mere alliteration, but agrees not to use it in front of Liza. Mrs. Pearce then requests that Higgins be more careful in his manners as well. He is indignant at this suggestion, but succumbs angrily after Mrs. Pearce refers to specific habits, such as wiping his hands on his dressing gown. After Mrs. Pearce leaves, Higgins tells Pickering her ideas are ludicrous, and that although he is shy and has never been able to feel really grown-up like other men, she believes him to be overbearing.

Topic Tracking: Manners 5

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 3



Mrs. Pearce reenters to announce the arrival of Alfred Doolittle, Liza's father. Doolittle, an expressive and confident dustman, comes into the study with a look of concern and resolution. Doolittle greets Higgins and Higgins rejoins by telling him his place of birth. Doolittle says he wants his daughter. Higgins tells him to take her away at once. Doolittle is taken aback. Higgins threatens to call the police and tell them Doolittle sent his daughter to his house in an attempt to blackmail him for money. Doolittle protests; he says he has not mentioned money and he did not send Liza to Higgins. Higgins demands to know how Doolittle knows Liza is at his house. Doolittle says sweetly, "I'm willing to tell you. I'm wanting to tell you. I'm waiting to tell you." Act 2, pg. 55 Higgins comments on this rhythmic phrasing, saying that sentimental rhetoric is common to the Welsh. Doolittle tells them that he found out from a boy Liza sent to get her things from her landlady. Doolittle has brought her things. Higgins asks why he has brought her things if he intends to take her away. Doolittle says he does not intend to stand in Liza's way. Higgins tells him he must take her away. Doolittle says he asks only for his rights as a father, he does not want Liza back. "Well what's a five-pound note to you? And what's Eliza to me?" Act 2, pg. 57 Doolittle says he would ask more if he thought Higgins were a dishonorable man. Higgins is shocked at Doolittle's confession that he would sell his daughter. Doolittle defends himself by arguing that middle class morality is just an excuse to never give anything to the poor. They are impressed by his speech and decide to give him the money. Doolittle turns Victorian morality on its head again by saying he will make good use of the money by spending it on an evening of drinking and entertainment. This use he argues will keep him from wasting it by saving it, and will pleasure him and employ others. He turns down Higgins offer of more money, explaining that a large sum of money might tempt him to become prudent and therefore unhappy. Higgins suggests that if they listen any longer to Doolittle they may lose all their convictions.

Topic Tracking: Morals 6

Topic Tracking: Morals 7

As Doolittle leaves the room, Eliza, dressed in a Japanese dress, which Higgins brought from Japan, enters. All three men are shocked by her appearance. Liza suggests that her father is there to ask Higgins for money and a fight ensues. Higgins steps between them and suggests that Doolittle come back to visit his daughter and meet a clergyman friend of his. He mentions the clergyman to discourage future visits from Doolittle. Doolittle assents and Mrs. Pearce escorts him out. Liza wishes her father would work at his trade instead of begging all the time. She asks if she can take a taxi to Tottenham Court Road so she can impress her old friends. Higgins suggests that she wait until her new clothes arrive. Mrs. Pearce announces their arrival, and Liza rushes out.

Eliza's first lesson is very disconcerting for her. She sits in Higgins laboratory as Higgins paces in front of her. She begins reciting her alphabet with a strong accent. Higgins stops her and asks her to say cup of tea. She obliges, and he suggests the proper placement for her tongue to produce better pronunciation. She gets it right on her next try. Higgins's rather intense lesson is characterized by exaggerated insults, compliments, and threats, and Eliza begins to weep. He tells her to leave and practice

with Mrs. Pearce. Her lessons continue in this fashion for months before her first practice round in London society.

## Act 3

Higgins bursts into his mother's sitting room. Mrs. Higgins is writing at a desk in her elegantly decorated parlor. She is waiting for visitors to arrive as it is her at-home-day. Mrs. Higgins scolds Higgins for coming, and tells him to leave as he always offends her visitors. Higgins says he has picked up a girl. Mrs. Higgins hopes it is a love interest, but Higgins says he is not interested in young women and that his idea of a lovable woman is someone just like his mother. He tells her about his project and says that he has invited Eliza to practice at Mrs. Higgins at-home-day. He has instructed Eliza to converse only on two topics, the weather and everyone's health.

Higgins jumps up to leave as Mrs. Higgins first guests, Mrs. And Miss Eynsford Hill, arrive. The mother appears reserved and the daughter gay and arrogant. Shaw attributes both of these characteristics to the women's social station of "genteel poverty." Act 3, pg. 70 Higgins attempted escape is unsuccessful. He is introduced and thinks he has met the pair somewhere. Pickering arrives, followed by Mrs. Eynsford Hill's son, Freddy. Higgins is slightly spooked by these people he cannot quite remember. He is also irritated because his talk with his mother was interrupted. He therefore treats the guests quite rudely by his mother's estimation. Miss Hill commiserates with Higgins by saying that she wishes everyone would say what they really think. Higgins says it would be quite indecent if they did.

Topic Tracking: Manners 6

Eliza arrives, and Higgins covertly indicates to her which woman is his mother, the hostess. Eliza is dressed exquisitely and greets Mrs. Higgins with studied grace. Mrs. Hill introduces her daughter, Clara, and son, Freddy. They are both impressed by Eliza's appearance. During the introduction, Higgins remembers the occasion on which he met the Hills. He swears but is silenced by his mother and retreats in exasperation. Mrs. Higgins asks about the weather, and Eliza gives her an intricate scientific answer that causes Freddy to laugh. She then relates a story about her father pouring gin down her aunt's throat to cure her diphtheria. Mrs. Hill is confused by the vulgar terms that Eliza uses. Higgins explains that it is the new small talk. Freddy can barely contain his laughter. Higgins cues Eliza and she rises to leave. Freddy offers to walk her across the park, and she responds in perfect English, "Walk! Not bloody likely [Sensation]. I am going to take a taxi." Act 3, pg. 78

The Hills are shocked by Eliza's use of the vulgar term bloody, but with some coaching by Higgins accept it as part of the new small talk. Clara determines to use it at her next social engagement. Freddy is determined to see Eliza again. The Hills leave, and Higgins eagerly questions Mrs. Higgins on her opinion of Eliza's performance. She says Eliza will never be presentable while she continues to live with Higgins, because his language is so loose. He protests, but when Pickering sides with his mother he accepts the criticism. Mrs. Higgins inquires about the arrangement they have with the girl. After their explanation she cajoles them for playing with a live doll. Higgins replies saying, "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." Act 3, pg. 82

Both Pickering and Higgins are effusive about Eliza's brilliant progress. They have a shouting match in which Pickering describes her skill at the piano and Higgins describes her precocious language acquisition. Mrs. Higgins reminds them that they should consider what they are going to do with this woman who they have educated beyond her social class. They brush off her concern, by saying they will find her some job, and leave discussing plans to take Eliza to the theater. Mrs. Higgins is exasperated and unable to continue writing letters.

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 4

Topic Tracking: Language 6

Near the end of the six-month bet, Pickering and Higgins take Eliza to an exclusive party at an embassy in London. They arrive in style. Eliza wears an evening gown and diamonds. As Higgins is taking off his coat, a smartly dressed, bearded man greets him with open arms. He reminds Higgins that he is Nepommuck, the Hungarian linguistic prodigy and his former student. He says he speaks thirtytwo languages and can place a man anywhere in Europe just by hearing him speak. Nepommuck is called away to translate for a Greek diplomat, and Higgins worries that he may be able to figure out Eliza. Eliza is presented to the Ambassador and his wife. They compliment Pickering on his adopted daughter, and the wife tells Nepommuck to find out everything about her.

In the salon, the crowd admires Eliza's strange grace. The Ambassador's wife asks Higgins about Eliza, but is interrupted by Nepommuck who exclaims with pride that Eliza is a fraud. He says she is a Hungarian of royal blood. The Ambassador asks Higgins what he thinks, and he replies that she is an ordinary girl who has been taught to speak by an expert. They are not convinced, and think Higgins is stubborn and obsessed with cockney dialects. The group breaks up and Higgins and Pickering decide the bet has been decided in Higgins favor. The three leave the party.

Topic Tracking: Language 7

## Act 4

Pickering and Higgins sit in Higgins laboratory around midnight after returning from the party. Eliza enters and sits down, brooding and silent. The two men are slightly drunk. Higgins can't find his slippers and Eliza brings them to him without a word. He does not notice her action, but is pleasantly surprised by the appearance of the slippers. Pickering congratulates Higgins on winning the bet, and Higgins thanks God it is over. Eliza flinches. He continues to complain about the foolishness of the party and the whole process of training Eliza. "It was a silly notion: the whole thing has been a bore." Act 4, pg. 98 Pickering congratulates him again and goes to bed. Higgins follows him but returns for his slippers. Eliza has become furious and hurls his slippers at him. Higgins is shocked. She accuses him of wanting to get rid of her and not caring if she were dead. He calmly gets her to admit that she has nothing to complain about regarding her treatment and concludes that the stress of the event has gotten to her. She seems to calm down, but then her desperation returns. She demands to know what she is to do with herself. He expresses no concern and suggests that she get married or open a florist's shop. She is not soothed, and asks what she can take with her when she leaves. He hasn't given her departure a thought. She demands to know, so that she will not be accused of stealing. He is flustered and tells her she can take everything but the rented jewels she is wearing. He turns to leave, but she stops him and forces him to take the jewels immediately as well as a ring he had bought for her previously. He is insulted and loses his temper. Eliza relishes this moment.

*"Higgins: [formally] Damn Mrs. Pearce; and damn the coffee; and damn you; and [wildly] damn my own folly in having lavished my hard-earned knowledge and the treasure of my regard and intimacy on a heartless guttersnipe. [ He goes out with impressive decorum, and spoils it by slamming the door savagely.]"* Act 4, pg. 105

Eliza picks up the ring off the floor, but after some consideration flings it on the dessert tray. She goes to her room, puts on her walking dress and leaves the house.

Topic Tracking: Manners 7

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 5

She finds Freddy outside. He has been pining for her there. They embrace in mutual need and he lavishes kisses upon her. However, a constable interrupts them. Freddy tells him they have just become engaged, and they run away. "The constable shakes his head, reflecting on his own courtship and on the vanity of human hopes." Act 4, pg. 106 After they escape, Eliza confesses to Freddy that she was going to throw herself into the river. He consoles her with another embrace, but they are again stopped by a constable. Eliza suggests they get a taxi and drive about until morning, when she intends to visit Mrs. Higgins to ask for her advice. Freddy agrees heartily.

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 6

## Act 5

The next morning, Mrs. Higgins is visited by her agitated son and Colonel Pickering. They have reported Eliza to the police as missing. Mrs. Higgins is vexed and tells them that Eliza has a right to leave them. The parlour maid announces the arrival of Mr. Doolittle. Mr. Doolittle enters, dressed expensively as if he was a bridegroom. He accosts Higgins, blaming him for ruining his happiness. Irritated, Higgins proclaims him either drunk or mad. Doolittle asks if he did not tell a philanthropist in America, Extra D. Wannafeller, that "the most original moralist at present in England, to the best of [his] knowledge, was Alfred Doolittle, a common dustman?" Act 5, pg. 115

Higgins admits that he did make such a joke. Doolittle says Wannafeller has died and bequested him 3,000 pounds a year on the condition that he will lecture for the Wannafeller Moral Reform World League up to six times a year. Higgins and Pickering are pleasantly surprised, but Doolittle goes on to explain that the carefree life he used to have as one of the undeserving poor has been ruined by this event. He used to ask responsible people for money, but now he is the one who is being asked for money by all his acquaintances. He does not want the responsibility of having money. Mrs. Higgins suggests that he renounce the gift, but he says he has not got the nerve to give up what will save him from having to go to the workhouse in his old age. Doolittle congratulates him on his good sense, and Mrs. Higgins is glad to hear that Eliza will have someone to provide for her. Higgins bristles at this idea. He says to Doolittle, "you took the money for the girl; and you have no right to take her as well." Act 5, pg. 117

Doolittle has no intention of supporting Eliza if he does not have to. Mrs. Higgins reassures Higgins, telling him that Eliza is in fact just upstairs. Higgins is put out that she has kept this information from him till now. She explains that Eliza has been insulted by their lack of recognition for her efforts of the last evening. Higgins is indignant, but agrees to be civil when Eliza comes down. Mrs. Higgins asks Doolittle to go out on the balcony until Eliza and Higgins have solved their problems.

Topic Tracking: Morals 8

Topic Tracking: Morals 9

Eliza comes in, perfectly composed, greets Higgins and sits down besides Pickering. Higgins warns her not to try using the tricks he taught her on him. She ignores him and tells Pickering she shall be unhappy if he forgets her because she learnt all of her manners from him, and would have never succeeded in becoming a lady if she only had Higgins as an example. Higgins says she will go back to her old ways soon enough. As if on key, she utters one of her old undignified yelps because her newly distinguished father walks into the room.

Higgins jumps on her mistake with self-righteous satisfaction. Eliza asks if Doolittle has touched a millionaire this time, and he affirms this. He says he is getting married to his



girlfriend, and Eliza expresses disapproval. However, she agrees to go to the wedding. Pickering and Mrs. Higgins decide to accompany her. Pickering and Doolittle leave together and while Mrs. Higgins goes to get ready, Higgins corners Eliza for a private conversation. He tells her his manners are the same as Pickering's; that he treats a duchess the same as he treats a flower girl and that is the important thing. Eliza says she does not care how he treats her as long as he does not ignore her.

He would like her to stay with him, but he will not guarantee a consistent interest in her. She says she will not care for someone who does not care for her. Higgins is contemptuous of her commercial perspective on affection, but contradicts her anyway saying that she has gained much more from their relationship than he has gained. He says the only reason he wants her to come back and that she should want to come back is to have fun. He says they are both free to change their minds at any time. Eliza is still frightened by that uncertain future. Higgins suggests that he could adopt her or she could marry Pickering, but then decides Pickering probably would not be interested. Eliza says she would never marry Higgins who is closer to her age. She says she has plenty of suitors, including Freddy. Higgins is disagreeably surprised by this information. He tells her Freddy is a fool and could not make anything of her. She is not interested in whether Freddy can make anything of her or not; she says she wants a natural affectionate relationship. Higgins says she is a fool. "You find me cold, unfeeling, selfish, don't you? Very well: be off with you to the sort of people you like. Marry some sentimental hog or other with lots of money, and a thick pair of lips to kiss you with and a thick pair of boots to kick you with." Act 5, pg. 130

Eliza says he is cruel for treating her this way when he knows she has few other choices than to stay with him. She tells him she is going to marry Freddy as soon as she can support him. She plans to teach phonetics using the techniques Higgins taught her with. She says she may try to work for Higgins's Hungarian rival. This enrages Higgins, but also causes him to gain respect for her. Mrs. Higgins enters the room and Eliza says goodbye to Higgins. He tells her to do some errands for him and she corrects him on various details of his order before wondering aloud how he will get along without her. They women leave and Higgins laughs aloud at the thought of Eliza marrying Freddy as the play ends.

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 7

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 8

Topic Tracking: Language 9

Topic Tracking: Manners 8

Topic Tracking: Morals 10

# Sequel

Shaw summarizes the details that conclude the story of his play because he fears lazy readers will assume an ending contrary to his intentions. He will not allow his romance to be misinterpreted as a cliché. Shaw insists that Eliza will not marry Higgins because, as an attractive young woman, she does not feel pressure to marry someone and though Higgins could support her he is domineering and insensitive. He also asserts that Higgins is not likely to be very interested in marrying Eliza because his standards are too high, as revealed by his reverence for his mother, and because he has other, greater passions than sex. Eliza would have sensed that Higgins could never worship her, whereas Freddy proclaimed his love for her daily. Shaw explains that it is common for strong people look for weaker partners. He says the strong are bored by those who are as strong or stronger than themselves. He concludes that since Freddy was more attractive than Higgins there can be no doubt that Eliza would choose to marry Freddy over Higgins. He verifies this conclusion and gives a synopsis of the beginnings of their life together.

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 9

Topic Tracking: Language 9

Neither Freddy nor Eliza had a job or any money to begin their life with. Although Eliza's father now regularly mingled with the upper class, he refused to support Eliza. They survived in the beginning because of a generous wedding present from Pickering, and eventually they moved in with Higgins and Pickering again. Eliza hazarded suggesting she begin teaching phonetics to support herself and Freddy, but Higgins strongly objected. Pickering suggested that Eliza and Freddy set up a flower shop. The only problem was that a blue-collar station for Freddy would reduce Clara's matrimonial chances. However, Clara's snobbery had recently evaporated after reading H.G. Wells and Galsworthy on the suggestion of friends. She now lived life free from the constraints of feeling she had to make a good impression. In fact, on the day Freddy went to consult with his mother on the topic of the shop, Clara had taken a job in a furniture shop. So, with Pickering's financial help, the couple entered the business world. They failed for quite some time, but after taking classes in bookkeeping and writing, their shop began to prosper. Freddy and Eliza moved out and started their own family, but Eliza continued to meddle in Higgins's housekeeping and to quarrel with Higgins. She sometimes fantasized about getting him to make love to her, but Galatea never really liked her godlike creator, Pygmalion.

Topic Tracking: Feminine Power 10