

# PYGMALION

By

George Bernard Shaw

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# PYGMALION

By

George Bernard Shaw

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## PREFACE TO PYGMALION

*A Professor of Phonetics*

AS WILL BE SEEN LATER ON, Pygmalion needs, not a preface, but a sequel, which I have supplied in its due place. The English have no respect for their language, and will not teach their children to speak it. They spell it so abominably that no man can teach himself what it sounds like. It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him. German and Spanish are accessible to foreigners: English is not accessible

even to Englishmen. The reformer England needs today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast: that is why I have made such a one the hero of a popular play. There have been heroes of that kind crying in the wilderness for many years past. When I became interested in the subject towards the end of the eighteen-seventies, Melville Bell was dead; but Alexander J. Ellis was still a living patriarch, with an impressive head always covered by a velvet skull cap, for which he would apologize to public meetings in a very courtly manner. He and Tito Pagliardini, another phonetic veteran, were men whom it was impossible to dislike. Henry Sweet, then a young man, lacked their sweetness of character: he was about as conciliatory to conventional mortals as Ibsen or Samuel Butler. His great ability as a phonetician (he was, I think, the best of them all at his job) would have entitled him to high official recognition, and perhaps enabled him to popularize his subject, but for his Satanic contempt for all academic dignitaries and persons in general who thought more of Greek than of phonet-

ics. Once, in the days when the Imperial Institute rose in South Kensington, and Joseph Chamberlain was booming the Empire, I induced the editor of a leading monthly review to commission an article from Sweet on the imperial importance of his subject. When it arrived, it contained nothing but a savagely derisive attack on a professor of language and literature whose chair Sweet regarded as proper to a phonetic expert only. The article, being libelous, had to be returned as impossible; and I had to renounce my dream of dragging its author into the limelight. When I met him afterwards, for the first time for many years, I found to my astonishment that he, who had been a quite tolerably presentable young man, had actually managed by sheer scorn to alter his personal appearance until he had become a sort of walking repudiation of Oxford and all its traditions. It must have been largely in his own despite that he was squeezed into something called a Readership of phonetics there. The future of phonetics rests probably with his pupils, who all swore by him; but nothing could bring

the man himself into any sort of compliance with the university, to which he nevertheless clung by divine right in an intensely Oxonian way. I daresay his papers, if he has left any, include some satires that may be published without too destructive results fifty years hence. He was, I believe, not in the least an ill-natured man: very much the opposite, I should say; but he would not suffer fools gladly.

Those who knew him will recognize in my third act the allusion to the patent Shorthand in which he used to write postcards, and which may be acquired from a four and six-penny manual published by the Clarendon Press. The postcards which Mrs. Higgins describes are such as I have received from Sweet. I would decipher a sound which a cockney would represent by zerr, and a Frenchman by seu, and then write demanding with some heat what on earth it meant. Sweet, with boundless contempt for my stupidity, would reply that it not only meant but obviously was the word Result, as no other Word containing that sound, and capable of making sense with

the context, existed in any language spoken on earth. That less expert mortals should require fuller indications was beyond Sweet's patience. Therefore, though the whole point of his "Current Shorthand" is that it can express every sound in the language perfectly, vowels as well as consonants, and that your hand has to make no stroke except the easy and current ones with which you write m, n, and u, l, p, and q, scribbling them at whatever angle comes easiest to you, his unfortunate determination to make this remarkable and quite legible script serve also as a Shorthand reduced it in his own practice to the most inscrutable of cryptograms. His true objective was the provision of a full, accurate, legible script for our noble but ill-dressed language; but he was led past that by his contempt for the popular Pitman system of Shorthand, which he called the Pitfall system. The triumph of Pitman was a triumph of business organization: there was a weekly paper to persuade you to learn Pitman: there were cheap textbooks and exercise books and transcripts of speeches for you to

copy, and schools where experienced teachers coached you up to the necessary proficiency. Sweet could not organize his market in that fashion. He might as well have been the Sybil who tore up the leaves of prophecy that nobody would attend to. The four and six-penny manual, mostly in his lithographed handwriting, that was never vulgarly advertized, may perhaps some day be taken up by a syndicate and pushed upon the public as The Times pushed the Encyclopaedia Britannica; but until then it will certainly not prevail against Pitman. I have bought three copies of it during my lifetime; and I am informed by the publishers that its cloistered existence is still a steady and healthy one. I actually learned the system two several times; and yet the shorthand in which I am writing these lines is Pitman's. And the reason is, that my secretary cannot transcribe Sweet, having been perforce taught in the schools of Pitman. Therefore, Sweet railed at Pitman as vainly as Thersites railed at Ajax: his raillery, however it may have eased his soul, gave no popular vogue to Cur-

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rent Shorthand. Pygmalion Higgins is not a portrait of Sweet, to whom the adventure of Eliza Doolittle would have been impossible; still, as will be seen, there are touches of Sweet in the play. With Higgins's physique and temperament Sweet might have set the Thames on fire. As it was, he impressed himself professionally on Europe to an extent that made his comparative personal obscurity, and the failure of Oxford to do justice to his eminence, a puzzle to foreign specialists in his subject. I do not blame Oxford, because I think Oxford is quite right in demanding a certain social amenity from its nurslings (heaven knows it is not exorbitant in its requirements!); for although I well know how hard it is for a man of genius with a seriously underrated subject to maintain serene and kindly relations with the men who under-rate it, and who keep all the best places for less important subjects which they profess without originality and sometimes without much capacity for them, still, if he overwhelms them with wrath and disdain, he cannot expect them to heap honors on him.

Of the later generations of phoneticians I know little. Among them towers the Poet Laureate, to whom perhaps Higgins may owe his Miltonic sympathies, though here again I must disclaim all portraiture. But if the play makes the public aware that there are such people as phoneticians, and that they are among the most important people in England at present, it will serve its turn.

I wish to boast that Pygmalion has been an extremely successful play all over Europe and North America as well as at home. It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that art should never be anything else.

Finally, and for the encouragement of people troubled with accents that cut them off from all high employment, I may add that the change wrought by Professor Higgins in the flower girl is neither impossible nor uncommon. The modern concierge's daugh-

ter who fulfils her ambition by playing the Queen of Spain in Ruy Blas at the Theatre Francais is only one of many thousands of men and women who have sloughed off their native dialects and acquired a new tongue. But the thing has to be done scientifically, or the last state of the aspirant may be worse than the first. An honest and natural slum dialect is more tolerable than the attempt of a phonetically untaught person to imitate the vulgar dialect of the golf club; and I am sorry to say that in spite of the efforts of our Academy of Dramatic Art, there is still too much sham golfing English on our stage, and too little of the noble English of Forbes Robertson.

## ACT I

Covent Garden at 11.15 p.m. Torrents of heavy summer rain. Cab whistles blowing frantically in all directions. Pedestrians running for shelter into the market and under the portico of St. Paul's Church, where there are already several people, among them a lady and her daughter in evening dress. They are all peering out gloomily at the rain, except one man with his back turned to the rest, who seems wholly preoccupied with a notebook in which he is writing busily.

*The church clock strikes the first quarter.*

**THE DAUGHTER** [*in the space between the central pillars, close to the one on her left*] I'm getting chilled to the bone. What can Freddy be doing all this time? He's been gone twenty minutes.

**THE MOTHER** [*on her daughter's right*] Not so long. But he ought to have got us a cab by this.

**A BYSTANDER** [*on the lady's right*] He won't get no cab not until half-past eleven, missus, when they come back after

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dropping their theatre fares.

**THE MOTHER.** But we must have a cab. We can't stand here until half-past eleven. It's too bad.

**THE BYSTANDER.** Well, it ain't my fault, missus.

**THE DAUGHTER.** If Freddy had a bit of gumption, he would have got one at the theatre door.

**THE MOTHER.** What could he have done, poor boy?

**THE DAUGHTER.** Other people got cabs. Why couldn't he?

*Freddy rushes in out of the rain from the Southampton Street side, and comes between them closing a dripping umbrella. He is a young man of twenty, in evening dress, very wet around the ankles.*

**THE DAUGHTER.** Well, haven't you got a cab?

**FREDDY.** There's not one to be had for love or money.

**THE MOTHER.** Oh, Freddy, there must be one. You can't have tried.

**THE DAUGHTER.** It's too tiresome. Do you expect us to go and get one ourselves?

**FREDDY.** I tell you they're all engaged. The rain was so sudden: nobody was prepared; and everybody had to take a cab. I've been to Charing Cross one way and nearly to Ludgate Circus the other; and they were all engaged.

**THE MOTHER.** Did you try Trafalgar Square?

**FREDDY.** There wasn't one at Trafalgar Square.

**THE DAUGHTER.** Did you try?

**FREDDY.** I tried as far as Charing Cross Station. Did you expect me to walk to Hammersmith?

**THE DAUGHTER.** You haven't tried at all.

**THE MOTHER.** You really are very helpless, Freddy. Go again; and don't come back until you have found a cab.

**FREDDY.** I shall simply get soaked for nothing.

**THE DAUGHTER.** And what about us? Are we to stay here all night in this draught, with next to nothing on. You selfish pig—



**FREDDY.** Oh, very well: I'll go, I'll go. [*He opens his umbrella and dashes off Strandwards, but comes into collision with a flower girl, who is hurrying in for shelter, knocking her basket out of her hands. A blinding flash of lightning, followed instantly by a rattling peal of thunder, orchestrates the incident*]

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Nah then, Freddy: look wh' y' gowin, deah.

**FREDDY.** Sorry [*he rushes off*].

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*picking up her scattered flowers and replacing them in the basket*] There's menners f' yer! Te-oo banches o voylets trod into the mad. [*She sits down on the plinth of the column, sorting her flowers, on the lady's right. She is not at all an attractive person. She is perhaps eighteen, perhaps twenty, hardly older. She wears a little sailor hat of black straw that has long been exposed to the dust and soot of London and has seldom if ever been brushed. Her hair needs washing rather badly: its mousy color can hardly be natural. She wears a shoddy black coat that reaches nearly to her knees and is shaped to her waist. She has a brown skirt with a coarse apron. Her boots are much the worse for wear. She is no doubt as clean as she can afford to be; but compared to the ladies she is very dirty. Her features are no worse than theirs; but their condition leaves something to be desired; and she needs the services of a dentist*].

**THE MOTHER.** How do you know that my son's name is Freddy, pray?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y' de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn than ran awy atbaht pyin. Will ye-oo py me f'them? [*Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London.*]

**THE DAUGHTER.** Do nothing of the sort, mother. The idea!

**THE MOTHER.** Please allow me, Clara. Have you any pennies?

**THE DAUGHTER.** No. I've nothing smaller than sixpence.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*hopefully*] I can give you change for a tanner, kind lady.

**THE MOTHER** [*to Clara*] Give it to me. [*Clara parts reluctantly*]. Now [*to the girl*] This is for your flowers.

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Thank you kindly, lady.

**THE DAUGHTER.** Make her give you the change. These

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things are only a penny a bunch.

**THE MOTHER.** Do hold your tongue, Clara. [*To the girl*].  
You can keep the change.

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Oh, thank you, lady.

**THE MOTHER.** Now tell me how you know that young gentleman's name.

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** I didn't.

**THE MOTHER.** I heard you call him by it. Don't try to deceive me.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*protesting*] Who's trying to deceive you? I called him Freddy or Charlie same as you might yourself if you was talking to a stranger and wished to be pleasant. [*She sits down beside her basket*].

**THE DAUGHTER.** Sixpence thrown away! Really, mamma, you might have spared Freddy that. [*She retreats in disgust behind the pillar*].

*An elderly gentleman of the amiable military type rushes into shelter, and closes a dripping umbrella. He is in the same plight as Freddy, very wet about the ankles. He is in evening dress,*

*with a light overcoat. He takes the place left vacant by the daughter's retirement.*

**THE GENTLEMAN.** Phew!

**THE MOTHER** [*to the gentleman*] Oh, sir, is there any sign of its stopping?

**THE GENTLEMAN.** I'm afraid not. It started worse than ever about two minutes ago. [*He goes to the plinth beside the flower girl; puts up his foot on it; and stoops to turn down his trouser ends*].

**THE MOTHER.** Oh, dear! [*She retires sadly and joins her daughter*].

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*taking advantage of the military gentleman's proximity to establish friendly relations with him*]. If it's worse it's a sign it's nearly over. So cheer up, Captain; and buy a flower off a poor girl.

**THE GENTLEMAN.** I'm sorry, I haven't any change.

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** I can give you change, Captain,

**THE GENTLEMEN.** For a sovereign? I've nothing less.

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Garn! Oh do buy a flower off me, Captain. I can change half-a-crown. Take this for tuppence.

**THE GENTLEMAN.** Now don't be troublesome: there's a good girl. [*Trying his pockets*] I really haven't any change—Stop: here's three hapence, if that's any use to you [*he retreats to the other pillar*].

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*disappointed, but thinking three halfpence better than nothing*] Thank you, sir.

**THE BYSTANDER** [*to the girl*] You be careful: give him a flower for it. There's a bloke here behind taking down every blessed word you're saying. [*All turn to the man who is taking notes*].

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*springing up terrified*] I ain't done nothing wrong by speaking to the gentleman. I've a right to sell flowers if I keep off the kerb. [*Hysterically*] I'm a respectable girl: so help me, I never spoke to him except to ask him to buy a flower off me. [*General hubbub, mostly sympathetic to the flower girl, but deprecating her excessive sensibility. Cries of Don't start hollerin. Who's hurting you? Nobody's going to touch you. What's the good of fussing? Steady on. Easy, easy, etc., come from the elderly staid spectators, who pat her comfortingly. Less patient ones bid her shut her head, or ask her roughly what is wrong with her. A remoter group, not knowing what the matter*

*is, crowd in and increase the noise with question and answer: What's the row? What she do? Where is he? A tec taking her down. What! him? Yes: him over there: Took money off the gentleman, etc. The flower girl, distraught and mobbed, breaks through them to the gentleman, crying mildly*] Oh, sir, don't let him charge me. You dunno what it means to me. They'll take away my character and drive me on the streets for speaking to gentlemen. They—

**THE NOTE TAKER** [*coming forward on her right, the rest crowding after him*] There, there, there, there! Who's hurting you, you silly girl? What do you take me for?

**THE BYSTANDER.** It's all right: he's a gentleman: look at his boots. [*Explaining to the note taker*] She thought you was a copper's nark, sir.

**THE NOTE TAKER** [*with quick interest*] What's a copper's nark?

**THE BYSTANDER** [*inept at definition*] It's a—well, it's a copper's nark, as you might say. What else would you call it? A sort of informer.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*still hysterical*] I take my Bible oath I never said a word—

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**THE NOTE TAKER** [*overbearing but good-humored*] Oh, shut up, shut up. Do I look like a policeman?

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*far from reassured*] Then what did you take down my words for? How do I know whether you took me down right? You just show me what you've wrote about me. [*The note taker opens his book and holds it steadily under her nose, though the pressure of the mob trying to read it over his shoulders would upset a weaker man*]. What's that? That ain't proper writing. I can't read that.

**THE NOTE TAKER.** I can. [*Reads, reproducing her pronunciation exactly*] "Cheer ap, Keptin; n' haw ya flahr orf a pore gel."

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*much distressed*] It's because I called him Captain. I meant no harm. [*To the gentleman*] Oh, sir, don't let him lay a charge agen me for a word like that. You—

**THE GENTLEMAN.** Charge! I make no charge. [*To the note taker*] Really, sir, if you are a detective, you need not begin protecting me against molestation by young women until I ask you. Anybody could see that the girl meant no harm.

**THE BYSTANDERS GENERALLY** [*demonstrating against police espionage*] Course they could. What business is it of yours?

You mind your own affairs. He wants promotion, he does. Taking down people's words! Girl never said a word to him. What harm if she did? Nice thing a girl can't shelter from the rain without being insulted, etc., etc., etc. [*She is conducted by the more sympathetic demonstrators back to her plinth, where she resumes her seat and struggles with her emotion*].

**THE BYSTANDER.** He ain't a tec. He's a blooming busy-body: that's what he is. I tell you, look at his boots.

**THE NOTE TAKER** [*turning on him genially*] And how are all your people down at Selsey?

**THE BYSTANDER** [*suspiciously*] Who told you my people come from Selsey?

**THE NOTE TAKER.** Never you mind. They did. [*To the girl*] How do you come to be up so far east? You were born in Lisson Grove.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*appalled*] Oh, what harm is there in my leaving Lisson Grove? It wasn't fit for a pig to live in; and I had to pay four-and-six a week. [*In tears*] Oh, boo—hoo—oo—

**THE NOTE TAKER.** Live where you like; but stop that noise.

**THE GENTLEMAN** [*to the girl*] Come, come! he can't touch you: you have a right to live where you please.

**A SARCASTIC BYSTANDER** [*thrusting himself between the note taker and the gentleman*] Park Lane, for instance. I'd like to go into the Housing Question with you, I would.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*subsiding into a brooding melancholy over her basket, and talking very low-spiritedly to herself*] I'm a good girl, I am.

**THE SARCASTIC BYSTANDER** [*not attending to her*] Do you know where *I* come from?

**THE NOTE TAKER** [*promptly*] Hoxton.

*Titterings. Popular interest in the note taker's performance increases.*

**THE SARCASTIC ONE** [*amazed*] Well, who said I didn't? Bly me! You know everything, you do.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*still nursing her sense of injury*] Ain't no call to meddle with me, he ain't.

**THE BYSTANDER** [*to her*] Of course he ain't. Don't you stand it from him. [*To the note taker*] See here: what call have

you to know about people what never offered to meddle with you? Where's your warrant?

**SEVERAL BYSTANDERS** [*encouraged by this seeming point of law*] Yes: where's your warrant?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Let him say what he likes. I don't want to have no truck with him.

**THE BYSTANDER.** You take us for dirt under your feet, don't you? Catch you taking liberties with a gentleman!

**THE SARCASTIC BYSTANDER.** Yes: tell HIM where he come from if you want to go fortune-telling.

**THE NOTE TAKER.** Cheltenham, Harrow, Cambridge, and India.

**THE GENTLEMAN.** Quite right. [*Great laughter. Reaction in the note taker's favor. Exclamations of He knows all about it. Told him proper. Hear him tell the toff where he come from? etc.*]. May I ask, sir, do you do this for your living at a music hall?

**THE NOTE TAKER.** I've thought of that. Perhaps I shall some day.

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*The rain has stopped; and the persons on the outside of the crowd begin to drop off.*

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*resenting the reaction*] He's no gentleman, he ain't, to interfere with a poor girl.

**THE DAUGHTER** [*out of patience, pushing her way rudely to the front and displacing the gentleman, who politely retires to the other side of the pillar*] What on earth is Freddy doing? I shall get pneumonia if I stay in this draught any longer.

**THE NOTE TAKER** [*to himself, hastily making a note of her pronunciation of "monia"*] Earlscourt.

**THE DAUGHTER** [*violently*] Will you please keep your impertinent remarks to yourself?

**THE NOTE TAKER.** Did I say that out loud? I didn't mean to. I beg your pardon. Your mother's Epsom, unmistakably.

**THE MOTHER** [*advancing between her daughter and the note taker*] How very curious! I was brought up in Largelady Park, near Epsom.

**THE NOTE TAKER** [*uproariously amused*] Ha! ha! What a devil of a name! Excuse me. [*To the daughter*] You want a cab, do you?

**THE DAUGHTER.** Don't dare speak to me.

**THE MOTHER.** Oh, please, please Clara. [*Her daughter repudiates her with an angry shrug and retires haughtily.*] We should be so grateful to you, sir, if you found us a cab. [*The note taker produces a whistle*]. Oh, thank you. [*She joins her daughter*]. The note taker blows a piercing blast.

**THE SARCASTIC BYSTANDER.** There! I knowed he was a plain-clothes copper.

**THE BYSTANDER.** That ain't a police whistle: that's a sporting whistle.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*still preoccupied with her wounded feelings*] He's no right to take away my character. My character is the same to me as any lady's.

**THE NOTE TAKER.** I don't know whether you've noticed it; but the rain stopped about two minutes ago.

**THE BYSTANDER.** So it has. Why didn't you say so before? and us losing our time listening to your silliness. [*He walks off towards the Strand*].

**THE SARCASTIC BYSTANDER.** I can tell where you come from. You come from Anwell. Go back there.

THE NOTE TAKER [*helpfully*] Hanwell.

THE SARCASTIC BYSTANDER [*affecting great distinction of speech*] Thank you, teacher. Haw haw! So long [*he touches his hat with mock respect and strolls off*].

THE FLOWER GIRL. Frightening people like that! How would he like it himself.

THE MOTHER. It's quite fine now, Clara. We can walk to a motor bus. Come. [*She gathers her skirts above her ankles and hurries off towards the Strand*].

THE DAUGHTER. But the cab—[*her mother is out of hearing*]. Oh, how tiresome! [*She follows angrily*].

*All the rest have gone except the note taker, the gentleman, and the flower girl, who sits arranging her basket, and still pitying herself in murmurs.*

THE FLOWER GIRL. Poor girl! Hard enough for her to live without being worried and chivied.

THE GENTLEMAN [*returning to his former place on the note taker's left*] How do you do it, if I may ask?

THE NOTE TAKER. Simply phonetics. The science of

speech. That's my profession; also my hobby. Happy is the man who can make a living by his hobby! You can spot an Irishman or a Yorkshireman by his brogue. I can place any man within six miles. I can place him within two miles in London. Sometimes within two streets.

THE FLOWER GIRL. Ought to be ashamed of himself, unmanly coward!

THE GENTLEMAN. But is there a living in that?

THE NOTE TAKER. Oh yes. Quite a fat one. This is an age of upstarts. Men begin in Kentish Town with 80 pounds a year, and end in Park Lane with a hundred thousand. They want to drop Kentish Town; but they give themselves away every time they open their mouths. Now I can teach them—

THE FLOWER GIRL. Let him mind his own business and leave a poor girl—

THE NOTE TAKER [*explosively*] Woman: cease this detestable boohooing instantly; or else seek the shelter of some other place of worship.

THE FLOWER GIRL [*with feeble defiance*] I've a right to be here if I like, same as you.

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**THE NOTE TAKER.** 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.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*quite overwhelmed, and looking up at him in mingled wonder and deprecation without daring to raise her head*] Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

**THE NOTE TAKER** [*whipping out his book*] Heavens! what a sound! [*He writes; then holds out the book and reads, reproducing her vowels exactly*] Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—ow—oo!

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*tickled by the performance, and laughing in spite of herself*] Garn!

**THE NOTE TAKER.** You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party. I could even get her a place as lady's maid or shop assistant, which requires better English. That's the sort of thing I do for commercial millionaires. And on the profits of it I do genuine scientific work in phonetics, and a little as a poet on Miltonic lines.

**THE GENTLEMAN.** I am myself a student of Indian dialects; and—

**THE NOTE TAKER** [*eagerly*] Are you? Do you know Colonel Pickering, the author of Spoken Sanscrit?

**THE GENTLEMAN.** I am Colonel Pickering. Who are you?

**THE NOTE TAKER.** Henry Higgins, author of Higgins's Universal Alphabet.

**PICKERING** [*with enthusiasm*] I came from India to meet you.

**HIGGINS.** I was going to India to meet you.

**PICKERING.** Where do you live?

**HIGGINS.** 27A Wimpole Street. Come and see me tomorrow.

**PICKERING.** I'm at the Carlton. Come with me now and let's have a jaw over some supper.

**HIGGINS.** Right you are.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*to Pickering, as he passes her*] Buy a flower, kind gentleman. I'm short for my lodging.



**PICKERING.** I really haven't any change. I'm sorry [*he goes away*].

**HIGGINS** [*shocked at girl's mendacity*] Liar. You said you could change half-a-crown.

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*rising in desperation*] You ought to be stuffed with nails, you ought. [*Flinging the basket at his feet*] Take the whole blooming basket for sixpence.

*The church clock strikes the second quarter.*

**HIGGINS** [*hearing in it the voice of God, rebuking him for his Pharisaic want of charity to the poor girl*] A reminder. [*He raises his hat solemnly; then throws a handful of money into the basket and follows Pickering*].

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*picking up a half-crown*] Ah—ow—ooh! [*Picking up a couple of florins*] Aaah—ow—ooh! [*Picking up several coins*] Aaaaaah—ow—ooh! [*Picking up a half-sovereign*] Aasaaaaaaaah—ow—ooh!!!

**FREDDY** [*springing out of a taxicab*] Got one at last. Hallo! [*To the girl*] Where are the two ladies that were here?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** They walked to the bus when the rain stopped.

**FREDDY.** And left me with a cab on my hands. Damnation!

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*with grandeur*] Never you mind, young man. I'm going home in a taxi. [*She sails off to the cab. The driver puts his hand behind him and holds the door firmly shut against her. Quite understanding his mistrust, she shows him her handful of money*]. Eightpence ain't no object to me, Charlie. [*He grins and opens the door*]. Angel Court, Drury Lane, round the corner of Micklejohn's oil shop. Let's see how fast you can make her hop it. [*She gets in and pulls the door to with a slam as the taxicab starts*].

**FREDDY.** Well, I'm dashed!

## ACT II

Next day at 11 a.m. Higgins's laboratory in Wimpole Street. It is a room on the first floor, looking on the street, and was meant for the drawing-room. The double doors are in the middle of the back hall; and persons entering find in the corner to their right two tall file cabinets at right angles to one another against the walls. In this corner stands a flat writing-table, on which are a phonograph, a laryngoscope, a row of tiny organ pipes with a bellows, a set of lamp chimneys for singing flames with burners attached to a gas plug in the wall by an indiarubber tube, several tuning-forks of different sizes, a life-size image of half a human head, showing in section the vocal organs, and a box containing a supply of wax cylinders for the phonograph.

Further down the room, on the same side, is a fireplace, with a comfortable leather-covered easy-chair at the side of the hearth nearest the door, and a coal-scuttle. There is a clock on the mantelpiece. Between

the fireplace and the phonograph table is a stand for newspapers.

On the other side of the central door, to the left of the visitor, is a cabinet of shallow drawers. On it is a telephone and the telephone directory. The corner beyond, and most of the side wall, is occupied by a grand piano, with the keyboard at the end furthest from the door, and a bench for the player extending the full length of the keyboard. On the piano is a dessert dish heaped with fruit and sweets, mostly chocolates.

The middle of the room is clear. Besides the easy chair, the piano bench, and two chairs at the phonograph table, there is one stray chair. It stands near the fireplace. On the walls, engravings; mostly Piranesi and mezzotint portraits. No paintings.

Pickering is seated at the table, putting down some cards and a tuning-fork which he has been using. Higgins is standing up near him, closing two or three file drawers which are hanging out. He appears in the morning light as a robust, vital, appetizing sort of man of forty or thereabouts, dressed in a professional-looking black frock-

coat with a white linen collar and black silk tie. He is of the energetic, scientific type, heartily, even violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings. 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. His manner varies from genial bullying when he is in a good humor to stormy petulance when anything goes wrong; but he is so entirely frank and void of malice that he remains likeable even in his least reasonable moments.

**HIGGINS** [*as he shuts the last drawer*] Well, I think that’s the whole show.

**PICKERING.** It’s really amazing. I haven’t taken half of it in, you know.

**HIGGINS.** Would you like to go over any of it again?

**PICKERING** [*rising and coming to the fireplace, where he plants himself with his back to the fire*] No, thank you; not now. I’m quite done up for this morning.

**HIGGINS** [*following him, and standing beside him on his left*] Tired of listening to sounds?

**PICKERING.** Yes. It’s a fearful strain. I rather fancied myself because I can pronounce twenty-four distinct vowel sounds; but your hundred and thirty beat me. I can’t hear a bit of difference between most of them.

**HIGGINS** [*chuckling, and going over to the piano to eat sweets*] Oh, that comes with practice. You hear no difference at first; but you keep on listening, and presently you find they’re all as different as A from B. [*Mrs. Pearce looks in: she is Higgins’s housekeeper*] What’s the matter?

**MRS. PEARCE** [*hesitating, evidently perplexed*] A young woman wants to see you, sir.

**HIGGINS.** A young woman! What does she want?

**MRS. PEARCE.** Well, sir, she says you’ll be glad to see her when you know what she’s come about. She’s quite a common girl, sir. Very common indeed. I should have sent her away, only I thought perhaps you wanted her to talk into your machines. I hope I’ve not done wrong; but really you see such queer people sometimes—you’ll excuse me, I’m sure, sir—

## Pygmalion

**HIGGINS.** Oh, that's all right, Mrs. Pearce. Has she an interesting accent?

**MRS. PEARCE.** Oh, something dreadful, sir, really. I don't know how you can take an interest in it.

**HIGGINS** [*to Pickering*] Let's have her up. Show her up, Mrs. Pearce [*he rushes across to his working table and picks out a cylinder to use on the phonograph*].

**MRS. PEARCE** [*only half resigned to it*] Very well, sir. It's for you to say. [*She goes downstairs*].

**HIGGINS.** This is rather a bit of luck. I'll show you how I make records. We'll set her talking; and I'll take it down first in Bell's visible Speech; then in broad Romic; and then we'll get her on the phonograph so that you can turn her on as often as you like with the written transcript before you.

**MRS. PEARCE** [*returning*] This is the young woman, sir.

*The flower girl enters in state. She has a hat with three ostrich feathers, orange, sky-blue, and red. She has a nearly clean apron, and the shoddy coat has been tidied a little. The pathos of this deplorable figure, with its innocent vanity and consequential air, touches Pickering, who has already straightened himself in the presence of Mrs. Pearce. But as to Higgins, the only distinc-*

*tion he makes between men and women is that when he is neither bullying nor exclaiming to the heavens against some featherweight cross, he coaxes women as a child coaxes its nurse when it wants to get anything out of her.*

**HIGGINS** [*brusquely, recognizing her with unconcealed disappointment, and at once, baby-like, making an intolerable grievance of it*] Why, this is the girl I jotted down last night. She's no use: I've got all the records I want of the Lisson Grove lingo; and I'm not going to waste another cylinder on it. [*To the girl*] Be off with you: I don't want you.

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Don't you be so saucy. You ain't heard what I come for yet. [*To Mrs. Pearce, who is waiting at the door for further instruction*] Did you tell him I come in a taxi?

**MRS. PEARCE.** Nonsense, girl! what do you think a gentleman like Mr. Higgins cares what you came in?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Oh, we are proud! He ain't above giving lessons, not him: I heard him say so. Well, I ain't come here to ask for any compliment; and if my money's not good enough I can go elsewhere.

**HIGGINS.** Good enough for what?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** 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** [*stupent*] WELL!!! [*Recovering his breath with a gasp*] What do you expect me to say to you?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** 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?

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*running away in terror to the piano, where she turns at bay*] Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—ow—oo! [*Wounded and whimpering*] I won't be called a baggage when I've offered to pay like any lady.

*Motionless, the two men stare at her from the other side of the room, amazed.*

**PICKERING** [*gently*] What is it you want, my girl?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** 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 ask-

ing any favor—and he treats me as if I was dirt.

**MRS. PEARCE.** How can you be such a foolish ignorant girl as to think you could afford to pay Mr. Higgins?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Why shouldn't I? I know what lessons cost as well as you do; and I'm ready to pay.

**HIGGINS.** How much?

**THE FLOWER GIRL** [*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.

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** 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. [*She places the stray chair near the hearthrug between Higgins and Pickering, and stands behind it waiting for the girl to sit down*].

## Pygmalion

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo! [*She stands, half rebellious, half bewildered*].

**PICKERING** [*very courteous*] Won't you sit down?

**LIZA** [*cooly*] Don't mind if I do. [*She sits down. Pickering returns to the hearthrug*].

**HIGGINS.** What's your name?

**THE FLOWER GIRL.** Liza Doolittle.

**HIGGINS** [*declaiming gravely*] Eliza, Elizabeth, Betsy and Bess, They went to the woods to get a birds nes':

**PICKERING.** They found a nest with four eggs in it:

**HIGGINS.** They took one apiece, and left three in it.

*They laugh heartily at their own wit.*

**LIZA.** Oh, don't be silly.

**MRS. PEARCE.** You mustn't speak to the gentleman like that.

**LIZA.** Well, why won't he speak sensible to me?

**HIGGINS.** Come back to business. How much do you propose to pay me for the lessons?

**LIZA.** Oh, I know what's right. A lady friend of mine gets French lessons for eighteenpence 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** [*walking up and down the room, rattling his keys and his cash in his pockets*] 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 guineas from a millionaire.

**PICKERING.** How so?

**HIGGINS.** Figure it out. A millionaire has about 150 pounds a day. She earns about half-a-crown.

**LIZA** [*haughtily*] Who told you I only—

**HIGGINS** [*continuing*] She offers me two-fifths of her day's income for a lesson. Two-fifths of a millionaire's income for a day would be somewhere about 60 pounds. It's handsome. By George, it's enormous! it's the biggest offer I ever had.

LIZA [*rising, terrified*] Sixty pounds! What are you talking about? I never offered you sixty pounds. Where would I get—

HIGGINS. Hold your tongue.

LIZA [*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. Sit down.

LIZA [*obeying slowly*] Ah—ah—ah—ow—oo—o! 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*]!

LIZA. 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.

*Liza, utterly bewildered, stares helplessly at him.*

MRS. PEARCE. It's no use talking to her like that, Mr. Higgins: she doesn't understand you. Besides, you're quite wrong: she doesn't do it that way at all [*she takes the handkerchief*].

LIZA [*snatching it*] Here! You give me that handkerchief. He give it to me, not to you.

PICKERING [*laughing*] He did. I think it must be regarded as her property, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS. PEARCE [*resigning herself*] Serve you right, Mr. Higgins.

PICKERING. Higgins: I'm interested. What about the ambassador's garden party? I'll say you're the greatest teacher alive if you make that good. I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you can't do it. And I'll pay for the lessons.

LIZA. Oh, you are real good. Thank you, Captain.

HIGGINS [*tempted, looking at her*] It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty—

LIZA [*protesting extremely*] Ah—ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oooo!!! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.

## Pygmalion

**PICKERING.** You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.

**MRS. PEARCE** [*uneasy*] Oh, don't say that, sir: there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish.

**HIGGINS** [*becoming excited as the idea grows on him*] What is life but a series of inspired follies? The difficulty is to find them to do. Never lose a chance: it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this draggetailed guttersnipe.

**LIZA** [*strongly deprecating this view of her*] Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

**HIGGINS** [*carried away*] Yes: in six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue—I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today: now! this moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. Monkey Brand, if it won't come off any other way. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?

**MRS. PEARCE** [*protesting*]. Yes; but—

**HIGGINS** [*storming on*] Take all her clothes off and burn

them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come.

**LIZA.** You're no gentleman, you're not, to talk of such things. I'm a good girl, I am; and I know what the like of you are, I do.

**HIGGINS.** We want none of your Lisson Grove prudery here, young woman. You've got to learn to behave like a duchess. Take her away, Mrs. Pearce. If she gives you any trouble wallop her.

**LIZA** [*springing up and running between Pickering and Mrs. Pearce for protection*] No! I'll call the police, I will.

**MRS. PEARCE.** But I've no place to put her.

**HIGGINS.** Put her in the dustbin.

**LIZA.** Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

**PICKERING.** Oh come, Higgins! be reasonable.

**MRS. PEARCE** [*resolutely*] You must be reasonable, Mr. Higgins: really you must. You can't walk over everybody like this.

*Higgins, thus scolded, subsides. The hurricane is succeeded by a zephyr of amiable surprise.*



**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 anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.

*Liza, reassured, steals back to her chair.*

**MRS. PEARCE** [*to Pickering*] Well, did you ever hear anything like that, sir?

**PICKERING** [*laughing heartily*] Never, Mrs. Pearce: never.

**HIGGINS** [*patiently*] What's the matter?

**MRS. PEARCE.** Well, the matter is, sir, that 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.

**LIZA.** Garn!

**HIGGINS.** There! As the girl very properly says, Garn! Married indeed! Don't you know that a woman of that class looks a worn out drudge of fifty a year after she's married.

**LIZA.** 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.

**MRS. PEARCE.** Nonsense, sir. You mustn't talk like that to her.

**LIZA** [*rising and squaring herself determinedly*] I'm going away. He's off his chump, he is. I don't want no balmies teaching 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.

**LIZA** [*whimpering*] Nah—ow. You got no right to touch me.

**MRS. PEARCE.** You see now what comes of being saucy. [*Indicating the door*] This way, please.

## Pygmalion

LIZA [*almost in tears*] I didn't want no clothes. I wouldn't have taken them [*she throws away the handkerchief*]. I can buy my own clothes.

HIGGINS [*defily retrieving the handkerchief and intercepting her on her reluctant way to the door*] You're an ungrateful wicked girl. This is my return for offering to take you out of the gutter and dress you beautifully and make a lady of you.

MRS. PEARCE. Stop, Mr. Higgins. I won't allow it. It's you that are wicked. Go home to your parents, girl; and tell them to take better care of you.

LIZA. I ain't got no parents. They told me I was big enough to earn my own living and turned me out.

MRS. PEARCE. Where's your mother?

LIZA. I ain't got no mother. Her that turned me out was my sixth stepmother. But I done without them. And I'm a good girl, I am.

HIGGINS. Very well, then, what on earth is all this fuss about? The girl doesn't belong to anybody—is no use to anybody but me. [*He goes to Mrs. Pearce and begins coaxing*]. You can adopt her, Mrs. Pearce: I'm sure a daughter would be a great amusement to you. Now don't make any more fuss.

Take her downstairs; and—

MRS. PEARCE. But what's to become of her? Is she to be paid anything? Do be sensible, sir.

HIGGINS. Oh, pay her whatever is necessary: put it down in the housekeeping book. [*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.

LIZA [*turning on him*] Oh you are a brute. It's a lie: nobody ever saw the sign of liquor on me. [*She goes back to her chair and plants herself there defiantly*].

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?

LIZA. I got my feelings same as anyone else.

HIGGINS [*to Pickering, reflectively*] You see the difficulty?

PICKERING. Eh? What difficulty?

**HIGGINS.** To get her to talk grammar. The mere pronunciation is easy enough.

**LIZA.** I don't want to talk grammar. I want to talk like a lady.

**MRS. PEARCE.** Will you please keep to the point, Mr. Higgins. I want to know on what terms the girl is to be here. Is she to have any wages? And what is to become of her when you've finished your teaching? You must look ahead a little.

**HIGGINS** [*impatiently*] What's to become of her if I leave her in the gutter? Tell 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 again; so that's all right.

**LIZA.** Oh, you've no feeling heart in you: you don't care for nothing but yourself [*she rises and takes the floor resolutely*]. Here! I've had enough of this. I'm going [*making for the door*]. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you ought.

**HIGGINS** [*snatching a chocolate cream from the piano, his*

*eyes suddenly beginning to twinkle with mischief*] Have some chocolates, Eliza.

**LIZA** [*halting, tempted*] How do I know what might be in them? I've heard of girls being drugged by the like of you.

*Higgins whips out his penknife; cuts a chocolate in two; puts one half into his mouth and bolts it; and offers her the other half.*

**HIGGINS.** Pledge of good faith, Eliza. I eat one half you eat the other. [*Liza opens her mouth to retort: he pops the half chocolate into it*]. You shall have boxes of them, barrels of them, every day. You shall live on them. Eh?

**LIZA** [*who has disposed of the chocolate after being nearly choked by it*] I wouldn't have ate it, only I'm too ladylike to take it out of my mouth.

**HIGGINS.** Listen, Eliza. I think you said you came in a taxi.

**LIZA.** Well, what if I did? I've as good a right to take a taxi as anyone else.

**HIGGINS.** You have, Eliza; and in future you shall have as many taxis as you want. You shall go up and down and round the town in a taxi every day. Think of that, Eliza.

## Pygmalion

**MRS. PEARCE.** Mr. Higgins: you're tempting the girl. It's not right. She should think of the future.

**HIGGINS.** At her age! Nonsense! Time enough to think of the future when you haven't any future to think of. No, Eliza: do as this lady does: think of other people's futures; but never think of your own. Think of chocolates, and taxis, and gold, and diamonds.

**LIZA.** No: I don't want no gold and no diamonds. I'm a good girl, I am. [*She sits down again, with an attempt at dignity*].

**HIGGINS.** You shall remain so, Eliza, under the care of Mrs. Pearce. And you shall marry an officer in the Guards, with a beautiful moustache: the son of a marquis, who will disinherit him for marrying you, but will relent when he sees your beauty and goodness—

**PICKERING.** Excuse me, Higgins; but I really must interfere. Mrs. Pearce is quite right. If this girl is to put herself in your hands for six months for an experiment in teaching, she must understand thoroughly what she's doing.

**HIGGINS.** How can she? She's incapable of understanding anything. Besides, do any of us understand what we are doing? If we did, would we ever do it?

**PICKERING.** Very clever, Higgins; but not sound sense. [To Eliza] Miss Doolittle—

**LIZA** [*overwhelmed*] Ah—ah—ow—oo!

**HIGGINS.** There! That's all you get out of Eliza. Ah—ah—ow—oo! No use explaining. As a military man you ought to know that. Give her her orders: that's what she wants. Eliza: you are to live here for the next six months, learning how to speak beautifully, like a lady in a florist's shop. If you're good and do whatever you're told, you shall sleep in a proper bedroom, and have lots to eat, and money to buy chocolates and take rides in taxis. If you're naughty and idle you will sleep in the back kitchen among the black beetles, and be walloped by Mrs. Pearce with a broomstick. At the end of six months you shall go to Buckingham Palace in a carriage, beautifully dressed. If the King finds out you're not a lady, you will be taken by the police to the Tower of London, where your head will be cut off as a warning to other presumptuous flower girls. If you are not found out, you shall have a present of seven-and-sixpence to start life with as a lady in a shop. If you refuse this offer you will be a most ungrateful and wicked girl; and the angels will weep for you. [*To Pickering*] Now are you satisfied, Pickering? [*To Mrs. Pearce*] Can I put it more plainly and fairly, Mrs. Pearce?

**MRS. PEARCE** [*patiently*] I think you'd better let me speak

to the girl properly in private. I don't know that I can take charge of her or consent to the arrangement at all. Of course I know you don't mean her any harm; but when you get what you call interested in people's accents, you never think or care what may happen to them or you. Come with me, Eliza.

**HIGGINS.** That's all right. Thank you, Mrs. Pearce. Bundle her off to the bath-room.

**LIZA** [*rising reluctantly and suspiciously*] You're a great bully, you are. I won't stay here if I don't like. I won't let nobody wallop me. I never asked to go to Bucknam Palace, I didn't. I was never in trouble with the police, not me. I'm a good girl—

**MRS. PEARCE.** Don't answer back, girl. You don't understand the gentleman. Come with me. [*She leads the way to the door, and holds it open for Eliza*].

**LIZA** [*as she goes out*] Well, what I say is right. I won't go near the king, not if I'm going to have my head cut off. If I'd known what I was letting myself in for, I wouldn't have come here. I always been a good girl; and I never offered to say a word to him; and I don't owe him nothing; and I don't care; and I won't be put upon; and I have my feelings the same as anyone else—

*Mrs. Pearce shuts the door; and Eliza's complaints are no longer audible. Pickering comes from the hearth to the chair and sits astride it with his arms on the back.*

**PICKERING.** Excuse the straight question, Higgins. Are you a man of good character where women are concerned?

**HIGGINS** [*moodily*] Have you ever met a man of good character where women are concerned?

**PICKERING.** Yes: very frequently.

**HIGGINS** [*dogmatically, lifting himself on his hands to the level of the piano, and sitting on it with a bounce*] Well, I haven't. I find that 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.

**PICKERING.** At what, for example?

**HIGGINB** [*coming off the piano restlessly*] Oh, Lord knows! I suppose the woman wants to live her own life; and the man wants to live his; and each tries to drag the other on to the wrong track. One wants to go north and the other south;

## Pygmalion

and the result is that both have to go east, though they both hate the east wind. [*He sits down on the bench at the keyboard*]. So here I am, a confirmed old bachelor, and likely to remain so.

**PICKERING** [*rising and standing over him gravely*] Come, Higgins! You know what I mean. If I'm to be in this business I shall feel responsible for that girl. I hope it's understood that no advantage is to be taken of her position.

**HIGGINS**. What! That thing! Sacred, I assure you. [*Rising to explain*] You see, she'll be a pupil; and teaching would be impossible unless pupils were sacred. I've taught scores of American millionairesses how to speak English: the best looking women in the world. I'm seasoned. They might as well be blocks of wood. I might as well be a block of wood. It's—

*Mrs. Pearce opens the door. She has Eliza's hat in her hand. Pickering retires to the easy-chair at the hearth and sits down.*

**HIGGINS** [*eagerly*] Well, Mrs. Pearce: is it all right?

**MRS. PEARCE** [*at the door*] I just wish to trouble you with a word, if I may, Mr. Higgins.

**HIGGINS**. Yes, certainly. Come in. [*She comes forward*]. Don't burn that, Mrs. Pearce. I'll keep it as a curiosity. [*He*

*takes the hat*].

**MRS. PEARCE**. Handle it carefully, sir, please. I had to promise her not to burn it; but I had better put it in the oven for a while.

**HIGGINS** [*putting it down hastily on the piano*] Oh! thank you. Well, what have you to say to me?

**PICKERING**. Am I in the way?

**MRS. PEARCE**. Not at all, sir. Mr. Higgins: will you please be very particular what you say before the girl?

**HIGGINS** [*sternly*] Of course. I'm always particular about what I say. Why do you say this to me?

**MRS. PEARCE** [*unmoved*] No, sir: you're not at all particular when you've mislaid anything or when you get a little impatient. Now it doesn't matter before me: I'm used to it. But you really must not swear before the girl.

**HIGGINS** [*indignantly*] I swear! [*Most emphatically*] I never swear. I detest the habit. What the devil do you mean?

**MRS. PEARCE** [*stolidly*] That's what I mean, sir. You swear a great deal too much. I don't mind your damning and blast-

ing, and what the devil and where the devil and who the devil—

HIGGINS. Really! Mrs. Pearce: this language from your lips!

MRS. PEARCE [*not to be put off*]—but there is a certain word I must ask you not to use. The girl has just used it herself because the bath was too hot. It begins with the same letter as bath. She knows no better: she learnt it at her mother's knee. But she must not hear it from your lips.

HIGGINS [*loftily*] I cannot charge myself with having ever uttered it, Mrs. Pearce. [*She looks at him steadfastly. He adds, hiding an uneasy conscience with a judicial air*] Except perhaps in a moment of extreme and justifiable excitement.

MRS. PEARCE. Only this morning, sir, you applied it to your boots, to the butter, and to the brown bread.

HIGGINS. Oh, that! Mere alliteration, Mrs. Pearce, natural to a poet.

MRS. PEARCE. Well, sir, whatever you choose to call it, I beg you not to let the girl hear you repeat it.

HIGGINS. Oh, very well, very well. Is that all?

MRS. PEARCE. No, sir. We shall have to be very particular with this girl as to personal cleanliness.

HIGGINS. Certainly. Quite right. Most important.

MRS. PEARCE. I mean not to be slovenly about her dress or untidy in leaving things about.

HIGGINS [*going to her solemnly*] Just so. I intended to call your attention to that [*He passes on to Pickering, who is enjoying the conversation immensely*]. It is these little things that matter, Pickering. Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves is as true of personal habits as of money. [*He comes to anchor on the hearthrug, with the air of a man in an unassailable position*].

MRS. PEARCE. Yes, sir. Then might I ask you not to come down to breakfast in your dressing-gown, or at any rate not to use it as a napkin to the extent you do, sir. And if you would be so good as not to eat everything off the same plate, and to remember not to put the porridge saucepan out of your hand on the clean tablecloth, it would be a better example to the girl. You know you nearly choked yourself with a fishbone in the jam only last week.

HIGGINS [*routed from the hearthrug and drifting back to the piano*] I may do these things sometimes in absence of mind;

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but surely I don't do them habitually. [Angrily] By the way: my dressing-gown smells most damnably of benzine.

**MRS. PEARCE.** No doubt it does, Mr. Higgins. But if you will wipe your fingers—

**HIGGINS** [*yelling*] Oh very well, very well: I'll wipe them in my hair in future.

**MRS. PEARCE.** I hope you're not offended, Mr. Higgins.

**HIGGINS** [*shocked at finding himself thought capable of an unamiable sentiment*] Not at all, not at all. You're quite right, Mrs. Pearce: I shall be particularly careful before the girl. Is that all?

**MRS. PEARCE.** No, sir. Might she use some of those Japanese dresses you brought from abroad? I really can't put her back into her old things.

**HIGGINS.** Certainly. Anything you like. Is that all?

**MRS. PEARCE.** Thank you, sir. That's all. [*She goes out*].

**HIGGINS.** You know, Pickering, that woman has the most extraordinary ideas about me. Here I am, a shy, diffident sort of man. I've never been able to feel really grown-up and

tremendous, like other chaps. And yet she's firmly persuaded that I'm an arbitrary overbearing bossing kind of person. I can't account for it.

*Mrs. Pearce returns.*

**MRS. PEARCE.** If you please, sir, the trouble's beginning already. There's a dustman downstairs, Alfred Doolittle, wants to see you. He says you have his daughter here.

**PICKERING** [*rising*] Phew! I say! [*He retreats to the hearthrug*].

**HIGGINS** [*promptly*] Send the blackguard up.

**MRS. PEARCE.** Oh, very well, sir. [*She goes out*].

**PICKERING.** He may not be a blackguard, Higgins.

**HIGGINS.** Nonsense. Of course he's a blackguard.

**PICKERING.** Whether he is or not, I'm afraid we shall have some trouble with him.

**HIGGINS** [*confidently*] Oh no: I think not. If there's any trouble he shall have it with me, not I with him. And we are sure to get something interesting out of him.



PICKERING. About the girl?

HIGGINS. No. I mean his dialect.

PICKERING. Oh!

MRS. PEARCE [*at the door*] Doolittle, sir. [*She admits Doolittle and retires*].

*Alfred Doolittle is an elderly but vigorous dustman, clad in the costume of his profession, including a hat with a back brim covering his neck and shoulders. He has well marked and rather interesting features, and seems equally free from fear and conscience. He has a remarkably expressive voice, the result of a habit of giving vent to his feelings without reserve. His present pose is that of wounded honor and stern resolution.*

DOOLITTLE [*at the door, uncertain which of the two gentlemen is his man*] Professor Higgins?

HIGGINS. Here. Good morning. Sit down.

DOOLITTLE. Morning, Governor. [*He sits down magisterially*] I come about a very serious matter, Governor.

HIGGINS [*to Pickering*] Brought up in Hounslow. Mother Welsh, I should think. [*Doolittle opens his mouth, amazed.*

*Higgins continues*] What do you want, Doolittle?

DOOLITTLE [*menacingly*] I want my daughter: that's what I want. See?

HIGGINS. Of course you do. You're her father, aren't you? You don't suppose anyone else wants her, do you? I'm glad to see you have some spark of family feeling left. She's upstairs. Take her away at once.

DOOLITTLE [*rising, fearfully taken aback*] What!

HIGGINS. Take her away. Do you suppose I'm going to keep your daughter for you?

DOOLITTLE [*remonstrating*] Now, now, look here, Governor. Is this reasonable? Is it fair to take advantage of a man like this? The girl belongs to me. You got her. Where do I come in? [*He sits down again*].

HIGGINS. Your daughter had the audacity to come to my house and ask me to teach her how to speak properly so that she could get a place in a flower-shop. This gentleman and my housekeeper have been here all the time. [*Bullying him*] How dare you come here and attempt to blackmail me? You sent her here on purpose.

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DOOLITTLE [*protesting*] No, Governor.

HIGGINS. You must have. How else could you possibly know that she is here?

DOOLITTLE. Don't take a man up like that, Governor.

HIGGINS. The police shall take you up. This is a plant—a plot to extort money by threats. I shall telephone for the police [*he goes resolutely to the telephone and opens the directory*].

DOOLITTLE. Have I asked you for a brass farthing? I leave it to the gentleman here: have I said a word about money?

HIGGINS [*throwing the book aside and marching down on Doolittle with a poser*] What else did you come for?

DOOLITTLE [*sweetly*] Well, what would a man come for? Be human, governor.

HIGGINS [*disarmed*] Alfred: did you put her up to it?

DOOLITTLE. So help me, Governor, I never did. I take my Bible oath I ain't seen the girl these two months past.

HIGGINS. Then how did you know she was here?

DOOLITTLE [*“most musical, most melancholy”*] I'll tell you, Governor, if you'll only let me get a word in. I'm willing to tell you. I'm wanting to tell you. I'm waiting to tell you.

HIGGINS. Pickering: this chap has a certain natural gift of rhetoric. Observe the rhythm of his native woodnotes wild. “I'm willing to tell you: I'm wanting to tell you: I'm waiting to tell you.” Sentimental rhetoric! That's the Welsh strain in him. It also accounts for his mendacity and dishonesty.

PICKERING. Oh, PLEASE, Higgins: I'm west country myself. [*To Doolittle*] How did you know the girl was here if you didn't send her?

DOOLITTLE. It was like this, Governor. The girl took a boy in the taxi to give him a jaunt. Son of her landlady, he is. He hung about on the chance of her giving him another ride home. Well, she sent him back for her luggage when she heard you was willing for her to stop here. I met the boy at the corner of Long Acre and Endell Street.

HIGGINS. Public house. Yes?

DOOLITTLE. The poor man's club, Governor: why shouldn't I?

PICKERING. Do let him tell his story, Higgins.

**DOOLITTLE.** He told me what was up. And I ask you, what was my feelings and my duty as a father? I says to the boy, “You bring me the luggage,” I says—

**PICKERING.** Why didn’t you go for it yourself?

**DOOLITTLE.** Landlady wouldn’t have trusted me with it, Governor. She’s that kind of woman: you know. I had to give the boy a penny afore he trusted me with it, the little swine. I brought it to her just to oblige you like, and make myself agreeable. That’s all.

**HIGGINS.** How much luggage?

**DOOLITTLE.** Musical instrument, Governor. A few pictures, a trifle of jewelry, and a bird-cage. She said she didn’t want no clothes. What was I to think from that, Governor? I ask you as a parent what was I to think?

**HIGGINS.** So you came to rescue her from worse than death, eh?

**DOOLITTLE** [*appreciatively: relieved at being understood*]  
Just so, Governor. That’s right.

**PICKERING.** But why did you bring her luggage if you intended to take her away?

**DOOLITTLE.** Have I said a word about taking her away? Have I now?

**HIGGINS** [*determinedly*] You’re going to take her away, double quick. [*He crosses to the hearth and rings the bell*].

**DOOLITTLE** [*rising*] No, Governor. Don’t say that. I’m not the man to stand in my girl’s light. Here’s a career opening for her, as you might say; and—

*Mrs. Pearce opens the door and awaits orders.*

**HIGGINS.** Mrs. Pearce: this is Eliza’s father. He has come to take her away. Give her to him. [*He goes back to the piano, with an air of washing his hands of the whole affair*].

**DOOLITTLE.** No. This is a misunderstanding. Listen here—

**MRS. PEARCE.** He can’t take her away, Mr. Higgins: how can he? You told me to burn her clothes.

**DOOLITTLE.** That’s right. I can’t carry the girl through the streets like a blooming monkey, can I? I put it to you.

**HIGGINS.** You have put it to me that you want your daughter. Take your daughter. If she has no clothes go out and buy

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her some.

**DOOLITTLE** [*desperate*] Where's the clothes she come in? Did I burn them or did your missus here?

**MRS. PEARCE.** I am the housekeeper, if you please. I have sent for some clothes for your girl. When they come you can take her away. You can wait in the kitchen. This way, please.

*Doolittle, much troubled, accompanies her to the door; then hesitates; finally turns confidentially to Higgins.*

**DOOLITTLE.** Listen here, Governor. 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*].

**PICKERING.** The floor is yours, Mr. Doolittle.

**DOOLITTLE** [*to Pickering*] I thank you, Governor. [*To Higgins, who takes refuge on the piano bench, a little overwhelmed by the proximity of his visitor; for Doolittle has a professional flavor of dust about him*]. Well, the truth is, I've taken

a sort of fancy to you, Governor; and if you want the girl, I'm not so set on having her back home again but what I might be open to an arrangement. Regarded in the light of a young woman, she's a fine handsome girl. As a daughter she's not worth her keep; and so I tell you straight. 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? [*He returns to his chair and sits down judicially*].

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

**DOOLITTLE.** Course they are, Governor. If I thought they wasn't, I'd ask fifty.

**HIGGINS** [*revolted*] Do you mean to say, you callous rascal, that you would sell your daughter for 50 pounds?

**DOOLITTLE.** Not in a general way I wouldn't; but to oblige a gentleman like you I'd do a good deal, I do assure you.

**PICKERING.** Have you no morals, man?

**DOOLITTLE** [*unabashed*] Can't afford them, Governor. Neither could you if you was as poor as me. Not that I mean

any harm, you know. But if Liza is going to have a bit out of this, why not me too?

**HIGGINS** [*troubled*] I don't know what to do, Pickering. There can be no question that as a matter of morals it's a positive crime to give this chap a farthing. And yet I feel a sort of rough justice in his claim.

**DOOLITTLE.** That's it, Governor. That's all I say. A father's heart, as it were.

**PICKERING.** Well, I know the feeling; but really it seems hardly right—

**DOOLITTLE.** Don't say that, Governor. Don't look at it that way. What am I, Governors both? I ask you, what am I? I'm one of the undeserving poor: that's what I am. Think of what that means to a man. It means that he's up agen middle class morality 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 him; and I drink a lot more. I want a bit of amusement, cause I'm a thinking man. I want cheerfulness and a song and a band when I feel low. Well, they charge me just the

same for everything as they charge the deserving. What is middle class morality? Just an excuse for never giving me anything. Therefore, I ask you, as two gentlemen, not to play that game on me. 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. 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 and fed and clothed by the sweat of his brow until 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** [*rising, and going over to Pickering*] 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.

**PICKERING.** What do you say to that, Doolittle?

**DOOLITTLE.** Not me, Governor, thank you kindly. I've heard all the preachers and all the prime ministers—for I'm a thinking man and game for politics or religion or social reform same as all the other amusements—and I tell you it's a dog's life anyway you look at it. Undeserving poverty is my line. Taking one station in society with another, it's—it's—well, it's the only one that has any ginger in it, to my taste.

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**HIGGINS.** I suppose we must give him a fiver.

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

**DOOLITTLE.** Not me, Governor, so help me I won't. Don't you be afraid that I'll save it and spare it and live idle on it. There won't be a penny of it left by Monday: I'll have to go to work same as if I'd never had it. It won't pauperize me, you bet. Just one good spree for myself and the missus, giving pleasure to ourselves and employment to others, and satisfaction to you to think it's not been thrown away. You couldn't spend it better.

**HIGGINS** [*taking out his pocket book and coming between Doolittle and the piano*] This is irresistible. Let's give him ten. [*He offers two notes to the dustman*].

**DOOLITTLE.** No, Governor. She wouldn't have the heart to spend ten; and perhaps I shouldn't neither. Ten pounds is a lot of money: it makes a man feel prudent like; and then goodbye to happiness. You give me what I ask you, Governor: not a penny more, and not a penny less.

**PICKERING.** Why don't you marry that missus of yours? I rather draw the line at encouraging that sort of immorality.

**DOOLITTLE.** Tell her so, Governor: tell her so. I'm willing.

It's me that suffers by it. I've no hold on her. I got to be agreeable to her. I got to give her presents. I got to buy her clothes something sinful. I'm a slave to that woman, Governor, just because I'm not her lawful husband. And she knows it too. Catch her marrying me! Take my advice, Governor: marry Eliza while she's young and don't know no better. If you don't you'll be sorry for it after. If you do, she'll be sorry for it after; but better you than her, because you're a man, and she's only a woman and don't know how to be happy anyhow.

**HIGGINS.** Pickering: if we listen to this man another minute, we shall have no convictions left. [*To Doolittle*] Five pounds I think you said.

**DOOLITTLE.** Thank you kindly, Governor.

**HIGGINS.** You're sure you won't take ten?

**DOOLITTLE.** Not now. Another time, Governor.

**HIGGINS** [*handing him a five-pound note*] Here you are.

**DOOLITTLE.** Thank you, Governor. Good morning.

[*He hurries to the door, anxious to get away with his booty. When he opens it he is confronted with a dainty and exquisitely clean young Japanese lady in a simple blue cotton kimono printed*

*cunningly with small white jasmine blossoms. Mrs. Pearce is with her. He gets out of her way deferentially and apologizes].*  
 Beg pardon, miss.

**THE JAPANESE LADY.** Garn! Don't you know your own daughter?

*Exclaiming simultaneously.*

**DOOLITTLE.** Bly me! it's Eliza!

**HIGGINS.** What's that! This!

**PICKERING.** By Jove!

**LIZA.** Don't I look silly?

**HIGGINS.** Silly?

**MRS. PEARCE** [*at the door*] Now, Mr. Higgins, please don't say anything to make the girl conceited about herself.

**HIGGINS** [*conscientiously*] Oh! Quite right, Mrs. Pearce. [*To Eliza*] Yes: damned silly.

**MRS. PEARCE.** Please, sir.

**HIGGINS** [*correcting himself*] I mean extremely silly.

**LIZA.** I should look all right with my hat on. [*She takes up*

*her hat; puts it on; and walks across the room to the fireplace with a fashionable air].*

**HIGGINS.** A new fashion, by George! And it ought to look horrible!

**DOOLITTLE** [*with fatherly pride*] Well, I never thought she'd clean up as good looking as that, Governor. She's a credit to me, ain't she?

**LIZA.** I tell you, it's easy to clean up here. Hot and cold water on tap, just as much as you like, there is. Woolly towels, there is; and a towel horse so hot, it burns your fingers. Soft brushes to scrub yourself, and a wooden bowl of soap smelling like primroses. Now I know why ladies is so clean. Washing's a treat for them. Wish they saw what it is for the like of me!

**HIGGINS.** I'm glad the bath-room met with your approval.

**LIZA.** It didn't: not all of it; and I don't care who hears me say it. Mrs. Pearce knows.

**HIGGINS.** What was wrong, Mrs. Pearce?

**MRS. PEARCE** [*blandly*] Oh, nothing, sir. It doesn't matter.

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LIZA. I had a good mind to break it. I didn't know which way to look. But I hung a towel over it, I did.

HIGGINS. Over what?

MRS. PEARCE. Over the looking-glass, sir.

HIGGINS. Doolittle: you have brought your daughter up too strictly.

DOOLITTLE. Me! I never brought her up at all, except to give her a lick of a strap now and again. Don't put it on me, Governor. She ain't accustomed to it, you see: that's all. But she'll soon pick up your free-and-easy ways.

LIZA. I'm a good girl, I am; and I won't pick up no free and easy ways.

HIGGINS. Eliza: if you say again that you're a good girl, your father shall take you home.

LIZA. Not him. You don't know my father. All he come here for was to touch you for some money to get drunk on.

DOOLITTLE. Well, what else would I want money for? To put into the plate in church, I suppose. [*She puts out her tongue at him. He is so incensed by this that Pickering presently*

*finds it necessary to step between them*]. Don't you give me none of your lip; and don't let me hear you giving this gentleman any of it neither, or you'll hear from me about it. See?

HIGGINS. Have you any further advice to give her before you go, Doolittle? Your blessing, for instance.

DOOLITTLE. No, Governor: I ain't such a mug as to put up my children to all I know myself. Hard enough to hold them in without that. If you want Eliza's mind improved, Governor, you do it yourself with a strap. So long, gentlemen. [*He turns to go*].

HIGGINS [*impressively*]. Stop. You'll come regularly to see your daughter. It's your duty, you know. My brother is a clergyman; and he could help you in your talks with her.

DOOLITTLE [*evasively*]. Certainly. I'll come, Governor. Not just this week, because I have a job at a distance. But later on you may depend on me. Afternoon, gentlemen. Afternoon, ma'am. [*He takes off his hat to Mrs. Pearce, who disdains the salutation and goes out. He winks at Higgins, thinking him probably a fellow sufferer from Mrs. Pearce's difficult disposition, and follows her*].

LIZA. Don't you believe the old liar. He'd as soon you set a bull-dog on him as a clergyman. You won't see him again in



a hurry.

**HIGGINS.** I don't want to, Eliza. Do you?

**LIZA.** Not me. I don't want never to see him again, I don't. He's a disgrace to me, he is, collecting dust, instead of working at his trade.

**PICKERING.** What is his trade, Eliza?

**LIZA.** Talking money out of other people's pockets into his own. His proper trade's a navy; and he works at it sometimes too—for exercise—and earns good money at it. Ain't you going to call me Miss Doolittle any more?

**PICKERING.** I beg your pardon, Miss Doolittle. It was a slip of the tongue.

**LIZA.** Oh, I don't mind; only it sounded so genteel. I should just like to take a taxi to the corner of Tottenham Court Road and get out there and tell it to wait for me, just to put the girls in their place a bit. I wouldn't speak to them, you know.

**PICKERING.** Better wait til we get you something really fashionable.

**HIGGINS.** Besides, you shouldn't cut your old friends now that you have risen in the world. That's what we call snobbery.

**LIZA.** You don't call the like of them my friends now, I should hope. They've took it out of me often enough with their ridicule when they had the chance; and now I mean to get a bit of my own back. But if I'm to have fashionable clothes, I'll wait. I should like to have some. Mrs. Pearce says you're going to give me some to wear in bed at night different to what I wear in the daytime; but it do seem a waste of money when you could get something to show. Besides, I never could fancy changing into cold things on a winter night.

**MRS. PEARCE** [*coming back*] Now, Eliza. The new things have come for you to try on.

**LIZA.** Ah—ow—oo—ooh! [*She rushes out*].

**MRS. PEARCE** [*following her*] Oh, don't rush about like that, girl [*She shuts the door behind her*].

**HIGGINS.** Pickering; we have taken on a stiff job.

**PICKERING** [*with conviction*] Higgins: we have.

## ACT III

It is Mrs. Higgins's at-home day. Nobody has yet arrived. Her drawing-room, in a flat on Chelsea embankment, has three windows looking on the river; and the ceiling is not so lofty as it would be in an older house of the same pretension. The windows are open, giving access to a balcony with flowers in pots. If you stand with your face to the windows, you have the fireplace on your left and the door in the right-hand wall close to the corner nearest the windows.

Mrs. Higgins was brought up on Morris and Burne Jones; and her room, which is very unlike her son's room in Wimpole Street, is not crowded with furniture and little tables and nicknacks. In the middle of the room there is a big ottoman; and this, with the carpet, the Morris wall-papers, and the Morris chintz window curtains and brocade covers of the ottoman and its cushions, supply all the ornament, and are much too handsome to be hidden by odds and ends of useless things. A few good oil-paintings from the

exhibitions in the Grosvenor Gallery thirty years ago (the Burne Jones, not the Whistler side of them) are on the walls. The only landscape is a Cecil Lawson on the scale of a Rubens. There is a portrait of Mrs. Higgins as she was when she defied fashion in her youth in one of the beautiful Rossettian costumes which, when caricatured by people who did not understand, led to the absurdities of popular estheticism in the eighteen-seventies.

In the corner diagonally opposite the door Mrs. Higgins, now over sixty and long past taking the trouble to dress out of the fashion, sits writing at an elegantly simple writing-table with a bell button within reach of her hand. There is a Chippendale chair further back in the room between her and the window nearest her side. At the other side of the room, further forward, is an Elizabethan chair roughly carved in the taste of Inigo Jones. On the same side a piano in a decorated case. The corner between the fireplace and the window is occupied by a divan cushioned in Morris chintz.

It is between four and five in the afternoon.

The door is opened violently; and Higgins enters with his hat on.

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*dismayed*] Henry [*scolding him*]! What are you doing here to-day? It is my at home day: you promised not to come. [*As he bends to kiss her, she takes his hat off, and presents it to him*].

**HIGGINS**. Oh bother! [*He throws the hat down on the table*].

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Go home at once.

**HIGGINS** [*kissing her*] I know, mother. I came on purpose.

**MRS. HIGGINS**. But you mustn't. I'm serious, Henry. You offend all my friends: they stop coming whenever they meet you.

**HIGGINS**. Nonsense! I know I have no small talk; but people don't mind. [*He sits on the settee*].

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Oh! don't they? Small talk indeed! What about your large talk? Really, dear, you mustn't stay.

**HIGGINS**. I must. I've a job for you. A phonetic job.

**MRS. HIGGINS**. No use, dear. I'm sorry; but I can't get round your vowels; and though I like to get pretty postcards in your patent shorthand, I always have to read the copies in ordinary writing you so thoughtfully send me.

**HIGGINS**. Well, this isn't a phonetic job.

**MRS. HIGGINS**. You said it was.

**HIGGINS**. Not your part of it. I've picked up a girl.

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Does that mean that some girl has picked you up?

**HIGGINS**. Not at all. I don't mean a love affair.

**MRS. HIGGINS**. What a pity!

**HIGGINS**. Why?

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Well, you never fall in love with anyone under forty-five. When will you discover that there are some rather nice-looking young women about?

**HIGGINS**. Oh, I can't be bothered with young women. My idea of a loveable woman is something as like you as possible. I shall never get into the way of seriously liking young

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women: some habits lie too deep to be changed. [*Rising abruptly and walking about, jingling his money and his keys in his trouser pockets*] Besides, they're all idiots.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Do you know what you would do if you really loved me, Henry?

**HIGGINS.** Oh bother! What? Marry, I suppose?

**MRS. HIGGINS.** No. Stop fidgeting and take your hands out of your pockets. [*With a gesture of despair, he obeys and sits down again*]. That's a good boy. Now tell me about the girl.

**HIGGINS.** She's coming to see you.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** I don't remember asking her.

**HIGGINS.** You didn't. I asked her. If you'd known her you wouldn't have asked her.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Indeed! Why?

**HIGGINS.** Well, it's like this. She's a common flower girl. I picked her off the kerbstone.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** And invited her to my at-home!

**HIGGINS** [*rising and coming to her to coax her*] Oh, that'll be all right. I've taught her to speak properly; and she has strict orders as to her behavior. She's to keep to two subjects: the weather and everybody's health—Fine day and How do you do, you know—and not to let herself go on things in general. That will be safe.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Safe! To talk about our health! about our insides! perhaps about our outsides! How could you be so silly, Henry?

**HIGGINS** [*impatently*] Well, she must talk about something. [*He controls himself and sits down again*]. Oh, she'll be all right: don't you fuss. Pickering is in it with me. I've a sort of bet on that I'll pass her off as a duchess in six months. I started on her some months ago; and she's getting on like a house on fire. I shall win my bet. She has a quick ear; and she's been easier to teach than my middle-class pupils because she's had to learn a complete new language. She talks English almost as you talk French.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** That's satisfactory, at all events.

**HIGGINS.** Well, it is and it isn't.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** What does that mean?

**HIGGINS.** You see, I've got her pronunciation all right; but you have to consider not only how a girl pronounces, but what she pronounces; and that's where—

*They are interrupted by the parlor-maid, announcing guests.*

**THE PARLOR-MAID.** Mrs. and Miss Eynsford Hill. [*She withdraws*].

**HIGGINS.** Oh Lord! [*He rises; snatches his hat from the table; and makes for the door; but before he reaches it his mother introduces him*].

*Mrs. and Miss Eynsford Hill are the mother and daughter who sheltered from the rain in Covent Garden. The mother is well bred, quiet, and has the habitual anxiety of straitened means. The daughter has acquired a gay air of being very much at home in society: the bravado of genteel poverty.*

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL** [*to Mrs. Higgins*] How do you do? [*They shake hands*].

**MISS EYNSFORD HILL.** How d'you do? [*She shakes*].

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*introducing*] My son Henry.

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL.** Your celebrated son! I have so

longed to meet you, Professor Higgins.

**HIGGINS** [*glumly, making no movement in her direction*] Delighted. [*He backs against the piano and bows brusquely*].

**MISS EYNSFORD HILL** [*going to him with confident familiarity*] How do you do?

**HIGGINS** [*staring at her*] I've seen you before somewhere. I haven't the ghost of a notion where; but I've heard your voice. [*Drearily*] It doesn't matter. You'd better sit down.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** I'm sorry to say that my celebrated son has no manners. You mustn't mind him.

**MISS EYNSFORD HILL** [*gaily*] I don't. [*She sits in the Elizabethan chair*].

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL** [*a little bewildered*] Not at all. [*She sits on the ottoman between her daughter and Mrs. Higgins, who has turned her chair away from the writing-table*].

**HIGGINS.** Oh, have I been rude? I didn't mean to be. He goes to the central window, through which, with his back to the company, he contemplates the river and the flowers in Battersea Park on the opposite bank as if they were a frozen dessert.

## Pygmalion

*The parlor-maid returns, ushering in Pickering.*

THE PARLOR-MAID. Colonel Pickering [*She withdraws*].

PICKERING. How do you do, Mrs. Higgins?

MRS. HIGGINS. So glad you've come. Do you know Mrs. Eynsford Hill—Miss Eynsford Hill? [*Exchange of bows. The Colonel brings the Chippendale chair a little forward between Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Higgins, and sits down*].

PICKERING. Has Henry told you what we've come for?

HIGGINS [*over his shoulder*] We were interrupted: damn it!

MRS. HIGGINS. Oh Henry, Henry, really!

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*half rising*] Are we in the way?

MRS. HIGGINS [*rising and making her sit down again*] No, no. You couldn't have come more fortunately: we want you to meet a friend of ours.

HIGGINS [*turning hopefully*] Yes, by George! We want two or three people. You'll do as well as anybody else.

*The parlor-maid returns, ushering Freddy.*

THE PARLOR-MAID. Mr. Eynsford Hill.

HIGGINS [*almost audibly, past endurance*] God of Heaven! another of them.

FREDDY [*shaking hands with Mrs. Higgins*] Ahdedo?

MRS. HIGGINS. Very good of you to come. [*Introducing*] Colonel Pickering.

FREDDY [*bowing*] Ahdedo?

MRS. HIGGINS. I don't think you know my son, Professor Higgins.

FREDDY [*going to Higgins*] Ahdedo?

HIGGINS [*looking at him much as if he were a pickpocket*] I'll take my oath I've met you before somewhere. Where was it?

FREDDY. I don't think so.

HIGGINS [*resignedly*] It don't matter, anyhow. Sit down. He shakes Freddy's hand, and almost slings him on the ottoman with his face to the windows; then comes round to the other side of it.

**HIGGINS.** Well, here we are, anyhow! [*He sits down on the ottoman next Mrs. Eynsford Hill, on her left*]. And now, what the devil are we going to talk about until Eliza comes?

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Henry: you are the life and soul of the Royal Society's soirees; but really you're rather trying on more commonplace occasions.

**HIGGINS.** Am I? Very sorry. [*Beaming suddenly*] I suppose I am, you know. [*Uproariously*] Ha, ha!

**MISS EYNSFORD HILL** [*who considers Higgins quite eligible matrimonially*] I sympathize. I haven't any small talk. If people would only be frank and say what they really think!

**HIGGINS** [*relapsing into gloom*] Lord forbid!

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL** [*taking up her daughter's cue*] But why?

**HIGGINS.** What they think they ought to think is bad enough, Lord knows; but what they really think would break up the whole show. Do you suppose it would be really agreeable if I were to come out now with what I really think?

**MISS EYNSFORD HILL** [*gaily*] Is it so very cynical?

**HIGGINS.** Cynical! Who the dickens said it was cynical? I mean it wouldn't be decent.

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL** [*seriously*] Oh! I'm sure you don't mean that, Mr. Higgins.

**HIGGINS.** You see, we're all savages, more or less. We're supposed to be civilized and cultured—to know all about poetry and philosophy and art and science, and so on; but how many of us know even the meanings of these names? [*To Miss Hill*] What do you know of poetry? [*To Mrs. Hill*] What do you know of science? [*Indicating Freddy*] What does he know of art or science or anything else? What the devil do you imagine I know of philosophy?

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*warningly*] Or of manners, Henry?

**THE PARLOR-MAID** [*opening the door*] Miss Doolittle. [*She withdraws*].

**HIGGINS** [*rising hastily and running to Mrs. Higgins*] Here she is, mother. [*He stands on tiptoe and makes signs over his mother's head to Eliza to indicate to her which lady is her hostess*].

*Eliza, who is exquisitely dressed, produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all rise, quite flustered. Guided by Higgins's signals, she comes to*

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*Mrs. Higgins with studied grace.*

**LIZA** [*speaking with pedantic correctness of pronunciation and great beauty of tone*] How do you do, Mrs. Higgins? [*She gasps slightly in making sure of the H in Higgins, but is quite successful*]. Mr. Higgins told me I might come.

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*cordially*] Quite right: I'm very glad indeed to see you.

**PICKERING.** How do you do, Miss Doolittle?

**LIZA** [*shaking hands with him*] Colonel Pickering, is it not?

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL.** I feel sure we have met before, Miss Doolittle. I remember your eyes.

**LIZA.** How do you do? [*She sits down on the ottoman gracefully in the place just left vacant by Higgins*].

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL** [*introducing*] My daughter Clara.

**LIZA.** How do you do?

**CLARA** [*impulsively*] How do you do? [*She sits down on the ottoman beside Eliza, devouring her with her eyes*].

**FREDDY** [*coming to their side of the ottoman*] I've certainly had the pleasure.

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL** [*introducing*] My son Freddy.

**LIZA.** How do you do?

*Freddy bows and sits down in the Elizabethan chair, infatuated.*

**HIGGINS** [*suddenly*] By George, yes: it all comes back to me! [*They stare at him*]. Covent Garden! [*Lamentably*] What a damned thing!

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Henry, please! [*He is about to sit on the edge of the table*]. Don't sit on my writing-table: you'll break it.

**HIGGINS** [*sulkily*] Sorry.

*He goes to the divan, stumbling into the fender and over the fire-irons on his way; extricating himself with muttered imprecations; and finishing his disastrous journey by throwing himself so impatiently on the divan that he almost breaks it. Mrs. Higgins looks at him, but controls herself and says nothing.*

*A long and painful pause ensues.*



MRS. HIGGINS [*at last, conversationally*] Will it rain, do you think?

LIZA. The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation.

FREDDY. Ha! ha! how awfully funny!

LIZA. What is wrong with that, young man? I bet I got it right.

FREDDY. Killing!

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. I'm sure I hope it won't turn cold. There's so much influenza about. It runs right through our whole family regularly every spring.

LIZA [*darkly*] My aunt died of influenza: so they said.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*clicks her tongue sympathetically*]!!!

LIZA [*in the same tragic tone*] But it's my belief they done the old woman in.

MRS. HIGGINS [*puzzled*] Done her in?

LIZA. Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They all thought she was dead; but my father he kept ladling gin down her throat til she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*startled*] Dear me!

LIZA [*piling up the indictment*] What call would a woman with that strength in her have to die of influenza? What become of her new straw hat that should have come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. What does doing her in mean?

HIGGINS [*hastily*] Oh, that's the new small talk. To do a person in means to kill them.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*to Eliza, horrified*] You surely don't believe that your aunt was killed?

LIZA. Do I not! Them she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin, let alone a hat.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. But it can't have been right for

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your father to pour spirits down her throat like that. It might have killed her.

LIZA. Not her. Gin was mother's milk to her. Besides, he'd poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. Do you mean that he drank?

LIZA. Drank! My word! Something chronic.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. How dreadful for you!

LIZA. Not a bit. It never did him no harm what I could see. But then he did not keep it up regular. [*Cheerfully*] On the burst, as you might say, from time to time. And always more agreeable when he had a drop in. When he was out of work, my mother used to give him fourpence and tell him to go out and not come back until he'd drunk himself cheerful and loving-like. There's lots of women has to make their husbands drunk to make them fit to live with. [Now quite at her ease] You see, it's like this. If a man has a bit of a conscience, it always takes him when he's sober; and then it makes him low-spirited. A drop of booze just takes that off and makes him happy. [*To Freddy, who is in convulsions of suppressed laughter*] Here! what are you sniggering at?

FREDDY. The new small talk. You do it so awfully well.

LIZA. If I was doing it proper, what was you laughing at? [*To Higgins*] Have I said anything I oughtn't?

MRS. HIGGINS [*interposing*] Not at all, Miss Doolittle.

LIZA. Well, that's a mercy, anyhow. [*Expansively*] What I always say is—

HIGGINS [*rising and looking at his watch*] Ahem!

LIZA [*looking round at him; taking the hint; and rising*] Well: I must go. [*They all rise. Freddy goes to the door*]. So pleased to have met you. Good-bye. [*She shakes hands with Mrs. Higgins*].

MRS. HIGGINS. Good-bye.

LIZA. Good-bye, Colonel Pickering.

PICKERING. Good-bye, Miss Doolittle. [*They shake hands*].

LIZA [*nodding to the others*] Good-bye, all.

FREDDY [*opening the door for her*] Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle? If so—

LIZA. Walk! Not bloody likely. [*Sensation*]. I am going in a taxi. [*She goes out*].

*Pickering gasps and sits down. Freddy goes out on the balcony to catch another glimpse of Eliza.*

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*suffering from shock*] Well, I really can't get used to the new ways.

CLARA [*throwing herself discontentedly into the Elizabethan chair*]. Oh, it's all right, mamma, quite right. People will think we never go anywhere or see anybody if you are so old-fashioned.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. I daresay I am very old-fashioned; but I do hope you won't begin using that expression, Clara. I have got accustomed to hear you talking about men as rotters, and calling everything filthy and beastly; though I do think it horrible and unladylike. But this last is really too much. Don't you think so, Colonel Pickering?

PICKERING. Don't ask me. I've been away in India for several years; and manners have changed so much that I sometimes don't know whether I'm at a respectable dinner-table or in a ship's fore-castle.

CLARA. It's all a matter of habit. There's no right or wrong

in it. Nobody means anything by it. And it's so quaint, and gives such a smart emphasis to things that are not in themselves very witty. I find the new small talk delightful and quite innocent.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*rising*] Well, after that, I think it's time for us to go.

*Pickering and Higgins rise.*

CLARA [*rising*] Oh yes: we have three at homes to go to still. Good-bye, Mrs. Higgins. Good-bye, Colonel Pickering. Good-bye, Professor Higgins.

HIGGINS [*coming grimly at her from the divan, and accompanying her to the door*] Good-bye. Be sure you try on that small talk at the three at-homes. Don't be nervous about it. Pitch it in strong.

CLARA [*all smiles*] I will. Good-bye. Such nonsense, all this early Victorian prudery!

HIGGINS [*tempting her*] Such damned nonsense!

CLARA. Such bloody nonsense!

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*convulsively*] Clara!

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**CLARA.** Ha! ha! [*She goes out radiant, conscious of being thoroughly up to date, and is heard descending the stairs in a stream of silvery laughter*].

**FREDDY** [*to the heavens at large*] Well, I ask you [*He gives it up, and comes to Mrs. Higgins*]. Good-bye.

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*shaking hands*] Good-bye. Would you like to meet Miss Doolittle again?

**FREDDY** [*eagerly*] Yes, I should, most awfully.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Well, you know my days.

**FREDDY.** Yes. Thanks awfully. Good-bye. [*He goes out*].

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL.** Good-bye, Mr. Higgins.

**HIGGINS.** Good-bye. Good-bye.

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL** [*to Pickering*] It's no use. I shall never be able to bring myself to use that word.

**PICKERING.** Don't. It's not compulsory, you know. You'll get on quite well without it.

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL.** Only, Clara is so down on me if

I am not positively reeking with the latest slang. Good-bye.

**PICKERING.** Good-bye [*They shake hands*].

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL** [*to Mrs. Higgins*] You mustn't mind Clara. [*Pickering, catching from her lowered tone that this is not meant for him to hear, discreetly joins Higgins at the window*]. We're so poor! and she gets so few parties, poor child! She doesn't quite know. [*Mrs. Higgins, seeing that her eyes are moist, takes her hand sympathetically and goes with her to the door*]. But the boy is nice. Don't you think so?

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Oh, quite nice. I shall always be delighted to see him.

**MRS. EYNSFORD HILL.** Thank you, dear. Good-bye. [*She goes out*].

**HIGGINS** [*eagerly*] Well? Is Eliza presentable [*he swoops on his mother and drags her to the ottoman, where she sits down in Eliza's place with her son on her left*]?

*Pickering returns to his chair on her right.*

**MRS. HIGGINS.** You silly boy, of course she's not presentable. She's a triumph of your art and of her dressmaker's; but if you suppose for a moment that she doesn't give herself

away in every sentence she utters, you must be perfectly cracked about her.

**PICKERING.** But don't you think something might be done? I mean something to eliminate the sanguinary element from her conversation.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Not as long as she is in Henry's hands.

**HIGGINS** [*aggrieved*] Do you mean that my language is improper?

**MRS. HIGGINS.** No, dearest: it would be quite proper—say on a canal barge; but it would not be proper for her at a garden party.

**HIGGINS** [*deeply injured*] Well I must say—

**PICKERING** [*interrupting him*] Come, Higgins: you must learn to know yourself. I haven't heard such language as yours since we used to review the volunteers in Hyde Park twenty years ago.

**HIGGINS** [*sulkily*] Oh, well, if you say so, I suppose I don't always talk like a bishop.

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*quieting Henry with a touch*] Colonel

Pickering: will you tell me what is the exact state of things in Wimpole Street?

**PICKERING** [*cheerfully: as if this completely changed the subject*] Well, I have come to live there with Henry. We work together at my Indian Dialects; and we think it more convenient—

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Quite so. I know all about that: it's an excellent arrangement. But where does this girl live?

**HIGGINS.** With us, of course. Where would she live?

**MRS. HIGGINS.** But on what terms? Is she a servant? If not, what is she?

**PICKERING** [*slowly*] I think I know what you mean, Mrs. Higgins.

**HIGGINS.** Well, dash me if I do! I've had to work at the girl every day for months to get her to her present pitch. Besides, she's useful. She knows where my things are, and remembers my appointments and so forth.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** How does your housekeeper get on with her?

## Pygmalion

**HIGGINS.** Mrs. Pearce? Oh, she's jolly glad to get so much taken off her hands; for before Eliza came, she had to have to find things and remind me of my appointments. But she's got some silly bee in her bonnet about Eliza. She keeps saying "You don't think, sir": doesn't she, Pick?

**PICKERING.** Yes: that's the formula. "You don't think, sir." That's the end of every conversation about Eliza.

**HIGGINS.** As if I ever stop thinking about the girl and her confounded vowels and consonants. I'm worn out, thinking about her, and watching her lips and her teeth and her tongue, not to mention her soul, which is the quaintest of the lot.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** You certainly are a pretty pair of babies, playing with your live doll.

**HIGGINS.** Playing! The hardest job I ever tackled: make no mistake about that, mother. But 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.

**PICKERING** [*drawing his chair closer to Mrs. Higgins and bending over to her eagerly*] Yes: it's enormously interesting. I assure you, Mrs. Higgins, we take Eliza very seriously. Every

week—every day almost—there is some new change. [*Closer again*] We keep records of every stage—dozens of gramophone disks and photographs—

**HIGGINS** [*assailing her at the other ear*] Yes, by George: it's the most absorbing experiment I ever tackled. She regularly fills our lives up; doesn't she, Pick?

**PICKERING.** We're always talking Eliza.

**HIGGINS.** Teaching Eliza.

**PICKERING.** Dressing Eliza.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** What!

**HIGGINS.** Inventing new Elizas.

*Higgins and Pickering, speaking together:*

**HIGGINS.** You know, she has the most extraordinary quickness of ear:

**PICKERING.** I assure you, my dear Mrs. Higgins, that girl

**HIGGINS.** just like a parrot. I've tried her with every

**PICKERING.** is a genius. She can play the piano quite beautifully

**HIGGINS.** possible sort of sound that a human being can make—

PICKERING. We have taken her to classical concerts and to music

HIGGINS. Continental dialects, African dialects, Hottentot

PICKERING. halls; and it's all the same to her: she plays everything

HIGGINS. clicks, things it took me years to get hold of; and

PICKERING. she hears right off when she comes home, whether it's

HIGGINS. she picks them up like a shot, right away, as if she had

PICKERING. Beethoven and Brahms or Lehar and Lionel Morickton;

HIGGINS. been at it all her life.

PICKERING. though six months ago, she'd never as much as touched a piano.

MRS. HIGGINS [*putting her fingers in her ears, as they are by this time shouting one another down with an intolerable noise*] Sh—sh—sh—sh! [*They stop*].

PICKERING. I beg your pardon. [*He draws his chair back apologetically*].

HIGGINS. Sorry. When Pickering starts shouting nobody can get a word in edgeways.

MRS. HIGGINS. Be quiet, Henry. Colonel Pickering: don't you realize that when Eliza walked into Wimpole Street, something walked in with her?

PICKERING. Her father did. But Henry soon got rid of him.

MRS. HIGGINS. It would have been more to the point if her mother had. But as her mother didn't something else did.

PICKERING. But what?

MRS. HIGGINS [*unconsciously dating herself by the word*] A problem.

PICKERING. Oh, I see. The problem of how to pass her off as a lady.

HIGGINS. I'll solve that problem. I've half solved it already.

MRS. HIGGINS. No, you two infinitely stupid male creatures: the problem of what is to be done with her afterwards.

HIGGINS. I don't see anything in that. She can go her own way, with all the advantages I have given her.

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**MRS. HIGGINS.** The advantages of that poor woman who was here just now! The manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income! Is that what you mean?

**PICKERING** [*indulgently, being rather bored*] Oh, that will be all right, Mrs. Higgins. [*He rises to go*].

**HIGGINS** [*rising also*] We'll find her some light employment.

**PICKERING.** She's happy enough. Don't you worry about her. Good-bye. [*He shakes hands as if he were consoling a frightened child, and makes for the door*].

**HIGGINS.** Anyhow, there's no good bothering now. The thing's done. Good-bye, mother. [*He kisses her, and follows Pickering*].

**PICKERING** [*turning for a final consolation*] There are plenty of openings. We'll do what's right. Good-bye.

**HIGGINS** [*to Pickering as they go out together*] Let's take her to the Shakespear exhibition at Earls Court.

**PICKERING.** Yes: let's. Her remarks will be delicious.

**HIGGINS.** She'll mimic all the people for us when we get home.

**PICKERING.** Ripping. [*Both are heard laughing as they go downstairs*].

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*rises with an impatient bounce, and returns to her work at the writing-table. She sweeps a litter of disarranged papers out of her way; snatches a sheet of paper from her stationery case; and tries resolutely to write. At the third line she gives it up; flings down her pen; grips the table angrily and exclaims*] Oh, men! men!! men!!!



## ACT IV

The Wimpole Street laboratory. Midnight. Nobody in the room. The clock on the mantelpiece strikes twelve.

The fire is not alight: it is a summer night.

Presently Higgins and Pickering are heard on the stairs.

**HIGGINS** [*calling down to Pickering*] I say, Pick: lock up, will you. I shan't be going out again.

**PICKERING**. Right. Can Mrs. Pearce go to bed? We don't want anything more, do we?

**HIGGINS**. Lord, no!

*Eliza opens the door and is seen on the lighted landing in opera cloak, brilliant evening dress, and diamonds, with fan, flowers, and all accessories. She comes to the hearth, and switches on the electric lights there. She is tired: her pallor contrasts strongly with her dark eyes and hair; and her expression is almost tragic. She takes off her cloak; puts her fan and flowers on the piano; and sits down on the bench, brooding and silent. Higgins, in evening dress, with overcoat and hat, comes in, carrying a smoking jacket which he has picked up downstairs. He takes off the hat and overcoat;*

*throws them carelessly on the newspaper stand; disposes of his coat in the same way; puts on the smoking jacket; and throws himself wearily into the easy-chair at the hearth. Pickering, similarly attired, comes in. He also takes off his hat and overcoat, and is about to throw them on Higgins's when he hesitates.*

**PICKERING**. I say: Mrs. Pearce will row if we leave these things lying about in the drawing-room.

**HIGGINS**. Oh, chuck them over the bannisters into the hall. She'll find them there in the morning and put them away all right. She'll think we were drunk.

**PICKERING**. We are, slightly. Are there any letters?

**HIGGINS**. I didn't look. [*Pickering takes the overcoats and hats and goes down stairs. Higgins begins half-singing half-yawning an air from La Fanciulla del Golden West. Suddenly he stops and exclaims*] I wonder where the devil my slippers are!

*Eliza looks at him darkly; then leaves the room.*

*Higgins yawns again, and resumes his song. Pickering returns, with the contents of the letter-box in his hand.*

**PICKERING**. Only circulars, and this coroneted billet-doux for you. [*He throws the circulars into the fender, and posts him-*

*self on the hearthrug, with his back to the grate].*

**HIGGINS** [*glancing at the billet-doux*] Money-lender. [*He throws the letter after the circulars*].

*Eliza returns with a pair of large down-at-heel slippers. She places them on the carpet before Higgins, and sits as before without a word.*

**HIGGINS** [*yawning again*] Oh Lord! What an evening! What a crew! What a silly tomfoollery! [*He raises his shoe to unlace it, and catches sight of the slippers. He stops unlacing and looks at them as if they had appeared there of their own accord*]. Oh! they're there, are they?

**PICKERING** [*stretching himself*] Well, I feel a bit tired. It's been a long day. The garden party, a dinner party, and the opera! Rather too much of a good thing. But you've won your bet, Higgins. Eliza did the trick, and something to spare, eh?

**HIGGINS** [*fervently*] Thank God it's over!

*Eliza flinches violently; but they take no notice of her; and she recovers herself and sits stonily as before.*

**PICKERING.** Were you nervous at the garden party? I was. Eliza didn't seem a bit nervous.

**HIGGINS.** Oh, she wasn't nervous. I knew she'd be all right. No, it's the strain of putting the job through all these months that has told on me. It was interesting enough at first, while we were at the phonetics; but after that I got deadly sick of it. If I hadn't backed myself to do it I should have chucked the whole thing up two months ago. It was a silly notion: the whole thing has been a bore.

**PICKERING.** Oh come! the garden party was frightfully exciting. My heart began beating like anything.

**HIGGINS.** Yes, for the first three minutes. But when I saw we were going to win hands down, I felt like a bear in a cage, hanging about doing nothing. The dinner was worse: sitting gorging there for over an hour, with nobody but a damned fool of a fashionable woman to talk to! I tell you, Pickering, never again for me. No more artificial duchesses. The whole thing has been simple purgatory.

**PICKERING.** You've never been broken in properly to the social routine. [*Strolling over to the piano*] I rather enjoy dipping into it occasionally myself: it makes me feel young again. Anyhow, it was a great success: an immense success. I was quite frightened once or twice because Eliza was doing it so well. You see, lots of the real people can't do it at all: they're such fools that they think style comes by nature to people in their position; and so they never learn. There's always some-

thing professional about doing a thing superlatively well.

**HIGGINS.** Yes: that's what drives me mad: the silly people don't know their own silly business. [*Rising*] However, it's over and done with; and now I can go to bed at last without dreading tomorrow.

*Eliza's beauty becomes murderous.*

**PICKERING.** I think I shall turn in too. Still, it's been a great occasion: a triumph for you. Good-night. [*He goes*].

**HIGGINS** [*following him*] Good-night. [*Over his shoulder, at the door*] Put out the lights, Eliza; and tell Mrs. Pearce not to make coffee for me in the morning: I'll take tea. [*He goes out*].

*Eliza tries to control herself and feel indifferent as she rises and walks across to the hearth to switch off the lights. By the time she gets there she is on the point of screaming. She sits down in Higgins's chair and holds on hard to the arms. Finally she gives way and flings herself furiously on the floor raging.*

**HIGGINS** [*in despairing wrath outside*] What the devil have I done with my slippers? [*He appears at the door*].

**LIZA** [*snatching up the slippers, and hurling them at him one after the other with all her force*] There are your slippers. And

there. Take your slippers; and may you never have a day's luck with them!

**HIGGINS** [*astounded*] What on earth—! [*He comes to her*]. What's the matter? Get up. [*He pulls her up*]. Anything wrong?

**LIZA** [*breathless*] Nothing wrong—with YOU. I've won your bet for you, haven't I? That's enough for you. I don't matter, I suppose.

**HIGGINS.** YOU won my bet! You! Presumptuous insect! I won it. What did you throw those slippers at me for?

**LIZA.** Because I wanted to smash your face. I'd like to kill you, you selfish brute. Why didn't you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God it's all over, and that now you can throw me back again there, do you? [*She crimps her fingers, frantically*].

**HIGGINS** [*looking at her in cool wonder*] The creature IS nervous, after all.

**LIZA** [*gives a suffocated scream of fury, and instinctively darts her nails at his face*]!!

**HIGGINS** [*catching her wrists*] Ah! would you? Claws in, you cat. How dare you show your temper to me? Sit down

## Pygmalion

and be quiet. [*He throws her roughly into the easy-chair*].

LIZA [*crushed by superior strength and weight*] What's to become of me? What's to become of me?

HIGGINS. How the devil do I know what's to become of you? What does it matter what becomes of you?

LIZA. You don't care. I know you don't care. You wouldn't care if I was dead. I'm nothing to you—not so much as them slippers.

HIGGINS [*thundering*] THOSE slippers.

LIZA [*with bitter submission*] Those slippers. I didn't think it made any difference now.

*A pause. Eliza hopeless and crushed. Higgins a little uneasy.*

HIGGINS [*in his loftiest manner*] Why have you begun going on like this? May I ask whether you complain of your treatment here?

LIZA. No.

HIGGINS. Has anybody behaved badly to you? Colonel Pickering? Mrs. Pearce? Any of the servants?

LIZA. No.

HIGGINS. I presume you don't pretend that I have treated you badly.

LIZA. No.

HIGGINS. I am glad to hear it. [*He moderates his tone*]. Perhaps you're tired after the strain of the day. Will you have a glass of champagne? [*He moves towards the door*].

LIZA. No. [*Recollecting her manners*] Thank you.

HIGGINS [*good-humored again*] This has been coming on you for some days. I suppose it was natural for you to be anxious about the garden party. But that's all over now. [*He pats her kindly on the shoulder. She writhes*]. There's nothing more to worry about.

LIZA. No. Nothing more for you to worry about. [*She suddenly rises and gets away from him by going to the piano bench, where she sits and hides her face*]. Oh God! I wish I was dead.

HIGGINS [*staring after her in sincere surprise*] Why? in heaven's name, why? [*Reasonably, going to her*] Listen to me, Eliza. All this irritation is purely subjective.

LIZA. I don't understand. I'm too ignorant.

HIGGINS. It's only imagination. Low spirits and nothing else. Nobody's hurting you. Nothing's wrong. You go to bed like a good girl and sleep it off. Have a little cry and say your prayers: that will make you comfortable.

LIZA. I heard YOUR prayers. "Thank God it's all over!"

HIGGINS [*impatiently*] Well, don't you thank God it's all over? Now you are free and can do what you like.

LIZA [*pulling herself together in desperation*] What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me?

HIGGINS [*enlightened, but not at all impressed*] Oh, that's what's worrying you, is it? [*He thrusts his hands into his pockets, and walks about in his usual manner, rattling the contents of his pockets, as if condescending to a trivial subject out of pure kindness*]. I shouldn't bother about it if I were you. I should imagine you won't have much difficulty in settling yourself, somewhere or other, though I hadn't quite realized that you were going away. [*She looks quickly at him: he does not look at her, but examines the dessert stand on the piano and decides that he will eat an apple*]. You might marry, you know. [*He bites a large piece out of the apple, and munches it noisily*]. You

see, Eliza, all men are not confirmed old bachelors like me and the Colonel. Most men are the marrying sort (poor devils!); and you're not bad-looking; it's quite a pleasure to look at you sometimes—not now, of course, because you're crying and looking as ugly as the very devil; but when you're all right and quite yourself, you're what I should call attractive. That is, to the people in the marrying line, you understand. You go to bed and have a good nice rest; and then get up and look at yourself in the glass; and you won't feel so cheap.

*Eliza again looks at him, speechless, and does not stir.*

*The look is quite lost on him: he eats his apple with a dreamy expression of happiness, as it is quite a good one.*

HIGGINS [*a genial afterthought occurring to him*] I daresay my mother could find some chap or other who would do very well—

LIZA. We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road.

HIGGINS [*waking up*] What do you mean?

LIZA. I sold flowers. I didn't sell myself. Now you've made a lady of me I'm not fit to sell anything else. I wish you'd left me where you found me.

## Pygmalion

**HIGGINS** [*slinging the core of the apple decisively into the grate*] Tosh, Eliza. Don't you insult human relations by dragging all this cant about buying and selling into it. You needn't marry the fellow if you don't like him.

**LIZA.** What else am I to do?

**HIGGINS.** Oh, lots of things. What about your old idea of a florist's shop? Pickering could set you up in one: he's lots of money. [*Chuckling*] He'll have to pay for all those togs you have been wearing today; and that, with the hire of the jewellery, will make a big hole in two hundred pounds. Why, six months ago you would have thought it the millennium to have a flower shop of your own. Come! you'll be all right. I must clear off to bed: I'm devilish sleepy. By the way, I came down for something: I forget what it was.

**LIZA.** Your slippers.

**HIGGINS.** Oh yes, of course. You shied them at me. [*He picks them up, and is going out when she rises and speaks to him*].

**LIZA.** Before you go, sir—

**HIGGINS** [*dropping the slippers in his surprise at her calling him sir*] Eh?

**LIZA.** Do my clothes belong to me or to Colonel Pickering?

**HIGGINS** [*coming back into the room as if her question were the very climax of unreason*] What the devil use would they be to Pickering?

**LIZA.** He might want them for the next girl you pick up to experiment on.

**HIGGINS** [*shocked and hurt*] Is THAT the way you feel towards us?

**LIZA.** I don't want to hear anything more about that. All I want to know is whether anything belongs to me. My own clothes were burnt.

**HIGGINS.** But what does it matter? Why need you start bothering about that in the middle of the night?

**LIZA.** I want to know what I may take away with me. I don't want to be accused of stealing.

**HIGGINS** [*now deeply wounded*] Stealing! You shouldn't have said that, Eliza. That shows a want of feeling.

**LIZA.** I'm sorry. I'm only a common ignorant girl; and in my station I have to be careful. There can't be any feelings

between the like of you and the like of me. Please will you tell me what belongs to me and what doesn't?

**HIGGINS** [*very sulky*] You may take the whole damned houseful if you like. Except the jewels. They're hired. Will that satisfy you? [*He turns on his heel and is about to go in extreme dudgeon*].

**LIZA** [*drinking in his emotion like nectar, and nagging him to provoke a further supply*] Stop, please. [*She takes off her jewels*]. Will you take these to your room and keep them safe? I don't want to run the risk of their being missing.

**HIGGINS** [*furiously*] Hand them over. [*She puts them into his hands*]. If these belonged to me instead of to the jeweler, I'd ram them down your ungrateful throat. [*He perfunctorily thrusts them into his pockets, unconsciously decorating himself with the protruding ends of the chains*].

**LIZA** [*taking a ring off*] This ring isn't the jeweler's: it's the one you bought me in Brighton. I don't want it now. [*Higgins dashes the ring violently into the fireplace, and turns on her so threateningly that she crouches over the piano with her hands over her face, and exclaims*] Don't you hit me.

**HIGGINS**. Hit you! You infamous creature, how dare you accuse me of such a thing? It is you who have hit me. You

have wounded me to the heart.

**LIZA** [*thrilling with hidden joy*] I'm glad. I've got a little of my own back, anyhow.

**HIGGINS** [*with dignity, in his finest professional style*] You have caused me to lose my temper: a thing that has hardly ever happen'd to me before. I prefer to say nothing more tonight. I am going to bed.

**LIZA** [*pertly*] You'd better leave a note for Mrs. Pearce about the coffee; for she won't be told by me.

**HIGGINS** [*formally*] Damn Mrs. Pearce; and damn the coffee; and damn you; and 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*].

*Eliza smiles for the first time; expresses her feelings by a wild pantomime in which an imitation of Higgins's exit is confused with her own triumph; and finally goes down on her knees on the hearthrug to look for the ring.*

ACT V

Mrs. Higgins's drawing-room. She is at her writing-table as before. The parlor-maid comes in.

**THE PARLOR-MAID** [*at the door*] Mr. Henry, mam, is downstairs with Colonel Pickering.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Well, show them up.

**THE PARLOR-MAID.** They're using the telephone, mam. Telephoning to the police, I think.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** What!

**THE PARLOR-MAID** [*coming further in and lowering her voice*] Mr. Henry's in a state, mam. I thought I'd better tell you.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** If you had told me that Mr. Henry was not in a state it would have been more surprising. Tell them to come up when they've finished with the police. I suppose he's lost something.

**THE PARLOR-MAID.** Yes, mam [*going*].

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Go upstairs and tell Miss Doolittle that Mr. Henry and the Colonel are here. Ask her not to come down till I send for her.

**THE PARLOR-MAID.** Yes, mam.

*Higgins bursts in. He is, as the parlor-maid has said, in a state.*

**HIGGINS.** Look here, mother: here's a confounded thing!

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Yes, dear. Good-morning. [He checks his impatience and kisses her, whilst the parlor-maid goes out]. What is it?

**HIGGINS.** Eliza's bolted.

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*calmly continuing her writing*] You must have frightened her.

**HIGGINS.** Frightened her! nonsense! She was left last night, as usual, to turn out the lights and all that; and instead of going to bed she changed her clothes and went right off: her bed wasn't slept in. She came in a cab for her things before seven this morning; and that fool Mrs. Pearce let her have them without telling me a word about it. What am I to do?

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Do without, I'm afraid, Henry. The girl



has a perfect right to leave if she chooses.

**HIGGINS** [*wandering distractedly across the room*] But I can't find anything. I don't know what appointments I've got. I'm—[*Pickering comes in. Mrs. Higgins puts down her pen and turns away from the writing-table*].

**PICKERING** [*shaking hands*] Good-morning, Mrs. Higgins. Has Henry told you? [*He sits down on the ottoman*].

**HIGGINS**. What does that ass of an inspector say? Have you offered a reward?

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*rising in indignant amazement*] You don't mean to say you have set the police after Eliza?

**HIGGINS**. Of course. What are the police for? What else could we do? [*He sits in the Elizabethan chair*].

**PICKERING**. The inspector made a lot of difficulties. I really think he suspected us of some improper purpose.

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Well, of course he did. What right have you to go to the police and give the girl's name as if she were a thief, or a lost umbrella, or something? Really! [*She sits down again, deeply vexed*].

**HIGGINS**. But we want to find her.

**PICKERING**. We can't let her go like this, you know, Mrs. Higgins. What were we to do?

**MRS. HIGGINS**. You have no more sense, either of you, than two children. Why—

*The parlor-maid comes in and breaks off the conversation.*

**THE PARLOR-MAID**. Mr, Henry: a gentleman wants to see you very particular. He's been sent on from Wimpole Street.

**HIGGINS**. Ob, bother! I can't see anyone now. Who is it?

**THE PARLOR-MAID**. A Mr. Doolittle, Sir.

**PICKERING**. Doolittle! Do you mean the dustman?

**THE PARLOR-MAID**. Dustman! Oh no, sir: a gentleman.

**HIGGINS** [*springing up excitedly*] By George, Pick, it's some relative of hers that she's gone to. Somebody we know nothing about. [*To the parlor-maid*] Send him up, quick.

**THE PARLOR-MAID**. Yes, Sir. [*She goes*].

## Pygmalion

**HIGGINS** [*eagerly, going to his mother*] Genteel relatives! now we shall hear something. [*He sits down in the Chippendale chair*].

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Do you know any of her people?

**PICKERING.** Only her father: the fellow we told you about.

**THE PARLOR-MAID** [*announcing*] Mr. Doolittle. [*She withdraws*].

*Doolittle enters. He is brilliantly dressed in a new fashionable frock-coat, with white waistcoat and grey trousers. A flower in his buttonhole, a dazzling silk hat, and patent leather shoes complete the effect. He is too concerned with the business he has come on to notice Mrs. Higgins. He walks straight to Higgins, and accosts him with vehement reproach.*

**DOOLITTLE** [*indicating his own person*] See here! Do you see this? You done this.

**HIGGINS.** Done what, man?

**DOOLITTLE.** This, I tell you. Look at it. Look at this hat. Look at this coat.

**PICKERING.** Has Eliza been buying you clothes?

**DOOLITTLE.** Eliza! not she. Not half. Why would she buy me clothes?

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Good-morning, Mr. Doolittle. Won't you sit down?

**DOOLITTLE** [*taken aback as he becomes conscious that he has forgotten his hostess*] Asking your pardon, ma'am. [*He approaches her and shakes her proffered hand*]. Thank you. [*He sits down on the ottoman, on Pickering's right*]. I am that full of what has happened to me that I can't think of anything else.

**HIGGINS.** What the dickens has happened to you?

**DOOLITTLE.** I shouldn't mind if it had only happened to me: anything might happen to anybody and nobody to blame but Providence, as you might say. But this is something that you done to me: yes, you, Henry Higgins.

**HIGGINS.** Have you found Eliza? That's the point.

**DOOLITTLE.** Have you lost her?

**HIGGINS.** Yes.

**DOOLITTLE.** You have all the luck, you have. I ain't found her; but she'll find me quick enough now after what you

done to me.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** But what has my son done to you, Mr. Doolittle?

**DOOLITTLE.** Done to me! Ruined me. Destroyed my happiness. Tied me up and delivered me into the hands of middle class morality.

**HIGGINS** [*rising intolerantly and standing over Doolittle*] You're raving. You're drunk. You're mad. I gave you five pounds. After that I had two conversations with you, at half-a-crown an hour. I've never seen you since.

**DOOLITTLE.** Oh! Drunk! am I? Mad! am I? Tell me this. Did you or did you not write a letter to an old blighter in America that was giving five millions to found Moral Reform Societies all over the world, and that wanted you to invent a universal language for him?

**HIGGINS.** What! Ezra D. Wannafeller! He's dead. [*He sits down again carelessly*].

**DOOLITTLE.** Yes: he's dead; and I'm done for. Now did you or did you not write a letter to him to say that the most original moralist at present in England, to the best of your knowledge, was Alfred Doolittle, a common dustman.

**HIGGINS.** Oh, after your last visit I remember making some silly joke of the kind.

**DOOLITTLE.** Ah! you may well call it a silly joke. It put the lid on me right enough. Just give him the chance he wanted to show that Americans is not like us: that they recognize and respect merit in every class of life, however humble. Them words is in his blooming will, in which, Henry Higgins, thanks to your silly joking, he leaves me a share in his Pre-digested Cheese Trust worth three thousand a year on condition that I lecture for his Wannafeller Moral Reform World League as often as they ask me up to six times a year.

**HIGGINS.** The devil he does! Whew! [*Brightening suddenly*] What a lark!

**PICKERING.** A safe thing for you, Doolittle. They won't ask you twice.

**DOOLITTLE.** It ain't the lecturing I mind. I'll lecture them blue in the face, I will, and not turn a hair. It's making a gentleman of me that I object to. Who asked him to make a gentleman of me? I was happy. I was free. I touched pretty nigh everybody for money when I wanted it, same as I touched you, Henry Higgins. Now I am worried; tied neck and heels; and everybody touches me for money. It's a fine thing for you, says my solicitor. Is it? says I. You mean it's a

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good thing for you, I says. When I was a poor man and had a solicitor once when they found a pram in the dust cart, he got me off, and got shut of me and got me shut of him as quick as he could. Same with the doctors: used to shove me out of the hospital before I could hardly stand on my legs, and nothing to pay. Now they finds out that I'm not a healthy man and can't live unless they looks after me twice a day. In the house I'm not let do a hand's turn for myself: somebody else must do it and touch me for it. A year ago I hadn't a relative in the world except two or three that wouldn't speak to me. Now I've fifty, and not a decent week's wages among the lot of them. I have to live for others and not for myself: that's middle class morality. You talk of losing Eliza. Don't you be anxious: I bet she's on my doorstep by this: she that could support herself easy by selling flowers if I wasn't respectable. And the next one to touch me will be you, Henry Higgins. I'll have to learn to speak middle class language from you, instead of speaking proper English. That's where you'll come in; and I daresay that's what you done it for.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** But, my dear Mr. Doolittle, you need not suffer all this if you are really in earnest. Nobody can force you to accept this bequest. You can repudiate it. Isn't that so, Colonel Pickering?

**PICKERING.** I believe so.

**DOOLITTLE** [*softening his manner in deference to her sex*] That's the tragedy of it, ma'am. It's easy to say chuck it; but I haven't the nerve. Which one of us has? We're all intimidated. Intimidated, ma'am: that's what we are. What is there for me if I chuck it but the workhouse in my old age? I have to dye my hair already to keep my job as a dustman. If I was one of the deserving poor, and had put by a bit, I could chuck it; but then why should I, acause the deserving poor might as well be millionaires for all the happiness they ever has. They don't know what happiness is. But I, as one of the undeserving poor, have nothing between me and the pauper's uniform but this here blasted three thousand a year that shoves me into the middle class. (Excuse the expression, ma'am: you'd use it yourself if you had my provocation). They've got you every way you turn: it's a choice between the Skilly of the workhouse and the Char Bydis of the middle class; and I haven't the nerve for the workhouse. Intimidated: that's what I am. Broke. Bought up. Happier men than me will call for my dust, and touch me for their tip; and I'll look on helpless, and envy them. And that's what your son has brought me to. [*He is overcome by emotion*].

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Well, I'm very glad you're not going to do anything foolish, Mr. Doolittle. For this solves the problem of Eliza's future. You can provide for her now.

**DOOLITTLE** [*with melancholy resignation*] Yes, ma'am; I'm

expected to provide for everyone now, out of three thousand a year.

**HIGGINS** [*jumping up*] Nonsense! he can't provide for her. He shan't provide for her. She doesn't belong to him. I paid him five pounds for her. Doolittle: either you're an honest man or a rogue.

**DOOLITTLE** [*tolerantly*] A little of both, Henry, like the rest of us: a little of both.

**HIGGINS**. Well, you took that money for the girl; and you have no right to take her as well.

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Henry: don't be absurd. If you really want to know where Eliza is, she is upstairs.

**HIGGINS** [*amazed*] Upstairs!!! Then I shall jolly soon fetch her downstairs. [*He makes resolutely for the door*].

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*rising and following him*] Be quiet, Henry. Sit down.

**HIGGINS**. I—

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Sit down, dear; and listen to me.

**HIGGINS**. Oh very well, very well, very well. [*He throws himself ungraciously on the ottoman, with his face towards the windows*]. But I think you might have told me this half an hour ago.

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Eliza came to me this morning. She passed the night partly walking about in a rage, partly trying to throw herself into the river and being afraid to, and partly in the Carlton Hotel. She told me of the brutal way you two treated her.

**HIGGINS** [*bounding up again*] What!

**PICKERING** [*rising also*] My dear Mrs. Higgins, she's been telling you stories. We didn't treat her brutally. We hardly said a word to her; and we parted on particularly good terms. [*Turning on Higgins*]. Higgins did you bully her after I went to bed?

**HIGGINS**. Just the other way about. She threw my slippers in my face. She behaved in the most outrageous way. I never gave her the slightest provocation. The slippers came bang into my face the moment I entered the room—before I had uttered a word. And used perfectly awful language.

**PICKERING** [*astonished*] But why? What did we do to her?

## Pygmalion

**MRS. HIGGINS.** I think I know pretty well what you did. The girl is naturally rather affectionate, I think. Isn't she, Mr. Doolittle?

**DOOLITTLE.** Very tender-hearted, ma'am. Takes after me.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Just so. She had become attached to you both. She worked very hard for you, Henry! I don't think you quite realize what anything in the nature of brain work means to a girl like that. Well, it seems that when the great day of trial came, and she did this wonderful thing for you without making a single mistake, you two sat there and never said a word to her, but talked together of how glad you were that it was all over and how you had been bored with the whole thing. And then you were surprised because she threw your slippers at you! *I should have thrown the fire-irons at you.*

**HIGGINS.** We said nothing except that we were tired and wanted to go to bed. Did we, Pick?

**PICKERING** [*shrugging his shoulders*] That was all.

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*ironically*] Quite sure?

**PICKERING.** Absolutely. Really, that was all.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** You didn't thank her, or pet her, or admire her, or tell her how splendid she'd been.

**HIGGINS** [*impatiently*] But she knew all about that. We didn't make speeches to her, if that's what you mean.

**PICKERING** [*conscience stricken*] Perhaps we were a little inconsiderate. Is she very angry?

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*returning to her place at the writing-table*] Well, I'm afraid she won't go back to Wimpole Street, especially now that Mr. Doolittle is able to keep up the position you have thrust on her; but she says she is quite willing to meet you on friendly terms and to let bygones be bygones.

**HIGGINS** [*furious*] Is she, by George? Ho!

**MRS. HIGGINS.** If you promise to behave yourself, Henry, I'll ask her to come down. If not, go home; for you have taken up quite enough of my time.

**HIGGINS.** Oh, all right. Very well. Pick: you behave yourself. Let us put on our best Sunday manners for this creature that we picked out of the mud. [*He flings himself sulkily into the Elizabethan chair*].

**DOOLITTLE** [*remonstrating*] Now, now, Henry Higgins!

have some consideration for my feelings as a middle class man.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Remember your promise, Henry. [*She presses the bell-button on the writing-table*]. Mr. Doolittle: will you be so good as to step out on the balcony for a moment. I don't want Eliza to have the shock of your news until she has made it up with these two gentlemen. Would you mind?

**DOOLITTLE.** As you wish, lady. Anything to help Henry to keep her off my hands. [*He disappears through the window*].

*The parlor-maid answers the bell. Pickering sits down in Doolittle's place.*

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Ask Miss Doolittle to come down, please.

**THE PARLOR-MAID.** Yes, mam. [*She goes out*].

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Now, Henry: be good.

**HIGGINS.** I am behaving myself perfectly.

**PICKERING.** He is doing his best, Mrs. Higgins.

*A pause. Higgins throws back his head; stretches out his legs;*

*and begins to whistle.*

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Henry, dearest, you don't look at all nice in that attitude.

**HIGGINS** [*pulling himself together*] I was not trying to look nice, mother.

**MRS. HIGGINS.** It doesn't matter, dear. I only wanted to make you speak.

**HIGGINS.** Why?

**MRS. HIGGINS.** Because you can't speak and whistle at the same time.

*Higgins groans. Another very trying pause.*

**HIGGINS** [*springing up, out of patience*] Where the devil is that girl? Are we to wait here all day?

*Eliza enters, sunny, self-possessed, and giving a staggeringly convincing exhibition of ease of manner. She carries a little work-basket, and is very much at home. Pickering is too much taken aback to rise.*

**LIZA.** How do you do, Professor Higgins? Are you quite well?

## Pygmalion

**HIGGINS** [*choking*] Am I— [*He can say no more*].

**LIZA**. But of course you are: you are never ill. So glad to see you again, Colonel Pickering. [*He rises hastily; and they shake hands*]. Quite chilly this morning, isn't it? [*She sits down on his left. He sits beside her*].

**HIGGINS**. Don't you dare try this game on me. I taught it to you; and it doesn't take me in. Get up and come home; and don't be a fool.

*Eliza takes a piece of needlework from her basket, and begins to stitch at it, without taking the least notice of this outburst.*

**MRS. HIGGINS**. Very nicely put, indeed, Henry. No woman could resist such an invitation.

**HIGGINS**. You let her alone, mother. Let her speak for herself. You will jolly soon see whether she has an idea that I haven't put into her head or a word that I haven't put into her mouth. I tell you I have created this thing out of the squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Garden; and now she pretends to play the fine lady with me.

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*placidly*] Yes, dear; but you'll sit down, won't you?

*Higgins sits down again, savagely.*

**LIZA** [*to Pickering, taking no apparent notice of Higgins, and working away deftly*] Will you drop me altogether now that the experiment is over, Colonel Pickering?

**PICKERING**. Oh don't. You mustn't think of it as an experiment. It shocks me, somehow.

**LIZA**. Oh, I'm only a squashed cabbage leaf.

**PICKERING** [*impulsively*] No.

**LIZA** [*continuing quietly*]—but I owe so much to you that I should be very unhappy if you forgot me.

**PICKERING**. It's very kind of you to say so, Miss Doolittle.

**LIZA**. It's not because you paid for my dresses. I know you are generous to everybody with money. But it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, isn't it? You see it was so very difficult for me with the example of Professor Higgins always before me. I was brought up to be just like him, unable to control myself, and using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didn't behave like that if you hadn't been there.



HIGGINS. Well!!

PICKERING. Oh, that's only his way, you know. He doesn't mean it.

LIZA. Oh, I didn't mean it either, when I was a flower girl. It was only my way. But you see I did it; and that's what makes the difference after all.

PICKERING. No doubt. Still, he taught you to speak; and I couldn't have done that, you know.

LIZA [*trivially*] Of course: that is his profession.

HIGGINS. Damnation!

LIZA [*continuing*] It was just like learning to dance in the fashionable way: there was nothing more than that in it. But do you know what began my real education?

PICKERING. What?

LIZA [*stopping her work for a moment*] Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self-respect for me. [*She resumes her stitching*]. And there were a hundred little things you never noticed, because they came naturally to you. Things about

standing up and taking off your hat and opening doors—

PICKERING. Oh, that was nothing.

LIZA. Yes: things that showed you thought and felt about me as if I were something better than a scullerymaid; though of course I know you would have been just the same to a scullery-maid if she had been let in the drawing-room. You never took off your boots in the dining room when I was there.

PICKERING. You mustn't mind that. Higgins takes off his boots all over the place.

LIZA. I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isn't it? But it made such a difference to me that you didn't do it. You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will.

MRS. HIGGINS. Please don't grind your teeth, Henry.

PICKERING. Well, this is really very nice of you, Miss Doolittle.

## Pygmalion

LIZA. I should like you to call me Eliza, now, if you would.

PICKERING. Thank you. Eliza, of course.

LIZA. And I should like Professor Higgins to call me Miss Doolittle.

HIGGINS. I'll see you damned first.

MRS. HIGGINS. Henry! Henry!

PICKERING [*laughing*] Why don't you slang back at him? Don't stand it. It would do him a lot of good.

LIZA. I can't. I could have done it once; but now I can't go back to it. Last night, when I was wandering about, a girl spoke to me; and I tried to get back into the old way with her; but it was no use. You told me, you know, that when a child is brought to a foreign country, it picks up the language in a few weeks, and forgets its own. Well, I am a child in your country. I have forgotten my own language, and can speak nothing but yours. That's the real break-off with the corner of Tottenham Court Road. Leaving Wimpole Street finishes it.

PICKERING [*much alarmed*] Oh! but you're coming back to Wimpole Street, aren't you? You'll forgive Higgins?

HIGGINS [*rising*] Forgive! Will she, by George! Let her go. Let her find out how she can get on without us. She will relapse into the gutter in three weeks without me at her elbow.

*Doolittle appears at the centre window. With a look of dignified reproach at Higgins, he comes slowly and silently to his daughter, who, with her back to the window, is unconscious of his approach.*

PICKERING. He's incorrigible, Eliza. You won't relapse, will you?

LIZA. No: Not now. Never again. I have learnt my lesson. I don't believe I could utter one of the old sounds if I tried. [*Doolittle touches her on her left shoulder. She drops her work, losing her self-possession utterly at the spectacle of her father's splendor*] A—a—a—a—a—ah—ow—ooh!

HIGGINS [*with a crow of triumph*] Aha! Just so. A—a—a—a—ahowoo! A—a—a—a—ahowoo! A—a—a—a—ahowoo! Victory! Victory! [*He throws himself on the divan, folding his arms, and spraddling arrogantly*].

DOOLITTLE. Can you blame the girl? Don't look at me like that, Eliza. It ain't my fault. I've come into money.

LIZA. You must have touched a millionaire this time, dad.

DOOLITTLE. I have. But I'm dressed something special today. I'm going to St. George's, Hanover Square. Your step-mother is going to marry me.

LIZA [*angrily*] You're going to let yourself down to marry that low common woman!

PICKERING [*quietly*] He ought to, Eliza. [*To Doolittle*] Why has she changed her mind?

DOOLITTLE [*sadly*] Intimidated, Governor. Intimidated. Middle class morality claims its victim. Won't you put on your hat, Liza, and come and see me turned off?

LIZA. If the Colonel says I must, I—I'll [*almost sobbing*] I'll demean myself. And get insulted for my pains, like enough.

DOOLITTLE. Don't be afraid: she never comes to words with anyone now, poor woman! respectability has broke all the spirit out of her.

PICKERING [*squeezing Eliza's elbow gently*] Be kind to them, Eliza. Make the best of it.

LIZA [*forcing a little smile for him through her vexation*] Oh well, just to show there's no ill feeling. I'll be back in a moment. [*She goes out*].

DOOLITTLE [*sitting down beside Pickering*] I feel uncommon nervous about the ceremony, Colonel. I wish you'd come and see me through it.

PICKERING. But you've been through it before, man. You were married to Eliza's mother.

DOOLITTLE. Who told you that, Colonel?

PICKERING. Well, nobody told me. But I concluded naturally—

DOOLITTLE. No: that ain't the natural way, Colonel: it's only the middle class way. My way was always the undeserving way. But don't say nothing to Eliza. She don't know: I always had a delicacy about telling her.

PICKERING. Quite right. We'll leave it so, if you don't mind.

DOOLITTLE. And you'll come to the church, Colonel, and put me through straight?

PICKERING. With pleasure. As far as a bachelor can.

## Pygmalion

**MRS. HIGGINS.** May I come, Mr. Doolittle? I should be very sorry to miss your wedding.

**DOOLITTLE.** I should indeed be honored by your condescension, ma'am; and my poor old woman would take it as a tremendous compliment. She's been very low, thinking of the happy days that are no more.

**MRS. HIGGINS** [*rising*] I'll order the carriage and get ready. [*The men rise, except Higgins*]. I shan't be more than fifteen minutes. [*As she goes to the door Eliza comes in, hatted and buttoning her gloves*]. I'm going to the church to see your father married, Eliza. You had better come in the brougham with me. Colonel Pickering can go on with the bridegroom.

*Mrs. Higgins goes out. Eliza comes to the middle of the room between the centre window and the ottoman. Pickering joins her.*

**DOOLITTLE.** Bridegroom! What a word! It makes a man realize his position, somehow. [*He takes up his hat and goes towards the door*].

**PICKERING.** Before I go, Eliza, do forgive him and come back to us.

**LIZA.** I don't think papa would allow me. Would you, dad?

**DOOLITTLE** [*sad but magnanimous*] They played you off very cunning, Eliza, them two sportsmen. If it had been only one of them, you could have nailed him. But you see, there was two; and one of them chaperoned the other, as you might say. [*To Pickering*] It was artful of you, Colonel; but I bear no malice: I should have done the same myself. I been the victim of one woman after another all my life; and I don't grudge you two getting the better of Eliza. I shan't interfere. It's time for us to go, Colonel. So long, Henry. See you in St. George's, Eliza. [*He goes out*].

**PICKERING** [*coaxing*] Do stay with us, Eliza. [*He follows Doolittle*].

*Eliza goes out on the balcony to avoid being alone with Higgins. He rises and joins her there. She immediately comes back into the room and makes for the door; but he goes along the balcony quickly and gets his back to the door before she reaches it.*

**HIGGINS.** Well, Eliza, you've had a bit of your own back, as you call it. Have you had enough? and are you going to be reasonable? Or do you want any more?

**LIZA.** You want me back only to pick up your slippers and put up with your tempers and fetch and carry for you.

**HIGGINS.** I haven't said I wanted you back at all.

LIZA. Oh, indeed. Then what are we talking about?

HIGGINS. About you, not about me. If you come back I shall treat you just as I have always treated you. I can't change my nature; and I don't intend to change my manners. My manners are exactly the same as Colonel Pickering's.

LIZA. That's not true. He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess.

HIGGINS. And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl.

LIZA. I see. [*She turns away composedly, and sits on the ottoman, facing the window*]. The same to everybody.

HIGGINS. Just so.

LIZA. Like father.

HIGGINS [*grinning, a little taken down*] Without accepting the comparison at all points, Eliza, it's quite true that your father is not a snob, and that he will be quite at home in any station of life to which his eccentric destiny may call him. [*Seriously*] The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-

class carriages, and one soul is as good as another.

LIZA. Amen. You are a born preacher.

HIGGINS [*irritated*] The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better.

LIZA [*with sudden sincerity*] I don't care how you treat me. I don't mind your swearing at me. I don't mind a black eye: I've had one before this. But [*standing up and facing him*] I won't be passed over.

HIGGINS. Then get out of my way; for I won't stop for you. You talk about me as if I were a motor bus.

LIZA. So you are a motor bus: all bounce and go, and no consideration for anyone. But I can do without you: don't think I can't.

HIGGINS. I know you can. I told you you could.

LIZA [*wounded, getting away from him to the other side of the ottoman with her face to the hearth*] I know you did, you brute. You wanted to get rid of me.

HIGGINS. Liar.

## Pygmalion

LIZA. Thank you. [*She sits down with dignity*].

HIGGINS. You never asked yourself, I suppose, whether I could do without YOU.

LIZA [*earnestly*] Don't you try to get round me. You'll HAVE to do without me.

HIGGINS [*arrogant*] I can do without anybody. I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire. But [*with sudden humility*] I shall miss you, Eliza. [*He sits down near her on the ottoman*]. I have learnt something from your idiotic notions: I confess that humbly and gratefully. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them, rather.

LIZA. Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feelings to hurt.

HIGGINS. I can't turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you.

LIZA. Oh, you ARE a devil. You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. Mrs. Pearce warned me. Time and again she has wanted to leave you;

and you always got round her at the last minute. And you don't care a bit for her. And you don't care a bit for me.

HIGGINS. I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house. What more can you or anyone ask?

LIZA. I won't care for anybody that doesn't care for me.

HIGGINS. Commercial principles, Eliza. Like [*reproducing her Covent Garden pronunciation with professional exactness*] s'yollin voylets [*selling violets*], isn't it?

LIZA. Don't sneer at me. It's mean to sneer at me.

HIGGINS. I have never sneered in my life. Sneering doesn't become either the human face or the human soul. I am expressing my righteous contempt for Commercialism. I don't and won't trade in affection. You call me a brute because you couldn't buy a claim on me by fetching my slippers and finding my spectacles. You were a fool: I think a woman fetching a man's slippers is a disgusting sight: did I ever fetch YOUR slippers? I think a good deal more of you for throwing them in my face. No use slaving for me and then saying you want to be cared for: who cares for a slave? If you come back, come back for the sake of good fellowship; for you'll get nothing else. You've had a thousand times as much out of me as I

have out of you; and if you dare to set up your little dog's tricks of fetching and carrying slippers against my creation of a Duchess Eliza, I'll slam the door in your silly face.

LIZA. What did you do it for if you didn't care for me?

HIGGINS [*heartily*] Why, because it was my job.

LIZA. You never thought of the trouble it would make for me.

HIGGINS. Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? Making life means making trouble. There's only one way of escaping trouble; and that's killing things. Cowards, you notice, are always shrieking to have troublesome people killed.

LIZA. I'm no preacher: I don't notice things like that. I notice that you don't notice me.

HIGGINS [*jumping up and walking about intolerantly*] Eliza: you're an idiot. I waste the treasures of my Miltonic mind by spreading them before you. Once for all, understand that I go my way and do my work without caring twopence what happens to either of us. I am not intimidated, like your father and your stepmother. So you can come back or go to the devil: which you please.

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.

## Pygmalion

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 of 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?

LIZA [*much troubled*] I want a little kindness. I know I’m a common ignorant girl, and you a book-learned gentleman; but I’m not dirt under your feet. What I done [*correcting herself*] what I did was not for the dresses and the taxis: I did it because we were pleasant together and I come—came—to care for you; not to want you to make love to me, and not



forgetting the difference between us, but more friendly like.

**HIGGINS.** Well, of course. That's just how I feel. And how Pickering feels. Eliza: you're a fool.

**LIZA.** That's not a proper answer to give me [*she sinks on the chair at the writing-table in tears*].

**HIGGINS.** It's all you'll get until you stop being a common idiot. If you're going to be a lady, you'll have to give up feeling neglected if the men you know don't spend half their time snivelling over you and the other half giving you black eyes. If you can't stand the coldness of my sort of life, and the strain of it, go back to the gutter. Work til you are more a brute than a human being; and then cuddle and squabble and drink til you fall asleep. Oh, it's a fine life, the life of the gutter. It's real: it's warm: it's violent: you can feel it through the thickest skin: you can taste it and smell it without any training or any work. Not like Science and Literature and Classical Music and Philosophy and Art. 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. If you can't appreciate what you've got, you'd better get what you can appreciate.

**LIZA** [*desperate*] Oh, you are a cruel tyrant. I can't talk to you: you turn everything against me: I'm always in the wrong. But you know very well all the time that you're nothing but a bully. You know I can't go back to the gutter, as you call it, and that I have no real friends in the world but you and the Colonel. You know well I couldn't bear to live with a low common man after you two; and it's wicked and cruel of you to insult me by pretending I could. You think I must go back to Wimpole Street because I have nowhere else to go but father's. But don't you be too sure that you have me under your feet to be trampled on and talked down. I'll marry Freddy, I will, as soon as he's able to support me.

**HIGGINS** [*sitting down beside her*] Rubbish! you shall marry an ambassador. You shall marry the Governor-General of India or the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, or somebody who wants a deputy-queen. I'm not going to have my masterpiece thrown away on Freddy.

**LIZA.** You think I like you to say that. But I haven't forgot what you said a minute ago; and I won't be coaxed round as if I was a baby or a puppy. If I can't have kindness, I'll have independence.

**HIGGINS.** Independence? That's middle class blasphemy. We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth.

## Pygmalion

LIZA [*rising determinedly*] I'll let you see whether I'm dependent on you. If you can preach, I can teach. I'll go and be a teacher.

HIGGINS. What'll you teach, in heaven's name?

LIZA. What you taught me. I'll teach phonetics.

HIGGINS. Ha! Ha! Ha!

LIZA. I'll offer myself as an assistant to Professor Nepean.

HIGGINS [*rising in a fury*] What! That impostor! that humbug! that toadying ignoramus! Teach him my methods! my discoveries! You take one step in his direction and I'll wring your neck. [*He lays hands on her*]. Do you hear?

LIZA [*defiantly non-resistant*] Wring away. What do I care? I knew you'd strike me some day. [*He lets her go, stamping with rage at having forgotten himself, and recoils so hastily that he stumbles back into his seat on the ottoman*]. Aha! Now I know how to deal with you. What a fool I was not to think of it before! You can't take away the knowledge you gave me. You said I had a finer ear than you. And I can be civil and kind to people, which is more than you can. Aha! That's done you, Henry Higgins, it has. Now I don't care that [*snapping her fingers*] for your bullying and your big talk. I'll advertize it in

the papers that your duchess is only a flower girl that you taught, and that she'll teach anybody to be a duchess just the same in six months for a thousand guineas. Oh, when I think of myself crawling under your feet and being trampled on and called names, when all the time I had only to lift up my finger to be as good as you, I could just kick myself.

HIGGINS [*wondering at her*] You damned impudent slut, you! But it's better than snivelling; better than fetching slippers and finding spectacles, isn't it? [*Rising*] By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this.

LIZA. Yes: you turn round and make up to me now that I'm not afraid of you, and can do without you.

HIGGINS. Of course I do, you little fool. Five minutes ago you were like a millstone round my neck. Now you're a tower of strength: a consort battleship. You and I and Pickering will be three old bachelors together instead of only two men and a silly girl.

*Mrs. Higgins returns, dressed for the wedding. Eliza instantly becomes cool and elegant.*

MRS. HIGGINS. The carriage is waiting, Eliza. Are you ready?

LIZA. Quite. Is the Professor coming?

MRS. HIGGINS. Certainly not. He can't behave himself in church. He makes remarks out loud all the time on the clergyman's pronunciation.

LIZA. Then I shall not see you again, Professor. Good bye. [*She goes to the door*].

MRS. HIGGINS [*coming to Higgins*] Good-bye, dear.

HIGGINS. Good-bye, mother. [*He is about to kiss her, when he recollects something*]. Oh, by the way, Eliza, order a ham and a Stilton cheese, will you? And buy me a pair of reindeer gloves, number eights, and a tie to match that new suit of mine, at Eale & Binman's. You can choose the color. [*His cheerful, careless, vigorous voice shows that he is incorrigible*].

LIZA [*disdainfully*] Buy them yourself. [*She sweeps out*].

MRS. HIGGINS. I'm afraid you've spoiled that girl, Henry. But never mind, dear: I'll buy you the tie and gloves.

HIGGINS [*sunnily*] Oh, don't bother. She'll buy em all right enough. Good-bye.

*They kiss. Mrs. Higgins runs out. Higgins, left alone, rattles his*

*cash in his pocket; chuckles; and disports himself in a highly self-satisfied manner.*

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The rest of the story need not be shown in action, and indeed, would hardly need telling if our imaginations were not so enfeebled by their lazy dependence on the ready-makes and reach-me-downs of the ragshop in which Romance keeps its stock of "happy endings" to misfit all stories. Now, the history of Eliza Doolittle, though called a romance because of the transfiguration it records seems exceedingly improbable, is common enough. Such transfigurations have been achieved by hundreds of resolutely ambitious young women since Nell Gwynne set them the example by playing queens and fascinating kings in the theatre in which she began by selling oranges. Nevertheless, people in all directions have assumed, for no other reason than that she became the heroine of a romance, that she must have married the hero of it. This is unbearable, not only because her little

drama, if acted on such a thoughtless assumption, must be spoiled, but because the true sequel is patent to anyone with a sense of human nature in general, and of feminine instinct in particular.

Eliza, in telling Higgins she would not marry him if he asked her, was not coquetting: she was announcing a well-considered decision. When a bachelor interests, and dominates, and teaches, and becomes important to a spinster, as Higgins with Eliza, she always, if she has character enough to be capable of it, considers very seriously indeed whether she will play for becoming that bachelor's wife, especially if he is so little interested in marriage that a determined and devoted woman might capture him if she set herself resolutely to do it. Her decision will depend a good deal on whether she is really free to choose; and that, again, will depend on her age and income. If she is at the end of her youth, and has no security for her livelihood, she will marry him because she must marry anybody who will provide for her. But at Eliza's age a good-looking girl does not feel that pres-

sure; she feels free to pick and choose. She is therefore guided by her instinct in the matter. Eliza's instinct tells her not to marry Higgins. It does not tell her to give him up. It is not in the slightest doubt as to his remaining one of the strongest personal interests in her life. It would be very sorely strained if there was another woman likely to supplant her with him. But as she feels sure of him on that last point, she has no doubt at all as to her course, and would not have any, even if the difference of twenty years in age, which seems so great to youth, did not exist between them.

As our own instincts are not appealed to by her conclusion, let us see whether we cannot discover some reason in it. When Higgins excused his indifference to young women on the ground that they had an irresistible rival in his mother, he gave the clue to his inveterate old-bachelordom. The case is uncommon only to the extent that remarkable mothers are uncommon. If an imaginative boy has a sufficiently rich mother who has intelligence, personal grace, dig-

nity of character without harshness, and a cultivated sense of the best art of her time to enable her to make her house beautiful, she sets a standard for him against which very few women can struggle, besides effecting for him a disengagement of his affections, his sense of beauty, and his idealism from his specifically sexual impulses. This makes him a standing puzzle to the huge number of uncultivated people who have been brought up in tasteless homes by commonplace or disagreeable parents, and to whom, consequently, literature, painting, sculpture, music, and affectionate personal relations come as modes of sex if they come at all. The word passion means nothing else to them; and that Higgins could have a passion for phonetics and idealize his mother instead of Eliza, would seem to them absurd and unnatural. Nevertheless, when we look round and see that hardly anyone is too ugly or disagreeable to find a wife or a husband if he or she wants one, whilst many old maids and bachelors are above the average in quality and culture, we cannot help suspect-

ing that the disentanglement of sex from the associations with which it is so commonly confused, a disentanglement which persons of genius achieve by sheer intellectual analysis, is sometimes produced or aided by parental fascination.

Now, though Eliza was incapable of thus explaining to herself Higgins's formidable powers of resistance to the charm that prostrated Freddy at the first glance, she was instinctively aware that she could never obtain a complete grip of him, or come between him and his mother (the first necessity of the married woman). To put it shortly, she knew that for some mysterious reason he had not the makings of a married man in him, according to her conception of a husband as one to whom she would be his nearest and fondest and warmest interest. Even had there been no mother-rival, she would still have refused to accept an interest in herself that was secondary to philosophic interests. Had Mrs. Higgins died, there would still have been Milton and the Universal Alphabet. Landor's remark that to those who have the

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greatest power of loving, love is a secondary affair, would not have recommended Landor to Eliza. Put that along with her resentment of Higgins's domineering superiority, and her mistrust of his coaxing cleverness in getting round her and evading her wrath when he had gone too far with his impetuous bullying, and you will see that Eliza's instinct had good grounds for warning her not to marry her Pygmalion.

And now, whom did Eliza marry? For if Higgins was a predestinate old bachelor, she was most certainly not a predestinate old maid. Well, that can be told very shortly to those who have not guessed it from the indications she has herself given them.

Almost immediately after Eliza is stung into proclaiming her considered determination not to marry Higgins, she mentions the fact that young Mr. Frederick Eynsford Hill is pouring out his love for her daily through the post. Now Freddy is young, practically twenty years younger than Higgins: he is a gentleman (or, as Eliza would qualify him, a toff), and speaks like one; he is nicely dressed, is treated by

the Colonel as an equal, loves her unaffectedly, and is not her master, nor ever likely to dominate her in spite of his advantage of social standing. Eliza has no use for the foolish romantic tradition that all women love to be mastered, if not actually bullied and beaten. "When you go to women," says Nietzsche, "take your whip with you." Sensible despots have never confined that precaution to women: they have taken their whips with them when they have dealt with men, and been slavishly idealized by the men over whom they have flourished the whip much more than by women. No doubt there are slavish women as well as slavish men; and women, like men, admire those that are stronger than themselves. But to admire a strong person and to live under that strong person's thumb are two different things. The weak may not be admired and hero-worshipped; but they are by no means disliked or shunned; and they never seem to have the least difficulty in marrying people who are too good for them. They may fail in emergencies; but life is not one long emergency: it is mostly a string of situa-

tions for which no exceptional strength is needed, and with which even rather weak people can cope if they have a stronger partner to help them out. Accordingly, it is a truth everywhere in evidence that strong people, masculine or feminine, not only do not marry stronger people, but do not show any preference for them in selecting their friends. When a lion meets another with a louder roar “the first lion thinks the last a bore.” The man or woman who feels strong enough for two, seeks for every other quality in a partner than strength.

The converse is also true. Weak people want to marry strong people who do not frighten them too much; and this often leads them to make the mistake we describe metaphorically as “biting off more than they can chew.” They want too much for too little; and when the bargain is unreasonable beyond all bearing, the union becomes impossible: it ends in the weaker party being either discarded or borne as a cross, which is worse. People who are not only weak, but silly or obtuse as well, are often in these difficulties.

This being the state of human affairs, what is Eliza fairly sure to do when she is placed between Freddy and Higgins? Will she look forward to a lifetime of fetching Higgins’s slippers or to a lifetime of Freddy fetching hers? There can be no doubt about the answer. Unless Freddy is biologically repulsive to her, and Higgins biologically attractive to a degree that overwhelms all her other instincts, she will, if she marries either of them, marry Freddy.

And that is just what Eliza did.

Complications ensued; but they were economic, not romantic. Freddy had no money and no occupation. His mother’s jointure, a last relic of the opulence of Largetady Park, had enabled her to struggle along in Earls court with an air of gentility, but not to procure any serious secondary education for her children, much less give the boy a profession. A clerkship at thirty shillings a week was beneath Freddy’s dignity, and extremely distasteful to him besides. His prospects consisted of a hope that if he kept up appearances somebody would do something for him. The

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something appeared vaguely to his imagination as a private secretaryship or a sinecure of some sort. To his mother it perhaps appeared as a marriage to some lady of means who could not resist her boy's niceness. Fancy her feelings when he married a flower girl who had become declassée under extraordinary circumstances which were now notorious!

It is true that Eliza's situation did not seem wholly ineligible. Her father, though formerly a dustman, and now fantastically disclassed, had become extremely popular in the smartest society by a social talent which triumphed over every prejudice and every disadvantage. Rejected by the middle class, which he loathed, he had shot up at once into the highest circles by his wit, his dustmanship (which he carried like a banner), and his Nietzschean transcendence of good and evil. At intimate ducal dinners he sat on the right hand of the Duchess; and in country houses he smoked in the pantry and was made much of by the butler when he was not feeding in the dining-room and being consulted by cabinet ministers. But he found it almost as

hard to do all this on four thousand a year as Mrs. Eynsford Hill to live in Earlseourt on an income so pitifully smaller that I have not the heart to disclose its exact figure. He absolutely refused to add the last straw to his burden by contributing to Eliza's support.

Thus Freddy and Eliza, now Mr. and Mrs. Eynsford Hill, would have spent a penniless honeymoon but for a wedding present of 500 pounds from the Colonel to Eliza. It lasted a long time because Freddy did not know how to spend money, never having had any to spend, and Eliza, socially trained by a pair of old bachelors, wore her clothes as long as they held together and looked pretty, without the least regard to their being many months out of fashion. Still, 500 pounds will not last two young people for ever; and they both knew, and Eliza felt as well, that they must shift for themselves in the end. She could quarter herself on Wimpole Street because it had come to be her home; but she was quite aware that she ought not to quarter Freddy there, and that it would not be good for his character if she did.



Not that the Wimpole Street bachelors objected. When she consulted them, Higgins declined to be bothered about her housing problem when that solution was so simple. Eliza's desire to have Freddy in the house with her seemed of no more importance than if she had wanted an extra piece of bedroom furniture. Pleas as to Freddy's character, and the moral obligation on him to earn his own living, were lost on Higgins. He denied that Freddy had any character, and declared that if he tried to do any useful work some competent person would have the trouble of undoing it: a procedure involving a net loss to the community, and great unhappiness to Freddy himself, who was obviously intended by Nature for such light work as amusing Eliza, which, Higgins declared, was a much more useful and honorable occupation than working in the city. When Eliza referred again to her project of teaching phonetics, Higgins abated not a jot of his violent opposition to it. He said she was not within ten years of being qualified to meddle with his pet subject; and as it was evident that the Colo-

nel agreed with him, she felt she could not go against them in this grave matter, and that she had no right, without Higgins's consent, to exploit the knowledge he had given her; for his knowledge seemed to her as much his private property as his watch: Eliza was no communist. Besides, she was superstitiously devoted to them both, more entirely and frankly after her marriage than before it.

It was the Colonel who finally solved the problem, which had cost him much perplexed cogitation. He one day asked Eliza, rather shyly, whether she had quite given up her notion of keeping a flower shop. She replied that she had thought of it, but had put it out of her head, because the Colonel had said, that day at Mrs. Higgins's, that it would never do. The Colonel confessed that when he said that, he had not quite recovered from the dazzling impression of the day before. They broke the matter to Higgins that evening. The sole comment vouchsafed by him very nearly led to a serious quarrel with Eliza. It was to the effect that she would have in Freddy an ideal errand boy.

Freddy himself was next sounded on the subject. He said he had been thinking of a shop himself; though it had presented itself to his pennilessness as a small place in which Eliza should sell tobacco at one counter whilst he sold newspapers at the opposite one. But he agreed that it would be extraordinarily jolly to go early every morning with Eliza to Covent Garden and buy flowers on the scene of their first meeting: a sentiment which earned him many kisses from his wife. He added that he had always been afraid to propose anything of the sort, because Clara would make an awful row about a step that must damage her matrimonial chances, and his mother could not be expected to like it after clinging for so many years to that step of the social ladder on which retail trade is impossible.

This difficulty was removed by an event highly unexpected by Freddy's mother. Clara, in the course of her incursions into those artistic circles which were the highest within her reach, discovered that her conversational qualifications were expected to include a

grounding in the novels of Mr. H.G. Wells. She borrowed them in various directions so energetically that she swallowed them all within two months. The result was a conversion of a kind quite common today. A modern Acts of the Apostles would fill fifty whole Bibles if anyone were capable of writing it.

Poor Clara, who appeared to Higgins and his mother as a disagreeable and ridiculous person, and to her own mother as in some inexplicable way a social failure, had never seen herself in either light; for, though to some extent ridiculed and mimicked in West Kensington like everybody else there, she was accepted as a rational and normal—or shall we say inevitable?—sort of human being. At worst they called her The Pusher; but to them no more than to herself had it ever occurred that she was pushing the air, and pushing it in a wrong direction. Still, she was not happy. She was growing desperate. Her one asset, the fact that her mother was what the Epsom greengrocer called a carriage lady had no exchange value, apparently. It had prevented her from getting

educated, because the only education she could have afforded was education with the Earls court green grocer's daughter. It had led her to seek the society of her mother's class; and that class simply would not have her, because she was much poorer than the greengrocer, and, far from being able to afford a maid, could not afford even a housemaid, and had to scrape along at home with an illiberally treated general servant. Under such circumstances nothing could give her an air of being a genuine product of Largetady Park. And yet its tradition made her regard a marriage with anyone within her reach as an unbearable humiliation. Commercial people and professional people in a small way were odious to her. She ran after painters and novelists; but she did not charm them; and her bold attempts to pick up and practise artistic and literary talk irritated them. She was, in short, an utter failure, an ignorant, incompetent, pretentious, unwelcome, penniless, useless little snob; and though she did not admit these disqualifications (for nobody ever faces unpleasant truths of this kind

until the possibility of a way out dawns on them) she felt their effects too keenly to be satisfied with her position.

Clara had a startling eyeopener when, on being suddenly wakened to enthusiasm by a girl of her own age who dazzled her and produced in her a gushing desire to take her for a model, and gain her friendship, she discovered that this exquisite apparition had graduated from the gutter in a few months' time. It shook her so violently, that when Mr. H. G. Wells lifted her on the point of his puissant pen, and placed her at the angle of view from which the life she was leading and the society to which she clung appeared in its true relation to real human needs and worthy social structure, he effected a conversion and a conviction of sin comparable to the most sensational feats of General Booth or Gypsy Smith. Clara's snobbery went bang. Life suddenly began to move with her. Without knowing how or why, she began to make friends and enemies. Some of the acquaintances to whom she had been a tedious or indifferent or ridicu-

lous affliction, dropped her: others became cordial. To her amazement she found that some “quite nice” people were saturated with Wells, and that this accessibility to ideas was the secret of their niceness. People she had thought deeply religious, and had tried to conciliate on that tack with disastrous results, suddenly took an interest in her, and revealed a hostility to conventional religion which she had never conceived possible except among the most desperate characters. They made her read Galsworthy; and Galsworthy exposed the vanity of Largetady Park and finished her. It exasperated her to think that the dungeon in which she had languished for so many unhappy years had been unlocked all the time, and that the impulses she had so carefully struggled with and stifled for the sake of keeping well with society, were precisely those by which alone she could have come into any sort of sincere human contact. In the radiance of these discoveries, and the tumult of their reaction, she made a fool of herself as freely and conspicuously as when she so rashly adopted Eliza’s

expletive in Mrs. Higgins’s drawing-room; for the newborn Wellsian had to find her bearings almost as ridiculously as a baby; but nobody hates a baby for its ineptitudes, or thinks the worse of it for trying to eat the matches; and Clara lost no friends by her follies. They laughed at her to her face this time; and she had to defend herself and fight it out as best she could.

When Freddy paid a visit to Earls court (which he never did when he could possibly help it) to make the desolating announcement that he and his Eliza were thinking of blackening the Largetady scutcheon by opening a shop, he found the little household already convulsed by a prior announcement from Clara that she also was going to work in an old furniture shop in Dover Street, which had been started by a fellow Wellsian. This appointment Clara owed, after all, to her old social accomplishment of Push. She had made up her mind that, cost what it might, she would see Mr. Wells in the flesh; and she had achieved her end at a garden party. She had better luck than so rash an enterprise deserved. Mr. Wells

came up to her expectations. Age had not withered him, nor could custom stale his infinite variety in half an hour. His pleasant neatness and compactness, his small hands and feet, his teeming ready brain, his unaffected accessibility, and a certain fine apprehensiveness which stamped him as susceptible from his topmost hair to his tipmost toe, proved irresistible. Clara talked of nothing else for weeks and weeks afterwards. And as she happened to talk to the lady of the furniture shop, and that lady also desired above all things to know Mr. Wells and sell pretty things to him, she offered Clara a job on the chance of achieving that end through her.

And so it came about that Eliza's luck held, and the expected opposition to the flower shop melted away. The shop is in the arcade of a railway station not very far from the Victoria and Albert Museum; and if you live in that neighborhood you may go there any day and buy a buttonhole from Eliza.

Now here is a last opportunity for romance. Would you not like to be assured that the shop was an im-

mense success, thanks to Eliza's charms and her early business experience in Covent Garden? Alas! the truth is the truth: the shop did not pay for a long time, simply because Eliza and her Freddy did not know how to keep it. True, Eliza had not to begin at the very beginning: she knew the names and prices of the cheaper flowers; and her elation was unbounded when she found that Freddy, like all youths educated at cheap, pretentious, and thoroughly inefficient schools, knew a little Latin. It was very little, but enough to make him appear to her a Porson or Bentley, and to put him at his ease with botanical nomenclature. Unfortunately he knew nothing else; and Eliza, though she could count money up to eighteen shillings or so, and had acquired a certain familiarity with the language of Milton from her struggles to qualify herself for winning Higgins's bet, could not write out a bill without utterly disgracing the establishment. Freddy's power of stating in Latin that Balbus built a wall and that Gaul was divided into three parts did not carry with it the slightest knowl-

edge of accounts or business: Colonel Pickering had to explain to him what a cheque book and a bank account meant. And the pair were by no means easily teachable. Freddy backed up Eliza in her obstinate refusal to believe that they could save money by engaging a bookkeeper with some knowledge of the business. How, they argued, could you possibly save money by going to extra expense when you already could not make both ends meet? But the Colonel, after making the ends meet over and over again, at last gently insisted; and Eliza, humbled to the dust by having to beg from him so often, and stung by the uproarious derision of Higgins, to whom the notion of Freddy succeeding at anything was a joke that never palled, grasped the fact that business, like phonetics, has to be learned.

On the piteous spectacle of the pair spending their evenings in shorthand schools and polytechnic classes, learning bookkeeping and typewriting with incipient junior clerks, male and female, from the elementary schools, let me not dwell. There were even

classes at the London School of Economics, and a humble personal appeal to the director of that institution to recommend a course bearing on the flower business. He, being a humorist, explained to them the method of the celebrated Dickensian essay on Chinese Metaphysics by the gentleman who read an article on China and an article on Metaphysics and combined the information. He suggested that they should combine the London School with Kew Gardens. Eliza, to whom the procedure of the Dickensian gentleman seemed perfectly correct (as in fact it was) and not in the least funny (which was only her ignorance) took his advice with entire gravity. But the effort that cost her the deepest humiliation was a request to Higgins, whose pet artistic fancy, next to Milton's verse, was calligraphy, and who himself wrote a most beautiful Italian hand, that he would teach her to write. He declared that she was congenitally incapable of forming a single letter worthy of the least of Milton's words; but she persisted; and again he suddenly threw himself into the task of teaching her

with a combination of stormy intensity, concentrated patience, and occasional bursts of interesting disquisition on the beauty and nobility, the august mission and destiny, of human handwriting. Eliza ended by acquiring an extremely uncommercial script which was a positive extension of her personal beauty, and spending three times as much on stationery as anyone else because certain qualities and shapes of paper became indispensable to her. She could not even address an envelope in the usual way because it made the margins all wrong.

Their commercial school days were a period of disgrace and despair for the young couple. They seemed to be learning nothing about flower shops. At last they gave it up as hopeless, and shook the dust of the shorthand schools, and the polytechnics, and the London School of Economics from their feet for ever. Besides, the business was in some mysterious way beginning to take care of itself. They had somehow forgotten their objections to employing other people. They came to the conclusion that their own way was

the best, and that they had really a remarkable talent for business. The Colonel, who had been compelled for some years to keep a sufficient sum on current account at his bankers to make up their deficits, found that the provision was unnecessary: the young people were prospering. It is true that there was not quite fair play between them and their competitors in trade. Their week-ends in the country cost them nothing, and saved them the price of their Sunday dinners; for the motor car was the Colonel's; and he and Higgins paid the hotel bills. Mr. F. Hill, florist and greengrocer (they soon discovered that there was money in asparagus; and asparagus led to other vegetables), had an air which stamped the business as classy; and in private life he was still Frederick Eynsford Hill, Esquire. Not that there was any swank about him: nobody but Eliza knew that he had been christened Frederick Challoner. Eliza herself swanked like anything.

That is all. That is how it has turned out. It is astonishing how much Eliza still manages to meddle in the

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housekeeping at Wimpole Street in spite of the shop and her own family. And it is notable that though she never nags her husband, and frankly loves the Colonel as if she were his favorite daughter, she has never got out of the habit of nagging Higgins that was established on the fatal night when she won his bet for him. She snaps his head off on the faintest provocation, or on none. He no longer dares to tease her by assuming an abysmal inferiority of Freddy's mind to his own. He storms and bullies and derides; but she stands up to him so ruthlessly that the Colonel has to ask her from time to time to be kinder to Higgins; and it is the only request of his that brings a mulish expression into her face. Nothing but some emergency or calamity great enough to break down all likes and dislikes, and throw them both back on their common humanity—and may they be spared any such trial!—will ever alter this. She knows that Higgins does not need her, just as her father did not need her. The very scrupulousness with which he told her that day that he had become used to having her there, and

dependent on her for all sorts of little services, and that he should miss her if she went away (it would never have occurred to Freddy or the Colonel to say anything of the sort) deepens her inner certainty that she is “no more to him than them slippers”, yet she has a sense, too, that his indifference is deeper than the infatuation of commoner souls. She is immensely interested in him. She has even secret mischievous moments in which she wishes she could get him alone, on a desert island, away from all ties and with nobody else in the world to consider, and just drag him off his pedestal and see him making love like any common man. We all have private imaginations of that sort. But when it comes to business, to the life that she really leads as distinguished from the life of dreams and fancies, she likes Freddy and she likes the Colonel; and she does not like Higgins and Mr. Doolittle. Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion: his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable.



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# HEARTBREAK HOUSE:

A FANTASIA IN THE RUSSIAN MANNER  
ON ENGLISH THEMES

by

BERNARD SHAW

*1913-1916*

A Penn State Electronic Classics Series Publication

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HEARTBREAK HOUSE AND HORSEBACK  
HALL

Where Heartbreak House Stands

HEARTBREAK  
HOUSE:

A FANTASIA IN THE  
RUSSIAN MANNER ON  
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BERNARD SHAW

*1913-1916*

HEARTBREAK HOUSE is not merely the name of the play which follows this preface. It is cultured, leisured Europe before the war. When the play was begun not a shot had been fired; and only the professional diplomatists and the very few amateurs whose hobby is foreign policy even knew that the guns were loaded. A Russian playwright, Tchekov, had produced four fascinating dramatic studies of Heartbreak House, of which three, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Seagull*, had been performed in England. Tolstoy, in his *Fruits of Enlightenment*, had shown us through it in his most ferociously contemptuous manner. Tolstoy did not waste any sympathy on it: it was to him the house in which Europe was stifling its soul; and he knew that our utter enervation and futilization in that overheated drawingroom atmosphere was delivering the world over to the control of ignorant and soulless cunning and energy, with the frightful consequences

which have now overtaken it. Tolstoy was no pessimist: he was not disposed to leave the house standing if he could bring it down about the ears of its pretty and amiable voluptuaries; and he wielded the pickaxe with a will. He treated the case of the inmates as one of opium poisoning, to be dealt with by seizing the patients roughly and exercising them violently until they were broad awake. Tchekov, more of a fatalist, had no faith in these charming people extricating themselves. They would, he thought, be sold up and sent adrift by the bailiffs; and he therefore had no scruple in exploiting and even flattering their charm.

### The Inhabitants

Tchekov's plays, being less lucrative than swings and roundabouts, got no further in England, where theatres are only ordinary commercial affairs, than a couple of performances by the Stage Society. We stared and said, "How Russian!" They did not strike me in that way. Just as Ibsen's intensely Norwegian plays exactly fitted every middle and professional class suburb in Europe, these intensely Russian plays

fitted all the country houses in Europe in which the pleasures of music, art, literature, and the theatre had supplanted hunting, shooting, fishing, flirting, eating, and drinking. The same nice people, the same utter futility. The nice people could read; some of them could write; and they were the sole repositories of culture who had social opportunities of contact with our politicians, administrators, and newspaper proprietors, or any chance of sharing or influencing their activities. But they shrank from that contact. They hated politics. They did not wish to realize Utopia for the common people: they wished to realize their favorite fictions and poems in their own lives; and, when they could, they lived without scruple on incomes which they did nothing to earn. The women in their girlhood made themselves look like variety theatre stars, and settled down later into the types of beauty imagined by the previous generation of painters. They took the only part of our society in which there was leisure for high culture, and made it an economic, political and; as far as practicable, a moral vacuum; and as Nature, abhorring the vacuum, immediately filled it up with sex and with all sorts of refined pleasures, it was a very delightful place at its

best for moments of relaxation. In other moments it was disastrous. For prime ministers and their like, it was a veritable Capua.

### Horseback Hall

But where were our front benchers to nest if not here? The alternative to Heartbreak House was Horseback Hall, consisting of a prison for horses with an annex for the ladies and gentlemen who rode them, hunted them, talked about them, bought them and sold them, and gave nine-tenths of their lives to them, dividing the other tenth between charity, churchgoing (as a substitute for religion), and conservative electioneering (as a substitute for politics). It is true that the two establishments got mixed at the edges. Exiles from the library, the music room, and the picture gallery would be found languishing among the stables, miserably discontented; and hardy horsewomen who slept at the first chord of Schumann were born, horribly misplaced, into the garden of Klingsor; but sometimes one came upon horsebreakers

and heartbreakers who could make the best of both worlds. As a rule, however, the two were apart and knew little of one another; so the prime minister folk had to choose between barbarism and Capua. And of the two atmospheres it is hard to say which was the more fatal to statesmanship.

### Revolution on the Shelf

Heartbreak House was quite familiar with revolutionary ideas on paper. It aimed at being advanced and freethinking, and hardly ever went to church or kept the Sabbath except by a little extra fun at weekends. When you spent a Friday to Tuesday in it you found on the shelf in your bedroom not only the books of poets and novelists, but of revolutionary biologists and even economists. Without at least a few plays by myself and Mr Granville Barker, and a few stories by Mr H. G. Wells, Mr Arnold Bennett, and Mr John Galsworthy, the house would have been out of the movement. You would find Blake among the poets, and beside him Bergson, Butler, Scott Haldane, the poems of Meredith and Thomas Hardy, and, generally speaking, all the literary implements

for forming the mind of the perfect modern Socialist and Creative Evolutionist. It was a curious experience to spend Sunday in dipping into these books, and the Monday morning to read in the daily paper that the country had just been brought to the verge of anarchy because a new Home Secretary or chief of police without an idea in his head that his great-grandmother might not have had to apologize for, had refused to “recognize” some powerful Trade Union, just as a gondola might refuse to recognize a 20,000-ton liner.

In short, power and culture were in separate compartments. The barbarians were not only literally in the saddle, but on the front bench in the House of commons, with nobody to correct their incredible ignorance of modern thought and political science but upstarts from the counting-house, who had spent their lives furnishing their pockets instead of their minds. Both, however, were practised in dealing with money and with men, as far as acquiring the one and exploiting the other went; and although this is as undesirable an expertness as that of the medieval robber baron, it qualifies men to keep an estate or a business going in its old routine without necessarily understanding it, just as Bond Street tradesmen and

domestic servants keep fashionable society going without any instruction in sociology.

### The Cherry Orchard

The Heartbreak people neither could nor would do anything of the sort. With their heads as full of the Anticipations of Mr H. G. Wells as the heads of our actual rulers were empty even of the anticipations of Erasmus or Sir Thomas More, they refused the drudgery of politics, and would have made a very poor job of it if they had changed their minds. Not that they would have been allowed to meddle anyhow, as only through the accident of being a hereditary peer can anyone in these days of Votes for Everybody get into parliament if handicapped by a serious modern cultural equipment; but if they had, their habit of living in a vacuum would have left them helpless and ineffective in public affairs. Even in private life they were often helpless wasters of their inheritance, like the people in Tchekov's Cherry Orchard. Even those who lived within their incomes were really kept going by their solicitors and agents, being unable to manage an

estate or run a business without continual prompting from those who have to learn how to do such things or starve.

From what is called Democracy no corrective to this state of things could be hoped. It is said that every people has the Government it deserves. It is more to the point that every Government has the electorate it deserves; for the orators of the front bench can edify or debauch an ignorant electorate at will. Thus our democracy moves in a vicious circle of reciprocal worthiness and unworthiness.

### Nature's Long Credits

Nature's way of dealing with unhealthy conditions is unfortunately not one that compels us to conduct a solvent hygiene on a cash basis. She demoralizes us with long credits and reckless overdrafts, and then pulls us up cruelly with catastrophic bankruptcies. Take, for example, common domestic sanitation. A whole city generation may neglect it utterly and scandalously, if not with absolute impunity, yet without any evil consequences that anyone thinks of tracing to it. In a hospital two generations of medical students way

tolerate dirt and carelessness, and then go out into general practice to spread the doctrine that fresh air is a fad, and sanitation an imposture set up to make profits for plumbers. Then suddenly Nature takes her revenge. She strikes at the city with a pestilence and at the hospital with an epidemic of hospital gangrene, slaughtering right and left until the innocent young have paid for the guilty old, and the account is balanced. And then she goes to sleep again and gives another period of credit, with the same result.

This is what has just happened in our political hygiene. Political science has been as recklessly neglected by Governments and electorates during my lifetime as sanitary science was in the days of Charles the Second. In international relations diplomacy has been a boyishly lawless affair of family intrigues, commercial and territorial brigandage, torpors of pseudo-goodnature produced by laziness and spasms of ferocious activity produced by terror. But in these islands we muddled through. Nature gave us a longer credit than she gave to France or Germany or Russia. To British centenarians who died in their beds in 1914, any dread of having to hide underground in London from the shells of an enemy



seemed more remote and fantastic than a dread of the appearance of a colony of cobras and rattlesnakes in Kensington Gardens. In the prophetic works of Charles Dickens we were warned against many evils which have since come to pass; but of the evil of being slaughtered by a foreign foe on our own doorsteps there was no shadow. Nature gave us a very long credit; and we abused it to the utmost. But when she struck at last she struck with a vengeance. For four years she smote our firstborn and heaped on us plagues of which Egypt never dreamed. They were all as preventable as the great Plague of London, and came solely because they had not been prevented. They were not undone by winning the war. The earth is still bursting with the dead bodies of the victors.

### The Wicked Half Century

It is difficult to say whether indifference and neglect are worse than false doctrine; but Heartbreak House and Horseback Hall unfortunately suffered from both. For half a century before the war civilization had been going to the devil very precipitately under the influence of a pseudo-science as di-

sastrous as the blackest Calvinism. Calvinism taught that as we are predestinately saved or damned, nothing that we can do can alter our destiny. Still, as Calvinism gave the individual no clue as to whether he had drawn a lucky number or an unlucky one, it left him a fairly strong interest in encouraging his hopes of salvation and allaying his fear of damnation by behaving as one of the elect might be expected to behave rather than as one of the reprobate. But in the middle of the nineteenth century naturalists and physicists assured the world, in the name of Science, that salvation and damnation are all nonsense, and that predestination is the central truth of religion, inasmuch as human beings are produced by their environment, their sins and good deeds being only a series of chemical and mechanical reactions over which they have no control. Such figments as mind, choice, purpose, conscience, will, and so forth, are, they taught, mere illusions, produced because they are useful in the continual struggle of the human machine to maintain its environment in a favorable condition, a process incidentally involving the ruthless destruction or subjection of its competitors for the supply (assumed to be limited) of subsistence available. We

taught Prussia this religion; and Prussia bettered our instruction so effectively that we presently found ourselves confronted with the necessity of destroying Prussia to prevent Prussia destroying us. And that has just ended in each destroying the other to an extent doubtfully reparable in our time.

It may be asked how so imbecile and dangerous a creed ever came to be accepted by intelligent beings. I will answer that question more fully in my next volume of plays, which will be entirely devoted to the subject. For the present I will only say that there were better reasons than the obvious one that such sham science as this opened a scientific career to very stupid men, and all the other careers to shameless rascals, provided they were industrious enough. It is true that this motive operated very powerfully; but when the new departure in scientific doctrine which is associated with the name of the great naturalist Charles Darwin began, it was not only a reaction against a barbarous pseudo-evangelical teleology intolerably obstructive to all scientific progress, but was accompanied, as it happened, by discoveries of extraordinary interest in physics, chemistry, and that lifeless method of evolution which its investigators called Natural Selection.

Howbeit, there was only one result possible in the ethical sphere, and that was the banishment of conscience from human affairs, or, as Samuel Butler vehemently put it, “of mind from the universe.”

### Hypochondria

Now Heartbreak House, with Butler and Bergson and Scott Haldane alongside Blake and the other major poets on its shelves (to say nothing of Wagner and the tone poets), was not so completely blinded by the doltish materialism of the laboratories as the uncultured world outside. But being an idle house it was a hypochondriacal house, always running after cures. It would stop eating meat, not on valid Shelleyan grounds, but in order to get rid of a bogey called Uric Acid; and it would actually let you pull all its teeth out to exorcise another demon named Pyorrhea. It was superstitious, and addicted to table-rapping, materialization seances, clairvoyance, palmistry, crystal-gazing and the like to such an extent that it may be doubted whether ever before in the history of the world did soothsayers, astrologers, and unregistered thera-

peutic specialists of all sorts flourish as they did during this half century of the drift to the abyss. The registered doctors and surgeons were hard put to it to compete with the unregistered. They were not clever enough to appeal to the imagination and sociability of the Heartbreakers by the arts of the actor, the orator, the poet, the winning conversationalist. They had to fall back coarsely on the terror of infection and death. They prescribed inoculations and operations. Whatever part of a human being could be cut out without necessarily killing him they cut out; and he often died (unnecessarily of course) in consequence. From such trifles as uvulas and tonsils they went on to ovaries and appendices until at last no one's inside was safe. They explained that the human intestine was too long, and that nothing could make a child of Adam healthy except short circuiting the pylorus by cutting a length out of the lower intestine and fastening it directly to the stomach. As their mechanist theory taught them that medicine was the business of the chemist's laboratory, and surgery of the carpenter's shop, and also that Science (by which they meant their practices) was so important that no consideration for the interests of any individual creature,

whether frog or philosopher, much less the vulgar commonplaces of sentimental ethics, could weigh for a moment against the remotest off-chance of an addition to the body of scientific knowledge, they operated and vivisected and inoculated and lied on a stupendous scale, clamoring for and actually acquiring such legal powers over the bodies of their fellow-citizens as neither king, pope, nor parliament dare ever have claimed. The Inquisition itself was a Liberal institution compared to the General Medical Council.

### **Those who do not know how to live must make a Merit of Dying**

Heartbreak House was far too lazy and shallow to extricate itself from this palace of evil enchantment. It rhapsodized about love; but it believed in cruelty. It was afraid of the cruel people; and it saw that cruelty was at least effective. Cruelty did things that made money, whereas Love did nothing but prove the soundness of Larochevoucauld's saying that very few people would fall in love if they had never read about it. Heartbreak House, in short, did not know how to

live, at which point all that was left to it was the boast that at least it knew how to die: a melancholy accomplishment which the outbreak of war presently gave it practically unlimited opportunities of displaying. Thus were the firstborn of Heart-break House smitten; and the young, the innocent, the hopeful, expiated the folly and worthlessness of their elders.

### War Delirium

Only those who have lived through a first-rate war, not in the field, but at home, and kept their heads, can possibly understand the bitterness of Shakespeare and Swift, who both went through this experience. The horror of Peer Gynt in the madhouse, when the lunatics, exalted by illusions of splendid talent and visions of a dawning millennium, crowned him as their emperor, was tame in comparison. I do not know whether anyone really kept his head completely except those who had to keep it because they had to conduct the war at first hand. I should not have kept my own (as far as I did keep it) if I had not at once understood that as a scribe and speaker I too was under the most serious public obligation

to keep my grip on realities; but this did not save me from a considerable degree of hyperaesthesia. There were of course some happy people to whom the war meant nothing: all political and general matters lying outside their little circle of interest. But the ordinary war-conscious civilian went mad, the main symptom being a conviction that the whole order of nature had been reversed. All foods, he felt, must now be adulterated. All schools must be closed. No advertisements must be sent to the newspapers, of which new editions must appear and be bought up every ten minutes. Travelling must be stopped, or, that being impossible, greatly hindered. All pretences about fine art and culture and the like must be flung off as an intolerable affectation; and the picture galleries and museums and schools at once occupied by war workers. The British Museum itself was saved only by a hair's breadth. The sincerity of all this, and of much more which would not be believed if I chronicled it, may be established by one conclusive instance of the general craziness. Men were seized with the illusion that they could win the war by giving away money. And they not only subscribed millions to Funds of all sorts with no discoverable object, and to ridicu-

lous voluntary organizations for doing what was plainly the business of the civil and military authorities, but actually handed out money to any thief in the street who had the presence of mind to pretend that he (or she) was “collecting” it for the annihilation of the enemy. Swindlers were emboldened to take offices; label themselves Anti-Enemy Leagues; and simply pocket the money that was heaped on them. Attractively dressed young women found that they had nothing to do but parade the streets, collecting-box in hand, and live gloriously on the profits. Many months elapsed before, as a first sign of returning sanity, the police swept an Anti-Enemy secretary into prison pour encourages les autres, and the passionate penny collecting of the Flag Days was brought under some sort of regulation.

### Madness in Court

The demoralization did not spare the Law Courts. Soldiers were acquitted, even on fully proved indictments for wilful murder, until at last the judges and magistrates had to announce that what was called the Unwritten Law, which meant

simply that a soldier could do what he liked with impunity in civil life, was not the law of the land, and that a Victoria Cross did not carry with it a perpetual plenary indulgence. Unfortunately the insanity of the juries and magistrates did not always manifest itself in indulgence. No person unlucky enough to be charged with any sort of conduct, however reasonable and salutary, that did not smack of war delirium, had the slightest chance of acquittal. There were in the country, too, a certain number of people who had conscientious objections to war as criminal or unchristian. The Act of Parliament introducing Compulsory Military Service thoughtlessly exempted these persons, merely requiring them to prove the genuineness of their convictions. Those who did so were very ill-advised from the point of view of their own personal interest; for they were persecuted with savage logicity in spite of the law; whilst those who made no pretence of having any objection to war at all, and had not only had military training in Officers' Training Corps, but had proclaimed on public occasions that they were perfectly ready to engage in civil war on behalf of their political opinions, were allowed the benefit of the Act on the ground that they did not approve of this particular war. For

the Christians there was no mercy. In cases where the evidence as to their being killed by ill treatment was so unequivocal that the verdict would certainly have been one of wilful murder had the prejudice of the coroner's jury been on the other side, their tormentors were gratuitously declared to be blameless. There was only one virtue, pugnacity: only one vice, pacifism. That is an essential condition of war; but the Government had not the courage to legislate accordingly; and its law was set aside for Lynch law.

The climax of legal lawlessness was reached in France. The greatest Socialist statesman in Europe, Jaures, was shot and killed by a gentleman who resented his efforts to avert the war. M. Clemenceau was shot by another gentleman of less popular opinions, and happily came off no worse than having to spend a precautionary couple of days in bed. The slayer of Jaures was recklessly acquitted: the would-be slayer of M. Clemenceau was carefully found guilty. There is no reason to doubt that the same thing would have happened in England if the war had begun with a successful attempt to assassinate Keir Hardie, and ended with an unsuccessful one to assassinate Mr Lloyd George.

## The Long Arm of War

The pestilence which is the usual accompaniment of war was called influenza. Whether it was really a war pestilence or not was made doubtful by the fact that it did its worst in places remote from the battlefields, notably on the west coast of North America and in India. But the moral pestilence, which was unquestionably a war pestilence, reproduced this phenomenon. One would have supposed that the war fever would have raged most furiously in the countries actually under fire, and that the others would be more reasonable. Belgium and Flanders, where over large districts literally not one stone was left upon another as the opposed armies drove each other back and forward over it after terrific preliminary bombardments, might have been pardoned for relieving their feelings more emphatically than by shrugging their shoulders and saying, "C'est la guerre." England, inviolate for so many centuries that the swoop of war on her homesteads had long ceased to be more credible than a return of the Flood, could hardly be expected to keep her temper sweet when she knew at last what it was to hide in cellars and underground railway stations, or lie quaking in bed, whilst

bombs crashed, houses crumbled, and aircraft guns distributed shrapnel on friend and foe alike until certain shop windows in London, formerly full of fashionable hats, were filled with steel helmets. Slain and mutilated women and children, and burnt and wrecked dwellings, excuse a good deal of violent language, and produce a wrath on which many suns go down before it is appeased. Yet it was in the United States of America where nobody slept the worse for the war, that the war fever went beyond all sense and reason. In European Courts there was vindictive illegality: in American Courts there was raving lunacy. It is not for me to chronicle the extravagances of an Ally: let some candid American do that. I can only say that to us sitting in our gardens in England, with the guns in France making themselves felt by a throb in the air as unmistakeable as an audible sound, or with tightening hearts studying the phases of the moon in London in their bearing on the chances whether our houses would be standing or ourselves alive next morning, the newspaper accounts of the sentences American Courts were passing on young girls and old men alike for the expression of opinions which were being uttered amid thundering applause before

huge audiences in England, and the more private records of the methods by which the American War Loans were raised, were so amazing that they put the guns and the possibilities of a raid clean out of our heads for the moment.

### The Rabid Watchdogs of Liberty

Not content with these rancorous abuses of the existing law, the war maniacs made a frantic rush to abolish all constitutional guarantees of liberty and well-being. The ordinary law was superseded by Acts under which newspapers were seized and their printing machinery destroyed by simple police raids a la Russe, and persons arrested and shot without any pretence of trial by jury or publicity of procedure or evidence. Though it was urgently necessary that production should be increased by the most scientific organization and economy of labor, and though no fact was better established than that excessive duration and intensity of toil reduces production heavily instead of increasing it, the factory laws were suspended, and men and women recklessly over-worked until the loss of their efficiency became too glaring to be ignored.

Remonstrances and warnings were met either with an accusation of pro-Germanism or the formula, "Remember that we are at war now." I have said that men assumed that war had reversed the order of nature, and that all was lost unless we did the exact opposite of everything we had found necessary and beneficial in peace. But the truth was worse than that. The war did not change men's minds in any such impossible way. What really happened was that the impact of physical death and destruction, the one reality that every fool can understand, tore off the masks of education, art, science and religion from our ignorance and barbarism, and left us glorying grotesquely in the licence suddenly accorded to our vilest passions and most abject terrors. Ever since Thucydides wrote his history, it has been on record that when the angel of death sounds his trumpet the pretences of civilization are blown from men's heads into the mud like hats in a gust of wind. But when this scripture was fulfilled among us, the shock was not the less appalling because a few students of Greek history were not surprised by it. Indeed these students threw themselves into the orgy as shamelessly as the illiterate. The Christian priest, joining in the war dance

without even throwing off his cassock first, and the respectable school governor expelling the German professor with insult and bodily violence, and declaring that no English child should ever again be taught the language of Luther and Goethe, were kept in countenance by the most impudent repudiations of every decency of civilization and every lesson of political experience on the part of the very persons who, as university professors, historians, philosophers, and men of science, were the accredited custodians of culture. It was crudely natural, and perhaps necessary for recruiting purposes, that German militarism and German dynastic ambition should be painted by journalists and recruiters in black and red as European dangers (as in fact they are), leaving it to be inferred that our own militarism and our own political constitution are millennially democratic (which they certainly are not); but when it came to frantic denunciations of German chemistry, German biology, German poetry, German music, German literature, German philosophy, and even German engineering, as malignant abominations standing towards British and French chemistry and so forth in the relation of heaven to hell, it was clear that the utterers of



such barbarous ravings had never really understood or cared for the arts and sciences they professed and were profaning, and were only the appallingly degenerate descendants of the men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who, recognizing no national frontiers in the great realm of the human mind, kept the European comity of that realm loftily and even ostentatiously above the rancors of the battle-field. Tearing the Garter from the Kaiser's leg, striking the German dukes from the roll of our peerage, changing the King's illustrious and historically appropriate surname (for the war was the old war of Guelph against Ghibelline, with the Kaiser as Arch-Ghibelline) to that of a traditionless locality. One felt that the figure of St. George and the Dragon on our coinage should be replaced by that of the soldier driving his spear through Archimedes. But by that time there was no coinage: only paper money in which ten shillings called itself a pound as confidently as the people who were disgracing their country called themselves patriots.

### The Sufferings of the Sane

The mental distress of living amid the obscene din of all these carmagnoles and corobberies was not the only burden that lay on sane people during the war. There was also the emotional strain, complicated by the offended economic sense, produced by the casualty lists. The stupid, the selfish, the narrow-minded, the callous and unimaginative were spared a great deal. "Blood and destruction shall be so in use that mothers shall but smile when they behold their infants quartered by the hands of war," was a Shakespearean prophecy that very nearly came true; for when nearly every house had a slaughtered son to mourn, we should all have gone quite out of our senses if we had taken our own and our friend's bereavements at their peace value. It became necessary to give them a false value; to proclaim the young life worthily and gloriously sacrificed to redeem the liberty of mankind, instead of to expiate the heedlessness and folly of their fathers, and expiate it in vain. We had even to assume that the parents and not the children had made the sacrifice, until at last the comic papers were driven to satirize fat old men, sitting comfortably in club chairs, and boasting of the

sons they had “given” to their country.

No one grudged these anodynes to acute personal grief; but they only embittered those who knew that the young men were having their teeth set on edge because their parents had eaten sour political grapes. Then think of the young men themselves! Many of them had no illusions about the policy that led to the war: they went clear-sighted to a horribly repugnant duty. Men essentially gentle and essentially wise, with really valuable work in hand, laid it down voluntarily and spent months forming fours in the barrack yard, and stabbing sacks of straw in the public eye, so that they might go out to kill and maim men as gentle as themselves. These men, who were perhaps, as a class, our most efficient soldiers (Frederick Keeling, for example), were not duped for a moment by the hypocritical melodrama that consoled and stimulated the others. They left their creative work to drudge at destruction, exactly as they would have left it to take their turn at the pumps in a sinking ship. They did not, like some of the conscientious objectors, hold back because the ship had been neglected by its officers and scuttled by its wreckers. The ship had to be saved, even if Newton had to

leave his fluxions and Michael Angelo his marbles to save it; so they threw away the tools of their beneficent and ennobling trades, and took up the blood-stained bayonet and the murderous bomb, forcing themselves to pervert their divine instinct for perfect artistic execution to the effective handling of these diabolical things, and their economic faculty for organization to the contriving of ruin and slaughter. For it gave an ironic edge to their tragedy that the very talents they were forced to prostitute made the prostitution not only effective, but even interesting; so that some of them were rapidly promoted, and found themselves actually becoming artists in wax, with a growing relish for it, like Napoleon and all the other scourges of mankind, in spite of themselves. For many of them there was not even this consolation. They “stuck it,” and hated it, to the end.

### Evil in the Throne of Good

This distress of the gentle was so acute that those who shared it in civil life, without having to shed blood with their own hands, or witness destruction with their own eyes, hardly

care to obtrude their own woes. Nevertheless, even when sitting at home in safety, it was not easy for those who had to write and speak about the war to throw away their highest conscience, and deliberately work to a standard of inevitable evil instead of to the ideal of life more abundant. I can answer for at least one person who found the change from the wisdom of Jesus and St. Francis to the morals of Richard III and the madness of Don Quixote extremely irksome. But that change had to be made; and we are all the worse for it, except those for whom it was not really a change at all, but only a relief from hypocrisy.

Think, too, of those who, though they had neither to write nor to fight, and had no children of their own to lose, yet knew the inestimable loss to the world of four years of the life of a generation wasted on destruction. Hardly one of the epoch-making works of the human mind might not have been aborted or destroyed by taking their authors away from their natural work for four critical years. Not only were Shakespeares and Platos being killed outright; but many of the best harvests of the survivors had to be sown in the barren soil of the trenches. And this was no mere British con-

sideration. To the truly civilized man, to the good European, the slaughter of the German youth was as disastrous as the slaughter of the English. Fools exulted in "German losses." They were our losses as well. Imagine exulting in the death of Beethoven because Bill Sykes dealt him his death blow!

### Straining at the Gnat and swallowing the Camel

But most people could not comprehend these sorrows. There was a frivolous exultation in death for its own sake, which was at bottom an inability to realize that the deaths were real deaths and not stage ones. Again and again, when an air raider dropped a bomb which tore a child and its mother limb from limb, the people who saw it, though they had been reading with great cheerfulness of thousands of such happenings day after day in their newspapers, suddenly burst into furious imprecations on "the Huns" as murderers, and shrieked for savage and satisfying vengeance. At such moments it became clear that the deaths they had not seen meant no more to them than the mimic death of the cinema screen. Sometimes it was not necessary that death should be actually

witnessed: it had only to take place under circumstances of sufficient novelty and proximity to bring it home almost as sensationally and effectively as if it had been actually visible.

For example, in the spring of 1915 there was an appalling slaughter of our young soldiers at Neuve Chapelle and at the Gallipoli landing. I will not go so far as to say that our civilians were delighted to have such exciting news to read at breakfast. But I cannot pretend that I noticed either in the papers, or in general intercourse, any feeling beyond the usual one that the cinema show at the front was going splendidly, and that our boys were the bravest of the brave. Suddenly there came the news that an Atlantic liner, the Lusitania, had been torpedoed, and that several well-known first-class passengers, including a famous theatrical manager and the author of a popular farce, had been drowned, among others. The others included Sir Hugh Lane; but as he had only laid the country under great obligations in the sphere of the fine arts, no great stress was laid on that loss. Immediately an amazing frenzy swept through the country. Men who up to that time had kept their heads now lost them utterly. "Killing saloon passengers! What next?" was the essence of the

whole agitation; but it is far too trivial a phrase to convey the faintest notion of the rage which possessed us. To me, with my mind full of the hideous cost of Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, and the Gallipoli landing, the fuss about the Lusitania seemed almost a heartless impertinence, though I was well acquainted personally with the three best-known victims, and understood, better perhaps than most people, the misfortune of the death of Lane. I even found a grim satisfaction, very intelligible to all soldiers, in the fact that the civilians who found the war such splendid British sport should get a sharp taste of what it was to the actual combatants. I expressed my impatience very freely, and found that my very straightforward and natural feeling in the matter was received as a monstrous and heartless paradox. When I asked those who gaped at me whether they had anything to say about the holocaust of Festubert, they gaped wider than before, having totally forgotten it, or rather, having never realized it. They were not heartless anymore than I was; but the big catastrophe was too big for them to grasp, and the little one had been just the right size for them. I was not surprised. Have I not seen a public body for just the same reason pass a vote for

œ30,000 without a word, and then spend three special meetings, prolonged into the night, over an item of seven shillings for refreshments?

### Little Minds and Big Battles

Nobody will be able to understand the vagaries of public feeling during the war unless they bear constantly in mind that the war in its entire magnitude did not exist for the average civilian. He could not conceive even a battle, much less a campaign. To the suburbs the war was nothing but a suburban squabble. To the miner and navy it was only a series of bayonet fights between German champions and English ones. The enormity of it was quite beyond most of us. Its episodes had to be reduced to the dimensions of a railway accident or a shipwreck before it could produce any effect on our minds at all. To us the ridiculous bombardments of Scarborough and Ramsgate were colossal tragedies, and the battle of Jutland a mere ballad. The words “after thorough artillery preparation” in the news from the front meant nothing to us; but when our seaside trippers learned

that an elderly gentleman at breakfast in a week-end marine hotel had been interrupted by a bomb dropping into his egg-cup, their wrath and horror knew no bounds. They declared that this would put a new spirit into the army; and had no suspicion that the soldiers in the trenches roared with laughter over it for days, and told each other that it would do the blighters at home good to have a taste of what the army was up against. Sometimes the smallness of view was pathetic. A man would work at home regardless of the call “to make the world safe for democracy.” His brother would be killed at the front. Immediately he would throw up his work and take up the war as a family blood feud against the Germans. Sometimes it was comic. A wounded man, entitled to his discharge, would return to the trenches with a grim determination to find the Hun who had wounded him and pay him out for it.

It is impossible to estimate what proportion of us, in khaki or out of it, grasped the war and its political antecedents as a whole in the light of any philosophy of history or knowledge of what war is. I doubt whether it was as high as our proportion of higher mathematicians. But there can be no doubt

that it was prodigiously outnumbered by the comparatively ignorant and childish. Remember that these people had to be stimulated to make the sacrifices demanded by the war, and that this could not be done by appeals to a knowledge which they did not possess, and a comprehension of which they were incapable. When the armistice at last set me free to tell the truth about the war at the following general election, a soldier said to a candidate whom I was supporting, "If I had known all that in 1914, they would never have got me into khaki." And that, of course, was precisely why it had been necessary to stuff him with a romance that any diplomatist would have laughed at. Thus the natural confusion of ignorance was increased by a deliberately propagated confusion of nursery bogey stories and melodramatic nonsense, which at last overreached itself and made it impossible to stop the war before we had not only achieved the triumph of vanquishing the German army and thereby overthrowing its militarist monarchy, but made the very serious mistake of ruining the centre of Europe, a thing that no sane European State could afford to do.

### The Dumb Capables and the Noisy Incapables

Confronted with this picture of insensate delusion and folly, the critical reader will immediately counterplead that England all this time was conducting a war which involved the organization of several millions of fighting men and of the workers who were supplying them with provisions, munitions, and transport, and that this could not have been done by a mob of hysterical ranters. This is fortunately true. To pass from the newspaper offices and political platforms and club fenders and suburban drawing-rooms to the Army and the munition factories was to pass from Bedlam to the busiest and sanest of workaday worlds. It was to rediscover England, and find solid ground for the faith of those who still believed in her. But a necessary condition of this efficiency was that those who were efficient should give all their time to their business and leave the rabble raving to its heart's content. Indeed the raving was useful to the efficient, because, as it was always wide of the mark, it often distracted attention very conveniently from operations that would have been defeated or hindered by publicity. A precept which I endeavored vainly to popularize early in the war, "If you have

anything to do go and do it: if not, for heaven's sake get out of the way," was only half carried out. Certainly the capable people went and did it; but the incapables would by no means get out of the way: they fussed and bawled and were only prevented from getting very seriously into the way by the blessed fact that they never knew where the way was. Thus whilst all the efficiency of England was silent and invisible, all its imbecility was deafening the heavens with its clamor and blotting out the sun with its dust. It was also unfortunately intimidating the Government by its blusterings into using the irresistible powers of the State to intimidate the sensible people, thus enabling a despicable minority of would-be lynchers to set up a reign of terror which could at any time have been broken by a single stern word from a responsible minister. But our ministers had not that sort of courage: neither Heartbreak House nor Horseback Hall had bred it, much less the suburbs. When matters at last came to the looting of shops by criminals under patriotic pretexts, it was the police force and not the Government that put its foot down. There was even one deplorable moment, during the submarine scare, in which the Government yielded to a child-

ish cry for the maltreatment of naval prisoners of war, and, to our great disgrace, was forced by the enemy to behave itself. And yet behind all this public blundering and misconduct and futile mischief, the effective England was carrying on with the most formidable capacity and activity. The ostensible England was making the empire sick with its incontinences, its ignorances, its ferocities, its panics, and its endless and intolerable blarings of Allied national anthems in season and out. The esoteric England was proceeding irresistibly to the conquest of Europe.

### The Practical Business Men

From the beginning the useless people set up a shriek for "practical business men." By this they meant men who had become rich by placing their personal interests before those of the country, and measuring the success of every activity by the pecuniary profit it brought to them and to those on whom they depended for their supplies of capital. The pitiable failure of some conspicuous samples from the first batch we tried of these poor devils helped to give the whole public

side of the war an air of monstrous and hopeless farce. They proved not only that they were useless for public work, but that in a well-ordered nation they would never have been allowed to control private enterprise.

### How the Fools shouted the Wise Men down

Thus, like a fertile country flooded with mud, England showed no sign of her greatness in the days when she was putting forth all her strength to save herself from the worst consequences of her littleness. Most of the men of action, occupied to the last hour of their time with urgent practical work, had to leave to idler people, or to professional rhetoricians, the presentation of the war to the reason and imagination of the country and the world in speeches, poems, manifestoes, picture posters, and newspaper articles. I have had the privilege of hearing some of our ablest commanders talking about their work; and I have shared the common lot of reading the accounts of that work given to the world by the newspapers. No two experiences could be more different. But in the end the talkers obtained a dangerous ascendancy

over the rank and file of the men of action; for though the great men of action are always inveterate talkers and often very clever writers, and therefore cannot have their minds formed for them by others, the average man of action, like the average fighter with the bayonet, can give no account of himself in words even to himself, and is apt to pick up and accept what he reads about himself and other people in the papers, except when the writer is rash enough to commit himself on technical points. It was not uncommon during the war to hear a soldier, or a civilian engaged on war work, describing events within his own experience that reduced to utter absurdity the ravings and maunderings of his daily paper, and yet echo the opinions of that paper like a parrot. Thus, to escape from the prevailing confusion and folly, it was not enough to seek the company of the ordinary man of action: one had to get into contact with the master spirits. This was a privilege which only a handful of people could enjoy. For the unprivileged citizen there was no escape. To him the whole country seemed mad, futile, silly, incompetent, with no hope of victory except the hope that the enemy might be just as mad. Only by very resolute reflection and



reasoning could he reassure himself that if there was nothing more solid beneath their appalling appearances the war could not possibly have gone on for a single day without a total breakdown of its organization.

### The Mad Election

Happy were the fools and the thoughtless men of action in those days. The worst of it was that the fools were very strongly represented in parliament, as fools not only elect fools, but can persuade men of action to elect them too. The election that immediately followed the armistice was perhaps the maddest that has ever taken place. Soldiers who had done voluntary and heroic service in the field were defeated by persons who had apparently never run a risk or spent a farthing that they could avoid, and who even had in the course of the election to apologize publicly for bawling Pacifist or Pro-German at their opponent. Party leaders seek such followers, who can always be depended on to walk tamely into the lobby at the party whip's orders, provided the leader will make their seats safe for them by the process which was called, in derisive ref-

erence to the war rationing system, "giving them the coupon." Other incidents were so grotesque that I cannot mention them without enabling the reader to identify the parties, which would not be fair, as they were no more to blame than thousands of others who must necessarily be nameless. The general result was patently absurd; and the electorate, disgusted at its own work, instantly recoiled to the opposite extreme, and cast out all the coupon candidates at the earliest bye-elections by equally silly majorities. But the mischief of the general election could not be undone; and the Government had not only to pretend to abuse its European victory as it had promised, but actually to do it by starving the enemies who had thrown down their arms. It had, in short, won the election by pledging itself to be thriftlessly wicked, cruel, and vindictive; and it did not find it as easy to escape from this pledge as it had from nobler ones. The end, as I write, is not yet; but it is clear that this thoughtless savagery will recoil on the heads of the Allies so severely that we shall be forced by the sternest necessity to take up our share of healing the Europe we have wounded almost to death instead of attempting to complete her destruction.

## The Yahoo and the Angry Ape

Contemplating this picture of a state of mankind so recent that no denial of its truth is possible, one understands Shakespeare comparing Man to an angry ape, Swift describing him as a Yahoo rebuked by the superior virtue of the horse, and Wellington declaring that the British can behave themselves neither in victory nor defeat. Yet none of the three had seen war as we have seen it. Shakespeare blamed great men, saying that "Could great men thunder as Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet; for every pelting petty officer would use his heaven for thunder: nothing but thunder." What would Shakespeare have said if he had seen something far more destructive than thunder in the hand of every village laborer, and found on the Messines Ridge the craters of the nineteen volcanoes that were let loose there at the touch of a finger that might have been a child's finger without the result being a whit less ruinous? Shakespeare may have seen a Stratford cottage struck by one of Jove's thunderbolts, and have helped to extinguish the lighted thatch and clear away the bits of the broken chimney. What would he have said if he had seen Ypres as it is now, or returned to

Stratford, as French peasants are returning to their homes to-day, to find the old familiar signpost inscribed "To Stratford, 1 mile," and at the end of the mile nothing but some holes in the ground and a fragment of a broken churn here and there? Would not the spectacle of the angry ape endowed with powers of destruction that Jove never pretended to, have beggared even his command of words?

And yet, what is there to say except that war puts a strain on human nature that breaks down the better half of it, and makes the worse half a diabolical virtue? Better, for us if it broke it down altogether, for then the warlike way out of our difficulties would be barred to us, and we should take greater care not to get into them. In truth, it is, as Byron said, "not difficult to die," and enormously difficult to live: that explains why, at bottom, peace is not only better than war, but infinitely more arduous. Did any hero of the war face the glorious risk of death more bravely than the traitor Bolo faced the ignominious certainty of it? Bolo taught us all how to die: can we say that he taught us all how to live? Hardly a week passes now without some soldier who braved death in the field so recklessly that he was decorated or specially com-

mended for it, being haled before our magistrates for having failed to resist the paltriest temptations of peace, with no better excuse than the old one that “a man must live.” Strange that one who, sooner than do honest work, will sell his honor for a bottle of wine, a visit to the theatre, and an hour with a strange woman, all obtained by passing a worthless cheque, could yet stake his life on the most desperate chances of the battle-field! Does it not seem as if, after all, the glory of death were cheaper than the glory of life? If it is not easier to attain, why do so many more men attain it? At all events it is clear that the kingdom of the Prince of Peace has not yet become the kingdom of this world. His attempts at invasion have been resisted far more fiercely than the Kaiser’s. Successful as that resistance has been, it has piled up a sort of National Debt that is not the less oppressive because we have no figures for it and do not intend to pay it. A blockade that cuts off “the grace of our Lord” is in the long run less bearable than the blockades which merely cut off raw materials; and against that blockade our Armada is impotent. In the blockader’s house, he has assured us, there are many mansions; but I am afraid they do not include either Heartbreak House or Horseback Hall.

### Plague on Both your Houses!

Meanwhile the Bolshevik picks and petards are at work on the foundations of both buildings; and though the Bolsheviks may be buried in the ruins, their deaths will not save the edifices. Unfortunately they can be built again. Like Doubting Castle, they have been demolished many times by successive Greathearts, and rebuilt by Simple, Sloth, and Presumption, by Feeble Mind and Much Afraid, and by all the jurymen of Vanity Fair. Another generation of “secondary education” at our ancient public schools and the cheaper institutions that ape them will be quite sufficient to keep the two going until the next war. For the instruction of that generation I leave these pages as a record of what civilian life was during the war: a matter on which history is usually silent. Fortunately it was a very short war. It is true that the people who thought it could not last more than six months were very signally refuted by the event. As Sir Douglas Haig has pointed out, its Waterloos lasted months instead of hours. But there would have been nothing surprising in its lasting thirty years. If it had not been for the fact that the blockade achieved the amazing feat of starving out Europe, which it

could not possibly have done had Europe been properly organized for war, or even for peace, the war would have lasted until the belligerents were so tired of it that they could no longer be compelled to compel themselves to go on with it. Considering its magnitude, the war of 1914-18 will certainly be classed as the shortest in history. The end came so suddenly that the combatant literally stumbled over it; and yet it came a full year later than it should have come if the belligerents had not been far too afraid of one another to face the situation sensibly. Germany, having failed to provide for the war she began, failed again to surrender before she was dangerously exhausted. Her opponents, equally improvident, went as much too close to bankruptcy as Germany to starvation. It was a bluff at which both were bluffed. And, with the usual irony of war, it remains doubtful whether Germany and Russia, the defeated, will not be the gainers; for the victors are already busy fastening on themselves the chains they have struck from the limbs of the vanquished.

### How the Theatre fared

Let us now contract our view rather violently from the European theatre of war to the theatre in which the fights are sham fights, and the slain, rising the moment the curtain has fallen, go comfortably home to supper after washing off their rose-pink wounds. It is nearly twenty years since I was last obliged to introduce a play in the form of a book for lack of an opportunity of presenting it in its proper mode by a performance in a theatre. The war has thrown me back on this expedient. Heartbreak House has not yet reached the stage. I have withheld it because the war has completely upset the economic conditions which formerly enabled serious drama to pay its way in London. The change is not in the theatres nor in the management of them, nor in the authors and actors, but in the audiences. For four years the London theatres were crowded every night with thousands of soldiers on leave from the front. These soldiers were not seasoned London playgoers. A childish experience of my own gave me a clue to their condition. When I was a small boy I was taken to the opera. I did not then know what an opera was, though I could whistle a good deal of opera music. I

had seen in my mother's album photographs of all the great opera singers, mostly in evening dress. In the theatre I found myself before a gilded balcony filled with persons in evening dress whom I took to be the opera singers. I picked out one massive dark lady as Alboni, and wondered how soon she would stand up and sing. I was puzzled by the fact that I was made to sit with my back to the singers instead of facing them. When the curtain went up, my astonishment and delight were unbounded.

### The Soldier at the Theatre Front

In 1915, I saw in the theatres men in khaki in just the same predicament. To everyone who had my clue to their state of mind it was evident that they had never been in a theatre before and did not know what it was. At one of our great variety theatres I sat beside a young officer, not at all a rough specimen, who, even when the curtain rose and enlightened him as to the place where he had to look for his entertainment, found the dramatic part of it utterly incomprehensible. He did not know how to play his part of the game. He

could understand the people on the stage singing and dancing and performing gymnastic feats. He not only understood but intensely enjoyed an artist who imitated cocks crowing and pigs squeaking. But the people who pretended that they were somebody else, and that the painted picture behind them was real, bewildered him. In his presence I realized how very sophisticated the natural man has to become before the conventions of the theatre can be easily acceptable, or the purpose of the drama obvious to him.

Well, from the moment when the routine of leave for our soldiers was established, such novices, accompanied by damsels (called flappers) often as innocent as themselves, crowded the theatres to the doors. It was hardly possible at first to find stuff crude enough to nurse them on. The best music-hall comedians ransacked their memories for the oldest quips and the most childish antics to avoid carrying the military spectators out of their depth. I believe that this was a mistake as far as the novices were concerned. Shakespeare, or the dramatized histories of George Barnwell, Maria Martin, or the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, would probably have been quite popular with them. But the novices were only a

minority after all. The cultivated soldier, who in time of peace would look at nothing theatrical except the most advanced post-Ibsen plays in the most artistic settings, found himself, to his own astonishment, thirsting for silly jokes, dances, and brainlessly sensuous exhibitions of pretty girls. The author of some of the most grimly serious plays of our time told me that after enduring the trenches for months without a glimpse of the female of his species, it gave him an entirely innocent but delightful pleasure merely to see a flapper. The reaction from the battle-field produced a condition of hyperaesthesia in which all the theatrical values were altered. Trivial things gained intensity and stale things novelty. The actor, instead of having to coax his audiences out of the boredom which had driven them to the theatre in an ill humor to seek some sort of distraction, had only to exploit the bliss of smiling men who were no longer under fire and under military discipline, but actually clean and comfortable and in a mood to be pleased with anything and everything that a bevy of pretty girls and a funny man, or even a bevy of girls pretending to be pretty and a man pretending to be funny, could do for them.

Then could be seen every night in the theatres old-fashioned farcical comedies, in which a bedroom, with four doors on each side and a practicable window in the middle, was understood to resemble exactly the bedroom in the flats beneath and above, all three inhabited by couples consumed with jealousy. When these people came home drunk at night; mistook their neighbor's flats for their own; and in due course got into the wrong beds, it was not only the novices who found the resulting complications and scandals exquisitely ingenious and amusing, nor their equally verdant flappers who could not help squealing in a manner that astonished the oldest performers when the gentleman who had just come in drunk through the window pretended to undress, and allowed glimpses of his naked person to be descried from time to time.

### Heartbreak House

Men who had just read the news that Charles Wyndham was dying, and were thereby sadly reminded of Pink Dominos and the torrent of farcical comedies that followed it in

his heyday until every trick of that trade had become so stale that the laughter they provoked turned to loathing: these veterans also, when they returned from the field, were as much pleased by what they knew to be stale and foolish as the novices by what they thought fresh and clever.

### Commerce in the Theatre

Wellington said that an army moves on its belly. So does a London theatre. Before a man acts he must eat. Before he performs plays he must pay rent. In London we have no theatres for the welfare of the people: they are all for the sole purpose of producing the utmost obtainable rent for the proprietor. If the twin flats and twin beds produce a guinea more than Shakespeare, out goes Shakespeare and in come the twin flats and the twin beds. If the brainless bevy of pretty girls and the funny man outbid Mozart, out goes Mozart.

### Unser Shakespeare

Before the war an effort was made to remedy this by establishing a national theatre in celebration of the tercentenary of the death of Shakespeare. A committee was formed; and all sorts of illustrious and influential persons lent their names to a grand appeal to our national culture. My play, *The Dark Lady of The Sonnets*, was one of the incidents of that appeal. After some years of effort the result was a single handsome subscription from a German gentleman. Like the celebrated swearer in the anecdote when the cart containing all his household goods lost its tailboard at the top of the hill and let its contents roll in ruin to the bottom, I can only say, "I cannot do justice to this situation," and let it pass without another word.

### The Higher Drama put out of Action

The effect of the war on the London theatres may now be imagined. The beds and the be vies drove every higher form of art out of it. Rents went up to an unprecedented figure. At the same time prices doubled everywhere except at the

theatre pay-boxes, and raised the expenses of management to such a degree that unless the houses were quite full every night, profit was impossible. Even bare solvency could not be attained without a very wide popularity. Now what had made serious drama possible to a limited extent before the war was that a play could pay its way even if the theatre were only half full until Saturday and three-quarters full then. A manager who was an enthusiast and a desperately hard worker, with an occasional grant-in-aid from an artistically disposed millionaire, and a due proportion of those rare and happy accidents by which plays of the higher sort turn out to be potboilers as well, could hold out for some years, by which time a relay might arrive in the person of another enthusiast. Thus and not otherwise occurred that remarkable revival of the British drama at the beginning of the century which made my own career as a playwright possible in England. In America I had already established myself, not as part of the ordinary theatre system, but in association with the exceptional genius of Richard Mansfield. In Germany and Austria I had no difficulty: the system of publicly aided theatres there, Court and Municipal, kept drama of the kind

I dealt in alive; so that I was indebted to the Emperor of Austria for magnificent productions of my works at a time when the sole official attention paid me by the British Courts was the announcement to the English-speaking world that certain plays of mine were unfit for public performance, a substantial set-off against this being that the British Court, in the course of its private playgoing, paid no regard to the bad character given me by the chief officer of its household.

Howbeit, the fact that my plays effected a lodgment on the London stage, and were presently followed by the plays of Granville Barker, Gilbert Murray, John Masefield, St. John Hankin, Lawrence Housman, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, John Drinkwater, and others which would in the nineteenth century have stood rather less chance of production at a London theatre than the Dialogues of Plato, not to mention revivals of the ancient Athenian drama and a restoration to the stage of Shakespeare's plays as he wrote them, was made economically possible solely by a supply of theatres which could hold nearly twice as much money as it cost to rent and maintain them. In such theatres work appealing to a relatively small class of cultivated persons, and



therefore attracting only from half to three-quarters as many spectators as the more popular pastimes, could nevertheless keep going in the hands of young adventurers who were doing it for its own sake, and had not yet been forced by advancing age and responsibilities to consider the commercial value of their time and energy too closely. The war struck this foundation away in the manner I have just described. The expenses of running the cheapest west-end theatres rose to a sum which exceeded by twenty-five per cent the utmost that the higher drama can, as an ascertained matter of fact, be depended on to draw. Thus the higher drama, which has never really been a commercially sound speculation, now became an impossible one. Accordingly, attempts are being made to provide a refuge for it in suburban theatres in London and repertory theatres in the provinces. But at the moment when the army has at last disgorged the survivors of the gallant band of dramatic pioneers whom it swallowed, they find that the economic conditions which formerly made their work no worse than precarious now put it out of the question altogether, as far as the west end of London is concerned.

### Church and Theatre

I do not suppose many people care particularly. We are not brought up to care; and a sense of the national importance of the theatre is not born in mankind: the natural man, like so many of the soldiers at the beginning of the war, does not know what a theatre is. But please note that all these soldiers who did not know what a theatre was, knew what a church was. And they had been taught to respect churches. Nobody had ever warned them against a church as a place where frivolous women paraded in their best clothes; where stories of improper females like Potiphar's wife, and erotic poetry like the Song of Songs, were read aloud; where the sensuous and sentimental music of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Gounod, and Brahms was more popular than severe music by greater composers; where the prettiest sort of pretty pictures of pretty saints assailed the imagination and senses through stained-glass windows; and where sculpture and architecture came to the help of painting. Nobody ever reminded them that these things had sometimes produced such developments of erotic idolatry that men who were not only enthusiastic amateurs of literature, painting, and music, but famous prac-

tioners of them, had actually exulted when mobs and even regular troops under express command had mutilated church statues, smashed church windows, wrecked church organs, and torn up the sheets from which the church music was read and sung. When they saw broken statues in churches, they were told that this was the work of wicked, godless rioters, instead of, as it was, the work partly of zealots bent on driving the world, the flesh, and the devil out of the temple, and partly of insurgent men who had become intolerably poor because the temple had become a den of thieves. But all the sins and perversions that were so carefully hidden from them in the history of the Church were laid on the shoulders of the Theatre: that stuffy, uncomfortable place of penance in which we suffer so much inconvenience on the slenderest chance of gaining a scrap of food for our starving souls. When the Germans bombed the Cathedral of Rheims the world rang with the horror of the sacrilege. When they bombed the Little Theatre in the Adelphi, and narrowly missed bombing two writers of plays who lived within a few yards of it, the fact was not even mentioned in the papers. In point of appeal to the senses no theatre ever built could touch the

fane at Rheims: no actress could rival its Virgin in beauty, nor any operatic tenor look otherwise than a fool beside its David. Its picture glass was glorious even to those who had seen the glass of Chartres. It was wonderful in its very grotesques: who would look at the Blondin Donkey after seeing its leviathans? In spite of the Adam-Adelphian decoration on which Miss Kingston had lavished so much taste and care, the Little Theatre was in comparison with Rheims the gloomiest of little conventicles: indeed the cathedral must, from the Puritan point of view, have debauched a million voluptuaries for every one whom the Little Theatre had sent home thoughtful to a chaste bed after Mr Chesterton's *Magic* or Brieux's *Les Avaries*. Perhaps that is the real reason why the Church is lauded and the Theatre reviled. Whether or no, the fact remains that the lady to whose public spirit and sense of the national value of the theatre I owed the first regular public performance of a play of mine had to conceal her action as if it had been a crime, whereas if she had given the money to the Church she would have worn a halo for it. And I admit, as I have always done, that this state of things may have been a very sensible one. I have asked Londoners

again and again why they pay half a guinea to go to a theatre when they can go to St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey for nothing. Their only possible reply is that they want to see something new and possibly something wicked; but the theatres mostly disappoint both hopes. If ever a revolution makes me Dictator, I shall establish a heavy charge for admission to our churches. But everyone who pays at the church door shall receive a ticket entitling him or her to free admission to one performance at any theatre he or she prefers. Thus shall the sensuous charms of the church service be made to subsidize the sterner virtue of the drama.

### The Next Phase

The present situation will not last. Although the newspaper I read at breakfast this morning before writing these words contains a calculation that no less than twenty-three wars are at present being waged to confirm the peace, England is no longer in khaki; and a violent reaction is setting in against the crude theatrical fare of the four terrible years. Soon the rents of theatres will once more be fixed on the assumption

that they cannot always be full, nor even on the average half full week in and week out. Prices will change. The higher drama will be at no greater disadvantage than it was before the war; and it may benefit, first, by the fact that many of us have been torn from the fools' paradise in which the theatre formerly traded, and thrust upon the sternest realities and necessities until we have lost both faith in and patience with the theatrical pretences that had no root either in reality or necessity; second, by the startling change made by the war in the distribution of income. It seems only the other day that a millionaire was a man with  $\text{œ}50,000$  a year. To-day, when he has paid his income tax and super tax, and insured his life for the amount of his death duties, he is lucky if his net income is 10,000 pounds though his nominal property remains the same. And this is the result of a Budget which is called "a respite for the rich." At the other end of the scale millions of persons have had regular incomes for the first time in their lives; and their men have been regularly clothed, fed, lodged, and taught to make up their minds that certain things have to be done, also for the first time in their lives. Hundreds of thousands of women have been taken out of

their domestic cages and tasted both discipline and independence. The thoughtless and snobbish middle classes have been pulled up short by the very unpleasant experience of being ruined to an unprecedented extent. We have all had a tremendous jolt; and although the widespread notion that the shock of the war would automatically make a new heaven and a new earth, and that the dog would never go back to his vomit nor the sow to her wallowing in the mire, is already seen to be a delusion, yet we are far more conscious of our condition than we were, and far less disposed to submit to it. Revolution, lately only a sensational chapter in history or a demagogic claptrap, is now a possibility so imminent that hardly by trying to suppress it in other countries by arms and defamation, and calling the process anti-Bolshevism, can our Government stave it off at home.

Perhaps the most tragic figure of the day is the American President who was once a historian. In those days it became his task to tell us how, after that great war in America which was more clearly than any other war of our time a war for an idea, the conquerors, confronted with a heroic task of reconstruction, turned recreant, and spent fifteen years in abusing

their victory under cover of pretending to accomplish the task they were doing what they could to make impossible. Alas! Hegel was right when he said that we learn from history that men never learn anything from history. With what anguish of mind the President sees that we, the new conquerors, forgetting everything we professed to fight for, are sitting down with watering mouths to a good square meal of ten years revenge upon and humiliation of our prostrate foe, can only be guessed by those who know, as he does, how hopeless is remonstrance, and how happy Lincoln was in perishing from the earth before his inspired messages became scraps of paper. He knows well that from the Peace Conference will come, in spite of his utmost, no edict on which he will be able, like Lincoln, to invoke "the considerate judgment of mankind: and the gracious favor of Almighty God." He led his people to destroy the militarism of Zabern; and the army they rescued is busy in Cologne imprisoning every German who does not salute a British officer; whilst the government at home, asked whether it approves, replies that it does not propose even to discontinue this Zabernism when the Peace is concluded, but in effect looks forward to

making Germans salute British officers until the end of the world. That is what war makes of men and women. It will wear off; and the worst it threatens is already proving impracticable; but before the humble and contrite heart ceases to be despised, the President and I, being of the same age, will be dotards. In the meantime there is, for him, another history to write; for me, another comedy to stage. Perhaps, after all, that is what wars are for, and what historians and playwrights are for. If men will not learn until their lessons are written in blood, why, blood they must have, their own for preference.

### The Ephemeral Thrones and the Eternal Theatre

To the theatre it will not matter. Whatever Bastilles fall, the theatre will stand. Apostolic Hapsburg has collapsed; All Highest Hohenzollern languishes in Holland, threatened with trial on a capital charge of fighting for his country against England; Imperial Romanoff, said to have perished miserably by a more summary method of murder, is perhaps alive or perhaps dead: nobody cares more than if he had been a peasant; the lord of Hellas is level with his lackeys in republican Switzerland; Prime Ministers and Commanders-in-

Chief have passed from a brief glory as Solons and Caesars into failure and obscurity as closely on one another's heels as the descendants of Banquo; but Euripides and Aristophanes, Shakespeare and Moliere, Goethe and Ibsen remain fixed in their everlasting seats.

### How War muzzles the Dramatic Poet

As for myself, why, it may be asked, did I not write two plays about the war instead of two pamphlets on it? The answer is significant. You cannot make war on war and on your neighbor at the same time. War cannot bear the terrible castigation of comedy, the ruthless light of laughter that glares on the stage. When men are heroically dying for their country, it is not the time to show their lovers and wives and fathers and mothers how they are being sacrificed to the blunders of boobies, the cupidity of capitalists, the ambition of conquerors, the electioneering of demagogues, the Pharisaim of patriots, the lusts and lies and rancors and bloodthirsts that love war because it opens their prison doors, and sets them in the thrones of power and popularity. For unless these things are mercilessly exposed they will hide under the mantle of

the ideals on the stage just as they do in real life.

And though there may be better things to reveal, it may not, and indeed cannot, be militarily expedient to reveal them whilst the issue is still in the balance. Truth telling is not compatible with the defence of the realm. We are just now reading the revelations of our generals and admirals, unmuzzled at last by the armistice. During the war, General A, in his moving despatches from the field, told how General B had covered himself with deathless glory in such and such a battle. He now tells us that General B came within an ace of losing us the war by disobeying his orders on that occasion, and fighting instead of running away as he ought to have done. An excellent subject for comedy now that the war is over, no doubt; but if General A had let this out at the time, what would have been the effect on General B's soldiers? And had the stage made known what the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for War who overruled General A thought of him, and what he thought of them, as now revealed in raging controversy, what would have been the effect on the nation? That is why comedy, though sorely tempted, had to be loyally silent; for the art of the dramatic

poet knows no patriotism; recognizes no obligation but truth to natural history; cares not whether Germany or England perish; is ready to cry with Brynhild, "Lass' uns verderben, lachend zu grunde geh'n" sooner than deceive or be deceived; and thus becomes in time of war a greater military danger than poison, steel, or trinitrotoluene. That is why I had to withhold Heartbreak House from the footlights during the war; for the Germans might on any night have turned the last act from play into earnest, and even then might not have waited for their cues.

June, 1919.

# HEARTBREAK HOUSE

## ACT I

The hilly country in the middle of the north edge of Sussex, looking very pleasant on a fine evening at the end of September, is seen through the windows of a room which has been built so as to resemble the after part of an old-fashioned high-pooped ship, with a stern gallery; for the windows are ship built with heavy timbering, and run right across the room as continuously as the stability of the wall allows. A row of lockers under the windows provides an unupholstered windowseat interrupted by twin glass doors, respectively halfway between the stern post and the sides. Another door strains the illusion a little by being apparently in the ship's port side, and yet leading, not to the open sea, but to the entrance hall of the house. Between this door and the stern gallery are bookshelves. There are electric light switches beside the door leading to the hall and the glass doors in the stern gallery. Against the starboard wall is a carpenter's bench. The vice has a board in its jaws; and the

floor is littered with shavings, overflowing from a waste-paper basket. A couple of planes and a centrebit are on the bench. In the same wall, between the bench and the windows, is a narrow doorway with a half door, above which a glimpse of the room beyond shows that it is a shelved pantry with bottles and kitchen crockery.

On the starboard side, but close to the middle, is a plain oak drawing-table with drawing-board, T-square, straight-edges, set squares, mathematical instruments, saucers of water color, a tumbler of discolored water, Indian ink, pencils, and brushes on it. The drawing-board is set so that the draughtsman's chair has the window on its left hand. On the floor at the end of the table, on its right, is a ship's fire bucket. On the port side of the room, near the bookshelves, is a sofa with its back to the windows. It is a sturdy mahogany article, oddly upholstered in sailcloth, including the bolster, with a couple of blankets hanging over the back. Between the sofa and the drawing-table is a big wicker chair, with broad arms and a low sloping back, with its back to the light. A small but stout table of teak, with a round top and gate legs, stands against the port wall between the door and the bookcase. It

is the only article in the room that suggests (not at all convincingly) a woman's hand in the furnishing. The uncarpeted floor of narrow boards is caulked and holystoned like a deck.

The garden to which the glass doors lead dips to the south before the landscape rises again to the hills. Emerging from the hollow is the cupola of an observatory. Between the observatory and the house is a flagstaff on a little esplanade, with a hammock on the east side and a long garden seat on the west.

A young lady, gloved and hatted, with a dust coat on, is sitting in the window-seat with her body twisted to enable her to look out at the view. One hand props her chin: the other hangs down with a volume of the Temple Shakespeare in it, and her finger stuck in the page she has been reading.

A clock strikes six.

The young lady turns and looks at her watch. She rises with an air of one who waits, and is almost at the end of her patience. She is a pretty girl, slender, fair, and intelligent looking, nicely but not expensively dressed, evidently not a smart idler.

With a sigh of weary resignation she comes to the draughtsman's chair; sits down; and begins to read

Shakespeare. Presently the book sinks to her lap; her eyes close; and she dozes into a slumber.

An elderly womanservant comes in from the hall with three unopened bottles of rum on a tray. She passes through and disappears in the pantry without noticing the young lady. She places the bottles on the shelf and fills her tray with empty bottles. As she returns with these, the young lady lets her book drop, awakening herself, and startling the womanservant so that she all but lets the tray fall.

**THE WOMANSERVANT.** God bless us! [*The young lady picks up the book and places it on the table*]. Sorry to wake you, miss, I'm sure; but you are a stranger to me. What might you be waiting here for now?

**THE YOUNG LADY.** Waiting for somebody to show some signs of knowing that I have been invited here.

**THE WOMANSERVANT.** Oh, you're invited, are you? And has nobody come? Dear! dear!

**THE YOUNG LADY.** A wild-looking old gentleman came and looked in at the window; and I heard him calling out, "Nurse, there is a young and attractive female waiting in the poop. Go and see what she wants." Are you the nurse?



## Heartbreak House

**THE WOMANSERVANT.** Yes, miss: I'm Nurse Guinness. That was old Captain Shotover, Mrs Hushabye's father. I heard him roaring; but I thought it was for something else. I suppose it was Mrs Hushabye that invited you, ducky?

**THE YOUNG LADY.** I understood her to do so. But really I think I'd better go.

**NURSE GUINNESS.** Oh, don't think of such a thing, miss. If Mrs Hushabye has forgotten all about it, it will be a pleasant surprise for her to see you, won't it?

**THE YOUNG LADY.** It has been a very unpleasant surprise to me to find that nobody expects me.

**NURSE GUINNESS.** You'll get used to it, miss: this house is full of surprises for them that don't know our ways.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*looking in from the hall suddenly: an ancient but still hardy man with an immense white beard, in a reefer jacket with a whistle hanging from his neck*]. Nurse, there is a hold-all and a handbag on the front steps for everybody to fall over. Also a tennis racquet. Who the devil left them there?

**THE YOUNG LADY.** They are mine, I'm afraid.

**THE CAPTAIN** [*advancing to the drawing-table*]. Nurse, who is this misguided and unfortunate young lady?

**NURSE GUINNESS.** She says Miss Hussy invited her, sir.

**THE CAPTAIN.** And had she no friend, no parents, to warn her against my daughter's invitations? This is a pretty sort of house, by heavens! A young and attractive lady is invited here. Her luggage is left on the steps for hours; and she herself is deposited in the poop and abandoned, tired and starving. This is our hospitality. These are our manners. No room ready. No hot water. No welcoming hostess. Our visitor is to sleep in the toolshed, and to wash in the duckpond.

**NURSE GUINNESS.** Now it's all right, Captain: I'll get the lady some tea; and her room shall be ready before she has finished it. [*To the young lady*]. Take off your hat, ducky; and make yourself at home [*she goes to the door leading to the hall*].

**THE CAPTAIN** [*as she passes him*]. Ducky! Do you suppose, woman, that because this young lady has been insulted and neglected, you have the right to address her as you address my wretched children, whom you have brought up in ignorance of the commonest decencies of social intercourse?

**NURSE GUINNESS.** Never mind him, doty. [*Quite unconcerned, she goes out into the hall on her way to the kitchen*].

**THE CAPTAIN.** Madam, will you favor me with your name?  
[*He sits down in the big wicker chair.*]

**THE YOUNG LADY.** My name is Ellie Dunn.

**THE CAPTAIN.** Dunn! I had a boatswain whose name was Dunn. He was originally a pirate in China. He set up as a ship's chandler with stores which I have every reason to believe he stole from me. No doubt he became rich. Are you his daughter?

**ELLIE** [*indignant*]. No, certainly not. I am proud to be able to say that though my father has not been a successful man, nobody has ever had one word to say against him. I think my father is the best man I have ever known.

**THE CAPTAIN.** He must be greatly changed. Has he attained the seventh degree of concentration?

**ELLIE.** I don't understand.

**THE CAPTAIN.** But how could he, with a daughter? I, madam, have two daughters. One of them is Hesione Hushabye, who invited you here. I keep this house: she upsets it. I desire to attain the seventh degree of concentration: she invites visitors and leaves me to entertain them. [*Nurse Guinness returns with the tea-tray, which she places on the teak*

*table*]. I have a second daughter who is, thank God, in a remote part of the Empire with her numskull of a husband. As a child she thought the figure-head of my ship, the Dauntless, the most beautiful thing on earth. He resembled it. He had the same expression: wooden yet enterprising. She married him, and will never set foot in this house again.

**NURSE GUINNESS** [*carrying the table, with the tea-things on it, to Ellie's side*]. Indeed you never were more mistaken. She is in England this very moment. You have been told three times this week that she is coming home for a year for her health. And very glad you should be to see your own daughter again after all these years.

**THE CAPTAIN.** I am not glad. The natural term of the affection of the human animal for its offspring is six years. My daughter Ariadne was born when I was forty-six. I am now eighty-eight. If she comes, I am not at home. If she wants anything, let her take it. If she asks for me, let her be informed that I am extremely old, and have totally forgotten her.

**NURSE GUINNESS.** That's no talk to offer to a young lady. Here, ducky, have some tea; and don't listen to him [*she pours out a cup of tea*].

**THE CAPTAIN** [*rising wrathfully*]. Now before high heaven they have given this innocent child Indian tea: the stuff they

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tan their own leather insides with. [*He seizes the cup and the tea-pot and empties both into the leathern bucket*].

**ELLIE** [*almost in tears*]. Oh, please! I am so tired. I should have been glad of anything.

**NURSE GUINNESS**. Oh, what a thing to do! The poor lamb is ready to drop.

**THE CAPTAIN**. You shall have some of my tea. Do not touch that fly-blown cake: nobody eats it here except the dogs. [*He disappears into the pantry*].

**NURSE GUINNESS**. There's a man for you! They say he sold himself to the devil in Zanzibar before he was a captain; and the older he grows the more I believe them.

**A WOMAN'S VOICE** [*in the hall*]. Is anyone at home? Hesione! Nurse! Papa! Do come, somebody; and take in my luggage.

*Thumping heard, as of an umbrella, on the wainscot.*

**NURSE GUINNESS**. My gracious! It's Miss Addy, Lady Utterword, Mrs Hushabye's sister: the one I told the captain about. [*Calling*]. Coming, Miss, coming.

*She carries the table back to its place by the door and is hurrying out when she is intercepted by Lady Utterword, who bursts in much flustered. Lady Utterword, a blonde, is very handsome, very well dressed, and so precipitate in speech and action that the first impression (erroneous) is one of comic silliness.*

**LADY UTTERWORD**. Oh, is that you, Nurse? How are you? You don't look a day older. Is nobody at home? Where is Hesione? Doesn't she expect me? Where are the servants? Whose luggage is that on the steps? Where's papa? Is everybody asleep? [*Seeing Ellie*]. Oh! I beg your pardon. I suppose you are one of my nieces. [*Approaching her with outstretched arms*]. Come and kiss your aunt, darling.

**ELLIE**. I'm only a visitor. It is my luggage on the steps.

**NURSE GUINNESS**. I'll go get you some fresh tea, ducky. [*She takes up the tray*].

**ELLIE**. But the old gentleman said he would make some himself.

**NURSE GUINNESS**. Bless you! he's forgotten what he went for already. His mind wanders from one thing to another.

**LADY UTTERWORD**. Papa, I suppose?

**NURSE GUINNESS.** Yes, Miss.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*vehemently*]. Don't be silly, Nurse. Don't call me Miss.

**NURSE GUINNESS** [*placidly*]. No, lovey [*she goes out with the tea-tray*].

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*sitting down with a flounce on the sofa*]. I know what you must feel. Oh, this house, this house! I come back to it after twenty-three years; and it is just the same: the luggage lying on the steps, the servants spoilt and impossible, nobody at home to receive anybody, no regular meals, nobody ever hungry because they are always gnawing bread and butter or munching apples, and, what is worse, the same disorder in ideas, in talk, in feeling. When I was a child I was used to it: I had never known anything better, though I was unhappy, and longed all the time—oh, how I longed!—to be respectable, to be a lady, to live as others did, not to have to think of everything for myself. I married at nineteen to escape from it. My husband is Sir Hastings Utterword, who has been governor of all the crown colonies in succession. I have always been the mistress of Government House. I have been so happy: I had forgotten that people could live like this. I wanted to see my father, my sister, my nephews and nieces (one ought to, you know), and I was looking forward to it. And now the state of the

house! the way I'm received! the casual impudence of that woman Guinness, our old nurse! really Hesion might at least have been here: some preparation might have been made for me. You must excuse my going on in this way; but I am really very much hurt and annoyed and disillusioned: and if I had realized it was to be like this, I wouldn't have come. I have a great mind to go away without another word [*she is on the point of weeping*].

**ELLIE** [*also very miserable*]. Nobody has been here to receive me either. I thought I ought to go away too. But how can I, Lady Utterword? My luggage is on the steps; and the station fly has gone.

*The captain emerges from the pantry with a tray of Chinese lacquer and a very fine tea-set on it. He rests it provisionally on the end of the table; snatches away the drawing-board, which he stands on the floor against table legs; and puts the tray in the space thus cleared. Ellie pours out a cup greedily.*

**THE CAPTAIN.** Your tea, young lady. What! another lady! I must fetch another cup [*he makes for the pantry*].

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*rising from the sofa, suffused with emotion*]. Papa! Don't you know me? I'm your daughter.

**THE CAPTAIN.** Nonsense! my daughter's upstairs asleep.

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*[He vanishes through the half door].*

*Lady Utterword retires to the window to conceal her tears.*

**ELLIE** *[going to her with the cup]*. Don't be so distressed. Have this cup of tea. He is very old and very strange: he has been just like that to me. I know how dreadful it must be: my own father is all the world to me. Oh, I'm sure he didn't mean it.

*The captain returns with another cup.*

**THE CAPTAIN**. Now we are complete. *[He places it on the tray]*.

**LADY UTTERWORD** *[hysterically]*. Papa, you can't have forgotten me. I am Ariadne. I'm little Paddy Patkins. Won't you kiss me? *[She goes to him and throws her arms round his neck]*.

**THE CAPTAIN** *[woodenly enduring her embrace]*. How can you be Ariadne? You are a middle-aged woman: well preserved, madam, but no longer young.

**LADY UTTERWORD**. But think of all the years and years I have been away, Papa. I have had to grow old, like other people.

**THE CAPTAIN** *[disengaging himself]*. You should grow out of kissing strange men: they may be striving to attain the seventh degree of concentration.

**LADY UTTERWORD**. But I'm your daughter. You haven't seen me for years.

**THE CAPTAIN**. So much the worse! When our relatives are at home, we have to think of all their good points or it would be impossible to endure them. But when they are away, we console ourselves for their absence by dwelling on their vices. That is how I have come to think my absent daughter Ariadne a perfect fiend; so do not try to ingratiate yourself here by impersonating her *[he walks firmly away to the other side of the room]*.

**LADY UTTERWORD**. Ingratiating myself indeed! *[With dignity]*. Very well, papa. *[She sits down at the drawing-table and pours out tea for herself]*.

**THE CAPTAIN**. I am neglecting my social duties. You remember Dunn? Billy Dunn?

**LADY UTTERWORD**. Do you mean that villainous sailor who robbed you?

**THE CAPTAIN** *[introducing Ellie]*. His daughter. *[He sits*

*down on the sofa*].

ELLIE [*protesting*]. No—

*Nurse Guinness returns with fresh tea.*

THE CAPTAIN. Take that hogwash away. Do you hear?

NURSE. You've actually remembered about the tea! [*To Ellie*]. Oh, miss, he didn't forget you after all! You *have* made an impression.

THE CAPTAIN [*gloomily*]. Youth! beauty! novelty! They are badly wanted in this house. I am excessively old. Hesione is only moderately young. Her children are not youthful.

LADY UTTERWORD. How can children be expected to be youthful in this house? Almost before we could speak we were filled with notions that might have been all very well for pagan philosophers of fifty, but were certainly quite unfit for respectable people of any age.

NURSE. You were always for respectability, Miss Addy.

LADY UTTERWORD. Nurse, will you please remember that I am Lady Utterword, and not Miss Addy, nor lovey, nor darling, nor doty? Do you hear?

NURSE. Yes, ducky: all right. I'll tell them all they must call you My Lady. [*She takes her tray out with undisturbed placidity*].

LADY UTTERWORD. What comfort? what sense is there in having servants with no manners?

ELLIE [*rising and coming to the table to put down her empty cup*]. Lady Utterword, do you think Mrs Hushabye really expects me?

LADY UTTERWORD. Oh, don't ask me. You can see for yourself that I've just arrived; her only sister, after twenty-three years' absence! and it seems that I am not expected.

THE CAPTAIN. What does it matter whether the young lady is expected or not? She is welcome. There are beds: there is food. I'll find a room for her myself [*he makes for the door*].

ELLIE [*following him to stop him*]. Oh, please—[*He goes out*]. Lady Utterword, I don't know what to do. Your father persists in believing that my father is some sailor who robbed him.

LADY UTTERWORD. You had better pretend not to notice it. My father is a very clever man; but he always forgot things; and now that he is old, of course he is worse. And I must warn you that it is sometimes very hard to feel quite sure that he really forgets.

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*Mrs Hushabye bursts into the room tempestuously and embraces Ellie. She is a couple of years older than Lady Utterword, and even better looking. She has magnificent black hair, eyes like the fishpools of Heshbon, and a nobly modelled neck, short at the back and low between her shoulders in front. Unlike her sister she is uncorseted and dressed anyhow in a rich robe of black pile that shows off her white skin and statuesque contour.*

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Ellie, my darling, my pettikins [*kissing her*], how long have you been here? I've been at home all the time: I was putting flowers and things in your room; and when I just sat down for a moment to try how comfortable the armchair was I went off to sleep. Papa woke me and told me you were here. Fancy your finding no one, and being neglected and abandoned. [*Kissing her again*]. My poor love! [*She deposits Ellie on the sofa. Meanwhile Ariadne has left the table and come over to claim her share of attention*]. Oh! you've brought someone with you. Introduce me.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Hesione, is it possible that you don't know me?

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*conventionally*]. Of course I remember your face quite well. Where have we met?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Didn't Papa tell you I was here? Oh! this is really too much. [*She throws herself sulkily into the big chair*].

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Papa!

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Yes, Papa. Our papa, you unfeeling wretch! [*Rising angrily*]. I'll go straight to a hotel.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*seizing her by the shoulders*]. My goodness gracious goodness, you don't mean to say that you're Addy!

**LADY UTTERWORD.** I certainly am Addy; and I don't think I can be so changed that you would not have recognized me if you had any real affection for me. And Papa didn't think me even worth mentioning!

**MRS HUSHABYE.** What a lark! Sit down [*she pushes her back into the chair instead of kissing her, and posts herself behind it*]. You *do* look a swell. You're much handsomer than you used to be. You've made the acquaintance of Ellie, of course. She is going to marry a perfect hog of a millionaire for the sake of her father, who is as poor as a church mouse; and you must help me to stop her.

**ELLIE.** Oh, please, Hesione!

**MRS HUSHABYE.** My pettikins, the man's coming here today with your father to begin persecuting you; and everybody will see the state of the case in ten minutes; so what's the use of making a secret of it?

ELLIE. He is not a hog, Hesione. You don't know how wonderfully good he was to my father, and how deeply grateful I am to him.

MRS HUSHABYE [*to Lady Utterword*]. Her father is a very remarkable man, Addy. His name is Mazzini Dunn. Mazzini was a celebrity of some kind who knew Ellie's grandparents. They were both poets, like the Brownings; and when her father came into the world Mazzini said, "Another soldier born for freedom!" So they christened him Mazzini; and he has been fighting for freedom in his quiet way ever since. That's why he is so poor.

ELLIE. I am proud of his poverty.

MRS HUSHABYE. Of course you are, pettikins. Why not leave him in it, and marry someone you love?

LADY UTTERWORD [*rising suddenly and explosively*]. Hesione, are you going to kiss me or are you not?

MRS HUSHABYE. What do you want to be kissed for?

LADY UTTERWORD. I *don't* want to be kissed; but I do want you to behave properly and decently. We are sisters. We have been separated for twenty-three years. You *ought* to kiss me.

MRS HUSHABYE. To-morrow morning, dear, before you make up. I hate the smell of powder.

LADY UTTERWORD. Oh! you unfeeling—[*she is interrupted by the return of the captain*].

THE CAPTAIN [*to Ellie*]. Your room is ready. [*Ellie rises*]. The sheets were damp; but I have changed them [*he makes for the garden door on the port side*].

LADY UTTERWORD. Oh! What about my sheets?

THE CAPTAIN [*halting at the door*]. Take my advice: air them: or take them off and sleep in blankets. You shall sleep in Ariadne's old room.

LADY UTTERWORD. Indeed I shall do nothing of the sort. That little hole! I am entitled to the best spare room.

THE CAPTAIN [*continuing unmoved*]. She married a numskull. She told me she would marry anyone to get away from home.

LADY UTTERWORD. You are pretending not to know me on purpose. I will leave the house.

*Mazzini Dunn enters from the hall. He is a little elderly man with bulging credulous eyes and earnest manners. He is dressed*



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*in a blue serge jacket suit with an unbuttoned mackintosh over it, and carries a soft black hat of clerical cut.*

ELLIE. At last! Captain Shotover, here is my father.

THE CAPTAIN. This! Nonsense! not a bit like him [*he goes away through the garden, shutting the door sharply behind him*].

LADY UTTERWORD. I will not be ignored and pretended to be somebody else. I will have it out with Papa now, this instant. [*To Mazzini*]. Excuse me. [*She follows the captain out, making a hasty bow to Mazzini, who returns it*].

MRS HUSHABYE [*hospitably shaking hands*]. How good of you to come, Mr Dunn! You don't mind Papa, do you? He is as mad as a hatter, you know, but quite harmless and extremely clever. You will have some delightful talks with him.

MAZZINI. I hope so. [*To Ellie*]. So here you are, Ellie, dear. [*He draws her arm affectionately through his*]. I must thank you, Mrs Hushabye, for your kindness to my daughter. I'm afraid she would have had no holiday if you had not invited her.

MRS HUSHABYE. Not at all. Very nice of her to come and attract young people to the house for us.

MAZZINI [*smiling*]. I'm afraid Ellie is not interested in young men, Mrs Hushabye. Her taste is on the graver, solider side.

MRS HUSHABYE [*with a sudden rather hard brightness in her manner*]. Won't you take off your overcoat, Mr Dunn? You will find a cupboard for coats and hats and things in the corner of the hall.

MAZZINI [*hastily releasing Ellie*]. Yes—thank you—I had better—[*he goes out*].

MRS HUSHABYE [*emphatically*]. The old brute!

ELLIE. Who?

MRS HUSHABYE. Who! Him. He. It [*pointing after Mazzini*]. “Graver, solider tastes,” indeed!

ELLIE [*aghast*]. You don't mean that you were speaking like that of my father!

MRS HUSHABYE. I was. You know I was.

ELLIE [*with dignity*]. I will leave your house at once. [*She turns to the door*].

MRS HUSHABYE. If you attempt it, I'll tell your father why.

ELLIE [*turning again*]. Oh! How can you treat a visitor like this, Mrs Hushabye?

MRS HUSHABYE. I thought you were going to call me Hesione.

ELLIE. Certainly not now?

MRS HUSHABYE. Very well: I'll tell your father.

ELLIE [*distressed*]. Oh!

MRS HUSHABYE. If you turn a hair—if you take his part against me and against your own heart for a moment, I'll give that born soldier of freedom a piece of my mind that will stand him on his selfish old head for a week.

ELLIE. Hesione! My father selfish! How little you know—

*She is interrupted by Mazzini, who returns, excited and perspiring.*

MAZZINI. Ellie, Mangan has come: I thought you'd like to know. Excuse me, Mrs Hushabye, the strange old gentleman—

MRS HUSHABYE. Papa. Quite so.

MAZZINI. Oh, I beg your pardon, of course: I was a little confused by his manner. He is making Mangan help him with something in the garden; and he wants me too—

*A powerful whistle is heard.*

THE CAPTAIN'S VOICE. Bosun ahoy! [*the whistle is repeated*].

MAZZINI [*flustered*]. Oh dear! I believe he is whistling for me. [*He hurries out*].

MRS HUSHABYE. Now *my* father is a wonderful man if you like.

ELLIE. Hesione, listen to me. You don't understand. My father and Mr Mangan were boys together. Mr Ma—

MRS HUSHABYE. I don't care what they were: we must sit down if you are going to begin as far back as that. [*She snatches at Ellie's waist, and makes her sit down on the sofa beside her*]. Now, pettikins, tell me all about Mr Mangan. They call him Boss Mangan, don't they? He is a Napoleon of industry and disgustingly rich, isn't he? Why isn't your father rich?

ELLIE. My poor father should never have been in business. His parents were poets; and they gave him the noblest ideas;

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but they could not afford to give him a profession.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Fancy your grandparents, with their eyes in fine frenzy rolling! And so your poor father had to go into business. Hasn't he succeeded in it?

**ELLIE.** He always used to say he could succeed if he only had some capital. He fought his way along, to keep a roof over our heads and bring us up well; but it was always a struggle: always the same difficulty of not having capital enough. I don't know how to describe it to you.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Poor Ellie! I know. Pulling the devil by the tail.

**ELLIE** [*hurt*]. Oh, no. Not like that. It was at least dignified.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** That made it all the harder, didn't it? I shouldn't have pulled the devil by the tail with dignity. I should have pulled hard—[*between her teeth*] hard. Well? Go on.

**ELLIE.** At last it seemed that all our troubles were at an end. Mr Mangan did an extraordinarily noble thing out of pure friendship for my father and respect for his character. He asked him how much capital he wanted, and gave it to him. I don't mean that he lent it to him, or that he invested it in his business. He just simply made him a present of it. Wasn't

that splendid of him?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** On condition that you married him?

**ELLIE.** Oh, no, no, no! This was when I was a child. He had never even seen me: he never came to our house. It was absolutely disinterested. Pure generosity.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Oh! I beg the gentleman's pardon. Well, what became of the money?

**ELLIE.** We all got new clothes and moved into another house. And I went to another school for two years.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Only two years?

**ELLIE.** That was all: for at the end of two years my father was utterly ruined.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** How?

**ELLIE.** I don't know. I never could understand. But it was dreadful. When we were poor my father had never been in debt. But when he launched out into business on a large scale, he had to incur liabilities. When the business went into liquidation he owed more money than Mr Mangan had given him.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Bit off more than he could chew, I suppose.

**ELLIE.** I think you are a little unfeeling about it.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** My pettikins, you mustn't mind my way of talking. I was quite as sensitive and particular as you once; but I have picked up so much slang from the children that I am really hardly presentable. I suppose your father had no head for business, and made a mess of it.

**ELLIE.** Oh, that just shows how entirely you are mistaken about him. The business turned out a great success. It now pays forty-four per cent after deducting the excess profits tax.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Then why aren't you rolling in money?

**ELLIE.** I don't know. It seems very unfair to me. You see, my father was made bankrupt. It nearly broke his heart, because he had persuaded several of his friends to put money into the business. He was sure it would succeed; and events proved that he was quite right. But they all lost their money. It was dreadful. I don't know what we should have done but for Mr Mangan.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** What! Did the Boss come to the rescue again, after all his money being thrown away?

**ELLIE.** He did indeed, and never uttered a reproach to my father. He bought what was left of the business—the buildings and the machinery and things—from the official trustee for enough money to enable my father to pay six-and-eight-pence in the pound and get his discharge. Everyone pitied Papa so much, and saw so plainly that he was an honorable man, that they let him off at six-and-eight-pence instead of ten shillings. Then Mr. Mangan started a company to take up the business, and made my father a manager in it to save us from starvation; for I wasn't earning anything then.

**MRS. HUSHABYE.** Quite a romance. And when did the Boss develop the tender passion?

**ELLIE.** Oh, that was years after, quite lately. He took the chair one night at a sort of people's concert. I was singing there. As an amateur, you know: half a guinea for expenses and three songs with three encores. He was so pleased with my singing that he asked might he walk home with me. I never saw anyone so taken aback as he was when I took him home and introduced him to my father, his own manager. It was then that my father told me how nobly he had behaved. Of course it was considered a great chance for me, as he is so rich. And—and—we drifted into a sort of understanding—I suppose I should call it an engagement—[*she is distressed and cannot go on*].

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MRS HUSHABYE [*rising and marching about*]. You may have drifted into it; but you will bounce out of it, my pettikins, if I am to have anything to do with it.

ELLIE [*hopelessly*]. No: it's no use. I am bound in honor and gratitude. I will go through with it.

MRS HUSHABYE [*behind the sofa, scolding down at her*]. You know, of course, that it's not honorable or grateful to marry a man you don't love. Do you love this Mangan man?

ELLIE. Yes. At least—

MRS HUSHABYE. I don't want to know about "at least": I want to know the worst. Girls of your age fall in love with all sorts of impossible people, especially old people.

ELLIE. I like Mr Mangan very much; and I shall always be—

MRS HUSHABYE [*impatiently completing the sentence and prancing away intolerantly to starboard*]. —grateful to him for his kindness to dear father. I know. Anybody else?

ELLIE. What do you mean?

MRS HUSHABYE. Anybody else? Are you in love with anybody else?

ELLIE. Of course not.

MRS HUSHABYE. Humph! [*The book on the drawing-table catches her eye. She picks it up, and evidently finds the title very unexpected. She looks at Ellie, and asks, quaintly*] Quite sure you're not in love with an actor?

ELLIE. No, no. Why? What put such a thing into your head?

MRS HUSHABYE. This is yours, isn't it? Why else should you be reading Othello?

ELLIE. My father taught me to love Shakespeare.

MRS HUSHABYE [*flinging the book down on the table*]. Really! your father does seem to be about the limit.

ELLIE [*naively*]. Do you never read Shakespeare, Hesione? That seems to me so extraordinary. I like Othello.

MRS HUSHABYE. Do you, indeed? He was jealous, wasn't he?

ELLIE. Oh, not that. I think all the part about jealousy is horrible. But don't you think it must have been a wonderful experience for Desdemona, brought up so quietly at home, to meet a man who had been out in the world doing all sorts of brave things and having terrible adventures, and yet find-

ing something in her that made him love to sit and talk with her and tell her about them?

MRS HUSHABYE. That's your idea of romance, is it?

ELLIE. Not romance, exactly. It might really happen.

*Ellie's eyes show that she is not arguing, but in a daydream. Mrs Hushabye, watching her inquisitively, goes deliberately back to the sofa and resumes her seat beside her.*

MRS HUSHABYE. Ellie darling, have you noticed that some of those stories that Othello told Desdemona couldn't have happened—?

ELLIE. Oh, no. Shakespeare thought they could have happened.

MRS HUSHABYE. Hm! Desdemona thought they could have happened. But they didn't.

ELLIE. Why do you look so enigmatic about it? You are such a sphinx: I never know what you mean.

MRS HUSHABYE. Desdemona would have found him out if she had lived, you know. I wonder was that why he strangled her!

ELLIE. Othello was not telling lies.

MRS HUSHABYE. How do you know?

ELLIE. Shakespeare would have said if he was. Hesione, there are men who have done wonderful things: men like Othello, only, of course, white, and very handsome, and—

MRS HUSHABYE. Ah! Now we're coming to it. Tell me all about him. I knew there must be somebody, or you'd never have been so miserable about Mangan: you'd have thought it quite a lark to marry him.

ELLIE [*blushing vividly*]. Hesione, you are dreadful. But I don't want to make a secret of it, though of course I don't tell everybody. Besides, I don't know him.

MRS HUSHABYE. Don't know him! What does that mean?

ELLIE. Well, of course I know him to speak to.

MRS HUSHABYE. But you want to know him ever so much more intimately, eh?

ELLIE. No, no: I know him quite—almost intimately.

MRS HUSHABYE. You don't know him; and you know

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him almost intimately. How lucid!

ELLIE. I mean that he does not call on us. I—I got into conversation with him by chance at a concert.

MRS HUSHABYE. You seem to have rather a gay time at your concerts, Ellie.

ELLIE. Not at all: we talk to everyone in the greenroom waiting for our turns. I thought he was one of the artists: he looked so splendid. But he was only one of the committee. I happened to tell him that I was copying a picture at the National Gallery. I make a little money that way. I can't paint much; but as it's always the same picture I can do it pretty quickly and get two or three pounds for it. It happened that he came to the National Gallery one day.

MRS HUSHABYE. One students' day. Paid sixpence to stumble about through a crowd of easels, when he might have come in next day for nothing and found the floor clear! Quite by accident?

ELLIE [*triumphantly*]. No. On purpose. He liked talking to me. He knows lots of the most splendid people. Fashionable women who are all in love with him. But he ran away from them to see me at the National Gallery and persuade me to come with him for a drive round Richmond Park in a taxi.

MRS HUSHABYE. My pettikins, you have been going it. It's wonderful what you good girls can do without anyone saying a word.

ELLIE. I am not in society, Hesione. If I didn't make acquaintances in that way I shouldn't have any at all.

MRS HUSHABYE. Well, no harm if you know how to take care of yourself. May I ask his name?

ELLIE [*slowly and musically*]. Marcus Darnley.

MRS HUSHABYE [*echoing the music*]. Marcus Darnley! What a splendid name!

ELLIE. Oh, I'm so glad you think so. I think so too; but I was afraid it was only a silly fancy of my own.

MRS HUSHABYE. Hm! Is he one of the Aberdeen Darnleys?

ELLIE. Nobody knows. Just fancy! He was found in an antique chest—

MRS HUSHABYE. A what?

ELLIE. An antique chest, one summer morning in a rose garden, after a night of the most terrible thunderstorm.

MRS HUSHABYE. What on earth was he doing in the chest? Did he get into it because he was afraid of the lightning?

ELLIE. Oh, no, no: he was a baby. The name Marcus Darnley was embroidered on his baby clothes. And five hundred pounds in gold.

MRS HUSHABYE [*Looking hard at her*]. Ellie!

ELLIE. The garden of the Viscount—

MRS HUSHABYE. —de Rougemont?

ELLIE [*innocently*]. No: de Larochejaquelin. A French family. A vicomte. His life has been one long romance. A tiger—

MRS HUSHABYE. Slain by his own hand?

ELLIE. Oh, no: nothing vulgar like that. He saved the life of the tiger from a hunting party: one of King Edward's hunting parties in India. The King was furious: that was why he never had his military services properly recognized. But he doesn't care. He is a Socialist and despises rank, and has been in three revolutions fighting on the barricades.

MRS HUSHABYE. How can you sit there telling me such lies? You, Ellie, of all people! And I thought you were a per-

fectly simple, straightforward, good girl.

ELLIE [*rising, dignified but very angry*]. Do you mean you don't believe me?

MRS HUSHABYE. Of course I don't believe you. You're inventing every word of it. Do you take me for a fool?

*Ellie stares at her. Her candor is so obvious that Mrs Hushabye is puzzled.*

ELLIE. Goodbye, Hesione. I'm very sorry. I see now that it sounds very improbable as I tell it. But I can't stay if you think that way about me.

MRS HUSHABYE [*catching her dress*]. You shan't go. I couldn't be so mistaken: I know too well what liars are like. Somebody has really told you all this.

ELLIE [*flushing*]. Hesione, don't say that you don't believe him. I couldn't bear that.

MRS HUSHABYE [*soothing her*]. Of course I believe him, dearest. But you should have broken it to me by degrees. [*Drawing her back to her seat*]. Now tell me all about him. Are you in love with him?



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ELLIE. Oh, no. I'm not so foolish. I don't fall in love with people. I'm not so silly as you think.

MRS HUSHABYE. I see. Only something to think about—to give some interest and pleasure to life.

ELLIE. Just so. That's all, really.

MRS HUSHABYE. It makes the hours go fast, doesn't it? No tedious waiting to go to sleep at nights and wondering whether you will have a bad night. How delightful it makes waking up in the morning! How much better than the happiest dream! All life transfigured! No more wishing one had an interesting book to read, because life is so much happier than any book! No desire but to be alone and not to have to talk to anyone: to be alone and just think about it.

ELLIE [*embracing her*]. Hesione, you are a witch. How do you know? Oh, you are the most sympathetic woman in the world!

MRS HUSHABYE [*caressing her*]. Pettikins, my pettikins, how I envy you! and how I pity you!

ELLIE. Pity me! Oh, why?

*A very handsome man of fifty, with mousquetaire moustaches,*

*wearing a rather dandified curly brimmed hat, and carrying an elaborate walking-stick, comes into the room from the hall, and stops short at sight of the women on the sofa.*

ELLIE [*seeing him and rising in glad surprise*]. Oh! Hesione: this is Mr Marcus Darnley.

MRS HUSHABYE [*rising*]. What a lark! He is my husband.

ELLIE. But now—[*she stops suddenly: then turns pale and sways*].

MRS HUSHABYE [*catching her and sitting down with her on the sofa*]. Steady, my pettikins.

THE MAN [*with a mixture of confusion and effrontery, depositing his hat and stick on the teak table*]. My real name, Miss Dunn, is Hector Hushabye. I leave you to judge whether that is a name any sensitive man would care to confess to. I never use it when I can possibly help it. I have been away for nearly a month; and I had no idea you knew my wife, or that you were coming here. I am none the less delighted to find you in our little house.

ELLIE [*in great distress*]. I don't know what to do. Please, may I speak to papa? Do leave me. I can't bear it.

MRS HUSHABYE. Be off, Hector.

HECTOR. I—

MRS HUSHABYE. Quick, quick. Get out.

HECTOR. If you think it better—[*he goes out, taking his hat with him but leaving the stick on the table*].

MRS HUSHABYE [*laying Ellie down at the end of the sofa*]. Now, pettikins, he is gone. There's nobody but me. You can let yourself go. Don't try to control yourself. Have a good cry.

ELLIE [*raising her head*]. Damn!

MRS HUSHABYE. Splendid! Oh, what a relief! I thought you were going to be broken-hearted. Never mind me. Damn him again.

ELLIE. I am not damning him. I am damning myself for being such a fool. [*Rising*]. How could I let myself be taken in so? [*She begins prowling to and fro, her bloom gone, looking curiously older and harder*].

MRS HUSHABYE [*cheerfully*]. Why not, pettikins? Very few young women can resist Hector. I couldn't when I was your age. He is really rather splendid, you know.

ELLIE [*turning on her*]. Splendid! Yes, splendid looking, of course. But how can you love a liar?

MRS HUSHABYE. I don't know. But you can, fortunately. Otherwise there wouldn't be much love in the world.

ELLIE. But to lie like that! To be a boaster! a coward!

MRS HUSHABYE [*rising in alarm*]. Pettikins, none of that, if you please. If you hint the slightest doubt of Hector's courage, he will go straight off and do the most horribly dangerous things to convince himself that he isn't a coward. He has a dreadful trick of getting out of one third-floor window and coming in at another, just to test his nerve. He has a whole drawerful of Albert Medals for saving people's lives.

ELLIE. He never told me that.

MRS HUSHABYE. He never boasts of anything he really did: he can't bear it; and it makes him shy if anyone else does. All his stories are made-up stories.

ELLIE [*coming to her*]. Do you mean that he is really brave, and really has adventures, and yet tells lies about things that he never did and that never happened?

MRS HUSHABYE. Yes, pettikins, I do. People don't have

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their virtues and vices in sets: they have them anyhow: all mixed.

**ELLIE** [*staring at her thoughtfully*]. There's something odd about this house, Hesione, and even about you. I don't know why I'm talking to you so calmly. I have a horrible fear that my heart is broken, but that heartbreak is not like what I thought it must be.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*fondling her*]. It's only life educating you, pettikins. How do you feel about Boss Mangan now?

**ELLIE** [*disengaging herself with an expression of distaste*]. Oh, how can you remind me of him, Hesione?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Sorry, dear. I think I hear Hector coming back. You don't mind now, do you, dear?

**ELLIE**. Not in the least. I am quite cured.

*Mazzini Dunn and Hector come in from the hall.*

**HECTOR** [*as he opens the door and allows Mazzini to pass in*]. One second more, and she would have been a dead woman!

**MAZZINI**. Dear! dear! what an escape! Ellie, my love, Mr

Hushabye has just been telling me the most extraordinary—

**ELLIE**. Yes, I've heard it [*she crosses to the other side of the room*].

**HECTOR** [*following her*]. Not this one: I'll tell it to you after dinner. I think you'll like it. The truth is I made it up for you, and was looking forward to the pleasure of telling it to you. But in a moment of impatience at being turned out of the room, I threw it away on your father.

**ELLIE** [*turning at bay with her back to the carpenter's bench, scornfully self-possessed*]. It was not thrown away. He believes it. I should not have believed it.

**MAZZINI** [*benevolently*]. Ellie is very naughty, Mr Hushabye. Of course she does not really think that. [He goes to the bookshelves, and inspects the titles of the volumes].

*Boss Mangan comes in from the hall, followed by the captain. Mangan, carefully frock-coated as for church or for a directors' meeting, is about fifty-five, with a careworn, mistrustful expression, standing a little on an entirely imaginary dignity, with a dull complexion, straight, lustreless hair, and features so entirely commonplace that it is impossible to describe them.*

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*to Mrs Hushabye, introducing the*

*newcomer*]. Says his name is Mangan. Not able-bodied.

MRS HUSHABYE [*graciously*]. How do you do, Mr Mangan?

MANGAN [*shaking hands*]. Very pleased.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Dunn's lost his muscle, but recovered his nerve. Men seldom do after three attacks of delirium tremens [*he goes into the pantry*].

MRS HUSHABYE. I congratulate you, Mr Dunn.

MAZZINI [*dazed*]. I am a lifelong teetotaler.

MRS HUSHABYE. You will find it far less trouble to let papa have his own way than try to explain.

MAZZINI. But three attacks of delirium tremens, really!

MRS HUSHABYE [*to Mangan*]. Do you know my husband, Mr Mangan [*she indicates Hector*].

MANGAN [*going to Hector, who meets him with outstretched hand*]. Very pleased. [*Turning to Ellie*]. I hope, Miss Ellie, you have not found the journey down too fatiguing. [*They shake hands*].

MRS HUSHABYE. Hector, show Mr Dunn his room.

HECTOR. Certainly. Come along, Mr Dunn. [*He takes Mazzini out*].

ELLIE. You haven't shown me my room yet, Hesione.

MRS HUSHABYE. How stupid of me! Come along. Make yourself quite at home, Mr Mangan. Papa will entertain you. [*She calls to the captain in the pantry*]. Papa, come and explain the house to Mr Mangan.

*She goes out with Ellie. The captain comes from the pantry.*

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. You're going to marry Dunn's daughter. Don't. You're too old.

MANGAN [*staggered*]. Well! That's fairly blunt, Captain.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. It's true.

MANGAN. She doesn't think so.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. She does.

MANGAN. Older men than I have—

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**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*finishing the sentence for him*].— made fools of themselves. That, also, is true.

**MANGAN** [*asserting himself*]. I don't see that this is any business of yours.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. It is everybody's business. The stars in their courses are shaken when such things happen.

**MANGAN**. I'm going to marry her all the same.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. How do you know?

**MANGAN** [*playing the strong man*]. I intend to. I mean to. See? I never made up my mind to do a thing yet that I didn't bring it off. That's the sort of man I am; and there will be a better understanding between us when you make up your mind to that, Captain.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. You frequent picture palaces.

**MANGAN**. Perhaps I do. Who told you?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. Talk like a man, not like a movie. You mean that you make a hundred thousand a year.

**MANGAN**. I don't boast. But when I meet a man that makes

a hundred thousand a year, I take off my hat to that man, and stretch out my hand to him and call him brother.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. Then you also make a hundred thousand a year, hey?

**MANGAN**. No. I can't say that. Fifty thousand, perhaps.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. His half brother only [*he turns away from Mangan with his usual abruptness, and collects the empty tea-cups on the Chinese tray*].

**MANGAN** [*irritated*]. See here, Captain Shotover. I don't quite understand my position here. I came here on your daughter's invitation. Am I in her house or in yours?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. You are beneath the dome of heaven, in the house of God. What is true within these walls is true outside them. Go out on the seas; climb the mountains; wander through the valleys. She is still too young.

**MANGAN** [*weakening*]. But I'm very little over fifty.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. You are still less under sixty. Boss Mangan, you will not marry the pirate's child [*he carries the tray away into the pantry*].

MANGAN [*following him to the half door*]. What pirate's child? What are you talking about?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*in the pantry*]. Ellie Dunn. You will not marry her.

MANGAN. Who will stop me?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*emerging*]. My daughter [he makes for the door leading to the hall].

MANGAN [*following him*]. Mrs Hushabye! Do you mean to say she brought me down here to break it off?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*stopping and turning on him*]. I know nothing more than I have seen in her eye. She will break it off. Take my advice: marry a West Indian negress: they make excellent wives. I was married to one myself for two years.

MANGAN. Well, I am damned!

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. I thought so. I was, too, for many years. The negress redeemed me.

MANGAN [*feebly*]. This is queer. I ought to walk out of this house.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Why?

MANGAN. Well, many men would be offended by your style of talking.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Nonsense! It's the other sort of talking that makes quarrels. Nobody ever quarrels with me.

*A gentleman, whose first-rate tailoring and frictionless manners proclaim the wellbred West Ender, comes in from the hall. He has an engaging air of being young and unmarried, but on close inspection is found to be at least over forty.*

THE GENTLEMAN. Excuse my intruding in this fashion, but there is no knocker on the door and the bell does not seem to ring.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Why should there be a knocker? Why should the bell ring? The door is open.

THE GENTLEMAN. Precisely. So I ventured to come in.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Quite right. I will see about a room for you [*he makes for the door*].

THE GENTLEMAN [*stopping him*]. But I'm afraid you don't know who I am.

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**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** *Do you suppose that at my age I make distinctions between one fellow creature and another? [He goes out. Mangan and the newcomer stare at one another].*

**MANGAN.** Strange character, Captain Shotover, sir.

**THE GENTLEMAN.** Very.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*shouting outside*]. Hesione, another person has arrived and wants a room. Man about town, well dressed, fifty.

**THE GENTLEMAN.** Fancy Hesione's feelings! May I ask are you a member of the family?

**MANGAN.** No.

**THE GENTLEMAN.** I am. At least a connection.

*Mrs Hushabye comes back.*

**MRS HUSHABYE.** How do you do? How good of you to come!

**THE GENTLEMAN.** I am very glad indeed to make your acquaintance, Hesione. [*Instead of taking her hand he kisses her. At the same moment the captain appears in the doorway*].

You will excuse my kissing your daughter, Captain, when I tell you that—

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Stuff! Everyone kisses my daughter. Kiss her as much as you like [*he makes for the pantry*].

**THE GENTLEMAN.** Thank you. One moment, Captain. [*The captain halts and turns. The gentleman goes to him affably*]. Do you happen to remember but probably you don't, as it occurred many years ago—that your younger daughter married a numskull?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Yes. She said she'd marry anybody to get away from this house. I should not have recognized you: your head is no longer like a walnut. Your aspect is softened. You have been boiled in bread and milk for years and years, like other married men. Poor devil! [*He disappears into the pantry*].

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*going past Mangan to the gentleman and scrutinizing him*]. I don't believe you are Hastings Utterword.

**THE GENTLEMAN.** I am not.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Then what business had you to kiss me?

**THE GENTLEMAN.** I thought I would like to. The fact is,

I am Randall Utterword, the unworthy younger brother of Hastings. I was abroad diplomatizing when he was married.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*dashing in*]. Hesione, where is the key of the wardrobe in my room? My diamonds are in my dressing-bag; I must lock it up—[*recognizing the stranger with a shock*] Randall, how dare you? [*She marches at him past Mrs Hushabye, who retreats and joins Mangan near the sofa*].

**RANDALL**. How dare I what? I am not doing anything.

**LADY UTTERWORD**. Who told you I was here?

**RANDALL**. Hastings. You had just left when I called on you at Claridge's; so I followed you down here. You are looking extremely well.

**LADY UTTERWORD**. Don't presume to tell me so.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. What is wrong with Mr Randall, Addy?

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*recollecting herself*]. Oh, nothing. But he has no right to come bothering you and papa without being invited [*she goes to the window-seat and sits down, turning away from them ill-humoredly and looking into the garden, where Hector and Ellie are now seen strolling together*].

**MRS HUSHABYE**. I think you have not met Mr Mangan, Addy.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*turning her head and nodding coldly to Mangan*]. I beg your pardon. Randall, you have flustered me so: I make a perfect fool of myself.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Lady Utterword. My sister. My younger sister.

**MANGAN** [*bowing*]. Pleased to meet you, Lady Utterword.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*with marked interest*]. Who is that gentleman walking in the garden with Miss Dunn?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. I don't know. She quarrelled mortally with my husband only ten minutes ago; and I didn't know anyone else had come. It must be a visitor. [*She goes to the window to look*]. Oh, it is Hector. They've made it up.

**LADY UTTERWORD**. Your husband! That handsome man?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Well, why shouldn't my husband be a handsome man?

**RANDALL** [*joining them at the window*]. One's husband



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never is, Ariadne [*he sits by Lady Utterword, on her right*].

**MRS HUSHABYE.** One's sister's husband always is, Mr Randall.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Don't be vulgar, Randall. And you, Hesione, are just as bad.

*Ellie and Hector come in from the garden by the starboard door. Randall rises. Ellie retires into the corner near the pantry. Hector comes forward; and Lady Utterword rises looking her very best.*

**MRS. HUSHABYE.** Hector, this is Addy.

**HECTOR** [*apparently surprised*]. Not this lady.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*smiling*]. Why not?

**HECTOR** [*looking at her with a piercing glance of deep but respectful admiration, his moustache bristling*]. I thought— [*pulling himself together*]. I beg your pardon, Lady Utterword. I am extremely glad to welcome you at last under our roof [*he offers his hand with grave courtesies*].

**MRS HUSHABYE.** She wants to be kissed, Hector.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Hesione! [*But she still smiles*].

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Call her Addy; and kiss her like a good brother-in-law; and have done with it. [*She leaves them to themselves*].

**HECTOR.** Behave yourself, Hesione. Lady Utterword is entitled not only to hospitality but to civilization.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*gratefully*]. Thank you, Hector. [*They shake hands cordially*].

*Mazzini Dunn is seen crossing the garden from starboard to port.*

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*coming from the pantry and addressing Ellie*]. Your father has washed himself.

**ELLIE** [*quite self-possessed*]. He often does, Captain Shotover.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** A strange conversion! I saw him through the pantry window.

*Mazzini Dunn enters through the port window door, newly washed and brushed, and stops, smiling benevolently, between Mangan and Mrs Hushabye.*

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*introducing*]. Mr Mazzini Dunn, Lady Ut—oh, I forgot: you’ve met. [*Indicating Ellie*] Miss Dunn.

**MAZZINI** [*walking across the room to take Ellie’s hand, and beaming at his own naughty irony*]. I have met Miss Dunn also. She is my daughter. [*He draws her arm through his caressingly*].

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Of course: how stupid! Mr Utterword, my sister’s—er—

**RANDALL** [*shaking hands agreeably*]. Her brother-in-law, Mr Dunn. How do you do?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. This is my husband.

**HECTOR**. We have met, dear. Don’t introduce us any more. [*He moves away to the big chair, and adds*] Won’t you sit down, Lady Utterword? [*She does so very graciously*].

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Sorry. I hate it: it’s like making people show their tickets.

**MAZZINI** [*sententiously*]. How little it tells us, after all! The great question is, not who we are, but what we are.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. Ha! What are you?

**MAZZINI** [*taken aback*]. What am I?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. A thief, a pirate, and a murderer.

**MAZZINI**. I assure you you are mistaken.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. An adventurous life; but what does it end in? Respectability. A ladylike daughter. The language and appearance of a city missionary. Let it be a warning to all of you [*he goes out through the garden*].

**DUNN**. I hope nobody here believes that I am a thief, a pirate, or a murderer. Mrs Hushabye, will you excuse me a moment? I must really go and explain. [*He follows the captain*].

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*as he goes*]. It’s no use. You’d really better—[*but Dunn has vanished*]. We had better all go out and look for some tea. We never have regular tea; but you can always get some when you want: the servants keep it stewing all day. The kitchen veranda is the best place to ask. May I show you? [*She goes to the starboard door*].

**RANDALL** [*going with her*]. Thank you, I don’t think I’ll take any tea this afternoon. But if you will show me the garden—

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MRS HUSHABYE. There's nothing to see in the garden except papa's observatory, and a gravel pit with a cave where he keeps dynamite and things of that sort. However, it's pleasanter out of doors; so come along.

RANDALL. Dynamite! Isn't that rather risky?

MRS HUSHABYE. Well, we don't sit in the gravel pit when there's a thunderstorm.

LADY UTTERORRD. That's something new. What is the dynamite for?

HECTOR. To blow up the human race if it goes too far. He is trying to discover a psychic ray that will explode all the explosive at the well of a Mahatma.

ELLIE. The captain's tea is delicious, Mr Utterword.

MRS HUSHABYE [*stopping in the doorway*]. Do you mean to say that you've had some of my father's tea? that you got round him before you were ten minutes in the house?

ELLIE. I did.

MRS HUSHABYE. You little devil! [*She goes out with Randall*].

MANGAN. Won't you come, Miss Ellie?

ELLIE. I'm too tired. I'll take a book up to my room and rest a little. [*She goes to the bookshelf*].

MANGAN. Right. You can't do better. But I'm disappointed. [*He follows Randall and Mrs Hushabye*].

*Ellie, Hector, and Lady Utterword are left. Hector is close to Lady Utterword. They look at Ellie, waiting for her to go.*

ELLIE [*looking at the title of a book*]. Do you like stories of adventure, Lady Utterword?

LADY UTTERWORD [*patronizingly*]. Of course, dear.

ELLIE. Then I'll leave you to Mr Hushabye. [*She goes out through the hall*].

HECTOR. That girl is mad about tales of adventure. The lies I have to tell her!

LADY UTTERWORD [*not interested in Ellie*]. When you saw me what did you mean by saying that you thought, and then stopping short? What did you think?

HECTOR [*folding his arms and looking down at her mag-*

*netically*]. May I tell you?

LADY UTTERWORD. Of course.

HECTOR. It will not sound very civil. I was on the point of saying, "I thought you were a plain woman."

LADY UTTERWORD. Oh, for shame, Hector! What right had you to notice whether I am plain or not?

HECTOR. Listen to me, Ariadne. Until today I have seen only photographs of you; and no photograph can give the strange fascination of the daughters of that supernatural old man. There is some damnable quality in them that destroys men's moral sense, and carries them beyond honor and dishonor. You know that, don't you?

LADY UTTERWORD. Perhaps I do, Hector. But let me warn you once for all that I am a rigidly conventional woman. You may think because I'm a Shotover that I'm a Bohemian, because we are all so horribly Bohemian. But I'm not. I hate and loathe Bohemianism. No child brought up in a strict Puritan household ever suffered from Puritanism as I suffered from our Bohemianism.

HECTOR. Our children are like that. They spend their holidays in the houses of their respectable schoolfellows.

LADY UTTERWORD. I shall invite them for Christmas.

HECTOR. Their absence leaves us both without our natural chaperones.

LADY UTTERWORD. Children are certainly very inconvenient sometimes. But intelligent people can always manage, unless they are Bohemians.

HECTOR. You are no Bohemian; but you are no Puritan either: your attraction is alive and powerful. What sort of woman do you count yourself?

LADY UTTERWORD. I am a woman of the world, Hector; and I can assure you that if you will only take the trouble always to do the perfectly correct thing, and to say the perfectly correct thing, you can do just what you like. An ill-conducted, careless woman gets simply no chance. An ill-conducted, careless man is never allowed within arm's length of any woman worth knowing.

HECTOR. I see. You are neither a Bohemian woman nor a Puritan woman. You are a dangerous woman.

LADY UTTERWORD. On the contrary, I am a safe woman.

HECTOR. You are a most accursedly attractive woman.

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Mind, I am not making love to you. I do not like being attracted. But you had better know how I feel if you are going to stay here.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** You are an exceedingly clever lady-killer, Hector. And terribly handsome. I am quite a good player, myself, at that game. Is it quite understood that we are only playing?

**HECTOR.** Quite. I am deliberately playing the fool, out of sheer worthlessness.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*rising brightly*]. Well, you are my brother-in-law, Hesione asked you to kiss me. [*He seizes her in his arms and kisses her strenuously*]. Oh! that was a little more than play, brother-in-law. [*She pushes him suddenly away*]. You shall not do that again.

**HECTOR.** In effect, you got your claws deeper into me than I intended.

**MRS HUBHABYE** [*coming in from the garden*]. Don't let me disturb you; I only want a cap to put on daddiest. The sun is setting; and he'll catch cold [*she makes for the door leading to the hall*].

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Your husband is quite charming,

darling. He has actually condescended to kiss me at last. I shall go into the garden: it's cooler now [*she goes out by the port door*].

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Take care, dear child. I don't believe any man can kiss Addy without falling in love with her. [*She goes into the hall*].

**HECTOR** [*striking himself on the chest*]. Fool! Goat!

*Mrs Hushabye comes back with the captain's cap.*

**HECTOR.** Your sister is an extremely enterprising old girl. Where's Miss Dunn!

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Mangan says she has gone up to her room for a nap. Addy won't let you talk to Ellie: she has marked you for her own.

**HECTOR.** She has the diabolical family fascination. I began making love to her automatically. What am I to do? I can't fall in love; and I can't hurt a woman's feelings by telling her so when she falls in love with me. And as women are always falling in love with my moustache I get landed in all sorts of tedious and terrifying flirtations in which I'm not a bit in earnest.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Oh, neither is Addy. She has never been in love in her life, though she has always been trying to fall in head over ears. She is worse than you, because you had one real go at least, with me.

**HECTOR.** That was a confounded madness. I can't believe that such an amazing experience is common. It has left its mark on me. I believe that is why I have never been able to repeat it.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*laughing and caressing his arm*]. We were frightfully in love with one another, Hector. It was such an enchanting dream that I have never been able to grudge it to you or anyone else since. I have invited all sorts of pretty women to the house on the chance of giving you another turn. But it has never come off.

**HECTOR.** I don't know that I want it to come off. It was damned dangerous. You fascinated me; but I loved you; so it was heaven. This sister of yours fascinates me; but I hate her; so it is hell. I shall kill her if she persists.

**MRS. HUSHABYE.** Nothing will kill Addy; she is as strong as a horse. [*Releasing him*]. Now I am going off to fascinate somebody.

**HECTOR.** The Foreign Office toff? Randall?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Goodness gracious, no! Why should I fascinate him?

**HECTOR.** I presume you don't mean the bloated capitalist, Mangan?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Hm! I think he had better be fascinated by me than by Ellie. [*She is going into the garden when the captain comes in from it with some sticks in his hand*]. What have you got there, daddiest?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Dynamite.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** You've been to the gravel pit. Don't drop it about the house, there's a dear. [*She goes into the garden, where the evening light is now very red*].

**HECTOR.** Listen, O sage. How long dare you concentrate on a feeling without risking having it fixed in your consciousness all the rest of your life?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Ninety minutes. An hour and a half. [*He goes into the pantry*].

*Hector, left alone, contracts his brows, and falls into a day-dream. He does not move for some time. Then he folds his arms. Then, throwing his hands behind him, and gripping one with the other,*

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*he strides tragically once to and fro. Suddenly he snatches his walking stick from the teak table, and draws it; for it is a swordstick. He fights a desperate duel with an imaginary antagonist, and after many vicissitudes runs him through the body up to the hilt. He sheathes his sword and throws it on the sofa, falling into another reverie as he does so. He looks straight into the eyes of an imaginary woman; seizes her by the arms; and says in a deep and thrilling tone, "Do you love me!" The captain comes out of the pantry at this moment; and Hector, caught with his arms stretched out and his fists clenched, has to account for his attitude by going through a series of gymnastic exercises.*

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** That sort of strength is no good. You will never be as strong as a gorilla.

**HECTOR.** What is the dynamite for?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** To kill fellows like Mangan.

**HECTOR.** No use. They will always be able to buy more dynamite than you.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** I will make a dynamite that he cannot explode.

**HECTOR.** And that you can, eh?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Yes: when I have attained the seventh degree of concentration.

**HECTOR.** What's the use of that? You never do attain it.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** What then is to be done? Are we to be kept forever in the mud by these hogs to whom the universe is nothing but a machine for greasing their bristles and filling their snouts?

**HECTOR.** Are Mangan's bristles worse than Randall's lovelocks?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** We must win powers of life and death over them both. I refuse to die until I have invented the means.

**HECTOR.** Who are we that we should judge them?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** What are they that they should judge us? Yet they do, unhesitatingly. There is enmity between our seed and their seed. They know it and act on it, strangling our souls. They believe in themselves. When we believe in ourselves, we shall kill them.

**HECTOR.** It is the same seed. You forget that your pirate has a very nice daughter. Mangan's son may be a Plato:

Randall's a Shelley. What was my father?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** The damnedst scoundrel I ever met. [*He replaces the drawing-board; sits down at the table; and begins to mix a wash of color*].

**HECTOR.** Precisely. Well, dare you kill his innocent grandchildren?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** They are mine also.

**HECTOR.** Just so—we are members one of another. [*He throws himself carelessly on the sofa*]. I tell you I have often thought of this killing of human vermin. Many men have thought of it. Decent men are like Daniel in the lion's den: their survival is a miracle; and they do not always survive. We live among the Mangans and Randalls and Billie Dunns as they, poor devils, live among the disease germs and the doctors and the lawyers and the parsons and the restaurant chefs and the tradesmen and the servants and all the rest of the parasites and blackmailers. What are our terrors to theirs? Give me the power to kill them; and I'll spare them in sheer—

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*cutting in sharply*]. Fellow feeling?

**HECTOR.** No. I should kill myself if I believed that. I must believe that my spark, small as it is, is divine, and that the

red light over their door is hell fire. I should spare them in simple magnanimous pity.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** You can't spare them until you have the power to kill them. At present they have the power to kill you. There are millions of blacks over the water for them to train and let loose on us. They're going to do it. They're doing it already.

**HECTOR.** They are too stupid to use their power.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*throwing down his brush and coming to the end of the sofa*]. Do not deceive yourself: they do use it. We kill the better half of ourselves every day to propitiate them. The knowledge that these people are there to render all our aspirations barren prevents us having the aspirations. And when we are tempted to seek their destruction they bring forth demons to delude us, disguised as pretty daughters, and singers and poets and the like, for whose sake we spare them.

**HECTOR** [*sitting up and leaning towards him*]. May not Hesione be such a demon, brought forth by you lest I should slay you?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** That is possible. She has used you up, and left you nothing but dreams, as some women do.



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HECTOR. Vampire women, demon women.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Men think the world well lost for them, and lose it accordingly. Who are the men that do things? The husbands of the shrew and of the drunkard, the men with the thorn in the flesh. [*Walking distractedly away towards the pantry*]. I must think these things out. [*Turning suddenly*]. But I go on with the dynamite none the less. I will discover a ray mightier than any X-ray: a mind ray that will explode the ammunition in the belt of my adversary before he can point his gun at me. And I must hurry. I am old: I have no time to waste in talk [*he is about to go into the pantry, and Hector is making for the hall, when Hesione comes back*].

MRS HUSHABYE. Daddiest, you and Hector must come and help me to entertain all these people. What on earth were you shouting about?

HECTOR [*stopping in the act of turning the door handle*]. He is madder than usual.

MRS HUSHABYE. We all are.

HECTOR. I must change [*he resumes his door opening*].

MRS HUSHABYE. Stop, stop. Come back, both of you. Come back. [*They return, reluctantly*]. Money is running short.

HECTOR. Money! Where are my April dividends?

MRS HUSHABYE. Where is the snow that fell last year?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Where is all the money you had for that patent lifeboat I invented?

MRS HUSHABYE. Five hundred pounds; and I have made it last since Easter!

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Since Easter! Barely four months! Monstrous extravagance! I could live for seven years on 500 pounds.

MRS HUSHABYE. Not keeping open house as we do here, daddiest.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Only 500 pounds for that lifeboat! I got twelve thousand for the invention before that.

MRS HUSHABYE. Yes, dear; but that was for the ship with the magnetic keel that sucked up submarines. Living at the rate we do, you cannot afford life-saving inventions. Can't you think of something that will murder half Europe at one bang?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. No. I am ageing fast. My mind does not dwell on slaughter as it did when I was a boy. Why

doesn't your husband invent something? He does nothing but tell lies to women.

**HECTOR.** Well, that is a form of invention, is it not? However, you are right: I ought to support my wife.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Indeed you shall do nothing of the sort: I should never see you from breakfast to dinner. I want my husband.

**HECTOR** [*bitterly*]. I might as well be your lapdog.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Do you want to be my breadwinner, like the other poor husbands?

**HECTOR.** No, by thunder! What a damned creature a husband is anyhow!

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*to the captain*]. What about that harpoon cannon?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** No use. It kills whales, not men.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Why not? You fire the harpoon out of a cannon. It sticks in the enemy's general; you wind him in; and there you are.

**HECTOR.** You are your father's daughter, Hesione.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** There is something in it. Not to wind in generals: they are not dangerous. But one could fire a grapnel and wind in a machine gun or even a tank. I will think it out.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*squeezing the captain's arm affectionately*]. Saved! You are a darling, daddiest. Now we must go back to these dreadful people and entertain them.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** They have had no dinner. Don't forget that.

**HECTOR.** Neither have I. And it is dark: it must be all hours.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Oh, Guinness will produce some sort of dinner for them. The servants always take jolly good care that there is food in the house.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*raising a strange wail in the darkness*]. What a house! What a daughter!

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*raving*]. What a father!

**HECTOR** [*following suit*]. What a husband!

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CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Is there no thunder in heaven?

HECTOR. Is there no beauty, no bravery, on earth?

MRS HUSHABYE. What do men want? They have their food, their firesides, their clothes mended, and our love at the end of the day. Why are they not satisfied? Why do they envy us the pain with which we bring them into the world, and make strange dangers and torments for themselves to be even with us?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*weirdly chanting*].

I builded a house for my daughters, and opened the doors  
thereof,  
That men might come for their choosing, and their betters  
spring from their love;  
But one of them married a numskull;

HECTOR [*taking up the rhythm*].

The other a liar wed;

MRS HUSHABYE [*completing the stanza*].

And now must she lie beside him, even as she made her bed.

LADY UTTERWORD [*calling from the garden*]. Hesione!  
Hesione! Where are you?

HECTOR. The cat is on the tiles.

MRS HUSHABYE. Coming, darling, coming [*she goes quickly into the garden*].

*The captain goes back to his place at the table.*

HECTOR [*going out into the hall*]. Shall I turn up the lights for you?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. No. Give me deeper darkness. Money is not made in the light.

## ACT II

The same room, with the lights turned up and the curtains drawn. Ellie comes in, followed by Mangan. Both are dressed for dinner. She strolls to the drawing-table. He comes between the table and the wicker chair.

**MANGAN.** What a dinner! I don't call it a dinner: I call it a meal.

**ELLIE.** I am accustomed to meals, Mr Mangan, and very lucky to get them. Besides, the captain cooked some macaroni for me.

**MANGAN** [*shuddering liverishly*]. Too rich: I can't eat such things. I suppose it's because I have to work so much with my brain. That's the worst of being a man of business: you are always thinking, thinking, thinking. By the way, now that we are alone, may I take the opportunity to come to a little understanding with you?

**ELLIE** [*settling into the draughtsman's seat*]. Certainly. I should like to.

**MANGAN** [*taken aback*]. Should you? That surprises me;

for I thought I noticed this afternoon that you avoided me all you could. Not for the first time either.

**ELLIE.** I was very tired and upset. I wasn't used to the ways of this extraordinary house. Please forgive me.

**MANGAN.** Oh, that's all right: I don't mind. But Captain Shotover has been talking to me about you. You and me, you know.

**ELLIE** [*interested*]. The captain! What did he say?

**MANGAN.** Well, he noticed the difference between our ages.

**ELLIE.** He notices everything.

**MANGAN.** You don't mind, then?

**ELLIE.** Of course I know quite well that our engagement—

**MANGAN.** Oh! you call it an engagement.

**ELLIE.** Well, isn't it?

**MANGAN.** Oh, yes, yes: no doubt it is if you hold to it. This is the first time you've used the word; and I didn't quite know where we stood: that's all. [*He sits down in the wicker*

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*chair; and resigns himself to allow her to lead the conversation*].  
You were saying—?

ELLIE. Was I? I forget. Tell me. Do you like this part of the country? I heard you ask Mr Hushabye at dinner whether there are any nice houses to let down here.

MANGAN. I like the place. The air suits me. I shouldn't be surprised if I settled down here.

ELLIE. Nothing would please me better. The air suits me too. And I want to be near Hesione.

MANGAN [*with growing uneasiness*]. The air may suit us; but the question is, should we suit one another? Have you thought about that?

ELLIE. Mr Mangan, we must be sensible, mustn't we? It's no use pretending that we are Romeo and Juliet. But we can get on very well together if we choose to make the best of it. Your kindness of heart will make it easy for me.

MANGAN [*leaning forward, with the beginning of something like deliberate unpleasantness in his voice*]. Kindness of heart, eh? I ruined your father, didn't I?

ELLIE. Oh, not intentionally.

MANGAN. Yes I did. Ruined him on purpose.

ELLIE. On purpose!

MANGAN. Not out of ill-nature, you know. And you'll admit that I kept a job for him when I had finished with him. But business is business; and I ruined him as a matter of business.

ELLIE. I don't understand how that can be. Are you trying to make me feel that I need not be grateful to you, so that I may choose freely?

MANGAN [*rising aggressively*]. No. I mean what I say.

ELLIE. But how could it possibly do you any good to ruin my father? The money he lost was yours.

MANGAN [*with a sour laugh*]. Was mine! It is mine, Miss Ellie, and all the money the other fellows lost too. [*He shoves his hands into his pockets and shows his teeth*]. I just smoked them out like a hive of bees. What do you say to that? A bit of shock, eh?

ELLIE. It would have been, this morning. Now! you can't think how little it matters. But it's quite interesting. Only, you must explain it to me. I don't understand it. [*Propping*

*her elbows on the drawingboard and her chin on her hands, she composes herself to listen with a combination of conscious curiosity with unconscious contempt which provokes him to more and more unpleasantness, and an attempt at patronage of her ignorance].*

**MANGAN.** Of course you don't understand: what do you know about business? You just listen and learn. Your father's business was a new business; and I don't start new businesses: I let other fellows start them. They put all their money and their friends' money into starting them. They wear out their souls and bodies trying to make a success of them. They're what you call enthusiasts. But the first dead lift of the thing is too much for them; and they haven't enough financial experience. In a year or so they have either to let the whole show go bust, or sell out to a new lot of fellows for a few deferred ordinary shares: that is, if they're lucky enough to get anything at all. As likely as not the very same thing happens to the new lot. They put in more money and a couple of years' more work; and then perhaps they have to sell out to a third lot. If it's really a big thing the third lot will have to sell out too, and leave their work and their money behind them. And that's where the real business man comes in: where I come in. But I'm cleverer than some: I don't mind dropping a little money to start the process. I took your father's measure. I saw that he had a sound idea, and that he would work himself silly for it if he got the chance. I saw that he

was a child in business, and was dead certain to outrun his expenses and be in too great a hurry to wait for his market. I knew that the surest way to ruin a man who doesn't know how to handle money is to give him some. I explained my idea to some friends in the city, and they found the money; for I take no risks in ideas, even when they're my own. Your father and the friends that ventured their money with him were no more to me than a heap of squeezed lemons. You've been wasting your gratitude: my kind heart is all rot. I'm sick of it. When I see your father beaming at me with his moist, grateful eyes, regularly wallowing in gratitude, I sometimes feel I must tell him the truth or burst. What stops me is that I know he wouldn't believe me. He'd think it was my modesty, as you did just now. He'd think anything rather than the truth, which is that he's a blamed fool, and I am a man that knows how to take care of himself. [*He throws himself back into the big chair with large self approval*]. Now what do you think of me, Miss Ellie?

**ELLIE** [*dropping her hands*]. How strange! that my mother, who knew nothing at all about business, should have been quite right about you! She always said not before papa, of course, but to us children—that you were just that sort of man.

**MANGAN** [*sitting up, much hurt*]. Oh! did she? And yet she'd have let you marry me.

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ELLIE. Well, you see, Mr Mangan, my mother married a very good man—for whatever you may think of my father as a man of business, he is the soul of goodness—and she is not at all keen on my doing the same.

MANGAN. Anyhow, you don't want to marry me now, do you?

ELLIE. [*very calmly*]. Oh, I think so. Why not?

MANGAN. [*rising aghast*]. Why not!

ELLIE. I don't see why we shouldn't get on very well together.

MANGAN. Well, but look here, you know—[*he stops, quite at a loss*].

ELLIE. [*patiently*]. Well?

MANGAN. Well, I thought you were rather particular about people's characters.

ELLIE. If we women were particular about men's characters, we should never get married at all, Mr Mangan.

MANGAN. A child like you talking of "we women"! What next! You're not in earnest?

ELLIE. Yes, I am. Aren't you?

MANGAN. You mean to hold me to it?

ELLIE. Do you wish to back out of it?

MANGAN. Oh, no. Not exactly back out of it.

ELLIE. Well?

*He has nothing to say. With a long whispered whistle, he drops into the wicker chair and stares before him like a beggared gambler. But a cunning look soon comes into his face. He leans over towards her on his right elbow, and speaks in a low steady voice.*

MANGAN. Suppose I told you I was in love with another woman!

ELLIE [*echoing him*]. Suppose I told you I was in love with another man!

MANGAN [*bouncing angrily out of his chair*]. I'm not joking.

ELLIE. Who told you I was?

MANGAN. I tell you I'm serious. You're too young to be serious; but you'll have to believe me. I want to be near your

friend Mrs Hushabye. I'm in love with her. Now the murder's out.

ELLIE. I want to be near your friend Mr Hushabye. I'm in love with him. [*She rises and adds with a frank air*] Now we are in one another's confidence, we shall be real friends. Thank you for telling me.

MANGAN [*almost beside himself*]. Do you think I'll be made a convenience of like this?

ELLIE. Come, Mr Mangan! you made a business convenience of my father. Well, a woman's business is marriage. Why shouldn't I make a domestic convenience of you?

MANGAN. Because I don't choose, see? Because I'm not a silly gull like your father. That's why.

ELLIE [*with serene contempt*]. You are not good enough to clean my father's boots, Mr Mangan; and I am paying you a great compliment in condescending to make a convenience of you, as you call it. Of course you are free to throw over our engagement if you like; but, if you do, you'll never enter Hesione's house again: I will take care of that.

MANGAN [*gasping*]. You little devil, you've done me. [*On the point of collapsing into the big chair again he recovers him-*

*self*]. Wait a bit, though: you're not so cute as you think. You can't beat Boss Mangan as easy as that. Suppose I go straight to Mrs Hushabye and tell her that you're in love with her husband.

ELLIE. She knows it.

MANGAN. You told her!!!

ELLIE. She told me.

MANGAN [*clutching at his bursting temples*]. Oh, this is a crazy house. Or else I'm going clean off my chump. Is she making a swop with you—she to have your husband and you to have hers?

ELLIE. Well, you don't want us both, do you?

MANGAN [*throwing himself into the chair distractedly*]. My brain won't stand it. My head's going to split. Help! Help me to hold it. Quick: hold it: squeeze it. Save me. [*Ellie comes behind his chair; clasps his head hard for a moment; then begins to draw her hands from his forehead back to his ears*]. Thank you. [*Drowsily*]. That's very refreshing. [*Waking a little*]. Don't you hypnotize me, though. I've seen men made fools of by hypnotism.



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**ELLIE** [*steadily*]. Be quiet. I've seen men made fools of without hypnotism.

**MANGAN** [*humbly*]. You don't dislike touching me, I hope. You never touched me before, I noticed.

**ELLIE**. Not since you fell in love naturally with a grown-up nice woman, who will never expect you to make love to her. And I will never expect him to make love to me.

**MANGAN**. He may, though.

**ELLIE** [*making her passes rhythmically*]. Hush. Go to sleep. Do you hear? You are to go to sleep, go to sleep, go to sleep; be quiet, deeply deeply quiet; sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep.

*He falls asleep. Ellie steals away; turns the light out; and goes into the garden.*

*Nurse Guinness opens the door and is seen in the light which comes in from the hall.*

**GUINNESS** [*speaking to someone outside*]. Mr Mangan's not here, duckie: there's no one here. It's all dark.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*without*]. Try the garden. Mr Dunn and I will be in my boudoir. Show him the way.

**GUINNESS**. Yes, ducky. [*She makes for the garden door in the dark; stumbles over the sleeping Mangan and screams*]. Ahoo! O Lord, Sir! I beg your pardon, I'm sure: I didn't see you in the dark. Who is it? [*She goes back to the door and turns on the light*]. Oh, Mr Mangan, sir, I hope I haven't hurt you plumping into your lap like that. [*Coming to him*]. I was looking for you, sir. Mrs Hushabye says will you please [*noticing that he remains quite insensible*]. Oh, my good Lord, I hope I haven't killed him. Sir! Mr Mangan! Sir! [*She shakes him; and he is rolling inertly off the chair on the floor when she holds him up and props him against the cushion*]. Miss Hussy! Miss Hussy! [quick, doty darling. Miss Hussy! [*Mrs Hushabye comes in from the hall, followed by Mazzini Dunn*]. Oh, Miss Hussy, I've been and killed him.

*Mazzini runs round the back of the chair to Mangan's right hand, and sees that the nurse's words are apparently only too true.*

**MAZZINI**. What tempted you to commit such a crime, woman?

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*trying not to laugh*]. Do you mean, you did it on purpose?

**GUINNESS**. Now is it likely I'd kill any man on purpose? I fell over him in the dark; and I'm a pretty tidy weight. He never spoke nor moved until I shook him; and then he would

have dropped dead on the floor. Isn't it tiresome?

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*going past the nurse to Mangan's side, and inspecting him less credulously than Mazzini*]. Nonsense! he is not dead: he is only asleep. I can see him breathing.

**GUINNESS**. But why won't he wake?

**MAZZINI** [*speaking very politely into Mangan's ear*]. Mangan! My dear Mangan! [*he blows into Mangan's ear*].

**MRS HUSHABYE**. That's no good [*she shakes him vigorously*]. Mr Mangan, wake up. Do you hear? [*He begins to roll over*]. Oh! Nurse, nurse: he's falling: help me.

*Nurse Guinness rushes to the rescue. With Mazzini's assistance, Mangan is propped safely up again.*

**GUINNESS** [*behind the chair; bending over to test the case with her nose*]. Would he be drunk, do you think, pet?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Had he any of papa's rum?

**MAZZINI**. It can't be that: he is most abstemious. I am afraid he drank too much formerly, and has to drink too little now. You know, Mrs Hushabye, I really think he has been hypnotized.

**GUINNESS**. Hip no what, sir?

**MAZZINI**. One evening at home, after we had seen a hypnotizing performance, the children began playing at it; and Ellie stroked my head. I assure you I went off dead asleep; and they had to send for a professional to wake me up after I had slept eighteen hours. They had to carry me upstairs; and as the poor children were not very strong, they let me slip; and I rolled right down the whole flight and never woke up. [*Mrs Hushabye splutters*]. Oh, you may laugh, Mrs Hushabye; but I might have been killed.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. I couldn't have helped laughing even if you had been, Mr Dunn. So Ellie has hypnotized him. What fun!

**MAZZINI**. Oh no, no, no. It was such a terrible lesson to her: nothing would induce her to try such a thing again.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Then who did it? I didn't.

**MAZZINI**. I thought perhaps the captain might have done it unintentionally. He is so fearfully magnetic: I feel vibrations whenever he comes close to me.

**GUINNESS**. The captain will get him out of it anyhow, sir: I'll back him for that. I'll go fetch him [*she makes for the pantry*].

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MRS HUSHABYE. Wait a bit. [*To Mazzini*]. You say he is all right for eighteen hours?

MAZZINI. Well, I was asleep for eighteen hours.

MRS HUSHABYE. Were you any the worse for it?

MAZZINI. I don't quite remember. They had poured brandy down my throat, you see; and—

MRS HUSHABYE. Quite. Anyhow, you survived. Nurse, darling: go and ask Miss Dunn to come to us here. Say I want to speak to her particularly. You will find her with Mr Hushabye probably.

GUINNESS. I think not, ducky: Miss Addy is with him. But I'll find her and send her to you. [*She goes out into the garden*].

MRS HUSHABYE [*calling Mazzini's attention to the figure on the chair*]. Now, Mr Dunn, look. Just look. Look hard. Do you still intend to sacrifice your daughter to that thing?

MAZZINI [*troubled*]. You have completely upset me, Mrs Hushabye, by all you have said to me. That anyone could imagine that I—I, a consecrated soldier of freedom, if I may say so—could sacrifice Ellie to anybody or anyone, or that I

should ever have dreamed of forcing her inclinations in any way, is a most painful blow to my—well, I suppose you would say to my good opinion of myself.

MRS HUSHABYE [*rather stolidly*]. Sorry.

MAZZINI [*looking forlornly at the body*]. What is your objection to poor Mangan, Mrs Hushabye? He looks all right to me. But then I am so accustomed to him.

MRS HUSHABYE. Have you no heart? Have you no sense? Look at the brute! Think of poor weak innocent Ellie in the clutches of this slavedriver, who spends his life making thousands of rough violent workmen bend to his will and sweat for him: a man accustomed to have great masses of iron beaten into shape for him by steam-hammers! to fight with women and girls over a halfpenny an hour ruthlessly! a captain of industry, I think you call him, don't you? Are you going to fling your delicate, sweet, helpless child into such a beast's claws just because he will keep her in an expensive house and make her wear diamonds to show how rich he is?

MAZZINI [*staring at her in wide-eyed amazement*]. Bless you, dear Mrs Hushabye, what romantic ideas of business you have! Poor dear Mangan isn't a bit like that.

MRS HUSHABYE [*scornfully*]. Poor dear Mangan indeed!

**MAZZINI.** But he doesn't know anything about machinery. He never goes near the men: he couldn't manage them: he is afraid of them. I never can get him to take the least interest in the works: he hardly knows more about them than you do. People are cruelly unjust to Mangan: they think he is all rugged strength just because his manners are bad.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Do you mean to tell me he isn't strong enough to crush poor little Ellie?

**MAZZINI.** Of course it's very hard to say how any marriage will turn out; but speaking for myself, I should say that he won't have a dog's chance against Ellie. You know, Ellie has remarkable strength of character. I think it is because I taught her to like Shakespeare when she was very young.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*contemptuously*]. Shakespeare! The next thing you will tell me is that you could have made a great deal more money than Mangan. [*She retires to the sofa, and sits down at the port end of it in the worst of humors*].

**MAZZINI** [*following her and taking the other end*]. No: I'm no good at making money. I don't care enough for it, somehow. I'm not ambitious! that must be it. Mangan is wonderful about money: he thinks of nothing else. He is so dreadfully afraid of being poor. I am always thinking of other things: even at the works I think of the things we are doing

and not of what they cost. And the worst of it is, poor Mangan doesn't know what to do with his money when he gets it. He is such a baby that he doesn't know even what to eat and drink: he has ruined his liver eating and drinking the wrong things; and now he can hardly eat at all. Ellie will diet him splendidly. You will be surprised when you come to know him better: he is really the most helpless of mortals. You get quite a protective feeling towards him.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Then who manages his business, pray?

**MAZZINI.** I do. And of course other people like me.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Footling people, you mean.

**MAZZINI.** I suppose you'd think us so.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** And pray why don't you do without him if you're all so much cleverer?

**MAZZINI.** Oh, we couldn't: we should ruin the business in a year. I've tried; and I know. We should spend too much on everything. We should improve the quality of the goods and make them too dear. We should be sentimental about the hard cases among the work people. But Mangan keeps us in order. He is down on us about every extra halfpenny. We could never do without him. You see, he will sit up all night

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thinking of how to save sixpence. Won't Ellie make him jump, though, when she takes his house in hand!

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Then the creature is a fraud even as a captain of industry!

**MAZZINI.** I am afraid all the captains of industry are what you call frauds, Mrs Hushabye. Of course there are some manufacturers who really do understand their own works; but they don't make as high a rate of profit as Mangan does. I assure you Mangan is quite a good fellow in his way. He means well.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** He doesn't look well. He is not in his first youth, is he?

**MAZZINI.** After all, no husband is in his first youth for very long, Mrs Hushabye. And men can't afford to marry in their first youth nowadays.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Now if I said that, it would sound witty. Why can't you say it wittily? What on earth is the matter with you? Why don't you inspire everybody with confidence? with respect?

**MAZZINI** [*humbly*]. I think that what is the matter with me is that I am poor. You don't know what that means at

home. Mind: I don't say they have ever complained. They've all been wonderful: they've been proud of my poverty. They've even joked about it quite often. But my wife has had a very poor time of it. She has been quite resigned—

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*shuddering involuntarily*]!

**MAZZINI.** There! You see, Mrs Hushabye. I don't want Ellie to live on resignation.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Do you want her to have to resign herself to living with a man she doesn't love?

**MAZZINI** [*wistfully*]. Are you sure that would be worse than living with a man she did love, if he was a footling person?

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*relaxing her contemptuous attitude, quite interested in Mazzini now*]. You know, I really think you must love Ellie very much; for you become quite clever when you talk about her.

**MAZZINI.** I didn't know I was so very stupid on other subjects.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** You are, sometimes.

**MAZZINI** [*turning his head away; for his eyes are wet*]. I have

learnt a good deal about myself from you, Mrs Hushabye; and I'm afraid I shall not be the happier for your plain speaking. But if you thought I needed it to make me think of Ellie's happiness you were very much mistaken.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*leaning towards him kindly*]. Have I been a beast?

**MAZZINI** [*pulling himself together*]. It doesn't matter about me, Mrs Hushabye. I think you like Ellie; and that is enough for me.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. I'm beginning to like you a little. I perfectly loathed you at first. I thought you the most odious, self-satisfied, boresome elderly prig I ever met.

**MAZZINI** [*resigned, and now quite cheerful*]. I daresay I am all that. I never have been a favorite with gorgeous women like you. They always frighten me.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*pleased*]. Am I a gorgeous woman, Mazzini? I shall fall in love with you presently.

**MAZZINI** [*with placid gallantry*]. No, you won't, Hesione. But you would be quite safe. Would you believe it that quite a lot of women have flirted with me because I am quite safe? But they get tired of me for the same reason.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*mischievously*]. Take care. You may not be so safe as you think.

**MAZZINI**. Oh yes, quite safe. You see, I have been in love really: the sort of love that only happens once. [*Softly*]. That's why Ellie is such a lovely girl.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Well, really, you are coming out. Are you quite sure you won't let me tempt you into a second grand passion?

**MAZZINI**. Quite. It wouldn't be natural. The fact is, you don't strike on my box, Mrs Hushabye; and I certainly don't strike on yours.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. I see. Your marriage was a safety match.

**MAZZINI**. What a very witty application of the expression I used! I should never have thought of it.

*Ellie comes in from the garden, looking anything but happy.*

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*rising*]. Oh! here is Ellie at last. [*She goes behind the sofa*].

**ELLIE** [*on the threshold of the starboard door*]. Guinness said you wanted me: you and papa.

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**MRS HUSHABYE.** You have kept us waiting so long that it almost came to—well, never mind. Your father is a very wonderful man [*she ruffles his hair affectionately*]: the only one I ever met who could resist me when I made myself really agreeable. [*She comes to the big chair, on Mangan's left*]. Come here. I have something to show you. [*Ellie strolls listlessly to the other side of the chair*]. Look.

**ELLIE** [*contemplating Mangan without interest*]. I know. He is only asleep. We had a talk after dinner; and he fell asleep in the middle of it.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** You did it, Ellie. You put him asleep.

**MAZZINI** [*rising quickly and coming to the back of the chair*]. Oh, I hope not. Did you, Ellie?

**ELLIE** [*wearily*]. He asked me to.

**MAZZINI.** But it's dangerous. You know what happened to me.

**ELLIE** [*utterly indifferent*]. Oh, I daresay I can wake him. If not, somebody else can.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** It doesn't matter, anyhow, because I have at last persuaded your father that you don't want to marry him.

**ELLIE** [*suddenly coming out of her listlessness, much vexed*]. But why did you do that, Hesione? I do want to marry him. I fully intend to marry him.

**MAZZINI.** Are you quite sure, Ellie? Mrs Hushabye has made me feel that I may have been thoughtless and selfish about it.

**ELLIE** [*very clearly and steadily*]. Papa. When Mrs. Hushabye takes it on herself to explain to you what I think or don't think, shut your ears tight; and shut your eyes too. Hesione knows nothing about me: she hasn't the least notion of the sort of person I am, and never will. I promise you I won't do anything I don't want to do and mean to do for my own sake.

**MAZZINI.** You are quite, quite sure?

**ELLIE.** Quite, quite sure. Now you must go away and leave me to talk to Mrs Hushabye.

**MAZZINI.** But I should like to hear. Shall I be in the way?

**ELLIE** [*inexorable*]. I had rather talk to her alone.

**MAZZINI** [*affectionately*]. Oh, well, I know what a nuisance parents are, dear. I will be good and go. [*He goes to the garden door*]. By the way, do you remember the address of that pro-

fessional who woke me up? Don't you think I had better telegraph to him?

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*moving towards the sofa*]. It's too late to telegraph tonight.

**MAZZINI**. I suppose so. I do hope he'll wake up in the course of the night. [*He goes out into the garden*].

**ELLIE** [*turning vigorously on Hesione the moment her father is out of the room*]. Hesione, what the devil do you mean by making mischief with my father about Mangan?

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*promptly losing her temper*]. Don't you dare speak to me like that, you little minx. Remember that you are in my house.

**ELLIE**. Stuff! Why don't you mind your own business? What is it to you whether I choose to marry Mangan or not?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Do you suppose you can bully me, you miserable little matrimonial adventurer?

**ELLIE**. Every woman who hasn't any money is a matrimonial adventurer. It's easy for you to talk: you have never known what it is to want money; and you can pick up men as if they were daisies. I am poor and respectable—

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*interrupting*]. Ho! respectable! How did you pick up Mangan? How did you pick up my husband? You have the audacity to tell me that I am a—a—a—

**ELLIE**. A siren. So you are. You were born to lead men by the nose: if you weren't, Marcus would have waited for me, perhaps.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*suddenly melting and half laughing*]. Oh, my poor Ellie, my pettikins, my unhappy darling! I am so sorry about Hector. But what can I do? It's not my fault: I'd give him to you if I could.

**ELLIE**. I don't blame you for that.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. What a brute I was to quarrel with you and call you names! Do kiss me and say you're not angry with me.

**ELLIE** [*fiercely*]. Oh, don't slop and gush and be sentimental. Don't you see that unless I can be hard—as hard as nails—I shall go mad? I don't care a damn about your calling me names: do you think a woman in my situation can feel a few hard words?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Poor little woman! Poor little situation!



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ELLIE. I suppose you think you're being sympathetic. You are just foolish and stupid and selfish. You see me getting a smasher right in the face that kills a whole part of my life: the best part that can never come again; and you think you can help me over it by a little coaxing and kissing. When I want all the strength I can get to lean on: something iron, something stony, I don't care how cruel it is, you go all mushy and want to slobber over me. I'm not angry; I'm not unfriendly; but for God's sake do pull yourself together; and don't think that because you're on velvet and always have been, women who are in hell can take it as easily as you.

MRS HUSHABYE [*shrugging her shoulders*]. Very well. [*She sits down on the sofa in her old place.*] But I warn you that when I am neither coaxing and kissing nor laughing, I am just wondering how much longer I can stand living in this cruel, damnable world. You object to the siren: well, I drop the siren. You want to rest your wounded bosom against a grindstone. Well [*folding her arms*] here is the grindstone.

ELLIE [*sitting down beside her, appeased*]. That's better: you really have the trick of falling in with everyone's mood; but you don't understand, because you are not the sort of woman for whom there is only one man and only one chance.

MRS HUSHABYE. I certainly don't understand how your marrying that object [*indicating Mangan*] will console you

for not being able to marry Hector.

ELLIE. Perhaps you don't understand why I was quite a nice girl this morning, and am now neither a girl nor particularly nice.

MRS HUSHABYE. Oh, yes, I do. It's because you have made up your mind to do something despicable and wicked.

ELLIE. I don't think so, Hesione. I must make the best of my ruined house.

MRS HUSHABYE. Pooh! You'll get over it. Your house isn't ruined.

ELLIE. Of course I shall get over it. You don't suppose I'm going to sit down and die of a broken heart, I hope, or be an old maid living on a pittance from the Sick and Indigent Roomkeepers' Association. But my heart is broken, all the same. What I mean by that is that I know that what has happened to me with Marcus will not happen to me ever again. In the world for me there is Marcus and a lot of other men of whom one is just the same as another. Well, if I can't have love, that's no reason why I should have poverty. If Mangan has nothing else, he has money.

MRS HUSHABYE. And are there no *young* men with money?

ELLIE. Not within my reach. Besides, a young man would have the right to expect love from me, and would perhaps leave me when he found I could not give it to him. Rich young men can get rid of their wives, you know, pretty cheaply. But this object, as you call him, can expect nothing more from me than I am prepared to give him.

MRS HUSHABYE. He will be your owner, remember. If he buys you, he will make the bargain pay him and not you. Ask your father.

ELLIE [*rising and strolling to the chair to contemplate their subject*]. You need not trouble on that score, Hesione. I have more to give Boss Mangan than he has to give me: it is I who am buying him, and at a pretty good price too, I think. Women are better at that sort of bargain than men. I have taken the Boss's measure; and ten Boss Mangans shall not prevent me doing far more as I please as his wife than I have ever been able to do as a poor girl. [*Stooping to the recumbent figure*]. Shall they, Boss? I think not. [*She passes on to the drawing-table, and leans against the end of it, facing the windows*]. I shall not have to spend most of my time wondering how long my gloves will last, anyhow.

MRS HUSHABYE [*rising superbly*]. Ellie, you are a wicked, sordid little beast. And to think that I actually condescended to fascinate that creature there to save you from him! Well,

let me tell you this: if you make this disgusting match, you will never see Hector again if I can help it.

ELLIE [*unmoved*]. I nailed Mangan by telling him that if he did not marry me he should never see you again [*she lifts herself on her wrists and seats herself on the end of the table*].

MRS HUSHABYE [*recoiling*]. Oh!

ELLIE. So you see I am not unprepared for your playing that trump against me. Well, you just try it: that's all. I should have made a man of Marcus, not a household pet.

MRS HUSHABYE [*flaming*]. You dare!

ELLIE [*looking almost dangerous*]. Set him thinking about me if you dare.

MRS HUSHABYE. Well, of all the impudent little fiends I ever met! Hector says there is a certain point at which the only answer you can give to a man who breaks all the rules is to knock him down. What would you say if I were to box your ears?

ELLIE [*calmly*]. I should pull your hair.

MRS HUSHABYE [*mischievously*]. That wouldn't hurt me.

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Perhaps it comes off at night.

**ELLIE** [*so taken aback that she drops off the table and runs to her*]. Oh, you don't mean to say, Hesione, that your beautiful black hair is false?

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*patting it*]. Don't tell Hector. He believes in it.

**ELLIE** [*groaning*]. Oh! Even the hair that ensnared him false! Everything false!

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Pull it and try. Other women can snare men in their hair; but I can swing a baby on mine. Aha! you can't do that, Goldylocks.

**ELLIE** [*heartbroken*]. No. You have stolen my babies.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Pettikins, don't make me cry. You know what you said about my making a household pet of him is a little true. Perhaps he ought to have waited for you. Would any other woman on earth forgive you?

**ELLIE**. Oh, what right had you to take him all for yourself! [*Pulling herself together*]. There! You couldn't help it: neither of us could help it. He couldn't help it. No, don't say anything more: I can't bear it. Let us wake the object. [*She begins*

*stroking Mangan's head, reversing the movement with which she put him to sleep*]. Wake up, do you hear? You are to wake up at once. Wake up, wake up, wake—

**MANGAN** [*bouncing out of the chair in a fury and turning on them*]. Wake up! So you think I've been asleep, do you? [He kicks the chair violently back out of his way, and gets between them]. You throw me into a trance so that I can't move hand or foot—I might have been buried alive! it's a mercy I wasn't—and then you think I was only asleep. If you'd let me drop the two times you rolled me about, my nose would have been flattened for life against the floor. But I've found you all out, anyhow. I know the sort of people I'm among now. I've heard every word you've said, you and your precious father, and [*to Mrs Hushabye*] you too. So I'm an object, am I? I'm a thing, am I? I'm a fool that hasn't sense enough to feed myself properly, am I? I'm afraid of the men that would starve if it weren't for the wages I give them, am I? I'm nothing but a disgusting old skinflint to be made a convenience of by designing women and fool managers of my works, am I? I'm—

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*with the most elegant aplomb*]. Sh-sh-sh-sh! Mr Mangan, you are bound in honor to obliterate from your mind all you heard while you were pretending to be asleep. It was not meant for you to hear.

**MANGAN.** Pretending to be asleep! Do you think if I was only pretending that I'd have sprawled there helpless, and listened to such unfairness, such lies, such injustice and plotting and backbiting and slandering of me, if I could have up and told you what I thought of you! I wonder I didn't burst.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*sweetly*]. You dreamt it all, Mr Mangan. We were only saying how beautifully peaceful you looked in your sleep. That was all, wasn't it, Ellie? Believe me, Mr Mangan, all those unpleasant things came into your mind in the last half second before you woke. Ellie rubbed your hair the wrong way; and the disagreeable sensation suggested a disagreeable dream.

**MANGAN** [*doggedly*]. I believe in dreams.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** So do I. But they go by contraries, don't they?

**MANGAN** [*depths of emotion suddenly welling up in him*]. I shan't forget, to my dying day, that when you gave me the glad eye that time in the garden, you were making a fool of me. That was a dirty low mean thing to do. You had no right to let me come near you if I disgusted you. It isn't my fault if I'm old and haven't a moustache like a bronze candlestick as your husband has. There are things no decent woman would do to a man—like a man hitting a woman in the breast.

*Hesione, utterly shamed, sits down on the sofa and covers her face with her hands. Mangan sits down also on his chair and begins to cry like a child. Ellie stares at them. Mrs Hushabye, at the distressing sound he makes, takes down her hands and looks at him. She rises and runs to him.*

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Don't cry: I can't bear it. Have I broken your heart? I didn't know you had one. How could I?

**MANGAN.** I'm a man, ain't I?

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*half coaxing, half rallying, altogether tenderly*]. Oh no: not what I call a man. Only a Boss: just that and nothing else. What business has a Boss with a heart?

**MANGAN.** Then you're not a bit sorry for what you did, nor ashamed?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** I was ashamed for the first time in my life when you said that about hitting a woman in the breast, and I found out what I'd done. My very bones blushed red. You've had your revenge, Boss. Aren't you satisfied?

**MANGAN.** Serve you right! Do you hear? Serve you right! You're just cruel. Cruel.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Yes: cruelty would be delicious if one

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could only find some sort of cruelty that didn't really hurt. By the way [*sitting down beside him on the arm of the chair*], what's your name? It's not really Boss, is it?

**MANGAN** [*shortly*]. If you want to know, my name's Alfred.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*springs up*]. Alfred!! Ellie, he was christened after Tennyson!!!

**MANGAN** [*rising*]. I was christened after my uncle, and never had a penny from him, damn him! What of it?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. It comes to me suddenly that you are a real person: that you had a mother, like anyone else. [*Putting her hands on his shoulders and surveying him*]. Little Alf!

**MANGAN**. Well, you have a nerve.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. And you have a heart, Alf, a whimpering little heart, but a real one. [*Releasing him suddenly*]. Now run and make it up with Ellie. She has had time to think what to say to you, which is more than I had [*she goes out quickly into the garden by the port door*].

**MANGAN**. That woman has a pair of hands that go right through you.

**ELLIE**. Still in love with her, in spite of all we said about you?

**MANGAN**. Are all women like you two? Do they never think of anything about a man except what they can get out of him? You weren't even thinking that about me. You were only thinking whether your gloves would last.

**ELLIE**. I shall not have to think about that when we are married.

**MANGAN**. And you think I am going to marry you after what I heard there!

**ELLIE**. You heard nothing from me that I did not tell you before.

**MANGAN**. Perhaps you think I can't do without you.

**ELLIE**. I think you would feel lonely without us all, now, after coming to know us so well.

**MANGAN** [*with something like a yell of despair*]. Am I never to have the last word?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*appearing at the starboard garden door*]. There is a soul in torment here. What is the matter?

**MANGAN.** This girl doesn't want to spend her life wondering how long her gloves will last.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*passing through*]. Don't wear any. I never do [*he goes into the pantry*].

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*appearing at the port garden door, in a handsome dinner dress*]. Is anything the matter?

**ELLIE.** This gentleman wants to know is he never to have the last word?

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*coming forward to the sofa*]. I should let him have it, my dear. The important thing is not to have the last word, but to have your own way.

**MANGAN.** She wants both.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** She won't get them, Mr Mangan. Providence always has the last word.

**MANGAN** [*desperately*]. Now you are going to come religion over me. In this house a man's mind might as well be a football. I'm going. [*He makes for the hall, but is stopped by a hail from the Captain, who has just emerged from his pantry*].

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Whither away, Boss Mangan?

**MANGAN.** To hell out of this house: let that be enough for you and all here.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** You were welcome to come: you are free to go. The wide earth, the high seas, the spacious skies are waiting for you outside.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** But your things, Mr Mangan. Your bag, your comb and brushes, your pyjamas—

**HECTOR** [*who has just appeared in the port doorway in a handsome Arab costume*]. Why should the escaping slave take his chains with him?

**MANGAN.** That's right, Hushabye. Keep the pyjamas, my lady, and much good may they do you.

**HECTOR** [*advancing to Lady Utterword's left hand*]. Let us all go out into the night and leave everything behind us.

**MANGAN.** You stay where you are, the lot of you. I want no company, especially female company.

**ELLIE.** Let him go. He is unhappy here. He is angry with us.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Go, Boss Mangan; and when you have found the land where there is happiness and where there

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are no women, send me its latitude and longitude; and I will join you there.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** You will certainly not be comfortable without your luggage, Mr Mangan.

**ELLIE** [*impatient*]. Go, go: why don't you go? It is a heavenly night: you can sleep on the heath. Take my waterproof to lie on: it is hanging up in the hall.

**HECTOR.** Breakfast at nine, unless you prefer to breakfast with the captain at six.

**ELLIE.** Good night, Alfred.

**HECTOR.** Alfred! [*He runs back to the door and calls into the garden*]. Randall, Mangan's Christian name is Alfred.

**RANDALL** [*appearing in the starboard doorway in evening dress*]. Then Hesione wins her bet.

*Mrs Hushabye appears in the port doorway. She throws her left arm round Hector's neck: draws him with her to the back of the sofa: and throws her right arm round Lady Utterword's neck.*

**MRS HUSHABYE.** They wouldn't believe me, Alf.

*They contemplate him.*

**MANGAN.** Is there any more of you coming in to look at me, as if I was the latest thing in a menagerie?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** You are the latest thing in this menagerie.

*Before Mangan can retort, a fall of furniture is heard from upstairs: then a pistol shot, and a yell of pain. The staring group breaks up in consternation.*

**MAZZINI'S VOICE** [*from above*]. Help! A burglar! Help!

**HECTOR** [*his eyes blazing*]. A burglar!!!

**MRS HUSHABYE.** No, Hector: you'll be shot [*but it is too late; he has dashed out past Mangan, who hastily moves towards the bookshelves out of his way*].

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*blowing his whistle*]. All hands aloft! [*He strides out after Hector*].

**LADY UTTERWORD.** My diamonds! [*She follows the captain*].

**RANDALL** [*rushing after her*]. No. Ariadne. Let me.

ELLIE. Oh, is papa shot? [*She runs out*].

MRS HUSHABYE. Are you frightened, Alf?

MANGAN. No. It ain't my house, thank God.

MRS HUSHABYE. If they catch a burglar, shall we have to go into court as witnesses, and be asked all sorts of questions about our private lives?

MANGAN. You won't be believed if you tell the truth.

*Mazzini, terribly upset, with a duelling pistol in his hand, comes from the hall, and makes his way to the drawing-table.*

MAZZINI. Oh, my dear Mrs Hushabye, I might have killed him. [*He throws the pistol on the table and staggers round to the chair*]. I hope you won't believe I really intended to.

*Hector comes in, marching an old and villainous looking man before him by the collar. He plants him in the middle of the room and releases him.*

*Ellie follows, and immediately runs across to the back of her father's chair and pats his shoulders.*

RANDALL [*entering with a poker*]. Keep your eye on this door, Mangan. I'll look after the other [*he goes to the star-*

*board door and stands on guard there*].

*Lady Utterword comes in after Randall, and goes between Mrs Hushabye and Mangan.*

*Nurse Guinness brings up the rear, and waits near the door, on Mangan's left.*

MRS HUSHABYE. What has happened?

MAZZINI. Your housekeeper told me there was somebody upstairs, and gave me a pistol that Mr Hushabye had been practising with. I thought it would frighten him; but it went off at a touch.

THE BURGLAR. Yes, and took the skin off my ear. Precious near took the top off my head. Why don't you have a proper revolver instead of a thing like that, that goes off if you as much as blow on it?

HECTOR. One of my duelling pistols. Sorry.

MAZZINI. He put his hands up and said it was a fair cop.

THE BURGLAR. So it was. Send for the police.

HECTOR. No, by thunder! It was not a fair cop. We were four to one.



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**MRS HUSHABYE.** What will they do to him?

**THE BURGLAR.** Ten years. Beginning with solitary. Ten years off my life. I shan't serve it all: I'm too old. It will see me out.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** You should have thought of that before you stole my diamonds.

**THE BURGLAR.** Well, you've got them back, lady, haven't you? Can you give me back the years of my life you are going to take from me?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Oh, we can't bury a man alive for ten years for a few diamonds.

**THE BURGLAR.** Ten little shining diamonds! Ten long black years!

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Think of what it is for us to be dragged through the horrors of a criminal court, and have all our family affairs in the papers! If you were a native, and Hastings could order you a good beating and send you away, I shouldn't mind; but here in England there is no real protection for any respectable person.

**THE BURGLAR.** I'm too old to be giv a hiding, lady. Send

for the police and have done with it. It's only just and right you should.

**RANDALL** [*who has relaxed his vigilance on seeing the burglar so pacifically disposed, and comes forward swinging the poker between his fingers like a well folded umbrella*]. It is neither just nor right that we should be put to a lot of inconvenience to gratify your moral enthusiasm, my friend. You had better get out, while you have the chance.

**THE BURGLAR** [*inexorably*]. No. I must work my sin off my conscience. This has come as a sort of call to me. Let me spend the rest of my life repenting in a cell. I shall have my reward above.

**MANGAN** [*exasperated*]. The very burglars can't behave naturally in this house.

**HECTOR.** My good sir, you must work out your salvation at somebody else's expense. Nobody here is going to charge you.

**THE BURGLAR.** Oh, you won't charge me, won't you?

**HECTOR.** No. I'm sorry to be inhospitable; but will you kindly leave the house?

**THE BURGLAR.** Right. I'll go to the police station and give myself up. [*He turns resolutely to the door: but Hector stops him*].

*Speaking together.*

**HECTOR.** Oh, no. You mustn't do that.

**RANDALL.** No no. Clear out man, can't you; and don't be a fool.

**MRS. HUSHABYE.** Don't be so silly. Can't you repent at home?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** You will have to do as you are told.

**THE BURGLAR.** It's compounding a felony, you know.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** This is utterly ridiculous. Are we to be forced to prosecute this man when we don't want to?

**THE BURGLAR.** Am I to be robbed of my salvation to save you the trouble of spending a day at the sessions? Is that justice? Is it right? Is it fair to me?

**MAZZINI** [*rising and leaning across the table persuasively as if it were a pulpit desk or a shop counter*]. Come, come! let me show you how you can turn your very crimes to account. Why not set up as a locksmith? You must know more about locks than most honest men?

**THE BURGLAR.** That's true, sir. But I couldn't set up as a locksmith under twenty pounds.

**RANDALL.** Well, you can easily steal twenty pounds. You will find it in the nearest bank.

**THE BURGLAR** [*horrified*]. Oh, what a thing for a gentleman to put into the head of a poor criminal scrambling out of the bottomless pit as it were! Oh, shame on you, sir! Oh, God forgive you! [*He throws himself into the big chair and covers his face as if in prayer*].

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Really, Randall!

**HECTOR.** It seems to me that we shall have to take up a collection for this inopportunist contrite sinner.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** But twenty pounds is ridiculous.

**THE BURGLAR** [*looking up quickly*]. I shall have to buy a lot of tools, lady.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Nonsense: you have your burgling kit.

**THE BURGLAR.** What's a jimmy and a centrebit and an acetylene welding plant and a bunch of skeleton keys? I shall

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want a forge, and a smithy, and a shop, and fittings. I can't hardly do it for twenty.

**HECTOR.** My worthy friend, we haven't got twenty pounds.

**THE BURGLAR** [*now master of the situation*]. You can raise it among you, can't you?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Give him a sovereign, Hector, and get rid of him.

**HECTOR** [*giving him a pound*]. There! Off with you.

**THE BURGLAR** [*rising and taking the money very ungratefully*]. I won't promise nothing. You have more on you than a quid: all the lot of you, I mean.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*vigorously*]. Oh, let us prosecute him and have done with it. I have a conscience too, I hope; and I do not feel at all sure that we have any right to let him go, especially if he is going to be greedy and impertinent.

**THE BURGLAR** [*quickly*]. All right, lady, all right. I've no wish to be anything but agreeable. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen; and thank you kindly.

*He is hurrying out when he is confronted in the doorway by*

*Captain Shotover.*

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*fixing the burglar with a piercing regard*]. What's this? Are there two of you?

**THE BURGLAR** [*falling on his knees before the captain in abject terror*]. Oh, my good Lord, what have I done? Don't tell me it's your house I've broken into, Captain Shotover.

*The captain seizes him by the collar: drags him to his feet: and leads him to the middle of the group, Hector falling back beside his wife to make way for them.*

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*turning him towards Ellie*]. Is that your daughter? [*He releases him*].

**THE BURGLAR.** Well, how do I know, Captain? You know the sort of life you and me has led. Any young lady of that age might be my daughter anywhere in the wide world, as you might say.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*to Mazzini*]. You are not Billy Dunn. This is Billy Dunn. Why have you imposed on me?

**THE BURGLAR** [*indignantly to Mazzini*]. Have you been giving yourself out to be me? You, that nigh blew my head off! Shooting yourself, in a manner of speaking!

**MAZZINI.** My dear Captain Shotover, ever since I came into this house I have done hardly anything else but assure you that I am not Mr William Dunn, but Mazzini Dunn, a very different person.

**THE BURGLAR.** He don't belong to my branch, Captain. There's two sets in the family: the thinking Dunns and the drinking Dunns, each going their own ways. I'm a drinking Dunn: he's a thinking Dunn. But that didn't give him any right to shoot me.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** So you've turned burglar, have you?

**THE BURGLAR.** No, Captain: I wouldn't disgrace our old sea calling by such a thing. I am no burglar.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** What were you doing with my diamonds?

**GUINNESS.** What did you break into the house for if you're no burglar?

**RANDALL.** Mistook the house for your own and came in by the wrong window, eh?

**THE BURGLAR.** Well, it's no use my telling you a lie: I can

take in most captains, but not Captain Shotover, because he sold himself to the devil in Zanzibar, and can divine water, spot gold, explode a cartridge in your pocket with a glance of his eye, and see the truth hidden in the heart of man. But I'm no burglar.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Are you an honest man?

**THE BURGLAR.** I don't set up to be better than my fellow-creatures, and never did, as you well know, Captain. But what I do is innocent and pious. I enquire about for houses where the right sort of people live. I work it on them same as I worked it here. I break into the house; put a few spoons or diamonds in my pocket; make a noise; get caught; and take up a collection. And you wouldn't believe how hard it is to get caught when you're actually trying to. I have knocked over all the chairs in a room without a soul paying any attention to me. In the end I have had to walk out and leave the job.

**RANDALL.** When that happens, do you put back the spoons and diamonds?

**THE BURGLAR.** Well, I don't fly in the face of Providence, if that's what you want to know.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Guinness, you remember this man?

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**GUINNESS.** I should think I do, seeing I was married to him, the blackguard!

*Exclaiming together.*

**HESIONE.** Married to him!

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Guinness!!

**THE BURGLAR.** It wasn't legal. I've been married to no end of women. No use coming that over me.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Take him to the forecastle [*he flings him to the door with a strength beyond his years*].

**GUINNESS.** I suppose you mean the kitchen. They won't have him there. Do you expect servants to keep company with thieves and all sorts?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Land-thieves and water-thieves are the same flesh and blood. I'll have no boatswain on my quarter-deck. Off with you both.

**THE BURGLAR.** Yes, Captain. [*He goes out humbly*].

**MAZZINI.** Will it be safe to have him in the house like that?

**GUINNESS.** Why didn't you shoot him, sir? If I'd known

who he was, I'd have shot him myself. [*She goes out*].

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Do sit down, everybody. [*She sits down on the sofa*].

*They all move except Ellie. Mazzini resumes his seat. Randall sits down in the window-seat near the starboard door, again making a pendulum of his poker, and studying it as Galileo might have done. Hector sits on his left, in the middle. Mangan, forgotten, sits in the port corner. Lady Utterword takes the big chair. Captain Shotover goes into the pantry in deep abstraction. They all look after him: and Lady Utterword coughs consciously.*

**MRS HUSHABYE.** So Billy Dunn was poor nurse's little romance. I knew there had been somebody.

**RANDALL.** They will fight their battles over again and enjoy themselves immensely.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*irritably*]. You are not married; and you know nothing about it, Randall. Hold your tongue.

**RANDALL.** Tyrant!

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Well, we have had a very exciting evening. Everything will be an anticlimax after it. We'd better all go to bed.

RANDALL. Another burglar may turn up.

MAZZINI. Oh, impossible! I hope not.

RANDALL. Why not? There is more than one burglar in England.

MRS HUSHABYE. What do you say, Alf?

MANGAN [*huffily*]. Oh, I don't matter. I'm forgotten. The burglar has put my nose out of joint. Shove me into a corner and have done with me.

MRS HUSHABYE [*jumping up mischievously, and going to him*]. Would you like a walk on the heath, Alfred? With me?

ELLIE. Go, Mr Mangan. It will do you good. Hesione will soothe you.

MRS HUSHABYE [*slipping her arm under his and pulling him upright*]. Come, Alfred. There is a moon: it's like the night in Tristan and Isolde. [*She caresses his arm and draws him to the port garden door*].

MANGAN [*writhing but yielding*]. How you can have the face-the-heart-*[he breaks down and is heard sobbing as she takes him out]*.

LADY UTTERWORD. What an extraordinary way to behave! What is the matter with the man?

ELLIE [*in a strangely calm voice, staring into an imaginary distance*]. His heart is breaking: that is all. [*The captain appears at the pantry door, listening*]. It is a curious sensation: the sort of pain that goes mercifully beyond our powers of feeling. When your heart is broken, your boats are burned: nothing matters any more. It is the end of happiness and the beginning of peace.

LADY UTTERWORD [*suddenly rising in a rage, to the astonishment of the rest*]. How dare you?

HECTOR. Good heavens! What's the matter?

RANDALL [*in a warning whisper*]. Tch—tch-tch! Steady.

ELLIE [*surprised and haughty*]. I was not addressing you particularly, Lady Utterword. And I am not accustomed to being asked how dare I.

LADY UTTERWORD. Of course not. Anyone can see how badly you have been brought up.

MAZZINI. Oh, I hope not, Lady Utterword. Really!

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LADY UTTERWORD. I know very well what you meant. The impudence!

ELLIE. What on earth do you mean?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*advancing to the table*]. She means that her heart will not break. She has been longing all her life for someone to break it. At last she has become afraid she has none to break.

LADY UTTERWORD [*flinging herself on her knees and throwing her arms round him*]. Papa, don't say you think I've no heart.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*raising her with grim tenderness*]. If you had no heart how could you want to have it broken, child?

HECTOR [*rising with a bound*]. Lady Utterword, you are not to be trusted. You have made a scene [*he runs out into the garden through the starboard door*].

LADY UTTERWORD. Oh! Hector, Hector! [*she runs out after him*].

RANDALL. Only nerves, I assure you. [*He rises and follows her, waving the poker in his agitation*]. Ariadne! Ariadne! For

God's sake, be careful. You will—[he is gone].

MAZZINI [*rising*]. How distressing! Can I do anything, I wonder?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*promptly taking his chair and setting to work at the drawing-board*]. No. Go to bed. Good-night.

MAZZINI [*bewildered*]. Oh! Perhaps you are right.

ELLIE. Good-night, dearest. [*She kisses him*].

MAZZINI. Good-night, love. [*He makes for the door, but turns aside to the bookshelves*]. I'll just take a book [*he takes one*]. Good-night. [*He goes out, leaving Ellie alone with the captain*].

*The captain is intent on his drawing. Ellie, standing sentry over his chair, contemplates him for a moment.*

ELLIE. Does nothing ever disturb you, Captain Shotover?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. I've stood on the bridge for eighteen hours in a typhoon. Life here is stormier; but I can stand it.

ELLIE. Do you think I ought to marry Mr Mangan?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*never looking up*]. One rock is as good as another to be wrecked on.

ELLIE. I am not in love with him.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Who said you were?

ELLIE. You are not surprised?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Surprised! At my age!

ELLIE. It seems to me quite fair. He wants me for one thing: I want him for another.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Money?

ELLIE. Yes.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Well, one turns the cheek: the other kisses it. One provides the cash: the other spends it.

ELLIE. Who will have the best of the bargain, I wonder?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. You. These fellows live in an office all day. You will have to put up with him from dinner to breakfast; but you will both be asleep most of that time. All day you will be quit of him; and you will be shopping with

his money. If that is too much for you, marry a seafaring man: you will be bothered with him only three weeks in the year, perhaps.

ELLIE. That would be best of all, I suppose.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. It's a dangerous thing to be married right up to the hilt, like my daughter's husband. The man is at home all day, like a damned soul in hell.

ELLIE. I never thought of that before.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. If you're marrying for business, you can't be too businesslike.

ELLIE. Why do women always want other women's husbands?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Why do horse-thieves prefer a horse that is broken-in to one that is wild?

ELLIE [*with a short laugh*]. I suppose so. What a vile world it is!

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. It doesn't concern me. I'm nearly out of it.



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ELLIE. And I'm only just beginning.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Yes; so look ahead.

ELLIE. Well, I think I am being very prudent.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. I didn't say prudent. I said look ahead.

ELLIE. What's the difference?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. It's prudent to gain the whole world and lose your own soul. But don't forget that your soul sticks to you if you stick to it; but the world has a way of slipping through your fingers.

ELLIE [*wearily, leaving him and beginning to wander restlessly about the room*]. I'm sorry, Captain Shotover; but it's no use talking like that to me. Old-fashioned people are no use to me. Old-fashioned people think you can have a soul without money. They think the less money you have, the more soul you have. Young people nowadays know better. A soul is a very expensive thing to keep: much more so than a motor car.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Is it? How much does your soul eat?

ELLIE. Oh, a lot. It eats music and pictures and books and mountains and lakes and beautiful things to wear and nice people to be with. In this country you can't have them without lots of money: that is why our souls are so horribly starved.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Mangan's soul lives on pig's food.

ELLIE. Yes: money is thrown away on him. I suppose his soul was starved when he was young. But it will not be thrown away on me. It is just because I want to save my soul that I am marrying for money. All the women who are not fools do.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. There are other ways of getting money. Why don't you steal it?

ELLIE. Because I don't want to go to prison.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Is that the only reason? Are you quite sure honesty has nothing to do with it?

ELLIE. Oh, you are very very old-fashioned, Captain. Does any modern girl believe that the legal and illegal ways of getting money are the honest and dishonest ways? Mangan robbed my father and my father's friends. I should rob all the money back from Mangan if the police would let me. As they won't, I must get it back by marrying him.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** I can't argue: I'm too old: my mind is made up and finished. All I can tell you is that, old-fashioned or new-fashioned, if you sell yourself, you deal your soul a blow that all the books and pictures and concerts and scenery in the world won't heal [*he gets up suddenly and makes for the pantry*].

**ELLIE** [*running after him and seizing him by the sleeve*]. Then why did you sell yourself to the devil in Zanzibar?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*stopping, startled*]. What?

**ELLIE.** You shall not run away before you answer. I have found out that trick of yours. If you sold yourself, why shouldn't I?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** I had to deal with men so degraded that they wouldn't obey me unless I swore at them and kicked them and beat them with my fists. Foolish people took young thieves off the streets; flung them into a training ship where they were taught to fear the cane instead of fearing God; and thought they'd made men and sailors of them by private subscription. I tricked these thieves into believing I'd sold myself to the devil. It saved my soul from the kicking and swearing that was damning me by inches.

**ELLIE** [*releasing him*]. I shall pretend to sell myself to Boss

Mangan to save my soul from the poverty that is damning me by inches.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Riches will damn you ten times deeper. Riches won't save even your body.

**ELLIE.** Old-fashioned again. We know now that the soul is the body, and the body the soul. They tell us they are different because they want to persuade us that we can keep our souls if we let them make slaves of our bodies. I am afraid you are no use to me, Captain.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** What did you expect? A Savior, eh? Are you old-fashioned enough to believe in that?

**ELLIE.** No. But I thought you were very wise, and might help me. Now I have found you out. You pretend to be busy, and think of fine things to say, and run in and out to surprise people by saying them, and get away before they can answer you.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** It confuses me to be answered. It discourages me. I cannot bear men and women. I have to run away. I must run away now [*he tries to*].

**ELLIE** [*again seizing his arm*]. You shall not run away from me. I can hypnotize you. You are the only person in the house

I can say what I like to. I know you are fond of me. Sit down. [*She draws him to the sofa*].

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*yielding*]. Take care: I am in my dotage. Old men are dangerous: it doesn't matter to them what is going to happen to the world.

*They sit side by side on the sofa. She leans affectionately against him with her head on his shoulder and her eyes half closed.*

**ELLIE** [*dreamily*]. I should have thought nothing else mattered to old men. They can't be very interested in what is going to happen to themselves.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. A man's interest in the world is only the overflow from his interest in himself. When you are a child your vessel is not yet full; so you care for nothing but your own affairs. When you grow up, your vessel overflows; and you are a politician, a philosopher, or an explorer and adventurer. In old age the vessel dries up: there is no overflow: you are a child again. I can give you the memories of my ancient wisdom: mere scraps and leavings; but I no longer really care for anything but my own little wants and hobbies. I sit here working out my old ideas as a means of destroying my fellow-creatures. I see my daughters and their men living foolish lives of romance and sentiment and snobbery. I see you, the younger generation, turning from their

romance and sentiment and snobbery to money and comfort and hard common sense. I was ten times happier on the bridge in the typhoon, or frozen into Arctic ice for months in darkness, than you or they have ever been. You are looking for a rich husband. At your age I looked for hardship, danger, horror, and death, that I might feel the life in me more intensely. I did not let the fear of death govern my life; and my reward was, I had my life. You are going to let the fear of poverty govern your life; and your reward will be that you will eat, but you will not live.

**ELLIE** [*sitting up impatiently*]. But what can I do? I am not a sea captain: I can't stand on bridges in typhoons, or go slaughtering seals and whales in Greenland's icy mountains. They won't let women be captains. Do you want me to be a stewardess?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. There are worse lives. The stewardesses could come ashore if they liked; but they sail and sail and sail.

**ELLIE**. What could they do ashore but marry for money? I don't want to be a stewardess: I am too bad a sailor. Think of something else for me.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. I can't think so long and continuously. I am too old. I must go in and out. [*He tries to rise*].

ELLIE [*pulling him back*]. You shall not. You are happy here, aren't you?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. I tell you it's dangerous to keep me. I can't keep awake and alert.

ELLIE. What do you run away for? To sleep?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. No. To get a glass of rum.

ELLIE [*frightfully disillusioned*]. Is that it? How disgusting! Do you like being drunk?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. No: I dread being drunk more than anything in the world. To be drunk means to have dreams; to go soft; to be easily pleased and deceived; to fall into the clutches of women. Drink does that for you when you are young. But when you are old: very very old, like me, the dreams come by themselves. You don't know how terrible that is: you are young: you sleep at night only, and sleep soundly. But later on you will sleep in the afternoon. Later still you will sleep even in the morning; and you will awake tired, tired of life. You will never be free from dozing and dreams; the dreams will steal upon your work every ten minutes unless you can awaken yourself with rum. I drink now to keep sober; but the dreams are conquering: rum is not what it was: I have had ten glasses since you came; and it

might be so much water. Go get me another: Guinness knows where it is. You had better see for yourself the horror of an old man drinking.

ELLIE. You shall not drink. Dream. I like you to dream. You must never be in the real world when we talk together.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. I am too weary to resist, or too weak. I am in my second childhood. I do not see you as you really are. I can't remember what I really am. I feel nothing but the accursed happiness I have dreaded all my life long: the happiness that comes as life goes, the happiness of yielding and dreaming instead of resisting and doing, the sweetness of the fruit that is going rotten.

ELLIE. You dread it almost as much as I used to dread losing my dreams and having to fight and do things. But that is all over for me: my dreams are dashed to pieces. I should like to marry a very old, very rich man. I should like to marry you. I had much rather marry you than marry Mangan. Are you very rich?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. No. Living from hand to mouth. And I have a wife somewhere in Jamaica: a black one. My first wife. Unless she's dead.

ELLIE. What a pity! I feel so happy with you. [*She takes his*

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*hand, almost unconsciously, and pats it*]. I thought I should never feel happy again.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Why?

ELLIE. Don't you know?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. No.

ELLIE. Heartbreak. I fell in love with Hector, and didn't know he was married.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Heartbreak? Are you one of those who are so sufficient to themselves that they are only happy when they are stripped of everything, even of hope?

ELLIE [*gripping the hand*]. It seems so; for I feel now as if there was nothing I could not do, because I want nothing.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. That's the only real strength. That's genius. That's better than rum.

ELLIE [*throwing away his hand*]. Rum! Why did you spoil it?

*Hector and Randall come in from the garden through the star-board door.*

HECTOR. I beg your pardon. We did not know there was anyone here.

ELLIE [*rising*]. That means that you want to tell Mr Randall the story about the tiger. Come, Captain: I want to talk to my father; and you had better come with me.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER [*rising*]. Nonsense! the man is in bed.

ELLIE. Aha! I've caught you. My real father has gone to bed; but the father you gave me is in the kitchen. You knew quite well all along. Come. [*She draws him out into the garden with her through the port door*].

HECTOR. That's an extraordinary girl. She has the Ancient Mariner on a string like a Pekinese dog.

RANDALL. Now that they have gone, shall we have a friendly chat?

HECTOR. You are in what is supposed to be my house. I am at your disposal.

*Hector sits down in the draughtsman's chair, turning it to face Randall, who remains standing, leaning at his ease against the carpenter's bench.*

RANDALL. I take it that we may be quite frank. I mean about Lady Utterword.

HECTOR. You may. I have nothing to be frank about. I never met her until this afternoon.

RANDALL [*straightening up*]. What! But you are her sister's husband.

HECTOR. Well, if you come to that, you are her husband's brother.

RANDALL. But you seem to be on intimate terms with her.

HECTOR. So do you.

RANDALL. Yes; but I *am* on intimate terms with her. I have known her for years.

HECTOR. It took her years to get to the same point with you that she got to with me in five minutes, it seems.

RANDALL [*vexed*]. Really, Ariadne is the limit [*he moves away huffishly towards the windows*].

HECTOR [*coolly*]. She is, as I remarked to Hesione, a very enterprising woman.

RANDALL [*returning, much troubled*]. You see, Hushabye, you are what women consider a good-looking man.

HECTOR. I cultivated that appearance in the days of my vanity; and Hesione insists on my keeping it up. She makes me wear these ridiculous things [*indicating his Arab costume*] because she thinks me absurd in evening dress.

RANDALL. Still, you do keep it up, old chap. Now, I assure you I have not an atom of jealousy in my disposition

HECTOR. The question would seem to be rather whether your brother has any touch of that sort.

RANDALL. What! Hastings! Oh, don't trouble about Hastings. He has the gift of being able to work sixteen hours a day at the dullest detail, and actually likes it. That gets him to the top wherever he goes. As long as Ariadne takes care that he is fed regularly, he is only too thankful to anyone who will keep her in good humor for him.

HECTOR. And as she has all the Shotover fascination, there is plenty of competition for the job, eh?

RANDALL [*angrily*]. She encourages them. Her conduct is perfectly scandalous. I assure you, my dear fellow, I haven't an atom of jealousy in my composition; but she makes her-

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self the talk of every place she goes to by her thoughtlessness. It's nothing more: she doesn't really care for the men she keeps hanging about her; but how is the world to know that? It's not fair to Hastings. It's not fair to me.

**HECTOR.** Her theory is that her conduct is so correct

**RANDALL.** Correct! She does nothing but make scenes from morning till night. You be careful, old chap. She will get you into trouble: that is, she would if she really cared for you.

**HECTOR.** Doesn't she?

**RANDALL.** Not a scrap. She may want your scalp to add to her collection; but her true affection has been engaged years ago. You had really better be careful.

**HECTOR.** Do you suffer much from this jealousy?

**RANDALL.** Jealousy! I jealous! My dear fellow, haven't I told you that there is not an atom of—

**HECTOR.** Yes. And Lady Utterword told me she never made scenes. Well, don't waste your jealousy on my moustache. Never waste jealousy on a real man: it is the imaginary hero that supplants us all in the long run. Besides, jealousy does not belong to your easy man-of-the-world pose, which you

carry so well in other respects.

**RANDALL.** Really, Hushabye, I think a man may be allowed to be a gentleman without being accused of posing.

**HECTOR.** It is a pose like any other. In this house we know all the poses: our game is to find out the man under the pose. The man under your pose is apparently Ellie's favorite, Othello.

**RANDALL.** Some of your games in this house are damned annoying, let me tell you.

**HECTOR.** Yes: I have been their victim for many years. I used to writhe under them at first; but I became accustomed to them. At last I learned to play them.

**RANDALL.** If it's all the same to you I had rather you didn't play them on me. You evidently don't quite understand my character, or my notions of good form.

**HECTOR.** Is it your notion of good form to give away Lady Utterword?

**RANDALL** [*a childishly plaintive note breaking into his huff*]. I have not said a word against Lady Utterword. This is just the conspiracy over again.

HECTOR. What conspiracy?

RANDALL. You know very well, sir. A conspiracy to make me out to be pettish and jealous and childish and everything I am not. Everyone knows I am just the opposite.

HECTOR [*rising*]. Something in the air of the house has upset you. It often does have that effect. [*He goes to the garden door and calls Lady Utterword with commanding emphasis*]. Ariadne!

LADY UTTERWORD [*at some distance*]. Yes.

RANDALL. What are you calling her for? I want to speak—

LADY UTTERWORD [*arriving breathless*]. Yes. You really are a terribly commanding person. What's the matter?

HECTOR. I do not know how to manage your friend Randall. No doubt you do.

LADY UTTERWORD. Randall: have you been making yourself ridiculous, as usual? I can see it in your face. Really, you are the most pettish creature.

RANDALL. You know quite well, Ariadne, that I have not an ounce of pettishness in my disposition. I have made my-

self perfectly pleasant here. I have remained absolutely cool and imperturbable in the face of a burglar. Imperturbability is almost too strong a point of mine. But [*putting his foot down with a stamp, and walking angrily up and down the room*] I insist on being treated with a certain consideration. I will not allow Hushabye to take liberties with me. I will not stand your encouraging people as you do.

HECTOR. The man has a rooted delusion that he is your husband.

LADY UTTERWORD. I know. He is jealous. As if he had any right to be! He compromises me everywhere. He makes scenes all over the place. Randall: I will not allow it. I simply will not allow it. You had no right to discuss me with Hector. I will not be discussed by men.

HECTOR. Be reasonable, Ariadne. Your fatal gift of beauty forces men to discuss you.

LADY UTTERWORD. Oh indeed! what about *your* fatal gift of beauty?

HECTOR. How can I help it?

LADY UTTERWORD. You could cut off your moustache: I can't cut off my nose. I get my whole life messed up with



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people falling in love with me. And then Randall says I run after men.

RANDALL. I—

LADY UTTERWORD. Yes you do: you said it just now. Why can't you think of something else than women? Napoleon was quite right when he said that women are the occupation of the idle man. Well, if ever there was an idle man on earth, his name is Randall Utterword.

RANDALL. Ariad—

LADY UTTERWORD [*overwhelming him with a torrent of words*]. Oh yes you are: it's no use denying it. What have you ever done? What good are you? You are as much trouble in the house as a child of three. You couldn't live without your valet.

RANDALL. This is—

LADY UTTERWORD. Laziness! You are laziness incarnate. You are selfishness itself. You are the most uninteresting man on earth. You can't even gossip about anything but yourself and your grievances and your ailments and the people who have offended you. [*Turning to Hector*]. Do you know what they call him, Hector?

*Speaking together.*

HECTOR. Please don't tell me.

RANDALL. I'll not stand it—

LADY UTTERWORD. Randall the Rotter: that is his name in good society.

RANDALL [*shouting*]. I'll not bear it, I tell you. Will you listen to me, you infernal—[*he chokes*].

LADY UTTERWORD. Well: go on. What were you going to call me? An infernal what? Which unpleasant animal is it to be this time?

RANDALL [*foaming*]. There is no animal in the world so hateful as a woman can be. You are a maddening devil. Hushabye, you will not believe me when I tell you that I have loved this demon all my life; but God knows I have paid for it [*he sits down in the draughtsman's chair, weeping*].

LADY UTTERWORD [*standing over him with triumphant contempt*]. Cry-baby!

HECTOR [*gravely, coming to him*]. My friend, the Shotover sisters have two strange powers over men. They can make them love; and they can make them cry. Thank your stars that you are not married to one of them.

LADY UTTERWORD [*haughtily*]. And pray, Hector—

HECTOR [*suddenly catching her round the shoulders: swinging her right round him and away from Randall: and gripping her throat with the other hand*]. Ariadne, if you attempt to start on me, I'll choke you: do you hear? The cat-and-mouse game with the other sex is a good game; but I can play your head off at it. [*He throws her, not at all gently, into the big chair, and proceeds, less fiercely but firmly*]. It is true that Napoleon said that woman is the occupation of the idle man. But he added that she is the relaxation of the warrior. Well, I am the warrior. So take care.

LADY UTTERWORD [*not in the least put out, and rather pleased by his violence*]. My dear Hector, I have only done what you asked me to do.

HECTOR. How do you make that out, pray?

LADY UTTERWORD. You called me in to manage Randall, didn't you? You said you couldn't manage him yourself.

HECTOR. Well, what if I did? I did not ask you to drive the man mad.

LADY UTTERWORD. He isn't mad. That's the way to manage him. If you were a mother, you'd understand.

HECTOR. Mother! What are you up to now?

LADY UTTERWORD. It's quite simple. When the children got nerves and were naughty, I smacked them just enough to give them a good cry and a healthy nervous shock. They went to sleep and were quite good afterwards. Well, I can't smack Randall: he is too big; so when he gets nerves and is naughty, I just rag him till he cries. He will be all right now. Look: he is half asleep already [*which is quite true*].

RANDALL [*waking up indignantly*]. I'm not. You are most cruel, Ariadne. [*Sentimentally*]. But I suppose I must forgive you, as usual [*he checks himself in the act of yawning*].

LADY UTTERWORD [*to Hector*]. Is the explanation satisfactory, dread warrior?

HECTOR. Some day I shall kill you, if you go too far. I thought you were a fool.

LADY UTTERWORD [*laughing*]. Everybody does, at first. But I am not such a fool as I look. [*She rises complacently*]. Now, Randall, go to bed. You will be a good boy in the morning.

RANDALL [*only very faintly rebellious*]. I'll go to bed when I like. It isn't ten yet.

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**LADY UTTERWORD.** It is long past ten. See that he goes to bed at once, Hector. [*She goes into the garden*].

**HECTOR.** Is there any slavery on earth viler than this slavery of men to women?

**RANDALL** [*rising resolutely*]. I'll not speak to her tomorrow. I'll not speak to her for another week. I'll give her such a lesson. I'll go straight to bed without bidding her good-night. [*He makes for the door leading to the hall*].

**HECTOR.** You are under a spell, man. Old Shotover sold himself to the devil in Zanzibar. The devil gave him a black witch for a wife; and these two demon daughters are their mystical progeny. I am tied to Hesione's apron-string; but I'm her husband; and if I did go stark staring mad about her, at least we became man and wife. But why should you let yourself be dragged about and beaten by Ariadne as a toy donkey is dragged about and beaten by a child? What do you get by it? Are you her lover?

**RANDALL.** You must not misunderstand me. In a higher sense—in a Platonic sense—

**HECTOR.** Psha! Platonic sense! She makes you her servant; and when pay-day comes round, she bilks you: that is what you mean.

**RANDALL** [*feebly*]. Well, if I don't mind, I don't see what business it is of yours. Besides, I tell you I am going to punish her. You shall see: I know how to deal with women. I'm really very sleepy. Say good-night to Mrs Hushabye for me, will you, like a good chap. Good-night. [*He hurries out*].

**HECTOR.** Poor wretch! Oh women! women! women! [*He lifts his fists in invocation to heaven*]. Fall. Fall and crush. [*He goes out into the garden*].

## ACT III

In the garden, Hector, as he comes out through the glass door of the poop, finds Lady Utterword lying voluptuously in the hammock on the east side of the flagstaff, in the circle of light cast by the electric arc, which is like a moon in its opal globe. Beneath the head of the hammock, a campstool. On the other side of the flagstaff, on the long garden seat, Captain Shotover is asleep, with Ellie beside him, leaning affectionately against him on his right hand. On his left is a deck chair. Behind them in the gloom, Hesione is strolling about with Mangan. It is a fine still night, moonless.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** What a lovely night! It seems made for us.

**HECTOR.** The night takes no interest in us. What are we to the night? [*He sits down moodily in the deck chair*].

**ELLIE** [*dreamily, nestling against the captain*]. Its beauty soaks into my nerves. In the night there is peace for the old and hope for the young.

**HECTOR.** Is that remark your own?

**ELLIE.** No. Only the last thing the captain said before he went to sleep.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** I'm not asleep.

**HECTOR.** Randall is. Also Mr Mazzini Dunn. Mangan, too, probably.

**MANGAN.** No.

**HECTOR.** Oh, you are there. I thought Hesione would have sent you to bed by this time.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*coming to the back of the garden seat, into the light, with Mangan*]. I think I shall. He keeps telling me he has a presentiment that he is going to die. I never met a man so greedy for sympathy.

**MANGAN** [*plaintively*]. But I have a presentiment. I really have. And you wouldn't listen.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** I was listening for something else. There was a sort of splendid drumming in the sky. Did none of you hear it? It came from a distance and then died away.

**MANGAN.** I tell you it was a train.

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MRS HUSHABYE. And I tell you, Alf, there is no train at this hour. The last is nine forty-five.

MANGAN. But a goods train.

MRS HUSHABYE. Not on our little line. They tack a truck on to the passenger train. What can it have been, Hector?

HECTOR. Heaven's threatening growl of disgust at us useless futile creatures. [*Fiercely*]. I tell you, one of two things must happen. Either out of that darkness some new creation will come to supplant us as we have supplanted the animals, or the heavens will fall in thunder and destroy us.

LADY UTTERWORD [*in a cool instructive manner, wallowing comfortably in her hammock*]. We have not supplanted the animals, Hector. Why do you ask heaven to destroy this house, which could be made quite comfortable if Hesione had any notion of how to live? Don't you know what is wrong with it?

HECTOR. We are wrong with it. There is no sense in us. We are useless, dangerous, and ought to be abolished.

LADY UTTERWORD. Nonsense! Hastings told me the very first day he came here, nearly twenty-four years ago, what is wrong with the house.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. What! The numskull said there was something wrong with my house!

LADY UTTERWORD. I said Hastings said it; and he is not in the least a numskull.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. What's wrong with my house?

LADY UTTERWORD. Just what is wrong with a ship, papa. Wasn't it clever of Hastings to see that?

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. The man's a fool. There's nothing wrong with a ship.

LADY UTTERWORD. Yes, there is.

MRS HUSHABYE. But what is it? Don't be aggravating, Addy.

LADY UTTERWORD. Guess.

HECTOR. Demons. Daughters of the witch of Zanzibar. Demons.

LADY UTTERWORD. Not a bit. I assure you, all this house needs to make it a sensible, healthy, pleasant house, with good appetites and sound sleep in it, is horses.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Horses! What rubbish!

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Yes: horses. Why have we never been able to let this house? Because there are no proper stables. Go anywhere in England where there are natural, wholesome, contented, and really nice English people; and what do you always find? That the stables are the real centre of the household; and that if any visitor wants to play the piano the whole room has to be upset before it can be opened, there are so many things piled on it. I never lived until I learned to ride; and I shall never ride really well because I didn't begin as a child. There are only two classes in good society in England: the equestrian classes and the neurotic classes. It isn't mere convention: everybody can see that the people who hunt are the right people and the people who don't are the wrong ones.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** There is some truth in this. My ship made a man of me; and a ship is the horse of the sea.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Exactly how Hastings explained your being a gentleman.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Not bad for a numskull. Bring the man here with you next time: I must talk to him.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Why is Randall such an obvious

rotter? He is well bred; he has been at a public school and a university; he has been in the Foreign Office; he knows the best people and has lived all his life among them. Why is he so unsatisfactory, so contemptible? Why can't he get a valet to stay with him longer than a few months? Just because he is too lazy and pleasure-loving to hunt and shoot. He strums the piano, and sketches, and runs after married women, and reads literary books and poems. He actually plays the flute; but I never let him bring it into my house. If he would only—*[she is interrupted by the melancholy strains of a flute coming from an open window above. She raises herself indignantly in the hammock]*. Randall, you have not gone to bed. Have you been listening? *[The flute replies perty]*. How vulgar! Go to bed instantly, Randall: how dare you? *[The window is slammed down. She subsides]*. How can anyone care for such a creature!

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Addy: do you think Ellie ought to marry poor Alfred merely for his money?

**MANGAN** *[much alarmed]*. What's that? Mrs Hushabye, are my affairs to be discussed like this before everybody?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** I don't think Randall is listening now.

**MANGAN.** Everybody is listening. It isn't right.

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MRS HUSHABYE. But in the dark, what does it matter? Ellie doesn't mind. Do you, Ellie?

ELLIE. Not in the least. What is your opinion, Lady Utterword? You have so much good sense.

MANGAN. But it isn't right. It—[*Mrs Hushabye puts her hand on his mouth*]. Oh, very well.

LADY UTTERWORD. How much money have you, Mr. Mangan?

MANGAN. Really—No: I can't stand this.

LADY UTTERWORD. Nonsense, Mr Mangan! It all turns on your income, doesn't it?

MANGAN. Well, if you come to that, how much money has she?

ELLIE. None.

LADY UTTERWORD. You are answered, Mr Mangan. And now, as you have made Miss Dunn throw her cards on the table, you cannot refuse to show your own.

MRS HUSHABYE. Come, Alf! out with it! How much?

MANGAN [*baited out of all prudence*]. Well, if you want to know, I have no money and never had any.

MRS HUSHABYE. Alfred, you mustn't tell naughty stories.

MANGAN. I'm not telling you stories. I'm telling you the raw truth.

LADY UTTERWORD. Then what do you live on, Mr Mangan?

MANGAN. Travelling expenses. And a trifle of commission.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. What more have any of us but travelling expenses for our life's journey?

MRS HUSHABYE. But you have factories and capital and things?

MANGAN. People think I have. People think I'm an industrial Napoleon. That's why Miss Ellie wants to marry me. But I tell you I have nothing.

ELLIE. Do you mean that the factories are like Marcus's tigers? That they don't exist?

MANGAN. They exist all right enough. But they're not mine.

They belong to syndicates and shareholders and all sorts of lazy good-for-nothing capitalists. I get money from such people to start the factories. I find people like Miss Dunn's father to work them, and keep a tight hand so as to make them pay. Of course I make them keep me going pretty well; but it's a dog's life; and I don't own anything.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Alfred, Alfred, you are making a poor mouth of it to get out of marrying Ellie.

**MANGAN.** I'm telling the truth about my money for the first time in my life; and it's the first time my word has ever been doubted.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** How sad! Why don't you go in for politics, Mr Mangan?

**MANGAN.** Go in for politics! Where have you been living? I am in politics.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** I'm sure I beg your pardon. I never heard of you.

**MANGAN.** Let me tell you, Lady Utterword, that the Prime Minister of this country asked me to join the Government without even going through the nonsense of an election, as the dictator of a great public department.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** As a Conservative or a Liberal?

**MANGAN.** No such nonsense. As a practical business man. [*They all burst out laughing*]. What are you all laughing at?

**MRS HUSHARYE.** Oh, Alfred, Alfred!

**ELLIE.** You! who have to get my father to do everything for you!

**MRS HUSHABYE.** You! who are afraid of your own workmen!

**HECTOR.** You! with whom three women have been playing cat and mouse all the evening!

**LADY UTTERWORD.** You must have given an immense sum to the party funds, Mr Mangan.

**MANGAN.** Not a penny out of my own pocket. The syndicate found the money: they knew how useful I should be to them in the Government.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** This is most interesting and unexpected, Mr Mangan. And what have your administrative achievements been, so far?



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**MANGAN.** Achievements? Well, I don't know what you call achievements; but I've jolly well put a stop to the games of the other fellows in the other departments. Every man of them thought he was going to save the country all by himself, and do me out of the credit and out of my chance of a title. I took good care that if they wouldn't let me do it they shouldn't do it themselves either. I may not know anything about my own machinery; but I know how to stick a ramrod into the other fellow's. And now they all look the biggest fools going.

**HECTOR.** And in heaven's name, what do you look like?

**MANGAN.** I look like the fellow that was too clever for all the others, don't I? If that isn't a triumph of practical business, what is?

**HECTOR.** Is this England, or is it a madhouse?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Do you expect to save the country, Mr Mangan?

**MANGAN.** Well, who else will? Will your Mr Randall save it?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Randall the rotter! Certainly not.

**MANGAN.** Will your brother-in-law save it with his moustache and his fine talk?

**HECTOR.** Yes, if they will let me.

**MANGAN** [*sneering*]. Ah! Will they let you?

**HECTOR.** No. They prefer you.

**MANGAN.** Very well then, as you're in a world where I'm appreciated and you're not, you'd best be civil to me, hadn't you? Who else is there but me?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** There is Hastings. Get rid of your ridiculous sham democracy; and give Hastings the necessary powers, and a good supply of bamboo to bring the British native to his senses: he will save the country with the greatest ease.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** It had better be lost. Any fool can govern with a stick in his hand. I could govern that way. It is not God's way. The man is a numskull.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** The man is worth all of you rolled into one. What do you say, Miss Dunn?

**ELLIE.** I think my father would do very well if people did not put upon him and cheat him and despise him because

he is so good.

**MANGAN** [*contemptuously*]. I think I see Mazzini Dunn getting into parliament or pushing his way into the Government. We've not come to that yet, thank God! What do you say, Mrs Hushabye?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Oh, I say it matters very little which of you governs the country so long as we govern you.

**HECTOR**. We? Who is we, pray?

**MRS HUSHABYE**. The devil's granddaughters, dear. The lovely women.

**HECTOR** [*raising his hands as before*]. Fall, I say, and deliver us from the lures of Satan!

**ELLIE**. There seems to be nothing real in the world except my father and Shakespeare. Marcus's tigers are false; Mr Mangan's millions are false; there is nothing really strong and true about Hesione but her beautiful black hair; and Lady Utterword's is too pretty to be real. The one thing that was left to me was the Captain's seventh degree of concentration; and that turns out to be—

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. Rum.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*placidly*]. A good deal of my hair is quite genuine. The Duchess of Dithering offered me fifty guineas for this [*touching her forehead*] under the impression that it was a transformation; but it is all natural except the color.

**MANGAN** [*wildly*]. Look here: I'm going to take off all my clothes [*he begins tearing off his coat*].

*In consternation.*

**LADY UTTERWORD**. Mr. Mangan!

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. What's that?

**HECTOR**. Ha! Ha! Do. Do.

**ELLIE**. Please don't.

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*catching his arm and stopping him*]. Alfred, for shame! Are you mad?

**MANGAN**. Shame! What shame is there in this house? Let's all strip stark naked. We may as well do the thing thoroughly when we're about it. We've stripped ourselves morally naked: well, let us strip ourselves physically naked as well, and see how we like it. I tell you I can't bear this. I was brought up to be respectable. I don't mind the women dyeing their hair and the men drinking: it's human nature. But it's not human nature to tell everybody about it. Every time one of you opens your mouth I go like this [*he cowers as if to avoid a*

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*missile*], afraid of what will come next. How are we to have any self-respect if we don't keep it up that we're better than we really are?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** I quite sympathize with you, Mr Mangan. I have been through it all; and I know by experience that men and women are delicate plants and must be cultivated under glass. Our family habit of throwing stones in all directions and letting the air in is not only unbearably rude, but positively dangerous. Still, there is no use catching physical colds as well as moral ones; so please keep your clothes on.

**MANGAN.** I'll do as I like: not what you tell me. Am I a child or a grown man? I won't stand this mothering tyranny. I'll go back to the city, where I'm respected and made much of.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Goodbye, Alf. Think of us sometimes in the city. Think of Ellie's youth!

**ELLIE.** Think of Hesione's eyes and hair!

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Think of this garden in which you are not a dog barking to keep the truth out!

**HECTOR.** Think of Lady Utterword's beauty! her good sense! her style!

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Flatterer. Think, Mr. Mangan, whether you can really do any better for yourself elsewhere: that is the essential point, isn't it?

**MANGAN** [*surrendering*]. All right: all right. I'm done. Have it your own way. Only let me alone. I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels when you all start on me like this. I'll stay. I'll marry her. I'll do anything for a quiet life. Are you satisfied now?

**ELLIE.** No. I never really intended to make you marry me, Mr Mangan. Never in the depths of my soul. I only wanted to feel my strength: to know that you could not escape if I chose to take you.

**MANGAN** [*indignantly*]. What! Do you mean to say you are going to throw me over after my acting so handsome?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** I should not be too hasty, Miss Dunn. You can throw Mr Mangan over at any time up to the last moment. Very few men in his position go bankrupt. You can live very comfortably on his reputation for immense wealth.

**ELLIE.** I cannot commit bigamy, Lady Utterword.

*Exclaiming together.*

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Bigamy! Whatever on earth are you

talking about, Ellie?

LADY UTTERWORD. Bigamy! What do you mean, Miss Dunn?

MANGAN. Bigamy! Do you mean to say you're married already?

HECTOR. Bigamy! This is some enigma.

ELLIE. Only half an hour ago I became Captain Shotover's white wife.

MRS HUSHABYE. Ellie! What nonsense! Where?

ELLIE. In heaven, where all true marriages are made.

LADY UTTERWORD. Really, Miss Dunn! Really, papa!

MANGAN. He told me I was too old! And him a mummy!

HECTOR [*quoting Shelley*].

“Their altar the grassy earth outspreads  
And their priest the muttering wind.”

ELLIE. Yes: I, Ellie Dunn, give my broken heart and my strong sound soul to its natural captain, my spiritual husband and second father.

*She draws the captain's arm through hers, and pats his hand.  
The captain remains fast asleep.*

MRS HUSHABYE. Oh, that's very clever of you, pettikins. Very clever. Alfred, you could never have lived up to Ellie. You must be content with a little share of me.

MANGAN [*sniffing and wiping his eyes*]. It isn't kind—[*his emotion chokes him*].

LADY UTTERWORD. You are well out of it, Mr Mangan. Miss Dunn is the most conceited young woman I have met since I came back to England.

MRS HUSHABYE. Oh, Ellie isn't conceited. Are you, pettikins?

ELLIE. I know my strength now, Hesione.

MANGAN. Brazen, I call you. Brazen.

MRS HUSHABYE. Tut, tut, Alfred: don't be rude. Don't you feel how lovely this marriage night is, made in heaven? Aren't you happy, you and Hector? Open your eyes: Addy and Ellie look beautiful enough to please the most fastidious man: we live and love and have not a care in the world. We women have managed all that for you. Why in the name of

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common sense do you go on as if you were two miserable wretches?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** I tell you happiness is no good. You can be happy when you are only half alive. I am happier now I am half dead than ever I was in my prime. But there is no blessing on my happiness.

**ELLIE** [*her face lighting up*]. Life with a blessing! that is what I want. Now I know the real reason why I couldn't marry Mr Mangan: there would be no blessing on our marriage. There is a blessing on my broken heart. There is a blessing on your beauty, Hesione. There is a blessing on your father's spirit. Even on the lies of Marcus there is a blessing; but on Mr Mangan's money there is none.

**MANGAN.** I don't understand a word of that.

**ELLIE.** Neither do I. But I know it means something.

**MANGAN.** Don't say there was any difficulty about the blessing. I was ready to get a bishop to marry us.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Isn't he a fool, pettikins?

**HECTOR** [*fiercely*]. Do not scorn the man. We are all fools.

*Mazzini, in pyjamas and a richly colored silk dressing gown, comes from the house, on Lady Utterword's side.*

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Oh! here comes the only man who ever resisted me. What's the matter, Mr Dunn? Is the house on fire?

**MAZZINI.** Oh, no: nothing's the matter: but really it's impossible to go to sleep with such an interesting conversation going on under one's window, and on such a beautiful night too. I just had to come down and join you all. What has it all been about?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Oh, wonderful things, soldier of freedom.

**HECTOR.** For example, Mangan, as a practical business man, has tried to undress himself and has failed ignominiously; whilst you, as an idealist, have succeeded brilliantly.

**MAZZINI.** I hope you don't mind my being like this, Mrs Hushabye. [*He sits down on the campstool*].

**MRS HUSHABYE.** On the contrary, I could wish you always like that.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Your daughter's match is off, Mr

Dunn. It seems that Mr Mangan, whom we all supposed to be a man of property, owns absolutely nothing.

**MAZZINI.** Well, of course I knew that, Lady Utterword. But if people believe in him and are always giving him money, whereas they don't believe in me and never give me any, how can I ask poor Ellie to depend on what I can do for her?

**MANGAN.** Don't you run away with this idea that I have nothing. I—

**HECTOR.** Oh, don't explain. We understand. You have a couple of thousand pounds in exchequer bills, 50,000 shares worth tenpence a dozen, and half a dozen tabloids of cyanide of potassium to poison yourself with when you are found out. That's the reality of your millions.

**MAZZINI.** Oh no, no, no. He is quite honest: the businesses are genuine and perfectly legal.

**HECTOR** [*disgusted*]. Yah! Not even a great swindler!

**MANGAN.** So you think. But I've been too many for some honest men, for all that.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** There is no pleasing you, Mr Mangan. You are determined to be neither rich nor poor,

honest nor dishonest.

**MANGAN.** There you go again. Ever since I came into this silly house I have been made to look like a fool, though I'm as good a man in this house as in the city.

**ELLIE** [*musically*]. Yes: this silly house, this strangely happy house, this agonizing house, this house without foundations. I shall call it Heartbreak House.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Stop, Ellie; or I shall howl like an animal.

**MANGAN** [*breaks into a low snivelling*]!!!

**MRS HUSAHBYE.** There! you have set Alfred off.

**ELLIE.** I like him best when he is howling.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Silence! [*Mangan subsides into silence*]. I say, let the heart break in silence.

**HECTOR.** Do you accept that name for your house?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** It is not my house: it is only my kennel.

## Heartbreak House

**HECTOR.** We have been too long here. We do not live in this house: we haunt it.

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*heart torn*]. It is dreadful to think how you have been here all these years while I have gone round the world. I escaped young; but it has drawn me back. It wants to break my heart too. But it shan't. I have left you and it behind. It was silly of me to come back. I felt sentimental about papa and Hesione and the old place. I felt them calling to me.

**MAZZINI.** But what a very natural and kindly and charming human feeling, Lady Utterword!

**LADY UTTERWORD.** So I thought, Mr Dunn. But I know now that it was only the last of my influenza. I found that I was not remembered and not wanted.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** You left because you did not want us. Was there no heartbreak in that for your father? You tore yourself up by the roots; and the ground healed up and brought forth fresh plants and forgot you. What right had you to come back and probe old wounds?

**MRS HUSHABYE.** You were a complete stranger to me at first, Addy; but now I feel as if you had never been away.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Thank you, Hesione; but the influenza is quite cured. The place may be Heartbreak House to you, Miss Dunn, and to this gentleman from the city who seems to have so little self-control; but to me it is only a very ill-regulated and rather untidy villa without any stables.

**HECTOR.** Inhabited by—?

**ELLIE.** A crazy old sea captain and a young singer who adores him.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** A sluttish female, trying to stave off a double chin and an elderly spread, vainly wooing a born soldier of freedom.

**MAZZINI.** Oh, really, Mrs Hushabye—

**MANGAN.** A member of His Majesty's Government that everybody sets down as a nincompoop: don't forget him, Lady Utterword.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** And a very fascinating gentleman whose chief occupation is to be married to my sister.

**HECTOR.** All heartbroken imbeciles.

**MAZZINI.** Oh no. Surely, if I may say so, rather a favorable

specimen of what is best in our English culture. You are very charming people, most advanced, unprejudiced, frank, humane, unconventional, democratic, free-thinking, and everything that is delightful to thoughtful people.

**MRS HUSHABYE.** You do us proud, Mazzini.

**MAZZINI.** I am not flattering, really. Where else could I feel perfectly at ease in my pyjamas? I sometimes dream that I am in very distinguished society, and suddenly I have nothing on but my pyjamas! Sometimes I haven't even pyjamas. And I always feel overwhelmed with confusion. But here, I don't mind in the least: it seems quite natural.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** An infallible sign that you are now not in really distinguished society, Mr Dunn. If you were in my house, you would feel embarrassed.

**MAZZINI.** I shall take particular care to keep out of your house, Lady Utterword.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** You will be quite wrong, Mr Dunn. I should make you very comfortable; and you would not have the trouble and anxiety of wondering whether you should wear your purple and gold or your green and crimson dressing-gown at dinner. You complicate life instead of simplifying it by doing these ridiculous things.

**ELLIE.** Your house is not Heartbreak House: is it, Lady Utterword?

**HECTOR.** Yet she breaks hearts, easy as her house is. That poor devil upstairs with his flute howls when she twists his heart, just as Mangan howls when my wife twists his.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** That is because Randall has nothing to do but have his heart broken. It is a change from having his head shampooed. Catch anyone breaking Hastings' heart!

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** The numskull wins, after all.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** I shall go back to my numskull with the greatest satisfaction when I am tired of you all, clever as you are.

**MANGAN** [*buffily*]. I never set up to be clever.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** I forgot you, Mr Mangan.

**MANGAN.** Well, I don't see that quite, either.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** You may not be clever, Mr Mangan; but you are successful.



## Heartbreak House

**MANGAN.** But I don't want to be regarded merely as a successful man. I have an imagination like anyone else. I have a presentiment

**MRS HUSHABYE.** Oh, you are impossible, Alfred. Here I am devoting myself to you; and you think of nothing but your ridiculous presentiment. You bore me. Come and talk poetry to me under the stars. [*She drags him away into the darkness*].

**MANGAN** [*tearfully, as he disappears*]. Yes: it's all very well to make fun of me; but if you only knew—

**HECTOR** [*impatiently*]. How is all this going to end?

**MAZZINI.** It won't end, Mr Hushabye. Life doesn't end: it goes on.

**ELLIE.** Oh, it can't go on forever. I'm always expecting something. I don't know what it is; but life must come to a point sometime.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** The point for a young woman of your age is a baby.

**HECTOR.** Yes, but, damn it, I have the same feeling; and I can't have a baby.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** By deputy, Hector.

**HECTOR.** But I have children. All that is over and done with for me: and yet I too feel that this can't last. We sit here talking, and leave everything to Mangan and to chance and to the devil. Think of the powers of destruction that Mangan and his mutual admiration gang wield! It's madness: it's like giving a torpedo to a badly brought up child to play at earthquakes with.

**MAZZINI.** I know. I used often to think about that when I was young.

**HECTOR.** Think! What's the good of thinking about it? Why didn't you do something?

**MAZZINI.** But I did. I joined societies and made speeches and wrote pamphlets. That was all I could do. But, you know, though the people in the societies thought they knew more than Mangan, most of them wouldn't have joined if they had known as much. You see they had never had any money to handle or any men to manage. Every year I expected a revolution, or some frightful smash-up: it seemed impossible that we could blunder and muddle on any longer. But nothing happened, except, of course, the usual poverty and crime and drink that we are used to. Nothing ever does happen. It's amazing how well we get along, all things considered.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Perhaps somebody cleverer than you and Mr Mangan was at work all the time.

**MAZZINI.** Perhaps so. Though I was brought up not to believe in anything, I often feel that there is a great deal to be said for the theory of an over-ruling Providence, after all.

**LADY UTTERWORD.** Providence! I meant Hastings.

**MAZZINI.** Oh, I beg your pardon, Lady Utterword.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Every drunken skipper trusts to Providence. But one of the ways of Providence with drunken skippers is to run them on the rocks.

**MAZZINI.** Very true, no doubt, at sea. But in politics, I assure you, they only run into jellyfish. Nothing happens.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** At sea nothing happens to the sea. Nothing happens to the sky. The sun comes up from the east and goes down to the west. The moon grows from a sickle to an arc lamp, and comes later and later until she is lost in the light as other things are lost in the darkness. After the typhoon, the flying-fish glitter in the sunshine like birds. It's amazing how they get along, all things considered. Nothing happens, except something not worth mentioning.

**ELLIE.** What is that, O Captain, O my captain?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*savagely*]. Nothing but the smash of the drunken skipper's ship on the rocks, the splintering of her rotten timbers, the tearing of her rusty plates, the drowning of the crew like rats in a trap.

**ELLIE.** Moral: don't take rum.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER** [*vehemently*]. That is a lie, child. Let a man drink ten barrels of rum a day, he is not a drunken skipper until he is a drifting skipper. Whilst he can lay his course and stand on his bridge and steer it, he is no drunkard. It is the man who lies drinking in his bunk and trusts to Providence that I call the drunken skipper, though he drank nothing but the waters of the River Jordan.

**ELLIE.** Splendid! And you haven't had a drop for an hour. You see you don't need it: your own spirit is not dead.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Echoes: nothing but echoes. The last shot was fired years ago.

**HECTOR.** And this ship that we are all in? This soul's prison we call England?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** The captain is in his bunk, drink-

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ing bottled ditch-water; and the crew is gambling in the fore-castle. She will strike and sink and split. Do you think the laws of God will be suspended in favor of England because you were born in it?

**HECTOR.** Well, I don't mean to be drowned like a rat in a trap. I still have the will to live. What am I to do?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Do? Nothing simpler. Learn your business as an Englishman.

**HECTOR.** And what may my business as an Englishman be, pray?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Navigation. Learn it and live; or leave it and be damned.

**ELLIE.** Quiet, quiet: you'll tire yourself.

**MAZZINI.** I thought all that once, Captain; but I assure you nothing will happen.

*A dull distant explosion is heard.*

**HECTOR** [*starting up*]. What was that?

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Something happening [he blows

his whistle]. Breakers ahead!

*The light goes out.*

**HECTOR** [*furiously*]. Who put that light out? Who dared put that light out?

**NURSE GUINNESS** [*running in from the house to the middle of the esplanade*]. I did, sir. The police have telephoned to say we'll be summoned if we don't put that light out: it can be seen for miles.

**HECTOR.** It shall be seen for a hundred miles [*he dashes into the house*].

**NURSE GUINNESS.** The Rectory is nothing but a heap of bricks, they say. Unless we can give the Rector a bed he has nowhere to lay his head this night.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** The Church is on the rocks, breaking up. I told him it would unless it headed for God's open sea.

**NURSE GUINNESS.** And you are all to go down to the cellars.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** Go there yourself, you and all the crew. Batten down the hatches.

**NURSE GUINNESS.** And hide beside the coward I married! I'll go on the roof first. [*The lamp lights up again*]. There! Mr Hushabye's turned it on again.

**THE BURGLAR** [*hurrying in and appealing to Nurse Guinness*]. Here: where's the way to that gravel pit? The boot-boy says there's a cave in the gravel pit. Them cellars is no use. Where's the gravel pit, Captain?

**NURSE GUINNESS.** Go straight on past the flagstaff until you fall into it and break your dirty neck. [*She pushes him contemptuously towards the flagstaff, and herself goes to the foot of the hammock and waits there, as it were by Ariadne's cradle*].

*Another and louder explosion is heard. The burglar stops and stands trembling.*

**ELLIE** [*rising*]. That was nearer.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER.** The next one will get us. [*He rises*]. Stand by, all hands, for judgment.

**THE BURGLAR.** Oh my Lordy God! [*He rushes away frantically past the flagstaff into the gloom*].

**MRS HUSHABYE** [*emerging panting from the darkness*]. Who was that running away? [*She comes to Ellie*]. Did you

hear the explosions? And the sound in the sky: it's splendid: it's like an orchestra: it's like Beethoven.

**ELLIE.** By thunder, Hesione: it is Beethoven.

*She and Hesione throw themselves into one another's arms in wild excitement. The light increases.*

**MAZZINI** [*anxiously*]. The light is getting brighter.

**NURSE GUINNESS** [*looking up at the house*]. It's Mr Hushabye turning on all the lights in the house and tearing down the curtains.

**RANDALL** [*rushing in in his pyjamas, distractedly waving a flute*]. Ariadne, my soul, my precious, go down to the cellars: I beg and implore you, go down to the cellars!

**LADY UTTERWORD** [*quite composed in her hammock*]. The governor's wife in the cellars with the servants! Really, Randall!

**RANDALL.** But what shall I do if you are killed?

**LADY UTTERWORD.** You will probably be killed, too, Randall. Now play your flute to show that you are not afraid; and be good. Play us "Keep the home fires burning."

## Heartbreak House

**NURSE GUINNESS** [*grimly*]. *They'll* keep the home fires burning for us: them up there.

**RANDALL** [*having tried to play*]. My lips are trembling. I can't get a sound.

**MAZZINI**. I hope poor Mangan is safe.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. He is hiding in the cave in the gravel pit.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. My dynamite drew him there. It is the hand of God.

**HECTOR** [*returning from the house and striding across to his former place*]. There is not half light enough. We should be blazing to the skies.

**ELLIE** [*tense with excitement*]. Set fire to the house, Marcus.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. My house! No.

**HECTOR**. I thought of that; but it would not be ready in time.

**CAPTAIN SHOTOVER**. The judgment has come. Courage will not save you; but it will show that your souls are still live.

**MRS HUSHABYE**. Sh-sh! Listen: do you hear it now? It's magnificent.

*They all turn away from the house and look up, listening.*

**HECTOR** [*gravely*]. Miss Dunn, you can do no good here. We of this house are only moths flying into the candle. You had better go down to the cellar.

**ELLIE** [*scornfully*]. I don't think.

**MAZZINI**. Ellie, dear, there is no disgrace in going to the cellar. An officer would order his soldiers to take cover. Mr Hushabye is behaving like an amateur. Mangan and the burglar are acting very sensibly; and it is they who will survive.

**ELLIE**. Let them. I shall behave like an amateur. But why should you run any risk?

**MAZZINI**. Think of the risk those poor fellows up there are running!

**NURSE GUINNESS**. Think of them, indeed, the murdering blackguards! What next?

*A terrific explosion shakes the earth. They reel back into their seats, or clutch the nearest support. They hear the falling of the*

*shattered glass from the windows.*

MAZZINI. Is anyone hurt?

HECTOR. Where did it fall?

NURSE GUINNESS [*in hideous triumph*]. Right in the gravel pit: I seen it. Serve un right! I seen it [*she runs away towards the gravel pit, laughing harshly*].

HECTOR. One husband gone.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Thirty pounds of good dynamite wasted.

MAZZINI. Oh, poor Mangan!

HECTOR. Are you immortal that you need pity him? Our turn next.

*They wait in silence and intense expectation. Hesione and Ellie hold each other's hand tight.*

*A distant explosion is heard.*

MRS HUSHABYE [*relaxing her grip*]. Oh! they have passed us.

LADY UTTERWORD. The danger is over, Randall. Go to bed.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Turn in, all hands. The ship is safe. [*He sits down and goes asleep*].

ELLIE [*disappointedly*]. Safe!

HECTOR [*disgustedly*]. Yes, safe. And how damnably dull the world has become again suddenly! [*he sits down*].

MAZZINI [*sitting down*]. I was quite wrong, after all. It is we who have survived; and Mangan and the burglar—

HECTOR. —the two burglars—

LADY UTTERWORD. —the two practical men of business—

MAZZINI. —both gone. And the poor clergyman will have to get a new house.

MRS HUSHABYE. But what a glorious experience! I hope they'll come again tomorrow night.

ELLIE [*radiant at the prospect*]. Oh, I hope so.

*Randall at last succeeds in keeping the home fires burning on his flute.*

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# THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE

By

Bernard Shaw

A Penn State Electronic Classics Series Publication



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# THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE

By

Bernard Shaw

## ACT I

At the most wretched hour between a black night and a wintry morning in the year 1777, Mrs. Dudgeon, of New Hampshire, is sitting up in the kitchen and general dwelling room of her farm house on the outskirts of the town of Websterbridge. She is not a prepossessing woman. No woman looks her best after sitting up all night; and Mrs. Dudgeon's face, even at its best, is grimly trenched by the channels into which the barren forms and observances of a dead Puritanism can pen a bitter temper and a fierce pride. She is an

elderly matron who has worked hard and got nothing by it except dominion and detestation in her sordid home, and an unquestioned reputation for piety and respectability among her neighbors, to whom drink and debauchery are still so much more tempting than religion and rectitude, that they conceive goodness simply as self-denial. This conception is easily extended to others—denial, and finally generalized as covering anything disagreeable. So Mrs. Dudgeon, being exceedingly disagreeable, is held to be exceedingly good. Short of flat felony, she enjoys complete license except for amiable weaknesses of any sort, and is consequently, without knowing it, the most licentious woman in the parish on the strength of never having broken the seventh commandment or missed a Sunday at the Presbyterian church.

The year 1777 is the one in which the passions roused of the breaking off of the American colonies from England, more by their own weight than their own will, boiled up to shooting point, the shooting being idealized to the English mind as suppression of rebellion and maintenance of British dominion, and to the American as defence of liberty, resistance to tyranny, and selfsacrifice on the altar of the Rights

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of Man. Into the merits of these idealizations it is not here necessary to inquire: suffice it to say, without prejudice, that they have convinced both Americans and English that the most high minded course for them to pursue is to kill as many of one another as possible, and that military operations to that end are in full swing, morally supported by confident requests from the clergy of both sides for the blessing of God on their arms.

Under such circumstances many other women besides this disagreeable Mrs. Dudgeon find themselves sitting up all night waiting for news. Like her, too, they fall asleep towards morning at the risk of nodding themselves into the kitchen fire. Mrs. Dudgeon sleeps with a shawl over her head, and her feet on a broad fender of iron laths, the step of the domestic altar of the fireplace, with its huge hobs and boiler, and its hinged arm above the smoky mantel-shelf for roasting. The plain kitchen table is opposite the fire, at her elbow, with a candle on it in a tin sconce. Her chair, like all the others in the room, is uncushioned and unpainted; but as it has a round railed back and a seat conventionally moulded to the sitter's curves, it is comparatively a chair of state. The

room has three doors, one on the same side as the fireplace, near the corner, leading to the best bedroom; one, at the opposite end of the opposite wall, leading to the scullery and washhouse; and the house door, with its latch, heavy lock, and clumsy wooden bar, in the front wall, between the window in its middle and the corner next the bedroom door. Between the door and the window a rack of pegs suggests to the deductive observer that the men of the house are all away, as there are no hats or coats on them. On the other side of the window the clock hangs on a nail, with its white wooden dial, black iron weights, and brass pendulum. Between the clock and the corner, a big cupboard, locked, stands on a dwarf dresser full of common crockery.

On the side opposite the fireplace, between the door and the corner, a shamelessly ugly black horsehair sofa stands against the wall. An inspection of its stridulous surface shows that Mrs. Dudgeon is not alone. A girl of sixteen or seventeen has fallen asleep on it. She is a wild, timid looking creature with black hair and tanned skin. Her frock, a scanty garment, is rent, weatherstained, berrystained, and by no means scrupulously clean. It hangs on her with a freedom

which, taken with her brown legs and bare feet, suggests no great stock of underclothing.

Suddenly there comes a tapping at the door, not loud enough to wake the sleepers. Then knocking, which disturbs Mrs. Dudgeon a little. Finally the latch is tried, whereupon she springs up at once.

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*threateningly*). Well, why don't you open the door? (*She sees that the girl is asleep and immediately raises a clamor of heartfelt vexation.*) Well, dear, dear me! Now this is—(*shaking her*) wake up, wake up: do you hear?

**THE GIRL** (*sitting up*). What is it?

**MRS. DUDGEON**. Wake up; and be ashamed of yourself, you unfeeling sinful girl, falling asleep like that, and your father hardly cold in his grave.

**THE GIRL** (*half asleep still*). I didn't mean to. I dropped off—

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*cutting her short*). Oh yes, you've plenty of excuses, I daresay. Dropped off! (*Fiercely, as the knocking recommences.*) Why don't you get up and let your uncle in? after me waiting up all night for him! (*She pushes her rudely*

*off the sofa.*) There: I'll open the door: much good you are to wait up. Go and mend that fire a bit.

*The girl, cowed and wretched, goes to the fire and puts a log on. Mrs. Dudgeon unbars the door and opens it, letting into the stuffy kitchen a little of the freshness and a great deal of the chill of the dawn, also her second son Christy, a fattish, stupid, fair-haired, round-faced man of about 22, muffled in a plaid shawl and grey overcoat. He hurries, shivering, to the fire, leaving Mrs. Dudgeon to shut the door.*

**CHRISTY** (*at the fire*). F—f—f! but it is cold. (Seeing the girl, and staring lumpishly at her.) Why, who are you?

**THE GIRL** (*shyly*). Essie.

**MRS. DUDGEON**. Oh you may well ask. (*To Essie.*) Go to your room, child, and lie down since you haven't feeling enough to keep you awake. Your history isn't fit for your own ears to hear.

**ESSIE**. I—

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*peremptorily*). Don't answer me, Miss; but show your obedience by doing what I tell you. (*Essie, almost in tears, crosses the room to the door near the sofa.*) And don't forget your prayers. (*Essie goes out.*) She'd have gone to

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bed last night just as if nothing had happened if I'd let her.

**CHRISTY** (*phlegmatically*). Well, she can't be expected to feel Uncle Peter's death like one of the family.

**MRS. DUDGEON**. What are you talking about, child? Isn't she his daughter—the punishment of his wickedness and shame? (*She assaults her chair by sitting down.*)

**CHRISTY** (*staring*). Uncle Peter's daughter!

**MRS. DUDGEON**. Why else should she be here? D'ye think I've not had enough trouble and care put upon me bringing up my own girls, let alone you and your good-for-nothing brother, without having your uncle's bastards—

**CHRISTY** (*interrupting her with an apprehensive glance at the door by which Essie went out*). Sh! She may hear you.

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*raising her voice*). Let her hear me. People who fear God don't fear to give the devil's work its right name. (*Christy, soullessly indifferent to the strife of Good and Evil, stares at the fire, warming himself.*) Well, how long are you going to stare there like a stuck pig? What news have you for me?

**CHRISTY** (*taking off his hat and shawl and going to the rack*

*to hang them up*). The minister is to break the news to you. He'll be here presently.

**MRS. DUDGEON**. Break what news?

**CHRISTY** (*standing on tiptoe, from boyish habit, to hang his hat up, though he is quite tall enough to reach the peg, and speaking with callous placidity, considering the nature of the announcement*). Father's dead too.

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*stupent*). Your father!

**CHRISTY** (*sulkily, coming back to the fire and warming himself again, attending much more to the fire than to his mother*). Well, it's not my fault. When we got to Nevinstown we found him ill in bed. He didn't know us at first. The minister sat up with him and sent me away. He died in the night.

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*bursting into dry angry tears*). Well, I do think this is hard on me—very hard on me. His brother, that was a disgrace to us all his life, gets hanged on the public gallows as a rebel; and your father, instead of staying at home where his duty was, with his own family, goes after him and dies, leaving everything on my shoulders. After sending this girl to me to take care of, too! (*She plucks her shawl vexedly over her ears.*) It's sinful, so it is; downright sinful.

**CHRISTY** (*with a slow, bovine cheerfulness, after a pause*). I think it's going to be a fine morning, after all.

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*railing at him*). A fine morning! And your father newly dead! Where's your feelings, child?

**CHRISTY** (*obstinately*). Well, I didn't mean any harm. I suppose a man may make a remark about the weather even if his father's dead.

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*bitterly*). A nice comfort my children are to me! One son a fool, and the other a lost sinner that's left his home to live with smugglers and gypsies and villains, the scum of the earth!

*Someone knocks.*

**CHRISTY** (*without moving*). That's the minister.

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*sharply*). Well, aren't you going to let Mr. Anderson in?

*Christy goes sheepishly to the door. Mrs. Dudgeon buries her face in her hands, as it is her duty as a widow to be overcome with grief. Christy opens the door, and admits the minister, Anthony Anderson, a shrewd, genial, ready Presbyterian divine of about 50, with something of the authority of his profession in*

*his bearing. But it is an altogether secular authority, sweetened by a conciliatory, sensible manner not at all suggestive of a quite thoroughgoing other-worldliness. He is a strong, healthy man, too, with a thick, sanguine neck; and his keen, cheerful mouth cuts into somewhat fleshy corners. No doubt an excellent parson, but still a man capable of making the most of this world, and perhaps a little apologetically conscious of getting on better with it than a sound Presbyterian ought.*

**ANDERSON** (*to Christy, at the door, looking at Mrs. Dudgeon whilst he takes off his cloak*). Have you told her?

**CHRISTY**. She made me. (*He shuts the door; yawns; and loafes across to the sofa where he sits down and presently drops off to sleep.*)

*Anderson looks compassionately at Mrs. Dudgeon. Then he hangs his cloak and hat on the rack. Mrs. Dudgeon dries her eyes and looks up at him.*

**ANDERSON**. Sister: the Lord has laid his hand very heavily upon you.

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*with intensely recalcitrant resignation*). It's His will, I suppose; and I must bow to it. But I do think it hard. What call had Timothy to go to Springtown, and remind everybody that he belonged to a man that was being

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hanged?—and (*spitefully*) that deserved it, if ever a man did.

ANDERSON (*gently*). They were brothers, Mrs. Dudgeon.

MRS. DUDGEON. Timothy never acknowledged him as his brother after we were married: he had too much respect for me to insult me with such a brother. Would such a selfish wretch as Peter have come thirty miles to see Timothy hanged, do you think? Not thirty yards, not he. However, I must bear my cross as best I may: least said is soonest mended.

ANDERSON (*very grave, coming down to the fire to stand with his back to it*). Your eldest son was present at the execution, Mrs. Dudgeon.

MRS. DUDGEON (*disagreeably surprised*). Richard?

ANDERSON (*nodding*). Yes.

MRS. DUDGEON (*vindictively*). Let it be a warning to him. He may end that way himself, the wicked, dissolute, godless—(*she suddenly stops; her voice fails; and she asks, with evident dread*) Did Timothy see him?

ANDERSON. Yes.

MRS. DUDGEON (*holding her breath*). Well?

ANDERSON. He only saw him in the crowd: they did not speak. (*Mrs. Dudgeon, greatly relieved, exhales the pent up breath and sits at her ease again.*) Your husband was greatly touched and impressed by his brother's awful death. (*Mrs. Dudgeon sneers. Anderson breaks off to demand with some indignation*) Well, wasn't it only natural, Mrs. Dudgeon? He softened towards his prodigal son in that moment. He sent for him to come to see him.

MRS. DUDGEON (*her alarm renewed*). Sent for Richard!

ANDERSON. Yes; but Richard would not come. He sent his father a message; but I'm sorry to say it was a wicked message—an awful message.

MRS. DUDGEON. What was it?

ANDERSON. That he would stand by his wicked uncle, and stand against his good parents, in this world and the next.

MRS. DUDGEON (*implacably*). He will be punished for it. He will be punished for it—in both worlds.

ANDERSON. That is not in our hands, Mrs. Dudgeon.

MRS. DUDGEON. Did I say it was, Mr. Anderson. We are

told that the wicked shall be punished. Why should we do our duty and keep God's law if there is to be no difference made between us and those who follow their own likings and dislikings, and make a jest of us and of their Maker's word?

ANDERSON. Well, Richard's earthly father has been merciful and his heavenly judge is the father of us all.

MRS. DUDGEON (*forgetting herself*). Richard's earthly father was a softheaded—

ANDERSON (*shocked*). Oh!

MRS. DUDGEON (*with a touch of shame*). Well, I am Richard's mother. If I am against him who has any right to be for him? (*Trying to conciliate him.*) Won't you sit down, Mr. Anderson? I should have asked you before; but I'm so troubled.

ANDERSON. Thank you— (*He takes a chair from beside the fireplace, and turns it so that he can sit comfortably at the fire. When he is seated he adds, in the tone of a man who knows that he is opening a difficult subject.*) Has Christy told you about the new will?

MRS. DUDGEON (*all her fears returning*). The new will!

Did Timothy—? (*She breaks off, gasping, unable to complete the question.*)

ANDERSON. Yes. In his last hours he changed his mind.

MRS. DUDGEON (*white with intense rage*). And you let him rob me?

ANDERSON. I had no power to prevent him giving what was his to his own son.

MRS. DUDGEON. He had nothing of his own. His money was the money I brought him as my marriage portion. It was for me to deal with my own money and my own son. He dare not have done it if I had been with him; and well he knew it. That was why he stole away like a thief to take advantage of the law to rob me by making a new will behind my back. The more shame on you, Mr. Anderson,—you, a minister of the gospel—to act as his accomplice in such a crime.

ANDERSON (*rising*). I will take no offence at what you say in the first bitterness of your grief.

MRS. DUDGEON (*contemptuously*). Grief!

ANDERSON. Well, of your disappointment, if you can find it in your heart to think that the better word.



## The Devil's Disciple

**MRS. DUDGEON.** My heart! My heart! And since when, pray, have you begun to hold up our hearts as trustworthy guides for us?

**ANDERSON** (*rather guiltily*). I—er—

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*vehemently*). Don't lie, Mr. Anderson. We are told that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. My heart belonged, not to Timothy, but to that poor wretched brother of his that has just ended his days with a rope round his neck—aye, to Peter Dudgeon. You know it: old Eli Hawkins, the man to whose pulpit you succeeded, though you are not worthy to loose his shoe latchet, told it you when he gave over our souls into your charge. He warned me and strengthened me against my heart, and made me marry a Godfearing man—as he thought. What else but that discipline has made me the woman I am? And you, you who followed your heart in your marriage, you talk to me of what I find in my heart. Go home to your pretty wife, man; and leave me to my prayers. (*She turns from him and leans with her elbows on the table, brooding over her wrongs and taking no further notice of him.*)

**ANDERSON** (*willing enough to escape*). The Lord forbid that I should come between you and the source of all comfort! (*He goes to the rack for his coat and hat.*)

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*without looking at him*). The Lord will know what to forbid and what to allow without your help.

**ANDERSON.** And whom to forgive, I hope—Eli Hawkins and myself, if we have ever set up our preaching against His law. (*He fastens his cloak, and is now ready to go.*) Just one word—on necessary business, Mrs. Dudgeon. There is the reading of the will to be gone through; and Richard has a right to be present. He is in the town; but he has the grace to say that he does not want to force himself in here.

**MRS. DUDGEON.** He shall come here. Does he expect us to leave his father's house for his convenience? Let them all come, and come quickly, and go quickly. They shall not make the will an excuse to shirk half their day's work. I shall be ready, never fear.

**ANDERSON** (*coming back a step or two*). Mrs. Dudgeon: I used to have some little influence with you. When did I lose it?

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*still without turning to him*). When you married for love. Now you're answered.

**ANDERSON.** Yes: I am answered. (*He goes out, musing.*)

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*to herself, thinking of her husband*). Thief! Thief!! (*She shakes herself angrily out of the chair; throws*

back the shawl from her head; and sets to work to prepare the room for the reading of the will, beginning by replacing Anderson's chair against the wall, and pushing back her own to the window. Then she calls, in her hard, driving, wrathful way) Christy. (*No answer: he is fast asleep.*) Christy. (*She shakes him roughly.*) Get up out of that; and be ashamed of yourself—sleeping, and your father dead! (*She returns to the table; puts the candle on the mantelshelf; and takes from the table drawer a red table cloth which she spreads.*)

**CHRISTY** (*rising reluctantly*). Well, do you suppose we are never going to sleep until we are out of mourning?

**MRS. DUDGEON**. I want none of your sulks. Here: help me to set this table. (*They place the table in the middle of the room, with Christy's end towards the fireplace and Mrs. Dudgeon's towards the sofa. Christy drops the table as soon as possible, and goes to the fire, leaving his mother to make the final adjustments of its position.*) We shall have the minister back here with the lawyer and all the family to read the will before you have done toasting yourself. Go and wake that girl; and then light the stove in the shed: you can't have your breakfast here. And mind you wash yourself, and make yourself fit to receive the company. (*She punctuates these orders by going to the cupboard; unlocking it; and producing a decanter of wine, which has no doubt stood there untouched since the last state occasion in the family, and some glasses, which she sets on*

*the table. Also two green ware plates, on one of which she puts a barmbrack with a knife beside it. On the other she shakes some biscuits out of a tin, putting back one or two, and counting the rest.*) Now mind: there are ten biscuits there: let there be ten there when I come back after dressing myself. And keep your fingers off the raisins in that cake. And tell Essie the same. I suppose I can trust you to bring in the case of stuffed birds without breaking the glass? (*She replaces the tin in the cupboard, which she locks, pocketing the key carefully.*)

**CHRISTY** (*lingering at the fire*). You'd better put the inkstand instead, for the lawyer.

**Mrs. DUDGEON**. That's no answer to make to me, sir. Go and do as you're told. (*Christy turns sullenly to obey.*) Stop: take down that shutter before you go, and let the daylight in: you can't expect me to do all the heavy work of the house with a great heavy lout like you idling about.

*Christy takes the window bar out of its damps, and puts it aside; then opens the shutter, showing the grey morning. Mrs. Dudgeon takes the sconce from the mantelshelf; blows out the candle; extinguishes the snuff by pinching it with her fingers, first licking them for the purpose; and replaces the sconce on the shelf.*

**CHRISTY** (*looking through the window*). Here's the minister's wife.

## The Devil's Disciple

MRS. DUDGEON (*displeased*). What! Is she coming here?

CHRISTY. Yes.

MRS. DUDGEON. What does she want troubling me at this hour, before I'm properly dressed to receive people?

CHRISTY. You'd better ask her.

MRS. DUDGEON (*threateningly*). You'd better keep a civil tongue in your head. (*He goes sulkily towards the door. She comes after him, plying him with instructions.*) Tell that girl to come to me as soon as she's had her breakfast. And tell her to make herself fit to be seen before the people. (*Christy goes out and slams the door in her face.*) Nice manners, that! (*Someone knocks at the house door: she turns and cries inhospitably.*) Come in. (*Judith Anderson, the minister's wife, comes in. Judith is more than twenty years younger than her husband, though she will never be as young as he in vitality. She is pretty and proper and ladylike, and has been admired and petted into an opinion of herself sufficiently favorable to give her a self-assurance which serves her instead of strength. She has a pretty taste in dress, and in her face the pretty lines of a sentimental character formed by dreams. Even her little self-complacency is pretty, like a child's vanity. Rather a pathetic creature to any sympathetic observer who knows how rough a place the world is. One feels, on the whole, that Anderson might have chosen worse, and*

*that she, needing protection, could not have chosen better.*) Oh, it's you, is it, Mrs. Anderson?

JUDITH (*very politely—almost patronizingly*). Yes. Can I do anything for you, Mrs. Dudgeon? Can I help to get the place ready before they come to read the will?

MRS. DUDGEON (*stiffly*). Thank you, Mrs. Anderson, my house is always ready for anyone to come into.

MRS. ANDERSON (*with complacent amiability*). Yes, indeed it is. Perhaps you had rather I did not intrude on you just now.

MRS. DUDGEON. Oh, one more or less will make no difference this morning, Mrs. Anderson. Now that you're here, you'd better stay. If you wouldn't mind shutting the door! (*Judith smiles, implying "How stupid of me" and shuts it with an exasperating air of doing something pretty and becoming.*) That's better. I must go and tidy myself a bit. I suppose you don't mind stopping here to receive anyone that comes until I'm ready.

JUDITH (*graciously giving her leave*). Oh yes, certainly. Leave them to me, Mrs. Dudgeon; and take your time. (*She hangs her cloak and bonnet on the rack.*)

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*half-sneering*). I thought that would be more in your way than getting the house ready. (*Essie comes back.*) Oh, here you are! (*Severely*) Come here: let me see you. (*Essie timidly goes to her. Mrs. Dudgeon takes her roughly by the arm and pulls her round to inspect the results of her attempt to clean and tidy herself—results which show little practice and less conviction.*) Mm! That's what you call doing your hair properly, I suppose. It's easy to see what you are, and how you were brought up. (*She throws her arms away, and goes on, peremptorily.*) Now you listen to me and do as you're told. You sit down there in the corner by the fire; and when the company comes don't dare to speak until you're spoken to. (*Essie creeps away to the fireplace.*) Your father's people had better see you and know you're there: they're as much bound to keep you from starvation as I am. At any rate they might help. But let me have no chattering and making free with them, as if you were their equal. Do you hear?

**ESSIE.** Yes.

**MRS. DUDGEON.** Well, then go and do as you're told. (*Essie sits down miserably on the corner of the fender furthest from the door.*) Never mind her, Mrs. Anderson: you know who she is and what she is. If she gives you any trouble, just tell me; and I'll settle accounts with her. (*Mrs. Dudgeon goes into the bedroom, shutting the door sharply behind her as if even it had to be made to do its duty with a ruthless hand.*)

**JUDITH** (*patronizing Essie, and arranging the cake and wine on the table more becomingly*). You must not mind if your aunt is strict with you. She is a very good woman, and desires your good too.

**ESSIE** (*in listless misery*). Yes.

**JUDITH** (*annoyed with Essie for her failure to be consoled and edified, and to appreciate the kindly condescension of the remark*). You are not going to be sullen, I hope, Essie.

**ESSIE.** No.

**JUDITH.** That's a good girl! (*She places a couple of chairs at the table with their backs to the window, with a pleasant sense of being a more thoughtful housekeeper than Mrs. Dudgeon.*) Do you know any of your father's relatives?

**ESSIE.** No. They wouldn't have anything to do with him: they were too religious. Father used to talk about Dick Dudgeon; but I never saw him.

**JUDITH** (*ostentatiously shocked*). Dick Dudgeon! Essie: do you wish to be a really respectable and grateful girl, and to make a place for yourself here by steady good conduct?

**ESSIE** (*very half-heartedly*). Yes.

## The Devil's Disciple

**JUDITH.** Then you must never mention the name of Richard Dudgeon—never even think about him. He is a bad man.

**ESSIE.** What has he done?

**JUDITH.** You must not ask questions about him, Essie. You are too young to know what it is to be a bad man. But he is a smuggler; and he lives with gypsies; and he has no love for his mother and his family; and he wrestles and plays games on Sunday instead of going to church. Never let him into your presence, if you can help it, Essie; and try to keep yourself and all womanhood unspotted by contact with such men.

**ESSIE.** Yes.

**JUDITH** (*again displeased*). I am afraid you say Yes and No without thinking very deeply.

**ESSIE.** Yes. At least I mean—

**JUDITH** (*severely*). What do you mean?

**ESSIE** (*almost crying*). Only—my father was a smuggler; and—(*Someone knocks.*)

**JUDITH.** They are beginning to come. Now remember your aunt's directions, Essie; and be a good girl. (*Christy comes*

*back with the stand of stuffed birds under a glass case, and an inkstand, which he places on the table.*) Good morning, Mr. Dudgeon. Will you open the door, please: the people have come.

**CHRISTY.** Good morning. (*He opens the house door.*)

*The morning is now fairly bright and warm; and Anderson, who is the first to enter, has left his cloak at home. He is accompanied by Lawyer Hawkins, a brisk, middleaged man in brown riding gaiters and yellow breeches, looking as much squire as solicitor. He and Anderson are allowed precedence as representing the learned professions. After them comes the family, headed by the senior uncle, William Dudgeon, a large, shapeless man, bottle-nosed and evidently no ascetic at table. His clothes are not the clothes, nor his anxious wife the wife, of a prosperous man. The junior uncle, Titus Dudgeon, is a wiry little terrier of a man, with an immense and visibly purse-proud wife, both free from the cares of the William household.*

*Hawkins at once goes briskly to the table and takes the chair nearest the sofa, Christy having left the inkstand there. He puts his hat on the floor beside him, and produces the will. Uncle William comes to the fire and stands on the hearth warming his coat tails, leaving Mrs. William derelict near the door. Uncle Titus, who is the lady's man of the family, rescues her by giving her his disengaged arm and bringing her to the sofa, where he sits down warmly between his own lady and his brother's. Ander-*

*son hangs up his hat and waits for a word with Judith.*

**JUDITH.** She will be here in a moment. Ask them to wait. *(She taps at the bedroom door. Receiving an answer from within, she opens it and passes through.)*

**ANDERSON** *(taking his place at the table at the opposite end to Hawkins)*. Our poor afflicted sister will be with us in a moment. Are we all here?

**CHRISTY** *(at the house door, which he has just shut)*. All except Dick.

*The callousness with which Christy names the reprobate jars on the moral sense of the family. Uncle William shakes his head slowly and repeatedly. Mrs. Titus catches her breath convulsively through her nose. Her husband speaks.*

**UNCLE TITUS.** Well, I hope he will have the grace not to come. I hope so.

*The Dudgeons all murmur assent, except Christy, who goes to the window and posts himself there, looking out. Hawkins smiles secretively as if he knew something that would change their tune if they knew it. Anderson is uneasy: the love of solemn family councils, especially funereal ones, is not in his nature. Judith appears at the bedroom door.*

**JUDITH** *(with gentle impressiveness)*. Friends, Mrs. Dudgeon. *(She takes the chair from beside the fireplace; and places it for Mrs. Dudgeon, who comes from the bedroom in black, with a clean handkerchief to her eyes. All rise, except Essie. Mrs. Titus and Mrs. William produce equally clean handkerchiefs and weep. It is an affecting moment.)*

**UNCLE WILLIAM.** Would it comfort you, sister, if we were to offer up a prayer?

**UNCLE TITUS.** Or sing a hymn?

**ANDERSON** *(rather hastily)*. I have been with our sister this morning already, friends. In our hearts we ask a blessing.

**ALL** *(except Essie)*. Amen.

*They all sit down, except Judith, who stands behind Mrs. Dudgeon's chair.*

**JUDITH** *(to Essie)*. Essie: did you say Amen?

**ESSIE** *(scaredly)*. No.

**JUDITH.** Then say it, like a good girl.

**ESSIE.** Amen.

## The Devil's Disciple

**UNCLE WILLIAM** (*encouragingly*). That's right: that's right. We know who you are; but we are willing to be kind to you if you are a good girl and deserve it. We are all equal before the Throne.

*This republican sentiment does not please the women, who are convinced that the Throne is precisely the place where their superiority, often questioned in this world, will be recognized and rewarded.*

**CHRISTY** (*at the window*). Here's Dick.

*Anderson and Hawkins look round sociably. Essie, with a gleam of interest breaking through her misery, looks up. Christy grins and gapes expectantly at the door. The rest are petrified with the intensity of their sense of Virtue menaced with outrage by the approach of flaunting Vice. The reprobate appears in the doorway, graced beyond his alleged merits by the morning sunlight. He is certainly the best looking member of the family; but his expression is reckless and sardonic, his manner defiant and satirical, his dress picturesquely careless. Only his forehead and mouth betray an extraordinary steadfastness, and his eyes are the eyes of a fanatic.*

**RICHARD** (*on the threshold, taking off his hat*). Ladies and gentlemen: your servant, your very humble servant. (*With this comprehensive insult, he throws his hat to Christy with a*

*suddenness that makes him jump like a negligent wicket keeper, and comes into the middle of the room, where he turns and deliberately surveys the company.*) How happy you all look! how glad to see me! (*He turns towards Mrs. Dudgeon's chair; and his lip rolls up horribly from his dog tooth as he meets her look of undisguised hatred.*) Well, mother: keeping up appearances as usual? that's right, that's right. (*Judith pointedly moves away from his neighborhood to the other side of the kitchen, holding her skirt instinctively as if to save it from contamination. Uncle Titus promptly marks his approval of her action by rising from the sofa, and placing a chair for her to sit down upon.*) What! Uncle William! I haven't seen you since you gave up drinking. (*Poor Uncle William, shamed, would protest; but Richard claps him heartily on his shoulder, adding*) you have given it up, haven't you? (*releasing him with a playful push*) of course you have: quite right too; you overdid it. (*He turns away from Uncle William and makes for the sofa.*) And now, where is that upright horsedealer Uncle Titus? Uncle Titus: come forth. (*He comes upon him holding the chair as Judith sits down.*) As usual, looking after the ladies.

**UNCLE TITUS** (*indignantly*). Be ashamed of yourself, sir—

**RICHARD** (*interrupting him and shaking his hand in spite of him*). I am: I am; but I am proud of my uncle—proud of all my relatives (*again surveying them*) who could look at them and not be proud and joyful? (*Uncle Titus, overborne, resumes*



*his seat on the sofa. Richard turns to the table.*) Ah, Mr. Anderson, still at the good work, still shepherding them. Keep them up to the mark, minister, keep them up to the mark. Come! *(with a spring he seats himself on the table and takes up the decanter)* clink a glass with me, Pastor, for the sake of old times.

**ANDERSON.** You know, I think, Mr. Dudgeon, that I do not drink before dinner.

**RICHARD.** You will, some day, Pastor: Uncle William used to drink before breakfast. Come: it will give your sermons unction. *(He smells the wine and makes a wry face.)* But do not begin on my mother's company sherry. I stole some when I was six years old; and I have been a temperate man ever since. *(He puts the decanter down and changes the subject.)* So I hear you are married, Pastor, and that your wife has a most ungodly allowance of good looks.

**ANDERSON** *(quietly indicating Judith).* Sir: you are in the presence of my wife. *(Judith rises and stands with stony propriety.)*

**RICHARD** *(quickly slipping down from the table with instinctive good manners).* Your servant, madam: no offence. *(He looks at her earnestly.)* You deserve your reputation; but I'm sorry to see by your expression that you're a good woman. *(She looks shocked, and sits down amid a murmur of indignant*

*sympathy from his relatives. Anderson, sensible enough to know that these demonstrations can only gratify and encourage a man who is deliberately trying to provoke them, remains perfectly goodhumored.)* All the same, Pastor, I respect you more than I did before. By the way, did I hear, or did I not, that our late lamented Uncle Peter, though unmarried, was a father?

**UNCLE TITUS.** He had only one irregular child, sir.

**RICHARD.** Only one! He thinks one a mere trifle! I blush for you, Uncle Titus.

**ANDERSON.** Mr. Dudgeon you are in the presence of your mother and her grief.

**RICHARD.** It touches me profoundly, Pastor. By the way, what has become of the irregular child?

**ANDERSON** *(pointing to Essie).* There, sir, listening to you.

**RICHARD** *(shocked into sincerity).* What! Why the devil didn't you tell me that before? Children suffer enough in this house without—*(He hurries remorsefully to Essie.)* Come, little cousin! never mind me: it was not meant to hurt you. *(She looks up gratefully at him. Her tearstained face affects him violently, and he bursts out, in a transport of wrath)* Who has been making her cry? Who has been ill-treating her? By God—



## The Devil's Disciple

**MRS. DUDGEON** (*rising and confronting him*). Silence your blasphemous tongue. I will hear no more of this. Leave my house.

**RICHARD**. How do you know it's your house until the will is read? (*They look at one another for a moment with intense hatred; and then she sinks, checkmated, into her chair. Richard goes boldly up past Anderson to the window, where he takes the railed chair in his hand.*) Ladies and gentlemen: as the eldest son of my late father, and the unworthy head of this household, I bid you welcome. By your leave, Minister Anderson: by your leave, Lawyer Hawkins. The head of the table for the head of the family. (*He places the chair at the table between the minister and the attorney; sits down between them; and addresses the assembly with a presidential air.*) We meet on a melancholy occasion: a father dead! an uncle actually hanged, and probably damned. (*He shakes his head deplorably. The relatives freeze with horror.*) That's right: pull your longest faces (*his voice suddenly sweetens gravely as his glance lights on Essie*) provided only there is hope in the eyes of the child. (*Briskly.*) Now then, Lawyer Hawkins: business, business. Get on with the will, man.

**TITUS**. Do not let yourself be ordered or hurried, Mr. Hawkins.

**HAWKINS** (*very politely and willingly*). Mr. Dudgeon means

no offence, I feel sure. I will not keep you one second, Mr. Dudgeon. Just while I get my glasses—(*he fumbles for them. The Dudgeons look at one another with misgiving*).

**RICHARD**. Aha! They notice your civility, Mr. Hawkins. They are prepared for the worst. A glass of wine to clear your voice before you begin. (*He pours out one for him and hands it; then pours one for himself.*)

**HAWKINS**. Thank you, Mr. Dudgeon. Your good health, sir.

**RICHARD**. Yours, sir. (*With the glass half way to his lips, he checks himself, giving a dubious glance at the wine, and adds, with quaint intensity.*) Will anyone oblige me with a glass of water?

*Essie, who has been hanging on his every word and movement, rises stealthily and slips out behind Mrs. Dudgeon through the bedroom door, returning presently with a jug and going out of the house as quietly as possible.*

**HAWKINS**. The will is not exactly in proper legal phraseology.

**RICHARD**. No: my father died without the consolations of the law.

**HAWKINS.** Good again, Mr. Dudgeon, good again. (*Preparing to read*) Are you ready, sir?

**RICHARD.** Ready, aye ready. For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Go ahead.

**HAWKINS** (*reading*). “This is the last will and testament of me Timothy Dudgeon on my deathbed at Nevinstown on the road from Springtown to Websterbridge on this twenty-fourth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and seventy seven. I hereby revoke all former wills made by me and declare that I am of sound mind and know well what I am doing and that this is my real will according to my own wish and affections.”

**RICHARD** (*glancing at his mother*). Aha!

**HAWKINS** (*shaking his head*). Bad phraseology, sir, wrong phraseology. “I give and bequeath a hundred pounds to my younger son Christopher Dudgeon, fifty pounds to be paid to him on the day of his marriage to Sarah Wilkins if she will have him, and ten pounds on the birth of each of his children up to the number of five.”

**RICHARD.** How if she won't have him?

**CHRISTY.** She will if I have fifty pounds.

**RICHARD.** Good, my brother. Proceed.

**HAWKINS.** “I give and bequeath to my wife Annie Dudgeon, born Annie Primrose”—you see he did not know the law, Mr. Dudgeon: your mother was not born Annie: she was christened so—”an annuity of fifty-two pounds a year for life (*Mrs. Dudgeon, with all eyes on her, holds herself convulsively rigid*) to be paid out of the interest on her own money”—there's a way to put it, Mr. Dudgeon! Her own money!

**MRS. DUDGEON.** A very good way to put God's truth. It was every penny my own. Fifty-two pounds a year!

**HAWKINS.** “And I recommend her for her goodness and piety to the forgiving care of her children, having stood between them and her as far as I could to the best of my ability.”

**MRS. DUDGEON.** And this is my reward! (*raging inwardly*) You know what I think, Mr. Anderson you know the word I gave to it.

**ANDERSON.** It cannot be helped, Mrs. Dudgeon. We must take what comes to us. (*To Hawkins.*) Go on, sir.

**HAWKINS.** “I give and bequeath my house at Websterbridge with the land belonging to it and all the rest of my property soever to my eldest son and heir, Richard Dudgeon.”

## The Devil's Disciple

RICHARD. Oho! The fatted calf, Minister, the fatted calf.

HAWBIN. "On these conditions—"

RICHARD. The devil! Are there conditions?

HAWKINS. "To wit: first, that he shall not let my brother Peter's natural child starve or be driven by want to an evil life."

RICHARD (*emphatically, striking his fist on the table*). Agreed.

*Mrs. Dudgeon, turning to look malignantly at Essie, misses her and looks quickly round to see where she has moved to; then,, seeing that she has left the room without leave, closes her lips vengefully.*

HAWKINS. "Second, that he shall be a good friend to my old horse Jim"—(*again slacking his head*) he should have written James, sir.

RICHARD. James shall live in clover. Go on.

HAWKINS. —and keep my deaf farm laborer Prodger Feston in his service."

RICHARD. Prodger Feston shall get drunk every Saturday.

HAWKINS. "Third, that he make Christy a present on his marriage out of the ornaments in the best room."

RICHARD (*holding up the stuffed birds*). Here you are, Christy.

CHRISTY (*disappointed*). I'd rather have the China peacocks.

RICHARD. You shall have both. (*Christy is greatly pleased*). Go on.

HAWKINS. "Fourthly and lastly, that he try to live at peace with his mother as far as she will consent to it."

RICHARD (*dubiously*). Hm! Anything more, Mr. Hawkins?

HAWKINS (*solemnly*). "Finally I gave and bequeath my soul into my Maker's hands, humbly asking forgiveness for all my sins and mistakes, and hoping that he will so guide my son that it may not be said that I have done wrong in trusting to him rather than to others in the perplexity of my last hour in this strange place."

ANDERSON. Amen.

THE UNCLES AND AUNTS. Amen.

RICHARD. My mother does not say Amen.

MRS. DUDGEON (*rising, unable to give up her property without a struggle*). Mr. Hawkins: is that a proper will? Remember, I have his rightful, legal will, drawn up by yourself, leaving all to me.

HAWKINS. This is a very wrongly and irregularly worded will, Mrs. Dudgeon; though (*turning politely to Richard*) it contains in my judgment an excellent disposal of his property.

ANDERSON (*interposing before Mrs. Dudgeon can retort*). That is not what you are asked, Mr. Hawkins. Is it a legal will?

HAWKINS. The courts will sustain it against the other.

ANDERSON. But why, if the other is more lawfully worded?

HAWKING. Because, sir, the courts will sustain the claim of a man—and that man the eldest son—against any woman, if they can. I warned you, Mrs. Dudgeon, when you got me to draw that other will, that it was not a wise will, and that though you might make him sign it, he would never be easy until he revoked it. But you wouldn't take advice; and now Mr. Richard is cock of the walk. (*He takes his hat from the floor; rises; and begins pocketing his papers and spectacles.*)

*This is the signal for the breaking-up of the party. Anderson takes his hat from the rack and joins Uncle William at the fire. Uncle Titus fetches Judith her things from the rack. The three on the sofa rise and chat with Hawkins. Mrs. Dudgeon, now an intruder in her own house, stands erect, crushed by the weight of the law on women, accepting it, as she has been trained to accept all monstrous calamities, as proofs of the greatness of the power that inflicts them, and of her own wormlike insignificance. For at this time, remember, Mary Wollstonecraft is as yet only a girl of eighteen, and her Vindication of the Rights of Women is still fourteen years off. Mrs. Dudgeon is rescued from her apathy by Essie, who comes back with the jug full of water. She is taking it to Richard when Mrs. Dudgeon stops her.*

MRS. DUDGEON (*threatening her*). Where have you been? (*Essie, appalled, tries to answer, but cannot.*) How dare you go out by yourself after the orders I gave you?

ESSIE. He asked for a drink—(*she stops, her tongue cleaving to her palate with terror*).

JUDITH (*with gentler severity*). Who asked for a drink? (*Essie, speechless, points to Richard.*)

RICHARD. What! I!

JUDITH (*shocked*). Oh Essie, Essie!

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**RICHARD.** I believe I did. (*He takes a glass and holds it to Essie to be filled. Her hand shakes.*) What! afraid of me?

**ESSIE** (*quickly*). No. I— (*She pours out the water.*)

**RICHARD** (*tasting it*). Ah, you've been up the street to the market gate spring to get that. (*He takes a draught.*) Delicious! Thank you. (*Unfortunately, at this moment he chances to catch sight of Judith's face, which expresses the most prudish disapproval of his evident attraction for Essie, who is devouring him with her grateful eyes. His mocking expression returns instantly. He puts down the glass; deliberately winds his arm round Essie's shoulders; and brings her into the middle of the company. Mrs. Dudgeon being in Essie's way as they come past the table, he says*) By your leave, mother (*and compels her to make way for them*). What do they call you? Bessie?

**ESSIE.** Essie.

**RICHARD.** Essie, to be sure. Are you a good girl, Essie?

**ESSIE** (*greatly disappointed that he, of all people should begin at her in this way*) Yes. (*She looks doubtfully at Judith.*) I think so. I mean I—I hope so.

**RICHARD.** Essie: did you ever hear of a person called the devil?

**ANDERSON** (*revolted*). Shame on you, sir, with a mere child—

**RICHARD.** By your leave, Minister: I do not interfere with your sermons: do not you interrupt mine. (*To Essie.*) Do you know what they call me, Essie?

**ESSIE.** Dick.

**RICHARD** (*amused: patting her on the shoulder*). Yes, Dick; but something else too. They call me the Devil's Disciple.

**ESSIE.** Why do you let them?

**RICHARD** (*seriously*). Because it's true. I was brought up in the other service; but I knew from the first that the Devil was my natural master and captain and friend. I saw that he was in the right, and that the world cringed to his conqueror only through fear. I prayed secretly to him; and he comforted me, and saved me from having my spirit broken in this house of children's tears. I promised him my soul, and swore an oath that I would stand up for him in this world and stand by him in the next. (*Solemnly*) That promise and that oath made a man of me. From this day this house is his home; and no child shall cry in it: this hearth is his altar; and no soul shall ever cower over it in the dark evenings and be afraid. Now (*turning forcibly on the rest*) which of you good

men will take this child and rescue her from the house of the devil?

**JUDITH** (*coming to Essie and throwing a protecting arm about her*). I will. You should be burnt alive.

**ESSIE**. But I don't want to. (*She shrinks back, leaving Richard and Judith face to face.*)

**RICHARD** (*to Judith*). Actually doesn't want to, most virtuous lady!

**UNCLE TITUS**. Have a care, Richard Dudgeon. The law—

**RICHARD** (*turning threateningly on him*). Have a care, you. In an hour from this there will be no law here but martial law. I passed the soldiers within six miles on my way here: before noon Major Swindon's gallows for rebels will be up in the market place.

**ANDERSON** (*calmly*). What have we to fear from that, sir?

**RICHARD**. More than you think. He hanged the wrong man at Springtown: he thought Uncle Peter was respectable, because the Dudgeons had a good name. But his next example will be the best man in the town to whom he can bring home a rebellious word. Well, we're all rebels; and you know it.

**ALL THE MEN** (*except Anderson*). No, no, no!

**RICHARD**. Yes, you are. You haven't damned King George up hill and down dale as I have; but you've prayed for his defeat; and you, Anthony Anderson, have conducted the service, and sold your family bible to buy a pair of pistols. They mayn't hang me, perhaps; because the moral effect of the Devil's Disciple dancing on nothing wouldn't help them. But a Minister! (*Judith, dismayed, clings to Anderson*) or a lawyer! (*Hawkins smiles like a man able to take care of himself*) or an upright horsedealer! (*Uncle Titus snarls at him in rags and terror*) or a reformed drunkard (*Uncle William, utterly unnerved, moans and wobbles with fear*) eh? Would that show that King George meant business—ha?

**ANDERSON** (*perfectly self-possessed*). Come, my dear: he is only trying to frighten you. There is no danger. (*He takes her out of the house. The rest crowd to the door to follow him, except Essie, who remains near Richard.*)

**RICHARD** (*boisterously derisive*). Now then: how many of you will stay with me; run up the American flag on the devil's house; and make a fight for freedom? (*They scramble out, Christy among them, hustling one another in their haste.*) Ha ha! Long live the devil! (*To Mrs. Dudgeon, who is following them*) What mother! are you off too?

ACT II

MRS. DUDGEON (*deadly pale, with her hand on her heart as if she had received a deathblow*). My curse on you! My dying curse! (*She goes out.*)

RICHARD (*calling after her*). It will bring me luck. Ha ha ha!

ESSIE (*anxiously*). Mayn't I stay?

RICHARD (*turning to her*). What! Have they forgotten to save your soul in their anxiety about their own bodies? Oh yes: you may stay. (*He turns excitedly away again and shakes his fist after them. His left fist, also clenched, hangs down. Essie seizes it and kisses it, her tears falling on it. He starts and looks at it.*) Tears! The devil's baptism! (*She falls on her knees, sobbing. He stoops goodnaturedly to raise her, saying*) Oh yes, you may cry that way, Essie, if you like.

Minister Anderson's house is in the main street of Websterbridge, not far from the town hall. To the eye of the eighteenth century New Englander, it is much grander than the plain farmhouse of the Dudgeons; but it is so plain itself that a modern house agent would let both at about the same rent. The chief dwelling room has the same sort of kitchen fireplace, with boiler, toaster hanging on the bars, movable iron griddle socketed to the hob, hook above for roasting, and broad fender, on which stand a kettle and a plate of buttered toast. The door, between the fireplace and the corner, has neither panels, fingerplates nor handles: it is made of plain boards, and fastens with a latch. The table is a kitchen table, with a treacle colored cover of American cloth, chapped at the corners by draping. The tea service on it consists of two thick cups and saucers of the plainest ware, with milk jug and bowl to match, each large enough to contain nearly a quart, on a black japanned tray, and, in the middle of the table, a wooden trencher with a big loaf upon it, and a square half pound block of butter in a crock. The big oak press

facing the fire from the opposite side of the room, is for use and storage, not for ornament; and the minister's house coat hangs on a peg from its door, showing that he is out; for when he is in it is his best coat that hangs there. His big riding boots stand beside the press, evidently in their usual place, and rather proud of themselves. In fact, the evolution of the minister's kitchen, dining room and drawing room into three separate apartments has not yet taken place; and so, from the point of view of our pampered period, he is no better off than the Dudgeons.

But there is a difference, for all that. To begin with, Mrs. Anderson is a pleasanter person to live with than Mrs. Dudgeon. To which Mrs. Dudgeon would at once reply, with reason, that Mrs. Anderson has no children to look after; no poultry, pigs nor cattle; a steady and sufficient income not directly dependent on harvests and prices at fairs; an affectionate husband who is a tower of strength to her: in short, that life is as easy at the minister's house as it is hard at the farm. This is true; but to explain a fact is not to alter it; and however little credit Mrs. Anderson may deserve for making her home happier, she has certainly succeeded in doing it.

The outward and visible signs of her superior social pretensions are a drugget on the floor, a plaster ceiling between the timbers and chairs which, though not upholstered, are stained and polished. The fine arts are represented by a mezzotint portrait of some Presbyterian divine, a copperplate of Raphael's St. Paul preaching at Athens, a rococo presentation clock on the mantelshelf, flanked by a couple of miniatures, a pair of crockery dogs with baskets in their mouths, and, at the corners, two large cowrie shells. A pretty feature of the room is the low wide latticed window, nearly its whole width, with little red curtains running on a rod half way up it to serve as a blind. There is no sofa; but one of the seats, standing near the press, has a railed back and is long enough to accommodate two people easily. On the whole, it is rather the sort of room that the nineteenth century has ended in struggling to get back to under the leadership of Mr. Philip Webb and his disciples in domestic architecture, though no genteel clergyman would have tolerated it fifty years ago.

The evening has closed in; and the room is dark except for the cosy firelight and the dim oil lamps seen through the window in the wet street, where there is a quiet, steady, warm,



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windless downpour of rain. As the town clock strikes the quarter, Judith comes in with a couple of candles in earthenware candlesticks, and sets them on the table. Her self-conscious airs of the morning are gone: she is anxious and frightened. She goes to the window and peers into the street. The first thing she sees there is her husband, hurrying here through the rain. She gives a little gasp of relief, not very far removed from a sob, and turns to the door. Anderson comes in, wrapped in a very wet cloak.

**JUDITH** (*running to him*). Oh, here you are at last, at last! (*She attempts to embrace him.*)

**ANDERSON** (*keeping her off*). Take care, my love: I'm wet. Wait till I get my cloak off. (*He places a chair with its back to the fire; hangs his cloak on it to dry; shakes the rain from his hat and puts it on the fender; and at last turns with his hands outstretched to Judith.*) Now! (*She flies into his arms.*) I am not late, am I? The town clock struck the quarter as I came in at the front door. And the town clock is always fast.

**JUDITH**. I'm sure it's slow this evening. I'm so glad you're back.

**ANDERSON** (*taking her more closely in his arms*). Anxious, my dear?

**JUDITH**. A little.

**ANDERSON**. Why, you've been crying.

**JUDITH**. Only a little. Never mind: it's all over now. (*A bugle call is heard in the distance. She starts in terror and retreats to the long seat, listening.*) What's that?

**ANDERSON** (*following her tenderly to the seat and making her sit down with him*). Only King George, my dear. He's returning to barracks, or having his roll called, or getting ready for tea, or booting or saddling or something. Soldiers don't ring the bell or call over the banisters when they want anything: they send a boy out with a bugle to disturb the whole town.

**JUDITH**. Do you think there is really any danger?

**ANDERSON**. Not the least in the world.

**JUDITH**. You say that to comfort me, not because you believe it.

**ANDERSON**. My dear: in this world there is always danger for those who are afraid of it. There's a danger that the house will catch fire in the night; but we shan't sleep any the less soundly for that.

**JUDITH.** Yes, I know what you always say; and you're quite right. Oh, quite right: I know it. But—I suppose I'm not brave: that's all. My heart shrinks every time I think of the soldiers.

**ANDERSON.** Never mind that, dear: bravery is none the worse for costing a little pain.

**JUDITH.** Yes, I suppose so. (*Embracing him again.*) Oh how brave you are, my dear! (*With tears in her eyes.*) Well, I'll be brave too: you shan't be ashamed of your wife.

**ANDERSON.** That's right. Now you make me happy. Well, well! (*He rises and goes cheerily to the fire to dry his shoes.*) I called on Richard Dudgeon on my way back; but he wasn't in.

**JUDITH** (*rising in consternation*). You called on that man!

**ANDERSON** (*reassuring her*). Oh, nothing happened, dearie. He was out.

**JUDITH** (*almost in tears, as if the visit were a personal humiliation to her*). But why did you go there?

**ANDERSON** (*gravely*). Well, it is all the talk that Major Swindon is going to do what he did in Springtown—make an example of some notorious rebel, as he calls us. He

pounced on Peter Dudgeon as the worst character there; and it is the general belief that he will pounce on Richard as the worst here.

**JUDITH.** But Richard said—

**ANDERSON** (*goodhumoredly cutting her short*). Pooh! Richard said! He said what he thought would frighten you and frighten me, my dear. He said what perhaps (*God forgive him!*) he would like to believe. It's a terrible thing to think of what death must mean for a man like that. I felt that I must warn him. I left a message for him.

**JUDITH** (*querulously*). What message?

**ANDERSON.** Only that I should be glad to see him for a moment on a matter of importance to himself; and that if he would look in here when he was passing he would be welcome.

**JUDITH** (*aghast*). You asked that man to come here!

**ANDERSON.** I did.

**JUDITH** (*sinking on the seat and clasping her hands*). I hope he won't come! Oh, I pray that he may not come!

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ANDERSON. Why? Don't you want him to be warned?

JUDITH. He must know his danger. Oh, Tony, is it wrong to hate a blasphemer and a villain? I do hate him! I can't get him out of my mind: I know he will bring harm with him. He insulted you: he insulted me: he insulted his mother.

ANDERSON (*quaintly*). Well, dear, let's forgive him; and then it won't matter.

JUDITH. Oh, I know it's wrong to hate anybody; but—

ANDERSON (*going over to her with humorous tenderness*). Come, dear, you're not so wicked as you think. The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: that's the essence of inhumanity. After all, my dear, if you watch people carefully, you'll be surprised to find how like hate is to love. (*She starts, strangely touched—even appalled. He is amused at her.*) Yes: I'm quite in earnest. Think of how some of our married friends worry one another, tax one another, are jealous of one another, can't bear to let one another out of sight for a day, are more like jailers and slave-owners than lovers. Think of those very same people with their enemies, scrupulous, lofty, self-respecting, determined to be independent of one another, careful of how they speak of one another—pooh! haven't you often thought that if they only knew it, they were better friends to their

enemies than to their own husbands and wives? Come: depend on it, my dear, you are really fonder of Richard than you are of me, if you only knew it. Eh?

JUDITH. Oh, don't say that: don't say that, Tony, even in jest. You don't know what a horrible feeling it gives me.

ANDERSON (*Laughing*). Well, well: never mind, pet. He's a bad man; and you hate him as he deserves. And you're going to make the tea, aren't you?

JUDITH (*remorsefully*). Oh yes, I forgot. I've been keeping you waiting all this time. (*She goes to the fire and puts on the kettle.*)

ANDERSON (*going to the press and taking his coat off*). Have you stitched up the shoulder of my old coat?

JUDITH. Yes, dear. (*She goes to the table, and sets about putting the tea into the teapot from the caddy.*)

ANDERSON (*as he changes his coat for the older one hanging on the press, and replaces it by the one he has just taken off*). Did anyone call when I was out?

JUDITH. No, only—(*someone knocks at the door. With a start which betrays her intense nervousness, she retreats to the further end of the table with the tea caddy and spoon, in her*

*hands, exclaiming*) Who's that?

**ANDERSON** (*going to her and patting her encouragingly on the shoulder*). All right, pet, all right. He won't eat you, whoever he is. (*She tries to smile, and nearly makes herself cry. He goes to the door and opens it. Richard is there, without overcoat or cloak.*) You might have raised the latch and come in, Mr. Dudgeon. Nobody stands on much ceremony with us. (*Hospitably.*) Come in. (*Richard comes in carelessly and stands at the table, looking round the room with a slight pucker of his nose at the mezzotinted divine on the wall. Judith keeps her eyes on the tea caddy.*) Is it still raining? (*He shuts the door.*)

**RICHARD**. Raining like the very (*his eye catches Judith's as she looks quickly and haughtily up*)—I beg your pardon; but (*showing that his coat is wet*) you see—!

**ANDERSON**. Take it off, sir; and let it hang before the fire a while: my wife will excuse your shirtsleeves. Judith: put in another spoonful of tea for Mr. Dudgeon.

**RICHARD** (*eyeing him cynically*). The magic of property, Pastor! Are even YOU civil to me now that I have succeeded to my father's estate?

*Judith throws down the spoon indignantly.*

**ANDERSON** (*quite unruffled, and helping Richard off with his coat*). I think, sir, that since you accept my hospitality, you cannot have so bad an opinion of it. Sit down. (*With the coat in his hand, he points to the railed seat. Richard, in his shirtsleeves, looks at him half quarrelsome for a moment; then, with a nod, acknowledges that the minister has got the better of him, and sits down on the seat. Anderson pushes his cloak into a heap on the seat of the chair at the fire, and hangs Richard's coat on the back in its place.*)

**RICHARD**. I come, sir, on your own invitation. You left word you had something important to tell me.

**ANDERSON**. I have a warning which it is my duty to give you.

**RICHARD** (*quickly rising*). You want to preach to me. Excuse me: I prefer a walk in the rain. (*He makes for his coat.*)

**ANDERSON** (*stopping him*). Don't be alarmed, sir; I am no great preacher. You are quite safe. (*Richard smiles in spite of himself. His glance softens: he even makes a gesture of excuse. Anderson, seeing that he has tamed him, now addresses him earnestly.*) Mr. Dudgeon: you are in danger in this town.

**RICHARD**. What danger?

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ANDERSON. Your uncle's danger. Major Swindon's gallows.

RICHARD. It is you who are in danger. I warned you—

ANDERSON (*interrupting him goodhumoredly but authoritatively*). Yes, yes, Mr. Dudgeon; but they do not think so in the town. And even if I were in danger, I have duties here I must not forsake. But you are a free man. Why should you run any risk?

RICHARD. Do you think I should be any great loss, Minister?

ANDERSON. I think that a man's life is worth saving, whoever it belongs to. (*Richard makes him an ironical bow. Anderson returns the bow humorously.*) Come: you'll have a cup of tea, to prevent you catching cold?

RICHARD. I observe that Mrs. Anderson is not quite so pressing as you are, Pastor.

JUDITH (*almost stifled with resentment, which she has been expecting her husband to share and express for her at every insult of Richard's*). You are welcome for my husband's sake. (*She brings the teapot to the fireplace and sets it on the hob.*)

RICHARD. I know I am not welcome for my own, madam. (*He rises.*) But I think I will not break bread here, Minister.

ANDERSON (*cheerily*). Give me a good reason for that.

RICHARD. Because there is something in you that I respect. and that makes me desire to have you for my enemy.

ANDERSON. That's well said. On those terms, sir, I will accept your enmity or any man's. Judith: Mr. Dudgeon will stay to tea. Sit down: it will take a few minutes to draw by the fire. (*Richard glances at him with a troubled face; then sits down with his head bent, to hide a convulsive swelling of his throat.*) I was just saying to my wife, Mr. Dudgeon, that enmity—(*she grasps his hand and looks imploringly at him, doing both with an intensity that checks him at once*) Well, well, I mustn't tell you, I see; but it was nothing that need leave us worse friend—enemies, I mean. Judith is a great enemy of yours.

RICHARD. If all my enemies were like Mrs. Anderson I should be the best Christian in America.

ANDERSON (*gratified, patting her hand*). You hear that, Judith? Mr. Dudgeon knows how to turn a compliment.

*The latch is lifted from without.*

JUDITH (*starting*). Who is that?

*Christy comes in.*

CHRISTY (*stopping and staring at Richard*). Oh, are YOU here?

RICHARD. Yes. Begone, you fool: Mrs. Anderson doesn't want the whole family to tea at once.

CHRISTY (*coming further in*). Mother's very ill.

RICHARD. Well, does she want to see ME?

CHRISTY. No.

RICHARD. I thought not.

CHRISTY. She wants to see the minister—at once.

JUDITH (*to Anderson*). Oh, not before you've had some tea.

ANDERSON. I shall enjoy it more when I come back, dear. (*He is about to take up his cloak.*)

CHRISTY. The rain's over.

ANDERSON (*dropping the cloak and picking up his hat from the fender*). Where is your mother, Christy?

CHRISTY. At Uncle Titus's.

ANDERSON. Have you fetched the doctor?

CHRISTY. No: she didn't tell me to.

ANDEBSON. Go on there at once: I'll overtake you on his doorstep. (*Christy turns to go.*) Wait a moment. Your brother must be anxious to know the particulars.

RICHARD. Psha! not I: he doesn't know; and I don't care. (*Violently.*) Be off, you oaf. (*Christy runs out. Richard adds, a little shamefacedly*) We shall know soon enough.

ANDERSON. Well, perhaps you will let me bring you the news myself. Judith: will you give Mr. Dudgeon his tea, and keep him here until I return?

JUDITH (*white and trembling*). Must I—

ANDERSON (*taking her hands and interrupting her to cover her agitation*). My dear: I can depend on you?

JUDITH (*with a piteous effort to be worthy of his trust*). Yes.

ANDERSON (*pressing her hand against his cheek*). You will not mind two old people like us, Mr. Dudgeon. (*Going.*) I

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shall not say good evening: you will be here when I come back. (*He goes out.*)

*They watch him pass the window, and then look at each other dumbly, quite disconcerted. Richard, noting the quiver of her lips, is the first to pull himself together.*

**RICHARD.** Mrs. Anderson: I am perfectly aware of the nature of your sentiments towards me. I shall not intrude on you. Good evening. (*Again he starts for the fireplace to get his coat.*)

**JUDITH** (*getting between him and the coat*). No, no. Don't go: please don't go.

**RICHARD** (*roughly*). Why? You don't want me here.

**JUDITH.** Yes, I—(*wringing her hands in despair*) Oh, if I tell you the truth, you will use it to torment me.

**RICHARD** (*indignantly*). Torment! What right have you to say that? Do you expect me to stay after that?

**JUDITH.** I want you to stay; but (*suddenly raging at him like an angry child*) it is not because I like you.

**RICHARD.** Indeed!

**JUDITH.** Yes: I had rather you did go than mistake me about that. I hate and dread you; and my husband knows it. If you are not here when he comes back, he will believe that I disobeyed him and drove you away.

**RICHARD** (*ironically*). Whereas, of course, you have really been so kind and hospitable and charming to me that I only want to go away out of mere contrariness, eh?

*Judith, unable to bear it, sinks on the chair and bursts into tears.*

**RICHARD.** Stop, stop, stop, I tell you. Don't do that. (*Putting his hand to his breast as if to a wound.*) He wrung my heart by being a man. Need you tear it by being a woman? Has he not raised you above my insults, like himself? (*She stops crying, and recovers herself somewhat, looking at him with a scared curiosity.*) There: that's right. (*Sympathetically.*) You're better now, aren't you? (*He puts his hand encouragingly on her shoulder. She instantly rises haughtily, and stares at him defiantly. He at once drops into his usual sardonic tone.*) Ah, that's better. You are yourself again: so is Richard. Well, shall we go to tea like a quiet respectable couple, and wait for your husband's return?

**JUDITH** (*rather ashamed of herself*). If you please. I—I am sorry to have been so foolish. (*She stoops to take up the plate of*

*toast from the fender.)*

**RICHARD.** I am sorry, for your sake, that I am—what I am. Allow me. (*He takes the plate from her and goes with it to the table.*)

**JUDITH** (*following with the teapot*). Will you sit down? (*He sits down at the end of the table nearest the press. There is a plate and knife laid there. The other plate is laid near it; but Judith stays at the opposite end of the table, next the fire, and takes her place there, drawing the tray towards her.*) Do you take sugar?

**RICHARD.** No; but plenty of milk. Let me give you some toast. (*He puts some on the second plate, and hands it to her, with the knife. The action shows quietly how well he knows that she has avoided her usual place so as to be as far from him as possible.*)

**JUDITH** (*consciously*). Thanks. (*She gives him his tea.*) Won't you help yourself?

**RICHARD.** Thanks. (*He puts a piece of toast on his own plate; and she pours out tea for herself.*)

**JUDITH** (*observing that he tastes nothing*). Don't you like it? You are not eating anything.

**RICHARD.** Neither are you.

**JUDITH** (*nervously*). I never care much for my tea. Please don't mind me.

**RICHARD** (*Looking dreamily round*). I am thinking. It is all so strange to me. I can see the beauty and peace of this home: I think I have never been more at rest in my life than at this moment; and yet I know quite well I could never live here. It's not in my nature, I suppose, to be domesticated. But it's very beautiful: it's almost holy. (*He muses a moment, and then laughs softly.*)

**JUDITH** (*quickly*). Why do you laugh?

**RICHARD.** I was thinking that if any stranger came in here now, he would take us for man and wife.

**JUDITH** (*taking offence*). You mean, I suppose, that you are more my age than he is.

**RICHARD** (*staring at this unexpected turn*). I never thought of such a thing. (*Sardonic again.*) I see there is another side to domestic joy.

**JUDITH** (*angrily*). I would rather have a husband whom everybody respects than—than—



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**RICHARD.** Than the devil's disciple. You are right; but I daresay your love helps him to be a good man, just as your hate helps me to be a bad one.

**JUDITH.** My husband has been very good to you. He has forgiven you for insulting him, and is trying to save you. Can you not forgive him for being so much better than you are? How dare you belittle him by putting yourself in his place?

**RICHARD.** Did I?

**JUDITH.** Yes, you did. You said that if anybody came in they would take us for man and—*(she stops, terror-stricken, as a squad of soldiers tramps past the window)* The English soldiers! Oh, what do they—

**RICHARD** *(listening)*. Sh!

**A VOICE** *(outside)*. Halt! Four outside: two in with me.

*Judith half rises, listening and looking with dilated eyes at Richard, who takes up his cup prosaically, and is drinking his tea when the latch goes up with a sharp click, and an English sergeant walks into the room with two privates, who post themselves at the door. He comes promptly to the table between them.*

**THE SERGEANT.** Sorry to disturb you, mum! duty! Anthony Anderson: I arrest you in King George's name as a rebel.

**JUDITH** *(pointing at Richard)*. But that is not— *(He looks up quickly at her, with a face of iron. She stops her mouth hastily with the hand she has raised to indicate him, and stands staring affrightedly.)*

**THE SERGEANT.** Come, Parson; put your coat on and come along.

**RICHARD.** Yes: I'll come. *(He rises and takes a step towards his own coat; then recollects himself, and, with his back to the sergeant, moves his gaze slowly round the room without turning his head until he sees Anderson's black coat hanging up on the press. He goes composedly to it; takes it down; and puts it on. The idea of himself as a parson tickles him: he looks down at the black sleeve on his arm, and then smiles slyly at Judith, whose white face shows him that what she is painfully struggling to grasp is not the humor of the situation but its horror. He turns to the sergeant, who is approaching him with a pair of handcuffs hidden behind him, and says lightly)* Did you ever arrest a man of my cloth before, Sergeant?

**THE SERGEANT** *(instinctively respectful, half to the black coat, half to Richard's good breeding)*. Well, no sir. At least,

only an army chaplain. (*Showing the handcuffs.*) I'm sorry, air; but duty—

**RICHARD.** Just so, Sergeant. Well, I'm not ashamed of them: thank you kindly for the apology. (*He holds out his hands.*)

**SERGEANT** (*not availing himself of the offer*). One gentleman to another, sir. Wouldn't you like to say a word to your missis, sir, before you go?

**RICHARD** (*smiling*). Oh, we shall meet again before—eh? (*Meaning "before you hang me."*)

**SERGEANT** (*loudly, with ostentatious cheerfulness*). Oh, of course, of course. No call for the lady to distress herself. Still— (*in a lower voice, intended for Richard alone*) your last chance, sir.

*They look at one another significantly for a moment. Then Richard exhales a deep breath and turns towards Judith.*

**RICHARD** (*very distinctly*). My love. (*She looks at him, pitifully pale, and tries to answer, but cannot—tries also to come to him, but cannot trust herself to stand without the support of the table.*) This gallant gentleman is good enough to allow us a moment of leavetaking. (*The sergeant retires delicately and joins his men near the door.*) He is trying to spare you the truth; but you had better know it. Are you listening to me?

(*She signifies assent.*) Do you understand that I am going to my death? (*She signifies that she understands.*) Remember, you must find our friend who was with us just now. Do you understand? (*She signifies yes.*) See that you get him safely out of harm's way. Don't for your life let him know of my danger; but if he finds it out, tell him that he cannot save me: they would hang him; and they would not spare me. And tell him that I am steadfast in my religion as he is in his, and that he may depend on me to the death. (*He turns to go, and meets the eye of the sergeant, who looks a little suspicious. He considers a moment, and then, turning roguishly to Judith with something of a smile breaking through his earnestness, says*) And now, my dear, I am afraid the sergeant will not believe that you love me like a wife unless you give one kiss before I go.

*He approaches her and holds out his arms. She quits the table and almost falls into them.*

**JUDITH** (*the words choking her*). I ought to—it's murder—

**RICHARD.** No: only a kiss (*softly to her*) for his sake.

**JUDITH.** I can't. You must—

**RICHARD** (*folding her in his arms with an impulse of compassion for her distress*). My poor girl!

## The Devil's Disciple

Judith, with a sudden effort, throws her arms round him; kisses him; and swoons away, dropping from his arms to the ground as if the kiss had killed her.

**RICHARD** (*going quickly to the sergeant*). Now, Sergeant: quick, before she comes to. The handcuffs. (*He puts out his hands.*)

**SERGEANT** (*pocketing them*). Never mind, sir: I'll trust you. You're a game one. You ought to be a soldier, sir. Between them two, please. (*The soldiers place themselves one before Richard and one behind him. The sergeant opens the door.*)

**RICHARD** (*taking a last look round him*). Goodbye, wife: goodbye, home. Muffle the drums, and quick march!

*The sergeant signs to the leading soldier to march. They file out quickly.*

*When Anderson returns from Mrs. Dudgeon's he is astonished to find the room apparently empty and almost in darkness except for the glow from the fire; for one of the candles has burnt out, and the other is at its last flicker.*

**ANDERSON**. Why, what on earth—? (*Calling*) Judith, Judith! (*He listens: there is no answer.*) Hm! (*He goes to the cupboard; takes a candle from the drawer; lights it at the flicker*

*of the expiring one on the table; and looks wonderingly at the untasted meal by its light. Then he sticks it in the candlestick; takes off his hat; and scratches his head, much puzzled. This action causes him to look at the floor for the first time; and there he sees Judith lying motionless with her eyes closed. He runs to her and stoops beside her, lifting her head.*) Judith.

**JUDITH** (*waking; for her swoon has passed into the sleep of exhaustion after suffering*). Yes. Did you call? What's the matter?

**ANDERSON**. I've just come in and found you lying here with the candles burnt out and the tea poured out and cold. What has happened?

**JUDITH** (*still astray*). I don't know. Have I been asleep? I suppose—(*she stops blankly*) I don't know.

**ANDERSON** (*groaning*). Heaven forgive me, I left you alone with that scoundrel. (*Judith remembers. With an agonized cry, she clutches his shoulders and drags herself to her feet as he rises with her. He clasps her tenderly in his arms.*) My poor pet!

**JUDITH** (*frantically clinging to him*). What shall I do? Oh my God, what shall I do?

**ANDERSON**. Never mind, never mind, my dearest dear: it was my fault. Come: you're safe now; and you're not hurt,

are you? (*He takes his arms from her to see whether she can stand.*) There: that's right, that's right. If only you are not hurt, nothing else matters.

JUDITH. No, no, no: I'm not hurt.

ANDERSON. Thank Heaven for that! Come now: (*leading her to the railed seat and making her sit down beside him*) sit down and rest: you can tell me about it to-morrow. Or, (*misunderstanding her distress*) you shall not tell me at all if it worries you. There, there! (*Cheerfully.*) I'll make you some fresh tea: that will set you up again. (*He goes to the table, and empties the teapot into the slop bowl.*)

JUDITH (*in a strained tone*). Tony.

ANDERSON. Yes, dear?

JUDITH. Do you think we are only in a dream now?

ANDERSON (*glancing round at her for a moment with a pang of anxiety, though he goes on steadily and cheerfully putting fresh tea into the pot*). Perhaps so, pet. But you may as well dream a cup of tea when you're about it.

JUDITH. Oh, stop, stop. You don't know— (*Distracted she buries her face in her knotted hands.*)

ANDERSON (*breaking down and coming to her*). My dear, what is it? I can't bear it any longer: you must tell me. It was all my fault: I was mad to trust him.

JUDITH. No: don't say that. You mustn't say that. He—oh no, no: I can't. Tony: don't speak to me. Take my hands—both my hands. (*He takes them, wondering.*) Make me think of you, not of him. There's danger, frightful danger; but it is your danger; and I can't keep thinking of it: I can't, I can't: my mind goes back to his danger. He must be saved—no: you must be saved: you, you, you. (*She springs up as if to do something or go somewhere, exclaiming*) Oh, Heaven help me!

ANDERSON (*keeping his seat and holding her hands with resolute composure*). Calmly, calmly, my pet. You're quite distracted.

JUDITH. I may well be. I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. (*Tearing her hands away.*) I must save him. (*Anderson rises in alarm as she runs wildly to the door. It is opened in her face by Essie, who hurries in, full of anxiety. The surprise is so disagreeable to Judith that it brings her to her senses. Her tone is sharp and angry as she demands*) What do you want?

ESSIE. I was to come to you.

## The Devil's Disciple

ANDERSON. Who told you to?

ESSIE (*staring at him, as if his presence astonished her*). Are you here?

JUDITH. Of course. Don't be foolish, child.

ANDERSON. Gently, dearest: you'll frighten her. (*Going between them.*) Come here, Essie. (*She comes to him.*) Who sent you?

ESSIE. Dick. He sent me word by a soldier. I was to come here at once and do whatever Mrs. Anderson told me.

ANDERSON (*enlightened*). A soldier! Ah, I see it all now! They have arrested Richard. (*Judith makes a gesture of despair.*)

ESSIE. No. I asked the soldier. Dick's safe. But the soldier said you had been taken—

ANDERSON. I! (*Bewildered, he turns to Judith for an explanation.*)

JUDITH (*coaxingly*). All right, dear: I understand. (*To Essie.*) Thank you, Essie, for coming; but I don't need you now. You may go home.

ESSIE (*suspicious*). Are you sure Dick has not been touched? Perhaps he told the soldier to say it was the minister. (*Anxiously.*) Mrs. Anderson: do you think it can have been that?

ANDERSON. Tell her the truth if it is so, Judith. She will learn it from the first neighbor she meets in the street. (*Judith turns away and covers her eyes with her hands.*)

ESSIE (*wailing*). But what will they do to him? Oh, what will they do to him? Will they hang him? (*Judith shudders convulsively, and throws herself into the chair in which Richard sat at the tea table.*)

ANDERSON (*patting Essie's shoulder and trying to comfort her*). I hope not. I hope not. Perhaps if you're very quiet and patient, we may be able to help him in some way.

ESSIE. Yes—help him—yes, yes, yes. I'll be good.

ANDERSON. I must go to him at once, Judith.

JUDITH (*springing up*). Oh no. You must go away—far away, to some place of safety.

ANDERSON. Pooh!

JUDITH (*passionately*). Do you want to kill me? Do you

think I can bear to live for days and days with every knock at the door—every footstep—giving me a spasm of terror? to lie awake for nights and nights in an agony of dread, listening for them to come and arrest you?

ANDERSON. Do you think it would be better to know that I had run away from my post at the first sign of danger?

JUDITH (*bitterly*). Oh, you won't go. I know it. You'll stay; and I shall go mad.

ANDERSON. My dear, your duty—

JUDITH (*fiercely*). What do I care about my duty?

ANDERSON (*shocked*). Judith!

JUDITH. I am doing my duty. I am clinging to my duty. My duty is to get you away, to save you, to leave him to his fate. (*Essie utters a cry of distress and sinks on the chair at the fire, sobbing silently.*) My instinct is the same as hers—to save him above all things, though it would be so much better for him to die! so much greater! But I know you will take your own way as he took it. I have no power. (*She sits down sullenly on the railed seat.*) I'm only a woman: I can do nothing but sit here and suffer. Only, tell him I tried to save you—that I did my best to save you.

ANDERSON. My dear, I am afraid he will be thinking more of his own danger than of mine.

JUDITH. Stop; or I shall hate you.

ANDERSON (*remonstrating*). Come, am I to leave you if you talk like this! your senses. (*He turns to Essie.*) Essie.

ESSIE (*eagerly rising and drying her eyes*). Yes?

ANDERSON. Just wait outside a moment, like a good girl: Mrs. Anderson is not well. (*Essie looks doubtful.*) Never fear: I'll come to you presently; and I'll go to Dick.

ESSIE. You are sure you will go to him? (*Whispering.*) You won't let her prevent you?

ANDERSON (*smiling*). No, no: it's all right. All right. (*She goes.*) That's a good girl. (*He closes the door, and returns to Judith.*)

JUDITH (*seated—rigid*). You are going to your death.

ANDERSON (*quaintly*). Then I shall go in my best coat, dear. (*He turns to the press, beginning to take off his coat.*) Where—? (*He stares at the empty nail for a moment; then looks quickly round to the fire; strides across to it; and lifts Richard's*

## The Devil's Disciple

*coat.*) Why, my dear, it seems that he has gone in my best coat.

JUDITH (*still motionless*). Yes.

ANDERSON. Did the soldiers make a mistake?

JUDITH. Yes: they made a mistake.

ANDERSON. He might have told them. Poor fellow, he was too upset, I suppose.

JUDITH. Yes: he might have told them. So might I.

ANDERSON. Well, it's all very puzzling—almost funny. It's curious how these little things strike us even in the most—(*he breaks of and begins putting on Richard's coat*) I'd better take him his own coat. I know what he'll say—(*imitating Richard's sardonic manner*) "Anxious about my soul, Pastor, and also about your best coat." Eh?

JUDITH. Yes, that is just what he will say to you. (Vacantly.) It doesn't matter: I shall never see either of you again.

ANDERSON (*rallying her*). Oh pooh, pooh, pooh! (*He sits down beside her.*) Is this how you keep your promise that I shan't be ashamed of my brave wife?

JUDITH. No: this is how I break it. I cannot keep my promises to him: why should I keep my promises to you?

ANDERSON. Don't speak so strangely, my love. It sounds insincere to me. (*She looks unutterable reproach at him.*) Yes, dear, nonsense is always insincere; and my dearest is talking nonsense. Just nonsense. (*Her face darkens into dumb obstinacy. She stares straight before her, and does not look at him again, absorbed in Richard's fate. He scans her face; sees that his rallying has produced no effect; and gives it up, making no further effort to conceal his anxiety.*) I wish I knew what has frightened you so. Was there a struggle? Did he fight?

JUDITH. No. He smiled.

ANDERSON. Did he realise his danger, do you think?

JUDITH. He realised yours.

ANDERSON. Mine!

JUDITH (*monotonously*). He said, "See that you get him safely out of harm's way." I promised: I can't keep my promise. He said, "Don't for your life let him know of my danger." I've told you of it. He said that if you found it out, you could not save him—that they will hang him and not spare you.

ANDERSON (*rising in generous indignation*). And you think that I will let a man with that much good in him die like a dog, when a few words might make him die like a Christian? I'm ashamed of you, Judith.

JUDITH. He will be steadfast in his religion as you are in yours; and you may depend on him to the death. He said so.

ANDERSON. God forgive him! What else did he say?

JUDITH. He said goodbye.

ANDERSON (*fidgeting nervously to and fro in great concern*). Poor fellow, poor fellow! You said goodbye to him in all kindness and charity, Judith, I hope.

JUDITH. I kissed him.

ANDERSON. What! Judith!

JUDITH. Are you angry?

ANDERSON. No, no. You were right: you were right. Poor fellow, poor fellow! (*Greatly distressed*.) To be hanged like that at his age! And then did they take him away?

JUDITH (*wearily*). Then you were here: that's the next thing

I remember. I suppose I fainted. Now bid me goodbye, Tony. Perhaps I shall faint again. I wish I could die.

ANDERSON. No, no, my dear: you must pull yourself together and be sensible. I am in no danger—not the least in the world.

JUDITH (*solemnly*). You are going to your death, Tony—your sure death, if God will let innocent men be murdered. They will not let you see him: they will arrest you the moment you give your name. It was for you the soldiers came.

ANDERSON (*thunderstruck*). For me!!! (*His fists clinch; his neck thickens; his face reddens; the fleshy purses under his eyes become injected with hot blood; the man of peace vanishes, transformed into a choleric and formidable man of war. Still, she does not come out of her absorption to look at him: her eyes are steadfast with a mechanical reflection of Richard's steadfastness.*)

JUDITH. He took your place: he is dying to save you. That is why he went in your coat. That is why I kissed him.

ANDERSON (*exploding*). Blood an' owns! (*His voice is rough and dominant, his gesture full of brute energy.*) Here! Essie, Essie!



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ESSIE (*running in*). Yes.

ANDERSON (*impetuously*). Off with you as hard as you can run, to the inn. Tell them to saddle the fastest and strongest horse they have (*Judith rises breathless, and stares at him incredulously*)—the chestnut mare, if she's fresh—without a moment's delay. Go into the stable yard and tell the black man there that I'll give him a silver dollar if the horse is waiting for me when I come, and that I am close on your heels. Away with you. (*His energy sends Essie flying from the room. He pounces on his riding boots; rushes with them to the chair at the fire; and begins pulling them on.*)

JUDITH (*unable to believe such a thing of him*). You are not going to him!

ANDERSON (*busy with the boots*). Going to him! What good would that do? (*Growling to himself as he gets the first boot on with a wrench*) I'll go to them, so I will. (*To Judith peremptorily*) Get me the pistols: I want them. And money, money: I want money—all the money in the house. (*He stoops over the other boot, grumbling*) A great satisfaction it would be to him to have my company on the gallows. (*He pulls on the boot.*)

JUDITH. You are deserting him, then?

ANDERSON. Hold your tongue, woman; and get me the pistols. (*She goes to the press and takes from it a leather belt with two pistols, a powder horn, and a bag of bullets attached to it. She throws it on the table. Then she unlocks a drawer in the press and takes out a purse. Anderson grabs the belt and buckles it on, saying*) If they took him for me in my coat, perhaps they'll take me for him in his. (*Hitching the belt into its place*) Do I look like him?

JUDITH (*turning with the purse in her hand*). Horribly unlike him.

ANDERSON (*snatching the purse from her and emptying it on the table*). Hm! We shall see.

JUDITH (*sitting down helplessly*). Is it of any use to pray, do you think, Tony?

ANDERSON (*counting the money*). Pray! Can we pray Swindon's rope off Richard's neck?

JUDITH. God may soften Major Swindon's heart.

ANDERSON (*contemptuously—pocketing a handful of money*). Let him, then. I am not God; and I must go to work another way. (*Judith gasps at the blasphemy. He throws the purse on the table.*) Keep that. I've taken 25 dollars.

JUDITH. Have you forgotten even that you are a minister?      hasn't he?

ANDERSON. Minister be—faugh! My hat: where's my hat? (*He snatches up hat and cloak, and puts both on in hot haste.*) Now listen, you. If you can get a word with him by pretending you're his wife, tell him to hold his tongue until morning: that will give me all the start I need.

JUDITH (*solemnly*). You may depend on him to the death.

ANDERSON. You're a fool, a fool, Judith (*for a moment checking the torrent of his haste, and speaking with something of his old quiet and impressive conviction*). You don't know the man you're married to. (*Essie returns. He swoops at her at once.*) Well: is the horse ready?

ESSIE (*breathless*). It will be ready when you come.

ANDERSON. Good. (*He makes for the door.*)

JUDITH (*rising and stretching out her arms after him involuntarily*). Won't you say goodbye?

ANDERSON. And waste another half minute! Psha! (He rushes out like an avalanche.)

ESSIE (*hurrying to Judith*). He has gone to save Richard,

JUDITH. To save Richard! No: Richard has saved him. He has gone to save himself. Richard must die.

*Essie screams with terror and falls on her knees, hiding her face. Judith, without heeding her, looks rigidly straight in front of her, at the vision of Richard, dying.*

## ACT III

Early next morning the sergeant, at the British headquarters in the Town Hall, unlocks the door of a little empty panelled waiting room, and invites Judith to enter. She has had a bad night, probably a rather delirious one; for even in the reality of the raw morning, her fixed gaze comes back at moments when her attention is not strongly held.

The sergeant considers that her feelings do her credit, and is sympathetic in an encouraging military way. Being a fine figure of a man, vain of his uniform and of his rank, he feels specially qualified, in a respectful way, to console her.

**SERGEANT.** You can have a quiet word with him here, mum.

**JUDITH.** Shall I have long to wait?

**SERGEANT.** No, mum, not a minute. We kept him in the Bridewell for the night; and he's just been brought over here for the court martial. Don't fret, mum: he slept like a child, and has made a rare good breakfast.

**JUDITH** (*incredulously*). He is in good spirits!

**SERGEANT.** Tip top, mum. The chaplain looked in to see him last night; and he won seventeen shillings off him at spoil five. He spent it among us like the gentleman he is. Duty's duty, mum, of course; but you're among friends here. (*The tramp of a couple of soldiers is heard approaching.*) There: I think he's coming. (*Richard comes in, without a sign of care or captivity in his bearing. The sergeant nods to the two soldiers, and shows them the key of the room in his hand. They withdraw.*) Your good lady, sir.

**RICHARD** (*going to her*). What! My wife. My adored one. (*He takes her hand and kisses it with a perverse, raffish gallantry.*) How long do you allow a brokenhearted husband for leave-taking, Sergeant?

**SERGEANT.** As long as we can, sir. We shall not disturb you till the court sits.

**RICHARD.** But it has struck the hour.

**SERGEANT.** So it has, sir; but there's a delay. General Burgoyne's just arrived—Gentlemanly Johnny we call him, sir—and he won't have done finding fault with everything this side of half past. I know him, sir: I served with him in Portugal. You may count on twenty minutes, sir; and by your leave I won't waste any more of them. (*He goes out, locking the door. Richard immediately drops his raffish manner and*

*turns to Judith with considerate sincerity.*)

**RICHARD.** Mrs. Anderson: this visit is very kind of you. And how are you after last night? I had to leave you before you recovered; but I sent word to Essie to go and look after you. Did she understand the message?

**JUDITH** (*breathless and urgent*). Oh, don't think of me: I haven't come here to talk about myself. Are they going to—to—(*meaning "to hang you"*)?

**RICHARD** (*whimsically*). At noon, punctually. At least, that was when they disposed of Uncle Peter. (*She shudders.*) Is your husband safe? Is he on the wing?

**JUDITH.** He is no longer my husband.

**RICHARD** (*opening his eyes wide*). Eh!

**JUDITH.** I disobeyed you. I told him everything. I expected him to come here and save you. I wanted him to come here and save you. He ran away instead.

**RICHARD.** Well, that's what I meant him to do. What good would his staying have done? They'd only have hanged us both.

**JUDITH** (*with reproachful earnestness*). Richard Dudgeon: on your honour, what would you have done in his place?

**RICHARD.** Exactly what he has done, of course.

**JUDITH.** Oh, why will you not be simple with me—honest and straightforward? If you are so selfish as that, why did you let them take you last night?

**RICHARD** (*gaily*). Upon my life, Mrs. Anderson, I don't know. I've been asking myself that question ever since; and I can find no manner of reason for acting as I did.

**JUDITH.** You know you did it for his sake, believing he was a more worthy man than yourself.

**RICHARD** (*laughing*). Oho! No: that's a very pretty reason, I must say; but I'm not so modest as that. No: it wasn't for his sake.

**JUDITH** (*after a pause, during which she looks shamefacedly at him, blushing painfully*). Was it for my sake?

**RICHARD** (*gallantly*). Well, you had a hand in it. It must have been a little for your sake. You let them take me, at all events.

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JUDITH. Oh, do you think I have not been telling myself that all night? Your death will be at my door. (*Impulsively, she gives him her hand, and adds, with intense earnestness*) If I could save you as you saved him, I would do it, no matter how cruel the death was.

RICHARD (*holding her hand and smiling, but keeping her almost at arm's length*). I am very sure I shouldn't let you.

JUDITH. Don't you see that I can save you?

RICHARD. How? By changing clothes with me, eh?

JUDITH (*disengaging her hand to touch his lips with it*). Don't (*meaning "Don't jest"*). No: by telling the Court who you really are.

RICHARD (*frowning*). No use: they wouldn't spare me; and it would spoil half of his chance of escaping. They are determined to cow us by making an example of somebody on that gallows to-day. Well, let us cow them by showing that we can stand by one another to the death. That is the only force that can send Burgoyne back across the Atlantic and make America a nation.

JUDITH (*impatiently*). Oh, what does all that matter?

RICHARD (*laughing*). True: what does it matter? what does anything matter? You see, men have these strange notions, Mrs. Anderson; and women see the folly of them.

JUDITH. Women have to lose those they love through them.

RICHARD. They can easily get fresh lovers.

JUDITH (*revolted*). Oh! (*Vehemently*) Do you realise that you are going to kill yourself?

RICHARD. The only man I have any right to kill, Mrs. Anderson. Don't be concerned: no woman will lose her lover through my death. (*Smiling*) Bless you, nobody cares for me. Have you heard that my mother is dead?

JUDITH. Dead!

RICHARD. Of heart disease—in the night. Her last word to me was her curse: I don't think I could have borne her blessing. My other relatives will not grieve much on my account. Essie will cry for a day or two; but I have provided for her: I made my own will last night.

JUDITH (*stonily, after a moment's silence*). And I!

RICHARD (*surprised*). You?

JUDITH. Yes, I. Am I not to care at all?

RICHARD (*gaily and bluntly*). Not a scrap. Oh, you expressed your feelings towards me very frankly yesterday. What happened may have softened you for the moment; but believe me, Mrs. Anderson, you don't like a bone in my skin or a hair on my head. I shall be as good a riddance at 12 today as I should have been at 12 yesterday.

JUDITH (*her voice trembling*). What can I do to show you that you are mistaken?

RICHARD. Don't trouble. I'll give you credit for liking me a little better than you did. All I say is that my death will not break your heart.

JUDITH (*almost in a whisper*). How do you know? (*She puts her hands on his shoulders and looks intently at him.*)

RICHARD (*amazed—divining the truth*). Mrs. Anderson!!! (*The bell of the town clock strikes the quarter. He collects himself, and removes her hands, saying rather coldly*) Excuse me: they will be here for me presently. It is too late.

JUDITH. It is not too late. Call me as witness: they will never kill you when they know how heroically you have acted.

RICHARD (*with some scorn*). Indeed! But if I don't go through with it, where will the heroism be? I shall simply have tricked them; and they'll hang me for that like a dog. Serve me right too!

JUDITH (*wildly*). Oh, I believe you WANT to die.

RICHARD (*obstinately*). No I don't.

JUDITH. Then why not try to save yourself? I implore you—listen. You said just now that you saved him for my sake—yes (*clutching him as he recoils with a gesture of denial*) a little for my sake. Well, save yourself for my sake. And I will go with you to the end of the world.

RICHARD (*taking her by the wrists and holding her a little way from him, looking steadily at her*). Judith.

JUDITH (*breathless—delighted at the name*). Yes.

RICHARD. If I said—to please you—that I did what I did ever so little for your sake, I lied as men always lie to women. You know how much I have lived with worthless men—aye, and worthless women too. Well, they could all rise to some sort of goodness and kindness when they were in love. (*The word love comes from him with true Puritan scorn.*) That has taught me to set very little store by the goodness that only

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comes out red hot. What I did last night, I did in cold blood, caring not half so much for your husband, or (*ruthlessly*) for you (*she droops, stricken*) as I do for myself. I had no motive and no interest: all I can tell you is that when it came to the point whether I would take my neck out of the noose and put another man's into it, I could not do it. I don't know why not: I see myself as a fool for my pains; but I could not and I cannot. I have been brought up standing by the law of my own nature; and I may not go against it, gallows or no gallows. (*She has slowly raised her head and is now looking full at him.*) I should have done the same for any other man in the town, or any other man's wife. (*Releasing her.*) Do you understand that?

JUDITH. Yes: you mean that you do not love me.

RICHARD (*revolted—with fierce contempt*). Is that all it means to you?

JUDITH. What more—what worse—can it mean to me?

(*The sergeant knocks. The blow on the door jars on her heart.*) Oh, one moment more. (*She throws herself on her knees.*) I pray to you—

RICHARD. Hush! (*Calling*) Come in. (*The sergeant unlocks the door and opens it. The guard is with him.*)

SERGEANT (*coming in*). Time's up, sir.

RICHARD. Quite ready, Sergeant. Now, my dear. (*He attempts to raise her.*)

JUDITH (*clinging to him*). Only one thing more—I entreat, I implore you. Let me be present in the court. I have seen Major Swindon: he said I should be allowed if you asked it. You will ask it. It is my last request: I shall never ask you anything again. (*She clasps his knee.*) I beg and pray it of you.

RICHARD. If I do, will you be silent?

JUDITH. Yes.

RICHARD. You will keep faith?

JUDITH. I will keep— (*She breaks down, sobbing.*)

RICHARD (*taking her arm to lift her*). Just—her other arm, Sergeant.

*They go out, she sobbing convulsively, supported by the two men.*

*Meanwhile, the Council Chamber is ready for the court martial. It is a large, lofty room, with a chair of state in the middle under a tall canopy with a gilt crown, and maroon curtains*

*with the royal monogram G. R. In front of the chair is a table, also draped in maroon, with a bell, a heavy inkstand, and writing materials on it. Several chairs are set at the table. The door is at the right hand of the occupant of the chair of state when it has an occupant: at present it is empty. Major Swindon, a pale, sandy-haired, very conscientious looking man of about 45, sits at the end of the table with his back to the door, writing. He is alone until the sergeant announces the General in a subdued manner which suggests that Gentlemanly Johnny has been making his presence felt rather heavily.*

**SERGEANT.** The General, sir.

*Swindon rises hastily. The General comes in. the sergeant goes out. General Burgoyne is 55, and very well preserved. He is a man of fashion, gallant enough to have made a distinguished marriage by an elopement, witty enough to write successful comedies, aristocratically-connected enough to have had opportunities of high military distinction. His eyes, large, brilliant, apprehensive, and intelligent, are his most remarkable feature: without them his fine nose and small mouth would suggest rather more fastidiousness and less force than go to the making of a first rate general. Just now the eyes are angry and tragic, and the mouth and nostrils tense.*

**BURGOYNE.** Major Swindon, I presume.

**SWINDON.** Yes. General Burgoyne, if I mistake not. (*They bow to one another ceremoniously.*) I am glad to have the support of your presence this morning. It is not particularly lively business, hanging this poor devil of a minister.

**BURGOYNE** (*throwing himself onto Swindon's chair*). No, sir, it is not. It is making too much of the fellow to execute him: what more could you have done if he had been a member of the Church of England? Martyrdom, sir, is what these people like: it is the only way in which a man can become famous without ability. However, you have committed us to hanging him: and the sooner he is hanged the better.

**SWINDON.** We have arranged it for 12 o'clock. Nothing remains to be done except to try him.

**BURGOYNE** (*looking at him with suppressed anger*). Nothing—except to save our own necks, perhaps. Have you heard the news from Springtown?

**SWINDON.** Nothing special. The latest reports are satisfactory.

**BURGOYNE** (*rising in amazement*). Satisfactory, sir! Satisfactory!! (*He stares at him for a moment, and then adds, with grim intensity*) I am glad you take that view of them.



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SWINDON (*puzzled*). Do I understand that in your opinion—

BURGOYNE. I do not express my opinion. I never stoop to that habit of profane language which unfortunately coarsens our profession. If I did, sir, perhaps I should be able to express my opinion of the news from Springtown—the news which *you* (*severely*) have apparently not heard. How soon do you get news from your supports here?—in the course of a month eh?

SWINDON (*turning sulky*). I suppose the reports have been taken to you, sir, instead of to me. Is there anything serious?

BURGOYNE (*taking a report from his pocket and holding it up*). Springtown's in the hands of the rebels. (*He throws the report on the table.*)

SWINDON (*aghast*). Since yesterday!

BURGOYNE. Since two o'clock this morning. Perhaps *we* shall be in their hands before two o'clock to-morrow morning. Have you thought of that?

SWINDON (*confidently*). As to that, General, the British soldier will give a good account of himself.

BURGOYNE (*bitterly*). And therefore, I suppose, sir, the British officer need not know his business: the British soldier will get him out of all his blunders with the bayonet. In future, sir, I must ask you to be a little less generous with the blood of your men, and a little more generous with your own brains.

SWINDON. I am sorry I cannot pretend to your intellectual eminence, sir. I can only do my best, and rely on the devotion of my countrymen.

BURGOYNE (*suddenly becoming suavely sarcastic*). May I ask are you writing a melodrama, Major Swindon?

SWINDON (*flushing*). No, sir.

BURGOYNE. What a pity! *What a pity!* (*Dropping his sarcastic tone and facing him suddenly and seriously*) Do you at all realize, sir, that we have nothing standing between us and destruction but our own bluff and the sheepishness of these colonists? They are men of the same English stock as ourselves: six to one of us (*repeating it emphatically*), six to one, sir; and nearly half our troops are Hessians, Brunswickers, German dragoons, and Indians with scalping knives. These are the countrymen on whose devotion you rely! Suppose the colonists find a leader! Suppose the news from Springtown should turn out to mean that they have already found a leader!

What shall we do then? Eh?

**SWINDON** (*sullenly*). Our duty, sir, I presume.

**BURGOYNE** (*again sarcastic—giving him up as a fool*). Quite so, quite so. Thank you, Major Swindon, thank you. Now you've settled the question, sir—thrown a flood of light on the situation. What a comfort to me to feel that I have at my side so devoted and able an officer to support me in this emergency! I think, sir, it will probably relieve both our feelings if we proceed to hang this dissenter without further delay (*he strikes the bell*), especially as I am debarred by my principles from the customary military vent for my feelings. (*The sergeant appears.*) Bring your man in.

**SERGEANT**. Yes, sir.

**BURGOYNE**. And mention to any officer you may meet that the court cannot wait any longer for him.

**SWINDON** (*keeping his temper with difficulty*). The staff is perfectly ready, sir. They have been waiting your convenience for fully half an hour. *Perfectly* ready, sir.

**BURGOYNE** (*blandly*). So am I. (*Several officers come in and take their seats. One of them sits at the end of the table furthest from the door, and acts throughout as clerk to the court,*

*making notes of the proceedings. The uniforms are those of the 9th, 20th, 21st, 24th, 47th, 53rd, and 62nd British Infantry. One officer is a Major General of the Royal Artillery. There are also German officers of the Hessian Rifles, and of German dragoon and Brunswicker regiments.*) Oh, good morning, gentlemen. Sorry to disturb you, I am sure. Very good of you to spare us a few moments.

**SWINDON**. Will you preside, sir?

**BURGOYNE** (*becoming additionally, polished, lofty, sarcastic and urbane now that he is in public*). No, sir: I feel my own deficiencies too keenly to presume so far. If you will kindly allow me, I will sit at the feet of Gamaliel. (*He takes the chair at the end of the table next the door, and motions Swindon to the chair of state, waiting for him to be seated before sitting himself.*)

**SWINDON** (*greatly annoyed*). As you please, sir. I am only trying to do my duty under excessively trying circumstances. (*He takes his place in the chair of state.*)

*Burgoyne, relaxing his studied demeanor for the moment, sits down and begins to read the report with knitted brows and careworn looks, reflecting on his desperate situation and Swindon's uselessness. Richard is brought in. Judith walks beside him. Two soldiers precede and two follow him, with the sergeant in com-*

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*mand. They cross the room to the wall opposite the door; but when Richard has just passed before the chair of state the ser-geant stops him with a touch on the arm, and posts himself behind him, at his elbow. Judith stands timidly at the wall. The four soldiers place themselves in a squad near her.*

**BURGOYNE** (*looking up and seeing Judith*). Who is that woman?

**SERGEANT**. Prisoner's wife, sir.

**SWINDON** (*nervously*). She begged me to allow her to be present; and I thought—

**BURGOYNE** (*completing the sentence for him ironically*). You thought it would be a pleasure for her. Quite so, quite so. (*Blandly*) Give the lady a chair; and make her thoroughly comfortable.

*The sergeant fetches a chair and places it near Richard.*

**JUDITH**. Thank you, sir. (*She sits down after an awe-stricken curtsy to Burgoyne, which he acknowledges by a dignified bend of his head.*)

**SWINDON** (*to Richard, sharply*). Your name, sir?

**RICHARD** (*affable, but obstinate*). Come: you don't mean to say that you've brought me here without knowing who I am?

**SWINDON**. As a matter of form, sir, give your name.

**RICHARD**. As a matter of form then, my name is Anthony Anderson, Presbyterian minister in this town.

**BURGOYNE** (*interested*). Indeed! Pray, Mr. Anderson, what do you gentlemen believe?

**RICHARD**. I shall be happy to explain if time is allowed me. I cannot undertake to complete your conversion in less than a fortnight.

**SWINDON** (*snubbing him*). We are not here to discuss your views.

**BURGOYNE** (*with an elaborate bow to the unfortunate Swindon*). I stand rebuked.

**SWINDON** (*embarrassed*). Oh, not you, I as—

**BURGOYNE**. Don't mention it. (*To Richard, very politely*) Any political views, Mr. Anderson?

RICHARD. I understand that that is just what we are here to find out.

SWINDON (*severely*). Do you mean to deny that you are a rebel?

RICHARD. I am an American, sir.

SWINDON. What do you expect me to think of that speech, Mr. Anderson?

RICHARD. I never expect a soldier to think, sir.

*Burgoyne is boundlessly delighted by this retort, which almost reconciles him to the loss of America.*

SWINDON (*whitening with anger*). I advise you not to be insolent, prisoner.

RICHARD. You can't help yourself, General. When you make up your mind to hang a man, you put yourself at a disadvantage with him. Why should I be civil to you? I may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.

SWINDON. You have no right to assume that the court has made up its mind without a fair trial. And you will please not address me as General. I am Major Swindon.

RICHARD. A thousand pardons. I thought I had the honor of addressing Gentlemanly Johnny.

*Sensation among the officers. The sergeant has a narrow escape from a guffaw.*

BURGOYNE (*with extreme suavity*). I believe I am Gentlemanly Johnny, sir, at your service. My more intimate friends call me General Burgoyne. (*Richard bows with perfect politeness.*) You will understand, sir, I hope, since you seem to be a gentleman and a man of some spirit in spite of your calling, that if we should have the misfortune to hang you, we shall do so as a mere matter of political necessity and military duty, without any personal ill-feeling.

RICHARD. Oh, quite so. That makes all the difference in the world, of course.

*They all smile in spite of themselves: and some of the younger officers burst out laughing.*

JUDITH (*her dread and horror deepening at every one of these jests and compliments*). How can you?

RICHARD. You promised to be silent.

BURGOYNE (*to Judith, with studied courtesy*). Believe me,

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madam, your husband is placing us under the greatest obligation by taking this very disagreeable business so thoroughly in the spirit of a gentleman. Sergeant: give Mr. Anderson a chair. (*The sergeant does so. Richard sits down.*) Now, Major Swindon: we are waiting for you.

**SWINDON.** You are aware, I presume, Mr. Anderson, of your obligations as a subject of His Majesty King George the Third.

**RICHARD.** I am aware, sir, that His Majesty King George the Third is about to hang me because I object to Lord North's robbing me.

**SWINDON.** That is a treasonable speech, sir.

**RICHARD** (*briefly*). Yes. I meant it to be.

**BURGOYNE** (*strongly deprecating this line of defence, but still polite*). Don't you think, Mr. Anderson, that this is rather—if you will excuse the word—a vulgar line to take? Why should you cry out robbery because of a stamp duty and a tea duty and so forth? After all, it is the essence of your position as a gentleman that you pay with a good grace.

**RICHARD.** It is not the money, General. But to be swindled by a pig-headed lunatic like King George

**SWINDON** (*scandalised*). Chut, sir—silence!

**SERGEANT** (*in stentorian tones, greatly shocked*). Silence!

**BURGOYNE** (*unruffled*). Ah, that is another point of view. My position does not allow of my going into that, except in private. But (*shrugging his shoulders*) of course, Mr. Anderson, if you are determined to be hanged (*Judith flinches*), there's nothing more to be said. An unusual taste! however (*with a final shrug*)—!

**SWINDON** (*to Burgoyne*). Shall we call witnesses?

**RICHARD.** What need is there of witnesses? If the townspeople here had listened to me, you would have found the streets barricaded, the houses loopholed, and the people in arms to hold the town against you to the last man. But you arrived, unfortunately, before we had got out of the talking stage; and then it was too late.

**SWINDON** (*severely*). Well, sir, we shall teach you and your townspeople a lesson they will not forget. Have you anything more to say?

**RICHARD.** I think you might have the decency to treat me as a prisoner of war, and shoot me like a man instead of hanging me like a dog.

**BURGOYNE** (*sympathetically*). Now there, Mr. Anderson, you talk like a civilian, if you will excuse my saying so. Have you any idea of the average marksmanship of the army of His Majesty King George the Third? If we make you up a firing party, what will happen? Half of them will miss you: the rest will make a mess of the business and leave you to the provo-marshal's pistol. Whereas we can hang you in a perfectly workmanlike and agreeable way. (*Kindly*) Let me persuade you to be hanged, Mr. Anderson?

**JUDITH** (*sick with horror*). My God!

**RICHARD** (*to Judith*). Your promise! (*To Burgoyne*) Thank you, General: that view of the case did not occur to me before. To oblige you, I withdraw my objection to the rope. Hang me, by all means.

**BURGOYNE** (*smoothly*). Will 12 o'clock suit you, Mr. Anderson?

**RICHARD**. I shall be at your disposal then, General.

**BURGOYNE** (*rising*). Nothing more to be said, gentlemen. (*They all rise.*)

**JUDITH** (*rushing to the table*). Oh, you are not going to murder a man like that, without a proper trial—without

thinking of what you are doing—without— (*She cannot find words.*)

**RICHARD**. Is this how you keep your promise?

**JUDITH**. If I am not to speak, you must. Defend yourself: save yourself: tell them the truth.

**RICHARD** (*worriedly*). I have told them truth enough to hang me ten times over. If you say another word you will risk other lives; but you will not save mine.

**BURGOYNE**. My good lady, our only desire is to save unpleasantness. What satisfaction would it give you to have a solemn fuss made, with my friend Swindon in a black cap and so forth? I am sure we are greatly indebted to the admirable tact and gentlemanly feeling shown by your husband.

**JUDITH** (*throwing the words in his face*). Oh, you are mad. Is it nothing to you what wicked thing you do if only you do it like a gentleman? Is it nothing to you whether you are a murderer or not, if only you murder in a red coat? (*Desperately*) You shall not hang him: that man is not my husband.

*The officers look at one another, and whisper: some of the Germans asking their neighbors to explain what the woman has said. Burgoyne, who has been visibly shaken by Judith's reproach,*

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*recovers himself promptly at this new development. Richard meanwhile raises his voice above the buzz.*

**RICHARD.** I appeal to you, gentlemen, to put an end to this. She will not believe that she cannot save me. Break up the court.

**BURGOYNE** (*in a voice so quiet and firm that it restores silence at once*). One moment, Mr. Anderson. One moment, gentlemen. (*He resumes his seat. Swindon and the officers follow his example.*) Let me understand you clearly, madam. Do you mean that this gentleman is not your husband, or merely—I wish to put this with all delicacy—that you are not his wife?

**JUDITH.** I don't know what you mean. I say that he is not my husband—that my husband has escaped. This man took his place to save him. Ask anyone in the town—send out into the street for the first person you find there, and bring him in as a witness. He will tell you that the prisoner is not Anthony Anderson.

**BURGOYNE** (*quietly, as before*). Sergeant.

**SERGEANT.** Yes sir.

**BURGOYNE.** Go out into the street and bring in the first

townsman you see there.

**SERGEANT** (*making for the door*). Yes sir.

**BURGOYNE** (*as the sergeant passes*). The first clean, sober townsman you see.

**SERGEANT.** Yes Sir. (*He goes out.*)

**BURGOYNE.** Sit down, Mr. Anderson—if I may call you so for the present. (*Richard sits down.*) Sit down, madam, whilst we wait. Give the lady a newspaper.

**RICHARD** (*indignantly*). Shame!

**BURGOYNE** (*keenly, with a half smile*). If you are not her husband, sir, the case is not a serious one—for her. (*Richard bites his lip silenced.*)

**JUDITH** (*to Richard, as she returns to her seat*). I couldn't help it. (*He shakes his head. She sits down.*)

**BURGOYNE.** You will understand of course, Mr. Anderson, that you must not build on this little incident. We are bound to make an example of somebody.

**RICHARD.** I quite understand. I suppose there's no use in

my explaining.

**BURGOYNE.** I think we should prefer independent testimony, if you don't mind.

*The sergeant, with a packet of papers in his hand, returns conducting Christy, who is much scared.*

**SERGEANT** (*giving Burgoyne the packet*). Dispatches, Sir. Delivered by a corporal of the 53rd. Dead beat with hard riding, sir.

*Burgoyne opens the dispatches, and presently becomes absorbed in them. They are so serious as to take his attention completely from the court martial.*

**SERGEANT** (*to Christy*). Now then. Attention; and take your hat off. (*He posts himself in charge of Christy, who stands on Burgoyne's side of the court.*)

**RICHARD** (*in his usual bullying tone to Christy*). Don't be frightened, you fool: you're only wanted as a witness. They're not going to hang you.

**SWINDON.** What's your name?

**CHRISTY.** Christy.

**RICHARD** (*impatiently*). Christopher Dudgeon, you blatant idiot. Give your full name.

**SWINDON.** Be silent, prisoner. You must not prompt the witness.

**RICHARD.** Very well. But I warn you you'll get nothing out of him unless you shake it out of him. He has been too well brought up by a pious mother to have any sense or manhood left in him.

**BURGOYNE** (*springing up and speaking to the sergeant in a startling voice*). Where is the man who brought these?

**SERGEANT.** In the guard-room, sir.

*Burgoyne goes out with a haste that sets the officers exchanging looks.*

**SWINDON** (*to Christy*). Do you know Anthony Anderson, the Presbyterian minister?

**CHRISTY.** Of course I do. (*Implying that Swindon must be an ass not to know it.*)

**SWINDON.** Is he here?



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CHRISTY (*staring round*). I don't know.

SWINDON. Do you see him?

CHRISTY. No.

SWINDON. You seem to know the prisoner?

CHRISTY. Do you mean Dick?

SWINDON. Which is Dick?

CHRISTY (*pointing to Richard*). Him.

SWINDON. What is his name?

CHRISTY. Dick.

RICHARD. Answer properly, you jumping jackass. What do they know about Dick?

CHRISTY. Well, you are Dick, ain't you? What am I to say?

SWINDON. Address me, sir; and do you, prisoner, be silent. Tell us who the prisoner is.

CHRISTY. He's my brother Dudgeon.

SWINDON. Your brother!

CHRISTY. Yes.

SWINDON. You are sure he is not Anderson.

CHRISTY. Who?

RICHARD (*exasperatedly*). Me, me, me, you—

SWINDON. Silence, sir.

SERGEANT (*shouting*). Silence.

RICHARD (*impatiently*). Yah! (*To Christy*) He wants to know am I Minister Anderson. Tell him, and stop grinning like a zany.

CHRISTY (*grinning more than ever*). You Pastor Anderson! (*To Swindon*) Why, Mr. Anderson's a minister—a very good man; and Dick's a bad character: the respectable people won't speak to him. He's the bad brother: I'm the good one, (*The officers laugh outright. The soldiers grin.*)

SWINDON. Who arrested this man?

SERGEANT. I did, sir. I found him in the minister's house,

sitting at tea with the lady with his coat off, quite at home. If he isn't married to her, he ought to be.

SWINDON. Did he answer to the minister's name?

SERGEANT. Yes sir, but not to a minister's nature. You ask the chaplain, sir.

SWINDON (*to Richard, threateningly*). So, sir, you have attempted to cheat us. And your name is Richard Dudgeon?

RICHARD. You've found it out at last, have you?

SWINDON. Dudgeon is a name well known to us, eh?

RICHARD. Yes: Peter Dudgeon, whom you murdered, was my uncle.

SWINDON. Hm! (*He compresses his lips and looks at Richard with vindictive gravity.*)

CHRISTY. Are they going to hang you, Dick?

RICHARD. Yes. Get out: they've done with you.

CHRISTY. And I may keep the china peacocks?

RICHARD (*jumping up*). Get out. Get out, you blithering baboon, you. (*Christy flies, panicstricken.*)

SWINDON (*rising—all rise*). Since you have taken the minister's place, Richard Dudgeon, you shall go through with it. The execution will take place at 12 o'clock as arranged; and unless Anderson surrenders before then you shall take his place on the gallows. Sergeant: take your man out.

JUDITH (*distracted*). No, no—

SWINDON (*fiercely, dreading a renewal of her entreaties*). Take that woman away.

RICHARD (*springing across the table with a tiger-like bound, and seizing Swindon by the throat*). You infernal scoundrel

*The sergeant rushes to the rescue from one side, the soldiers from the other. They seize Richard and drag him back to his place. Swindon, who has been thrown supine on the table, rises, arranging his stock. He is about to speak, when he is anticipated by Burgoyne, who has just appeared at the door with two papers in his hand: a white letter and a blue dispatch.*

BURGOYNE (*advancing to the table, elaborately cool*). What is this? What's happening? Mr. Anderson: I'm astonished at you.

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**RICHARD.** I am sorry I disturbed you, General. I merely wanted to strangle your understrapper there. (*Breaking out violently at Swindon*) Why do you raise the devil in me by bullying the woman like that? You oatmeal faced dog, I'd twist your cursed head off with the greatest satisfaction. (*He puts out his hands to the sergeant*) Here: handcuff me, will you; or I'll not undertake to keep my fingers off him.

*The sergeant takes out a pair of handcuffs and looks to Burgoyne for instructions.*

**BURGOYNE.** Have you addressed profane language to the lady, Major Swindon?

**SWINDON** (*very angry*). No, sir, certainly not. That question should not have been put to me. I ordered the woman to be removed, as she was disorderly; and the fellow sprang at me. Put away those handcuffs. I am perfectly able to take care of myself.

**RICHARD.** Now you talk like a man, I have no quarrel with you.

**BURGOYNE.** Mr. Anderson—

**SWINDON.** His name is Dudgeon, sir, Richard Dudgeon. He is an impostor.

**BURGOYNE** (*brusquely*). Nonsense, sir; you hanged Dudgeon at Springtown.

**RICHARD.** It was my uncle, General.

**BURGOYNE.** Oh, your uncle. (*To Swindon, handsomely*) I beg your pardon, Major Swindon. (*Swindon acknowledges the apology stiffly. Burgoyne turns to Richard*) We are somewhat unfortunate in our relations with your family. Well, Mr. Dudgeon, what I wanted to ask you is this: Who is (*reading the name from the letter*) William Maindeck Parshotter?

**RICHARD.** He is the Mayor of Springtown.

**BURGOYNE.** Is William—Maindeck and so on—a man of his word?

**RICHARD.** Is he selling you anything?

**BURGOYNE.** No.

**RICHARD.** Then you may depend on him.

**BURGOYNE.** Thank you, Mr.—'m Dudgeon. By the way, since you are not Mr. Anderson, do we still—eh, Major Swindon? (*meaning "do we still hang him?"*)

RICHARD. The arrangements are unaltered, General.

BURGOYNE. Ah, indeed. I am sorry. Good morning, Mr. Dudgeon. Good morning, madam.

RICHARD (*interrupting Judith almost fiercely as she is about to make some wild appeal, and taking her arm resolutely*). Not one word more. Come.

*She looks imploringly at him, but is overborne by his determination. They are marched out by the four soldiers: the sergeant, very sulky, walking between Swindon and Richard, whom he watches as if he were a dangerous animal.*

BURGOYNE. Gentlemen: we need not detain you. Major Swindon: a word with you. (*The officers go out. Burgoyne waits with unruffled serenity until the last of them disappears. Then he becomes very grave, and addresses Swindon for the first time without his title.*) Swindon: do you know what this is (*showing him the letter*)?

SWINDON. What?

BURGOYNE. A demand for a safe-conduct for an officer of their militia to come here and arrange terms with us.

SWINDON. Oh, they are giving in.

BURGOYNE. They add that they are sending the man who raised Springtown last night and drove us out; so that we may know that we are dealing with an officer of importance.

SWINDON. Pooh!

BURGOYNE. He will be fully empowered to arrange the terms of—guess what.

SWINDON. Their surrender, I hope.

BURGOYNE. No: our evacuation of the town. They offer us just six hours to clear out.

SWINDON. What monstrous impudence!

BURGOYNE. What shall we do, eh?

SWINDON. March on Springtown and strike a decisive blow at once.

BURGOYNE (*quietly*). Hm! (*Turning to the door*) Come to the adjutant's office.

SWINDON. What for?

BURGOYNE. To write out that safe-conduct. (*He puts his*

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*hand to the door knob to open it.)*

SWINDON (*who has not budged*). General Burgoyne.

BURGOYNE (*returning*). Sir?

SWINDON. It is my duty to tell you, sir, that I do not consider the threats of a mob of rebellious tradesmen a sufficient reason for our giving way.

BURGOYNE (*imperturbable*). Suppose I resign my command to you, what will you do?

SWINDON. I will undertake to do what we have marched south from Boston to do, and what General Howe has marched north from New York to do: effect a junction at Albany and wipe out the rebel army with our united forces.

BURGOYNE (*enigmatically*). And will you wipe out our enemies in London, too?

SWINDON. In London! What enemies?

BURGOYNE (*forcibly*). Jobbery and snobbery, incompetence and Red Tape. (*He holds up the dispatch and adds, with despair in his face and voice*) I have just learnt, sir, that General Howe is still in New York.

SWINDON (*thunderstruck*). Good God! He has disobeyed orders!

BURGOYNE (*with sardonic calm*). He has received no orders, sir. Some gentleman in London forgot to dispatch them: he was leaving town for his holiday, I believe. To avoid upsetting his arrangements, England will lose her American colonies; and in a few days you and I will be at Saratoga with 5,000 men to face 16,000 rebels in an impregnable position.

SWINDON (*appalled*). Impossible!

BURGOYNE (*coldly*). I beg your pardon!

SWINDON. I can't believe it! What will History say?

BURGOYNE. History, sir, will tell lies, as usual. Come: we must send the safe-conduct. (*He goes out.*)

SWINDON (*following distractedly*). My God, my God! We shall be wiped out.

*As noon approaches there is excitement in the market place. The gallows which hangs there permanently for the terror of evildoers, with such minor advertizers and examples of crime as the pillory, the whipping post, and the stocks, has a new rope attached, with the noose hitched up to one of the uprights, out of*

*reach of the boys. Its ladder, too, has been brought out and placed in position by the town beadle, who stands by to guard it from unauthorized climbing. The Websterbridge townfolk are present in force, and in high spirits; for the news has spread that it is the devil's disciple and not the minister that the Continentals (so they call Burgoyne's forces) are about to hang: consequently the execution can be enjoyed without any misgiving as to its righteousness, or to the cowardice of allowing it to take place without a struggle. There is even some fear of a disappointment as midday approaches and the arrival of the beadle with the ladder remains the only sign of preparation. But at last reassuring shouts of Here they come: Here they are, are heard; and a company of soldiers with fixed bayonets, half British infantry, half Hessians, tramp quickly into the middle of the market place, driving the crowd to the sides.*

**SERGEANT.** Halt. Front. Dress. (*The soldiers change their column into a square enclosing the gallows, their petty officers, energetically led by the sergeant, hustling the persons who find themselves inside the square out at the corners.*) Now then! Out of it with you: out of it. Some o' you'll get strung up yourselves presently. Form that square there, will you, you damned Hoosians. No use talkin' German to them: talk to their toes with the butt ends of your muskets: they'll understand that. GET out of it, will you? (*He comes upon Judith, standing near the gallows.*) Now then: *you've* no call here.

**JUDITH.** May I not stay? What harm am I doing?

**SERGEANT.** I want none of your argufying. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, running to see a man hanged that's not your husband. And he's no better than yourself. I told my major he was a gentleman; and then he goes and tries to strangle him, and calls his blessed Majesty a lunatic. So out of it with you, double quick.

**JUDITH.** Will you take these two silver dollars and let me stay?

*The sergeant, without an instant's hesitation, looks quickly and furtively round as he shoots the money dexterously into his pocket. Then he raises his voice in virtuous indignation.*

**SERGEANT.** *Me* take money in the execution of my duty! Certainly not. Now I'll tell you what I'll do, to teach you to corrupt the King's officer. I'll put you under arrest until the execution's over. You just stand there; and don't let me see you as much as move from that spot until you're let. (*With a swift wink at her he points to the corner of the square behind the gallows on his right, and turns noisily away, shouting*) Now then dress up and keep 'em back, will you?

*Cries of Hush and Silence are heard among the townfolk; and the sound of a military band, playing the Dead March from*

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*Saul, is heard. The crowd becomes quiet at once; and the sergeant and petty officers, hurrying to the back of the square, with a few whispered orders and some stealthy hustling cause it to open and admit the funeral procession, which is protected from the crowd by a double file of soldiers. First come Burgoyne and Swindon, who, on entering the square, glance with distaste at the gallows, and avoid passing under it by wheeling a little to the right and stationing themselves on that side. Then Mr. Brudenell, the chaplain, in his surplice, with his prayer book open in his hand, walking beside Richard, who is moody and disorderly. He walks doggedly through the gallows framework, and posts himself a little in front of it. Behind him comes the executioner, a stalwart soldier in his shirtsleeves. Following him, two soldiers haul a light military waggon. Finally comes the band, which posts itself at the back of the square, and finishes the Dead March. Judith, watching Richard painfully, steals down to the gallows, and stands leaning against its right post. During the conversation which follows, the two soldiers place the cart under the gallows, and stand by the shafts, which point backwards. The executioner takes a set of steps from the cart and places it ready for the prisoner to mount. Then he climbs the tall ladder which stands against the gallows, and cuts the string by which the rope is hitched up; so that the noose drops dangling over the cart, into which he steps as he descends.*

**RICHARD** (*with suppressed impatience, to Brudenell*). Look here, sir: this is no place for a man of your profession. Hadn't

you better go away?

**SWINDON**. I appeal to you, prisoner, if you have any sense of decency left, to listen to the ministrations of the chaplain, and pay due heed to the solemnity of the occasion.

**THE CHAPLAIN** (*gently reproving Richard*). Try to control yourself, and submit to the divine will. (*He lifts his book to proceed with the service.*)

**RICHARD**. Answer for your own will, sir, and those of your accomplices here (*indicating Burgoyne and Swindon*): I see little divinity about them or you. You talk to me of Christianity when you are in the act of hanging your enemies. Was there ever such blasphemous nonsense! (*To Swindon, more rudely*) You've got up the solemnity of the occasion, as you call it, to impress the people with your own dignity—Handel's music and a clergyman to make murder look like piety! Do you suppose I am going to help you? You've asked me to choose the rope because you don't know your own trade well enough to shoot me properly. Well, hang away and have done with it.

**SWINDON** (*to the chaplain*). Can you do nothing with him, Mr. Brudenell?

**CHAPLAIN**. I will try, sir. (*Beginning to read*) Man that is

born of woman hath—

**RICHARD** (*fixing his eyes on him*). “Thou shalt not kill.”

*The book drops in Brudenell’s hands.*

**CHAPLAIN** (*confessing his embarrassment*). What am I to say, Mr. Dudgeon?

**RICHARD**. Let me alone, man, can’t you?

**BURGOYNE** (*with extreme urbanity*). I think, Mr. Brudenell, that as the usual professional observations seem to strike Mr. Dudgeon as incongruous under the circumstances, you had better omit them until—er—until Mr. Dudgeon can no longer be inconvenienced by them. (*Brudenell, with a shrug, shuts his book and retires behind the gallows.*) You seem in a hurry, Mr. Dudgeon.

**RICHARD** (*with the horror of death upon him*). Do you think this is a pleasant sort of thing to be kept waiting for? You’ve made up your mind to commit murder: well, do it and have done with it.

**BURGOYNE**. Mr. Dudgeon: we are only doing this—

**RICHARD**. Because you’re paid to do it.

**SWINDON**. You insolent— (*He swallows his rage.*)

**BURGOYNE** (*with much charm of manner*). Ah, I am really sorry that you should think that, Mr. Dudgeon. If you knew what my commission cost me, and what my pay is, you would think better of me. I should be glad to part from you on friendly terms.

**RICHARD**. Hark ye, General Burgoyne. If you think that I like being hanged, you’re mistaken. I don’t like it; and I don’t mean to pretend that I do. And if you think I’m obliged to you for hanging me in a gentlemanly way, you’re wrong there too. I take the whole business in devilish bad part; and the only satisfaction I have in it is that you’ll feel a good deal meaner than I’ll look when it’s over. (*He turns away, and is striding to the cart when Judith advances and interposes with her arms stretched out to him. Richard, feeling that a very little will upset his self-possession, shrinks from her, crying*) What are you doing here? This is no place for you. (*She makes a gesture as if to touch him. He recoils impatiently.*) No: go away, go away; you’ll unnerve me. Take her away, will you?

**JUDITH**. Won’t you bid me good-bye?

**RICHARD** (*allowing her to take his hand*). Oh good-bye, good-bye. Now go—go—quickly. (*She clings to his hand—will not be put off with so cold a last farewell—at last, as he*



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*tries to disengage himself, throws herself on his breast in agony.)*

**SWINDON** (*angrily to the sergeant, who, alarmed at Judith's movement, has come from the back of the square to pull her back, and stopped irresolutely on finding that he is too late*). How is this? Why is she inside the lines?

**SERGEANT** (*guiltily*). I dunno, sir. She's that artful can't keep her away.

**BURGOYNE**. You were bribed.

**SERGEANT** (*protesting*). No, Sir—

**SWINDON** (*severely*). Fall back. (*He obeys.*)

**RICHARD** (*imploringly to those around him, and finally to Burgoyne, as the least stolid of them*). Take her away. Do you think I want a woman near me now?

**BURGOYNE** (*going to Judith and taking her hand*). Here, madam: you had better keep inside the lines; but stand here behind us; and don't look.

*Richard, with a great sobbing sigh of relief as she releases him and turns to Burgoyne, flies for refuge to the cart and mounts into it. The executioner takes off his coat and pinions him.*

**JUDITH** (*resisting Burgoyne quietly and drawing her hand away*). No: I must stay. I won't look. (*She goes to the right of the gallows. She tries to look at Richard, but turns away with a frightful shudder, and falls on her knees in prayer. Brudenell comes towards her from the back of the square.*)

**BURGOYNE** (*nodding approvingly as she kneels*). Ah, quite so. Do not disturb her, Mr. Brudenell: that will do very nicely. (*Brudenell nods also, and withdraws a little, watching her sympathetically. Burgoyne resumes his former position, and takes out a handsome gold chronometer.*) Now then, are those preparations made? We must not detain Mr. Dudgeon.

*By this time Richard's hands are bound behind him; and the noose is round his neck. The two soldiers take the shaft of the wagon, ready to pull it away. The executioner, standing in the cart behind Richard, makes a sign to the sergeant.*

**SERGEANT** (*to Burgoyne*). Ready, sir.

**BURGOYNE**. Have you anything more to say, Mr. Dudgeon? It wants two minutes of twelve still.

**RICHARD** (*in the strong voice of a man who has conquered the bitterness of death*). Your watch is two minutes slow by the town clock, which I can see from here, General. (*The town clock strikes the first stroke of twelve. Involuntarily the*

*people flinch at the sound, and a subdued groan breaks from them.)* Amen! my life for the world's future!

**ANDERSON** (*shouting as he rushes into the market place*). Amen; and stop the execution. (*He bursts through the line of soldiers opposite Burgoyne, and rushes, panting, to the gallows.*) I am Anthony Anderson, the man you want.

*The crowd, intensely excited, listens with all its ears. Judith, half rising, stares at him; then lifts her hands like one whose dearest prayer has been granted.*

**SWINDON**. Indeed. Then you are just in time to take your place on the gallows. Arrest him.

*At a sign from the sergeant, two soldiers come forward to seize Anderson.*

**ANDERSON** (*thrusting a paper under Swindon's nose*). There's my safe-conduct, sir.

**SWINDON** (*taken aback*). Safe-conduct! Are you—!

**ANDERSON** (*emphatically*). I am. (*The two soldiers take him by the elbows.*) Tell these men to take their hands off me.

**SWINDON** (*to the men*). Let him go.

**SERGEANT**. Fall back.

*The two men return to their places. The townsfolk raise a cheer; and begin to exchange exultant looks, with a presentiment of triumph as they see their Pastor speaking with their enemies in the gate.*

**ANDERSON** (*exhaling a deep breath of relief, and dabbing his perspiring brow with his handkerchief*). Thank God, I was in time!

**BURGOYNE** (*calm as ever, and still watch in hand*). Ample time, sir. Plenty of time. I should never dream of hanging any gentleman by an American clock. (*He puts up his watch.*)

**ANDERSON**. Yes: we are some minutes ahead of you already, General. Now tell them to take the rope from the neck of that American citizen.

**BURGOYNE** (*to the executioner in the cart—very politely*). Kindly undo Mr. Dudgeon.

*The executioner takes the rope from Richard's neck, unties his hands, and helps him on with his coat.*

**JUDITH** (*stealing timidly to Anderson*). Tony.

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**ANDERSON** (*putting his arm round her shoulders and bantering her affectionately*). Well what do you think of you husband, *now*, eh?—eh??—eh???

**JUDITH**. I am ashamed— (*She hides her face against his breast.*)

**BURGOYNE** (*to Swindon*). You look disappointed, Major Swindon.

**SWINDON**. You look defeated, General Burgoyne.

**BURGOYNE**. I am, sir; and I am humane enough to be glad of it. (*Richard jumps down from the cart, Brudenell offering his hand to help him, and runs to Anderson, whose left hand he shakes heartily, the right being occupied by Judith.*) By the way, Mr. Anderson, I do not quite understand. The safe-conduct was for a commander of the militia. I understand you are a—(*he looks as pointedly as his good manners permit at the riding boots, the pistols, and Richard's coat, and adds*) a clergyman.

**ANDERSON** (*between Judith and Richard*). Sir: it is in the hour of trial that a man finds his true profession. This foolish young man (*placing his hand on Richard's shoulder*) boasted himself the Devil's Disciple; but when the hour of trial came to him, he found that it was his destiny to suffer and be

faithful to the death. I thought myself a decent minister of the gospel of peace; but when the hour of trial came to me, I found that it was my destiny to be a man of action and that my place was amid the thunder of the captains and the shouting. So I am starting life at fifty as Captain Anthony Anderson of the Springtown militia; and the Devil's Disciple here will start presently as the Reverend Richard Dudgeon, and wag his pow in my old pulpit, and give good advice to this silly sentimental little wife of mine (*putting his other hand on her shoulder. She steals a glance at Richard to see how the prospect pleases him*). Your mother told me, Richard, that I should never have chosen Judith if I'd been born for the ministry. I am afraid she was right; so, by your leave, you may keep my coat and I'll keep yours.

**RICHARD**. Minister—I should say Captain. I have behaved like a fool.

**JUDITH**. Like a hero.

**RICHARD**. Much the same thing, perhaps. (*With some bitterness towards himself*) But no: if I had been any good, I should have done for you what you did for me, instead of making a vain sacrifice.

**ANDERSON**. Not vain, my boy. It takes all sorts to make a world —saints as well as soldiers. (*Turning to Burgoyne*) And

now, General, time presses; and America is in a hurry. Have you realized that though you may occupy towns and win battles, you cannot conquer a nation?

**BURGOYNE.** My good sir, without a Conquest you cannot have an aristocracy. Come and settle the matter at my quarters.

**ANDERSON.** At your service, sir. *(To Richard)* See Judith home for me, will you, my boy? *(He hands her over to him.)* Now General. *(He goes busily up the market place towards the Town Hall, Leaving Judith and Richard together. Burgoyne follows him a step or two; then checks himself and turns to Richard.)*

**BURGOYNE.** Oh, by the way, Mr. Dudgeon, I shall be glad to see you at lunch at half-past one. *(He pauses a moment, and adds, with politely veiled slyness)* Bring Mrs. Anderson, if she will be so good. *(To Swindon, who is fuming)* Take it quietly, Major Swindon: your friend the British soldier can stand up to anything except the British War Office. *(He follows Anderson.)*

**SERGEANT** *(to Swindon)*. What orders, sir?

**SWINDON** *(savagely)*. Orders! What use are orders now? There's no army. Back to quarters; and be d— *(He tunes on his heel and goes.)*

**SERGEANT** (pugnacious and patriotic, repudiating the idea of defeat). 'Tention. Now then: cock up your chins, and show'em you don't care a damn for 'em. Slope arms! Fours! Wheel! Quick march!

*The drum marks time with a tremendous bang; the band strikes up British Grenadiers; and the sergeant, Brudenell, and the English troops march off defiantly to their quarters. The townsfolk press in behind, and follow them up the market, jeering at them; and the town band, a very primitive affair, brings up the rear, playing Yankee Doodle. Essie, who comes in with them, runs to Richard.*

**ESSIE.** Oh, Dick!

**RICHARD** *(good-humoredly, but wilfully)*. Now, now: come, come! I don't mind being hanged; but I will not be cried over.

**ESSIE.** No, I promise. I'll be good. *(She tries to restrain her tears, but cannot.)* I—I want to see where the soldiers are going to. *(She goes a little way up the market, pretending to look after the crowd.)*

**JUDITH.** Promise me you will never tell him.

**RICHARD.** Don't be afraid.

*They shake hands on it.*

ESSIE (*calling to them*). They're coming back. They want you.

*Jubilation in the market. The townsfolk surge back again in wild enthusiasm with their band, and hoist Richard on their shoulders, cheering him.*

CURTAIN.

## NOTES TO THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE

### BURGOYNE

General John Burgoyne, who is presented in this play for the first time (as far as I am aware) on the English stage, is not a conventional stage soldier, but as faithful a portrait as it is in the nature of stage portraits to be. His objection to profane swearing is not borrowed from Mr. Gilbert's H. M. S. Pin-afore: it is taken from the Code of Instructions drawn up by himself for his officers when he introduced Light Horse into the English army. His opinion that English soldiers should be treated as thinking beings was no doubt as unwelcome to the military authorities of his time, when nothing was thought of ordering a soldier a thousand lashes, as it will be to those modern victims of the flagellation neurosis who are so anxious to revive that discredited sport. His military reports are very clever as criticisms, and are humane and enlightened within certain aristocratic limits, best illustrated perhaps by his declaration, which now sounds so curious, that he should blush to ask for promotion on any other ground than that of family influence. As a parliamentary candidate, Burgoyne

took our common expression “fighting an election” so very literally that he led his supporters to the poll at Preston in 1768 with a loaded pistol in each hand, and won the seat, though he was fined 1,000 pounds, and denounced by Junius, for the pistols.

It is only within quite recent years that any general recognition has become possible for the feeling that led Burgoyne, a professed enemy of oppression in India and elsewhere, to accept his American command when so many other officers threw up their commissions rather than serve in a civil war against the Colonies. His biographer De Fonblanque, writing in 1876, evidently regarded his position as indefensible. Nowadays, it is sufficient to say that Burgoyne was an Imperialist. He sympathized with the colonists; but when they proposed as a remedy the disruption of the Empire, he regarded that as a step backward in civilization. As he put it to the House of Commons, “while we remember that we are contending against brothers and fellow subjects, we must also remember that we are contending in this crisis for the fate of the British Empire.” Eighty-four years after his defeat, his republican conquerors themselves engaged in a civil

war for the integrity of their Union. In 1886 the Whigs who represented the anti-Burgoyne tradition of American Independence in English politics, abandoned Gladstone and made common cause with their political opponents in defence of the Union between England and Ireland. Only the other day England sent 200,000 men into the field south of the equator to fight out the question whether South Africa should develop as a Federation of British Colonies or as an independent Afrikaner United States. In all these cases the Unionists who were detached from their parties were called renegades, as Burgoyne was. That, of course, is only one of the unfortunate consequences of the fact that mankind, being for the most part incapable of politics, accepts vituperation as an easy and congenial substitute. Whether Burgoyne or Washington, Lincoln or Davis, Gladstone or Bright, Mr. Chamberlain or Mr. Leonard Courtney was in the right will never be settled, because it will never be possible to prove that the government of the victor has been better for mankind than the government of the vanquished would have been. It is true that the victors have no doubt on the point; but to the dramatist, that certainty of theirs is only part of the hu-

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man comedy. The American Unionist is often a Separatist as to Ireland; the English Unionist often sympathizes with the Polish Home Ruler; and both English and American Unionists are apt to be Disruptionists as regards that Imperial Ancient of Days, the Empire of China. Both are Unionists concerning Canada, but with a difference as to the precise application to it of the Monroe doctrine. As for me, the dramatist, I smile, and lead the conversation back to Burgoyne.

Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga made him that occasionally necessary part of our British system, a scapegoat. The explanation of his defeat given in the play is founded on a passage quoted by De Fonblanque from Fitzmaurice's Life of Lord Shelburne, as follows: "Lord George Germain, having among other peculiarities a particular dislike to be put out of his way on any occasion, had arranged to call at his office on his way to the country to sign the dispatches; but as those addressed to Howe had not been faircopied, and he was not disposed to be balked of his projected visit to Kent, they were not signed then and were forgotten on his return home." These were the dispatches instructing Sir William Howe, who was in New York, to effect a junction at Albany

with Burgoyne, who had marched from Boston for that purpose. Burgoyne got as far as Saratoga, where, failing the expected reinforcement, he was hopelessly outnumbered, and his officers picked off, Boer fashion, by the American farmer-sharpshooters. His own collar was pierced by a bullet. The publicity of his defeat, however, was more than compensated at home by the fact that Lord George's trip to Kent had not been interfered with, and that nobody knew about the oversight of the dispatch. The policy of the English Government and Court for the next two years was simply concealment of Germain's neglect. Burgoyne's demand for an inquiry was defeated in the House of Commons by the court party; and when he at last obtained a committee, the king got rid of it by a prorogation. When Burgoyne realized what had happened about the instructions to Howe (the scene in which I have represented him as learning it before Saratoga is not historical: the truth did not dawn on him until many months afterwards) the king actually took advantage of his being a prisoner of war in England on parole, and ordered him to return to America into captivity. Burgoyne immediately resigned all his appointments; and this practically closed his

military career, though he was afterwards made Commander of the Forces in Ireland for the purpose of banishing him from parliament.

The episode illustrates the curious perversion of the English sense of honor when the privileges and prestige of the aristocracy are at stake. Mr. Frank Harris said, after the disastrous battle of Modder River, that the English, having lost America a century ago because they preferred George III, were quite prepared to lose South Africa to-day because they preferred aristocratic commanders to successful ones. Horace Walpole, when the parliamentary recess came at a critical period of the War of Independence, said that the Lords could not be expected to lose their pheasant shooting for the sake of America. In the working class, which, like all classes, has its own official aristocracy, there is the same reluctance to discredit an institution or to “do a man out of his job.” At bottom, of course, this apparently shameless sacrifice of great public interests to petty personal ones, is simply the preference of the ordinary man for the things he can feel and understand to the things that are beyond his capacity. It is stupidity, not dishonesty.

Burgoyne fell a victim to this stupidity in two ways. Not only was he thrown over, in spite of his high character and distinguished services, to screen a court favorite who had actually been cashiered for cowardice and misconduct in the field fifteen years before; but his peculiar critical temperament and talent, artistic, satirical, rather histrionic, and his fastidious delicacy of sentiment, his fine spirit and humanity, were just the qualities to make him disliked by stupid people because of their dread of ironic criticism. Long after his death, Thackeray, who had an intense sense of human character, but was typically stupid in valuing and interpreting it, instinctively sneered at him and exulted in his defeat. That sneer represents the common English attitude towards the Burgoyne type. Every instance in which the critical genius is defeated, and the stupid genius (for both temperaments have their genius) “muddles through all right,” is popular in England. But Burgoyne’s failure was not the work of his own temperament, but of the stupid temperament. What man could do under the circumstances he did, and did handsomely and loftily. He fell, and his ideal empire was dismembered, not through his own misconduct, but because Sir



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George Germain overestimated the importance of his Kentish holiday, and underestimated the difficulty of conquering those remote and inferior creatures, the colonists. And King George and the rest of the nation agreed, on the whole, with Germain. It is a significant point that in America, where Burgoyne was an enemy and an invader, he was admired and praised. The climate there is no doubt more favorable to intellectual vivacity.

I have described Burgoyne's temperament as rather histrionic; and the reader will have observed that the Burgoyne of the Devil's Disciple is a man who plays his part in life, and makes all its points, in the manner of a born high comedian. If he had been killed at Saratoga, with all his comedies unwritten, and his plan for turning *As You Like It* into a Beggar's Opera unconceived, I should still have painted the same picture of him on the strength of his reply to the articles of capitulation proposed to him by his American conqueror General Gates. Here they are:

### PROPOSITION.

1. General Burgoyne's army being reduced by repeated de-

feats, by desertion, sickness, etc., their provisions exhausted, their military horses, tents and baggage taken or destroyed, their retreat cut off, and their camp invested, they can only be allowed to surrender as prisoners of war.

### ANSWER.

1. Lieut.-General Burgoyne's army, however reduced, will never admit that their retreat is cut off while they have arms in their hands.

### PROPOSITION.

2. The officers and soldiers may keep the baggage belonging to them. The generals of the United States never permit individuals to be pillaged.

### ANSWER.

2. Noted.

### PROPOSITION.

3. The troops under his Excellency General Burgoyne will be conducted by the most convenient route to New England, marching by easy marches, and sufficiently provided for by the way.

ANSWER.

3. Agreed.

PROPOSITION.

4. The officers will be admitted on parole and will be treated with the liberality customary in such cases, so long as they, by proper behaviour, continue to deserve it; but those who are apprehended having broke their parole, as some British officers have done, must expect to be close confined.

ANSWER.

4. There being no officer in this army, under, or capable of being under, the description of breaking parole, this article needs no answer.

PROPOSITION.

5. All public stores, artillery, arms, ammunition, carriages, horses, etc.,etc., must be delivered to commissaries appointed to receive them.

ANSWER.

5. All public stores may be delivered, arms excepted.

PROPOSITION.

6. These terms being agreed to and signed, the troops under his Excellency's, General Burgoyne's command, may be drawn up in their encampments, where they will be ordered to ground their arms, and may thereupon be marched to the river-side on their way to Bennington.

ANSWER.

6. This article is inadmissible in any extremity. Sooner than this army will consent to ground their arms in their encampments, they will rush on the enemy determined to take no quarter.

And, later on, "If General Gates does not mean to recede from the 6th article, the treaty ends at once: the army will to a man proceed to any act of desperation sooner than submit to that article."

Here you have the man at his Burgoyne's. Need I add that he had his own way; and that when the actual ceremony of surrender came, he would have played poor General Gates off the stage, had not that commander risen to the occasion by handing him back his sword.

In connection with the reference to Indians with scalping knives, who, with the troops hired from Germany, made up

about half Burgoyne's force, I may mention that Burgoyne offered two of them a reward to guide a Miss McCrea, betrothed to one of the English officers, into the English lines.

The two braves quarrelled about the reward; and the more sensitive of them, as a protest against the unfairness of the other, tomahawked the young lady. The usual retaliations were proposed under the popular titles of justice and so forth; but as the tribe of the slayer would certainly have followed suit by a massacre of whites on the Canadian frontier, Burgoyne was compelled to forgive the crime, to the intense disgust of indignant Christendom.

### BRUDENELL

Brudenell is also a real person. At least an artillery chaplain of that name distinguished himself at Saratoga by reading the burial service over Major Fraser under fire, and by a quite readable adventure, chronicled by Burgoyne, with Lady Harriet Ackland. Lady Harriet's husband achieved the remarkable feat of killing himself, instead of his adversary, in a duel. He overbalanced himself in the heat of his swordsmanship, and fell with his head against a pebble. Lady Harriet then married the warrior chaplain, who, like Anthony Anderson in the play, seems to have mistaken his natural profession.

The rest of the Devil's Disciple may have actually occurred, like most stories invented by dramatists; but I cannot produce any documents. Major Swindon's name is invented;

but the man, of course, is real. There are dozens of him extant to this day.

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