

ACT ONE

Scene 6

OUTSIDE ASCOT.

TIME: A July afternoon.

AT RISE: PICKERING, MRS. HIGGINS and CHARLES, the chauffeur, are grouped at DLC with MRS. HIGGINS standing in the center.

MRS. HIGGINS

Colonel Pickering, I don't understand – do you mean that my son is coming to Ascot today?

PICKERING

Yes, he is, Mrs. Higgins. As a matter of fact, he's here!

MRS. HIGGINS

What a disagreeable surprise. Ascot is usually the one place I can come to with my friends and not run the risk of seeing my son, Henry. Whenever my friends meet him, I never see them again.

PICKERING

He had to come, Mrs. Higgins. You see, he's taking the girl to the annual Embassy Ball, and he wanted to try her out first.

MRS. HIGGINS

I beg your pardon?

PICKERING

You know... the annual Embassy Ball...

MRS. HIGGINS

Yes, I know the Ball... but what girl?

PICKERING

Oh, didn't I mention that?

MRS. HIGGINS

No, you did not.

PICKERING

Well, it's quite simple, really. One night I went to the Opera at Covent Garden to hear one of my favorite operas – "Aida" – and as I was coming out – incidentally, they didn't do "Aida" that night – No, they did "Gotterdammerung" instead. I'd never heard "Gotterdammerung". By George, that's a rackety one! Now, when this tenor chap...

MRS. HIGGINS

What about the girl, Colonel?

PICKERING

Oh, yes. As I was coming out, I met your son, Henry, who, in turn, met Miss Doolittle, who now lives with Henry.

MRS. HIGGINS

Lives with Henry? Is it a love affair?

PICKERING

Heavens, no! She's a flower girl. He picked her up off the curb-stone.

MRS. HIGGINS

A flower girl?

PICKERING

Yes. Higgins said to me: "Pickering, you see this girl? In six months I could make a duchess of her." I said: "Nonsense." He came back with "Yes, I can." "All right," I said, "I'll made a bet with you you can't." And I did. And he is.

(The ASCOT BELL is heard ringing)

~~CHARLES~~

~~The horses are leaving the paddock, Mrs. Higgins.~~

~~PICKERING~~

~~Excuse me, Mrs. Higgins. I must fetch her.~~

~~(X DL)~~

~~MRS. HIGGINS~~

~~But Colonel — am I to understand that Henry is bringing a flower girl to Ascot?~~

~~PICKERING~~

~~(Turns to HER)~~

~~Yes, Mrs. Higgins. That's is, that's it precisely! Jolly good, Mrs. Higgins! Jolly good!~~

~~(Exits DL)~~

MRS. HIGGINS

Charles, you'd better stay close to ^{On Dear} the ear. I may be leaving abruptly.

BLACKOUT