

Pygmalion - George Bernard Shaw (1914)



LIZA. What am I to come back for?

HIGGINS [bouncing up on his knees on the ottoman and leaning over it to her] For the fun of it. That's why I took you on.

LIZA [with averted face] And you may throw me out tomorrow if I don't do everything you want me to?

HIGGINS. Yes; and you may walk out tomorrow if I don't do everything YOU want me to.

LIZA. And live with my stepmother?

HIGGINS. Yes, or sell flowers.

LIZA. Oh! if I only COULD go back to my flower basket! I should be independent of both you and father and all the world! Why did you take my independence from me? Why did I give it up? I'm a slave now, for all my fine clothes.

HIGGINS. Not a bit. I'll adopt you as my daughter and settle money on you if you like. Or would you rather marry Pickering?

LIZA [looking fiercely round at him] I wouldn't marry YOU if you asked me; and you're nearer my age than what he is.

HIGGINS [gently] Than he is: not "than what he is."

LIZA [losing her temper and rising] I'll talk as I like. You're not my teacher now.

HIGGINS [reflectively] I don't suppose Pickering would, though. He's as confirmed an old bachelor as I am.

LIZA. That's not what I want; and don't you think it. I've always had chaps enough wanting me that way. Freddy Hill writes to me twice and three times a day, sheets and sheets.

HIGGINS [disagreeably surprised] Damn his impudence! [He recoils and finds himself sitting on his heels].

LIZA. He has a right to if he likes, poor lad. And he does love me.

HIGGINS [getting off the ottoman] You have no right to encourage him.

LIZA. Every girl has a right to be loved.

HIGGINS. What! By fools like that?

LIZA. Freddy's not a fool. And if he's weak and poor and wants me, may be he'd make me happier than my betters that bully me and don't want me.

HIGGINS. Can he MAKE anything of you? That's the point.

LIZA. Perhaps I could make something of him. But I never thought of us making anything of one another; and you never think of anything else. I only want to be natural.

HIGGINS. In short, you want me to be as infatuated about you as Freddy? Is that it?

LIZA. No I don't. That's not the sort of feeling I want from you. And don't you be too sure of yourself or of me. I could have been a bad girl if I'd liked. I've seen more of some things than you, for all your learning. Girls like me can drag gentlemen down to make love to them easy enough. And they wish each other dead the next minute.

HIGGINS. Of course they do. Then what in thunder are we quarrelling about?