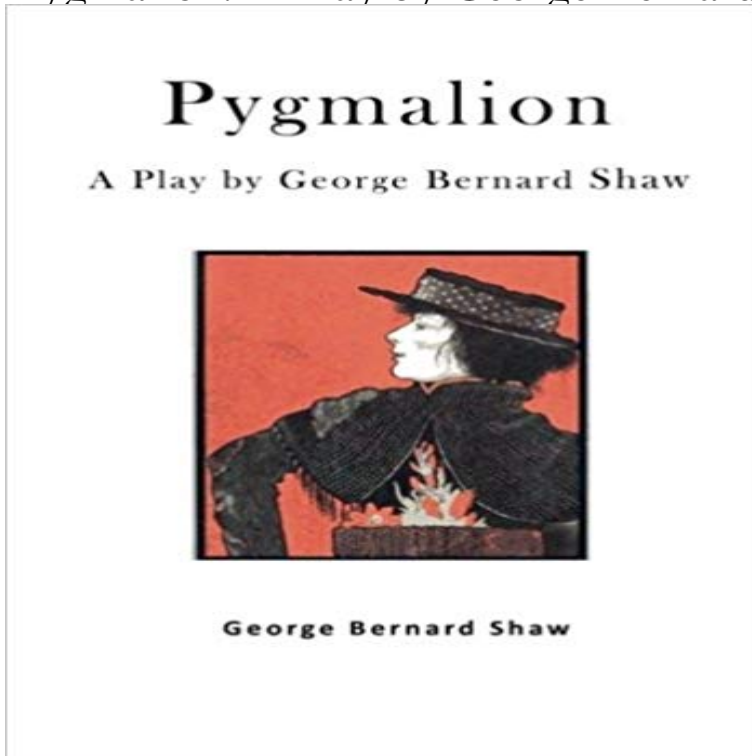


## Pygmalion: A Play by George Bernard Shaw



Pygmalion A Play by George Bernard Shaw George Bernard Shaw Pygmalion is a play by George Bernard Shaw, named after a Greek mythological character. It was first presented on stage to the public in 1913. Professor of phonetics Henry Higgins makes a bet that he can train a bedraggled Cockney flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, to pass for a duchess at an ambassadors garden party by teaching her to assume a veneer of gentility, the most important element of which, he believes, is impeccable speech. The play is a sharp lampoon of the rigid British class system of the day and a commentary on womens independence. In ancient Greek mythology, Pygmalion fell in love with one of his sculptures, which then came to life. The general idea of that myth was a popular subject for Victorian era English playwrights, including one of Shaws influences, W. S. Gilbert, who wrote a successful play based on the story called Pygmalion and Galatea first presented in 1871. Shaw would also have been familiar with the burlesque version, Galatea, or Pygmalion Reversed. Shaws play has been adapted numerous times, most notably as the musical My Fair Lady and the film of that name. Shaw mentioned that the character of Professor Henry Higgins was inspired by several British professors of phonetics: Alexander Melville Bell, Alexander J. Ellis, Tito Pagliardini, but above all, the cantankerous Henry Sweet.

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**Pygmalion Summary - Shmoop** The Source of the Title: The Legend of Pygmalion and Galatea Shaw took his title from the ancient Greek George Bernard Shaw but instead, since the play deals with phonetics, and since the character of Henry Higgins is based largely : **Pygmalion: A Play by George Bernard Shaw** When Shaw wrote Pygmalion more than a half century ago, no one could have predicted his play would eventually be converted into one of the greatest

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