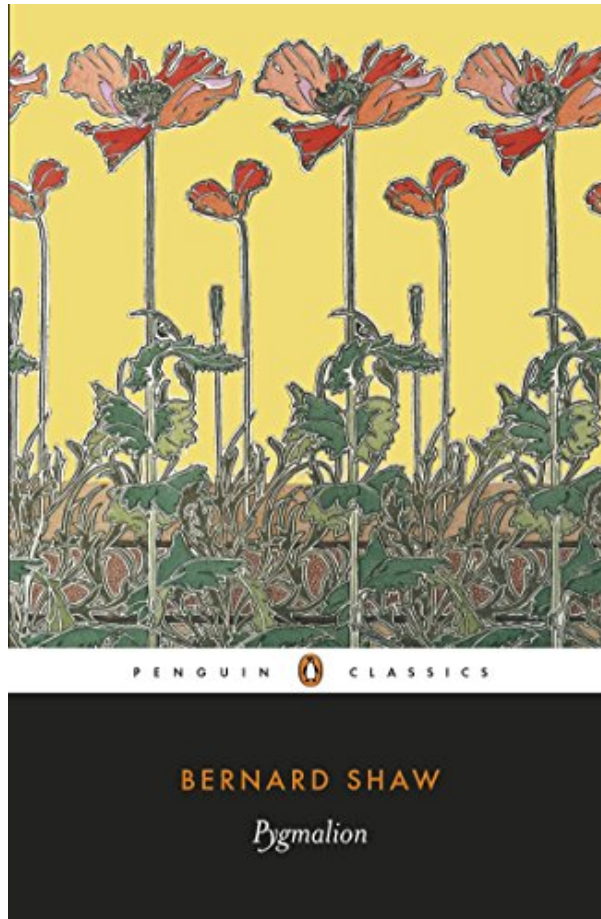


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Shaw's brilliantly witty exposure of the British class system

Shaw wrote the part of Eliza Doolittle—'an east-end dona with an apron and three orange and red ostrich feathers'—for Mrs Patrick Campbell, with whom he had a passionate but unconsummated affair. From the outset the play was a sensational success, although Shaw, irritated by its popularity at the expense of his artistic intentions, dismissed it as a potboiler. The Pygmalion of legend falls in love with his perfect female statue and persuades Venus to bring her to life so that he can marry her. But Shaw radically reworks Ovid's tale to give it a feminist slant: while Higgins teaches Eliza to speak and act like a duchess, she also asserts her independence, adamantly refusing to be his creation.

This Penguin Classics edition is the definitive text produced under the editorial supervision of Dan H. Laurence, with an illuminating introduction by Nicholas Grene, discussing the language and politics of the play. Included in this volume is Shaw's preface, as well as his 'sequel' written for the first publication in 1916, to rebut public demand for a more conventionally romantic ending.

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19 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

WARNING....abridged version

By Marda S.

Although I love *Pygmalion*, this is an ABRIDGED version. Many scenes are not included, particularly at the end of each act. If you want an unabridged version, I would suggest the Penguin Classics edition.

20 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

The Evolution of *Pygmalion*

By christine

Pygmalion is a brilliant success by George Bernard Shaw to modernize the legendary Greek tale of a sculptor who falls in love with his artistic creation and wishes to bring her to life. The rags-to-riches tale of Eliza Doolittle captivates the reader with its fast paced storyline, and witty dialogue. Shaw fascinates the reader with complicated characters such as Henry Higgins, Doolittle, and Colonel Pickering. Set in England, during a period of sophistication and elegance, Higgins and Pickering were faced with the seemingly impossible task of transforming a filthy flower girl (Eliza) into a beautiful duchess. The outrageous antics that ensue are both humorous and entertaining. Shaw's playful dialogue and timeless plot have been updated to fit the social and cultural standards of our time. For example, Alan Jay Lerner's *My Fair Lady* is an internationally acclaimed musical adaptation of Shaw's classic play. 1999 brought yet another adaptation of *Pygmalion*, in the form of the film *She's All That*, penned by R. Lee Fleming Jr. This teen comedy brings a new twist to the classic characters of Shaw's play. *Pygmalion* is a quick read and an enjoyable way to spend the day, and the characters in the story will remain with you forever.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Two-fer-one: the play and the musical

By Anne Salazar

This is a really nice edition since it has George Bernard Shaw's original text AND the script of Lerner and Loewe's musical adaptation, including the lyrics. I actually read the play in the Simon and Schuster paperback edition and followed each act by reading this book's *My Fair Lady*; the lyrics are a lot of fun to read, just as they were fun to hear in the movie or the soundtrack or on the stage.

While I was reading *Pygmalion*, Henry Higgins comes across as even more insufferable than the character as depicted by Rex Harrison. But Shaw was trying to make a point in his play -- actually, several points -- about the English language. For example, the Publisher's Note in this edition quotes Shaw in 1902 discussing what he emphatically states as the stupid, unnecessary use of apostrophes in such words as *won't*, *can't*, *haven't*, etc., and it strikes me that in today's abbreviated computer-speak (lol, omg, etc.) his desire is finally come to pass. Oh well, it only took a hundred years.

But the use of apostrophes is just one point made seriously but humorously in both play and musical, and you really need to read both to understand the full message about the use of language and "types" of people, including Eliza's father, not to mention the Conclusion to the play not widely known by the non-readers among us. I thought both the play and the musical were delightful and this is a wonderful edition because it includes the full text of both, but the Simon and Schuster edition has Shaw's complete Epilogue.

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