 Year 12 English Standard

Pygmalion – Acts IV and V

Task – Fill in the blanks using the words in the bank below.

Word bank:

* Princess
* Challenge
* Spirit
* Reconsider
* Slippers
* Climax
* Superiority
* Objects
* Transformations
* Object
* Equal
* Birth

Act IV

Analysis

If we consider the conventional structure of a romance or fairy tale, the story has really already reached its by this point, because Cinderella has been turned into a , and the has been met. However, the fact that the play carries on indicates that there are more in Eliza to be witnessed. This act shows the of an independent in the face of Higgins' bullying .

The ongoing conflict between people and (such as whether Higgins treats people like people or objects) is brought to a head when Eliza flings his in his face, and complains that she means no more to him than his slippers – "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." Not only does she to being treated like an object, she goes on to assert herself by saying that she would never sell herself, like Higgins suggests when he tells her she can go get married.

This climactic move forces Higgins to what a woman can be, and, as his realisation in the final act, marks the beginning of him considering Eliza to be an rather than a burden.

Key symbols

Task – Read through the description of ‘slippers’ as a key symbol and complete the explanation. Try to think of more key symbols for Act IV.

* Slippers – The slippers, like all clothing in this play, represent Higgins’ social class, power and sophistication. However, rather than Eliza obediently offering Higgins with his slippers, she

which symbolises

Task – Fill in the blanks using the words in the bank below.

Word bank:

* Free
* Experiment
* Submissiveness
* Freddy
* Millionaire
* Distraction
* Flower
* Defiance
* Fool
* Owns
* Doolittle
* Damned
* Rich
* Eliza
* Self-respect
* Pain
* Chief
* Duchess

Act V

Summary

Higgins and Pickering show up the next day at Mrs Higgins' home in a state of because Eliza has run away. They are interrupted by Alfred Doolittle, who enters well dressed and . It turns out that Higgins wrote a letter to a jokingly recommending as a most noble man, so that in his will the millionaire left Doolittle with all of his money.

Newfound wealth has only brought him more than pleasure, as long lost relatives are asking to be fed, not to mention that he is now no longer to behave in his casual and relaxed ways. He has been by "middle class morality (principles)." The talk devolves into an argument over who Eliza, Higgins or her father. To stop them, Mrs Higgins sends for , who has been upstairs all along.

When she enters, Eliza takes care to behave very respectfully. Pickering tells her she must not think of herself as an , and she expresses her gratitude to him. She says that even though Higgins was the one who trained the girl to become a duchess, Pickering always treated her like a , even when she was a flower girl. His treatment of her did not just simply teach her phonetics, but . Higgins and Eliza are finally left alone while the rest go off to get ready.

She mentions that has been writing her love letters, but Higgins immediately dismisses him as a . She says that she will marry Freddy, and that the two will support themselves by taking Higgins' phonetic methods to his rival. Although Higgins is outraged, he finds her much more appealing than the of the slippers-fetcher.

Analysis

Eliza makes an impressive observation that "the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated." The line is proof that Eliza has grown enough to make such an intelligent claim. Quite contrary to the dresses, the vowels, the consonants, the jewellery that she learned to put on, probably the greatest thing she has gained from this experience is self-respect. While respectability can be learned, and is what Higgins has taught Eliza, self-respect is something far more authentic, and helps rather than hinders the growth of an independent spirit.

Higgins' arrogant claim at the end – "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." – mistakes Eliza’s external transformation for the internal, which is the ultimate cause of his misunderstanding with Eliza.

Cloze Passage Answers

Act IV

If we consider the conventional structure of a romance or fairy tale, the story has really already reached its climax by this point, because Cinderella has been turned into a princess, and the challenge has been met. However, the fact that the play carries on indicates that there are more transformations in Eliza to be witnessed: this act shows the birth of an independent spirit in the face of Higgins' bullying superiority.

The ongoing conflict between people and objects (such as whether Higgins treats people like people or objects) is brought to a head when Eliza flings his slippers in his face, and complains that she means no more to him than his slippers – "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." Not only does she object to being treated like an object, she goes on to assert herself by saying that she would never sell herself, like Higgins suggests when he tells her she can go get married.

This climactic move forces Higgins to reconsider what a woman can be, and, as his realisation in the final act, marks the beginning of him considering Eliza to be an equal rather than a burden.

Act V

Higgins and Pickering show up the next day at Mrs Higgins' home in a state of distraction because Eliza has run away. They are interrupted by Alfred Doolittle, who enters well dressed and rich. It turns out that Higgins wrote a letter to a millionaire jokingly recommending Doolittle as a most noble man, so that in his will the millionaire left Doolittle with all of his money.

Newfound wealth has only brought him more pain than pleasure, as long lost relatives are asking to be fed, not to mention that he is now no longer free to behave in his casual and relaxed ways. He has been damned by "middle class morality (principles)". The talk devolves into an argument over who owns Eliza, Higgins or her father. To stop them, Mrs Higgins sends for Eliza, who has been upstairs all along.

When she enters, Eliza takes care to behave very respectfully. Pickering tells her she must not think of herself as an experiment, and she expresses her gratitude to him. She says that even though Higgins was the one who trained the flower girl to become a duchess, Pickering always treated her like a duchess, even when she was a flower girl. His treatment of her did not just simply teach her phonetics, but self-respect. Higgins and Eliza are finally left alone while the rest go off to get ready.

She mentions that Freddy has been writing her love letters, but Higgins immediately dismisses him as a fool. She says that she will marry Freddy, and that the two will support themselves by taking Higgins' phonetic methods to his chief rival. Although Higgins is outraged, he finds her defiance much more appealing than the submissiveness of the slippers-fetcher.