**Pygmalion**

**Characters**

**Clara Eynsford Hill**

- Upper middle class
- Aggressive, disrespectful, selfish, impulsive, pathetic
- Higher social class than Eliza but doesn't act like it
- Behaves badly
- Not married
- Too snobbish to admit that she can no longer afford a life of luxury
- At first, she treats Eliza like dirt but she admires her so much that Eliza becomes her model → she has not recognized that Eliza was the flower girl at first

*Function in the play:* → Shaw is mocking the social pretensions from the upper and upper-middle class, which prevents them from facing up to reality.
→ Instead of adapting, they hold on to the past
→ The attempts to keep up appearances makes them even more pathetic
→ Can be a reaction form Shaw to his own mother, who belonged to the genteel poor and tried to keep up appearances

**Mrs. Eynsford Hill**

- Upper middle class
- Means the same things as Clara but in a more polite way
- Treats Freddy like a child
- Gives "too much"—> **wants to keep up appearances**
- Bored and ashamed of her daughter's reactions
- Her family used to be well-off
- Doesn't have money to organize parties for Clara to meet a man

**Freddy Eynsford Hill**

- Submissive
- 21 years old
- Obeys love at the first sight (with Eliza)
- Is held as a fool by Higgins
- Writes letters to Eliza (he's in love)
• serves as a young, viable marriage option for Eliza

**Eliza**

• We don't really know her age (18-20 years old)
• Beginning: Dirty, not attractive, poor
• Difficult to understand → shows her social situation
• Knows how to take advantage of things → intelligent
• Shows self-respect
• Not a romantic figure
• Her real remaking happens after the ambassador's party, when she decides to make a statement for her own dignity against Higgins' insensitive treatment. This is when she becomes, not a duchess, but an independent woman.
• Comes very close to being a walking cliché. She's the poor girl from the streets who turns out to be a brilliant and beautiful young woman.
• She doesn't speak with a thick accent; her grammar is correct; she moves with poise and confidence
• Serves to show us how messed up society is. Her transformation is a testament to the power of education and language

**Colonel Pickering**

• Middle class
• Elderly, amiable military
• Generous and charitable
• Gentleman
• author of Spoken Sanskrit
• Says he will cover the costs of the experiment if Higgins makes a convincing duchess of Eliza
• Teaches Eliza self-respect through the way he treats her
Professor (Henry) Higgins

**Personality:**

- Upper middle class (wears boots)
- Impolite, snobbish, arrogant, childish, bossy, egoistic
- Feels superior, bullies the others
- Bad-mannered, uses swear words, impatient
- Can hardly control his feelings

**Behaviors:**

- **Shows up his skills** (that he has a good language and that he can recognize accents)
- Work = hobby → he has enough money to live without having to work
- Doesn't care about other's feelings
- Tries to get Eliza into the experience through tempting, threatening or blackmailing
- Is Higgins a hypocrite? Straight forward speech is not hypocritical. But when he's caught doing something that doesn't correspond to his class, he can not admit his faults, which is hypocritical.
- Bets with Pickering
- Corrects Eliza's language

**Believes:**

- Convinced bachelor (men and women can not understand each other, walks over everybody)
- The language is sacred to him, phonetics are his life (obsessed with science)
- Dislikes women, he can not get along with them. Like Shaw, he is skeptical about marriage

Nepommuck

- Old student of Higgins → teaches English now
- Is ask by the ambassador's wife to find out more about Eliza
- Thinks Eliza is a foreigner because of her perfect accent
- Tells the ambassador's wife that Eliza is a hungarian princess
- Is chocked when Higgins that Eliza comes from the London gutter
Mrs. Pearce

- Lower-middle class
- Higgins' housekeeper
- Believes in good manners
- Rational, calm, respectable, sensible

Relationship with Higgins: Treats him like a spoiled child  
Rebukes him for his bullying and rudeness  
Knows how to defend against his remarks  
Tries to make him recognize his own faults  
→ she's like a mother

Relationship with Eliza: Shows her affections, preoccupation  
Not snobbish nor condescending  
Supports her (protection)  
→ mother/child relationship

Mr. Doolittle

- Eliza's father
- Job = dustman
- Drunkard
- Elderly but vigorous, expressive voice
- His face is free from fear and conscience
- Expresses his feelings freely → wonderful talker
- Lazy (Doolittle=“do little”)
- Doesn't want much money, just enough to enjoy his life
- Does not try to improve his life

Relationship with Eliza: Used to beat and neglect her  
Sudden interest → could make out money of the situation  
Sells her for 5$, she never wants to see him again

Function in the play: Mouthpiece for the author's ideas  
Violates the principles of the Bourgeois
Provokes audience into rethinking conventional views about morality
→ (Illegitimate daughter + lives with a women who is not his wife)

**Mrs. Higgins**

- Henry's mother
- High class
- Great character, intelligent, charming
- Wealthy and independent
- Cares about her appearance
- Accepts people as they are
- Calm → take control of every situation
- Ideal mother: wise, tolerant, caring and understanding
- Treats her son like a naughty child
- Knows how ambitious her son is, so she sympathies with Eliza (//Mrs.Pearce)

**Role in the play:**
- Reasonable: shows her disapproval for the experiment
- Higgins can use her home to introduce Eliza into polite society
- Model for Eliza in her new surroundings
- Mediator between Eliza and Higgins
- Expresses the common sense, responsible view

**Lifestyle:**
- Expensive, prestigious furniture
- Tidy, valuable objects
- Aestheticism = lover of fine arts