

Female/Female Duo

Pygmalion

George Bernard Shaw

Eliza and Mrs Pearce

Mrs Pearce: I will have to put you here. This will be your bedroom.

Eliza: O-h, I couldn't sleep here, missus. It's too good for the likes of me. I should be afraid to touch anything. I aint a duchess yet, you know.

Mrs Pearce: You have got to make yourself as clean as the room: then you won't be afraid of it. And you must call me Mrs Pearce, not missus.

Liza: Gawd! What's this? Is this where you wash clothes? Funny sort of copper I call it.

Mrs Pearce: It is not a copper. This is where we wash ourselves Eliza and where I am going to wash you.

Liza: You expect me to get into that and wet myself all over! Not me. I should catch my death. I knew a woman did it every Saturday night; and she died of it.

Mrs Pearce: Mr Higgins has the gentlemen's bathroom downstairs; and he has a bath every morning in cold water.

Liza: Ugh! He's made of iron, that man.

Mrs Pearce: If you are to sit with him and the Colonel and be taught you will have to do the same. They won't like the smell of you if you don't. But you can have the water as hot as you like. There are two taps; hot and cold.

Liza: I couldn't. I durnst. It's not natural: it would kill me. I've never had a bath in my life: not what you'd call a proper one.

Mrs Pearce: Now stop crying and go back into your room and take off all your clothes. Then wrap yourself in this and come back to me. I will get the bath ready.

Liza: I can't. I won't. I'm not used to it. I've never taken my clothes off before. It's not right: it's not decent.

Mrs Pearce: Nonsense child. Don't you take off all your clothes every night when you go to bed?

Liza: No. Why should I? I should catch my death. Of course I take off my skirt.

Mrs Pearce: You will never do that again as long as you live here. I will get you a proper nightdress.

Liza: Do you mean change into cold things and lie awake shivering half the night? You want to kill me, you do.

Mrs Pearce: I want to change you from a frowzy slut to a clean respectable girl fit to sit with the gentlemen in the study. Are you going to trust me and do what I tell you or be thrown out and sent back to your flower basket?

Eliza: Oh, if only I'd known what a dreadful thing it is to be clean I'd never have come.

Back to Methuselah

George Bernard Shaw

Eve and the Serpent

THE SERPENT: Eve.

EVE: Who is that?

THE SERPENT: It is I. I have come to shew you my beautiful new hood. See!

EVE: Oh! But who taught you to speak?

THE SERPENT: You and Adam. I have crept through the grass, and hidden, and listened to you.

EVE: That was wonderfully clever of you.

THE SERPENT: I am the most subtle of all the creatures of the field.

EVE: Your hood is most lovely. Pretty thing! Do you love your godmother Eve?

THE SERPENT: I adore her.

EVE: Eve's wonderful darling snake. Eve will never be lonely now that her snake can talk to her.

THE SNAKE: I can talk of many things. I am very wise. It was I who whispered the word to you that you did not know. Dead. Death. Die.

EVE: Why do you remind me of it? I forgot it when I saw your beautiful hood. You must not remind me of unhappy things.

THE SERPENT: Death is not an unhappy thing when you have learnt how to conquer it.

EVE: How can I conquer it?

THE SERPENT: By another thing, called birth.

EVE: What? B-birth?

THE SERPENT: Yes, birth.

EVE: What is birth?

THE SERPENT: The serpent never dies. Some day you shall see me come out of this beautiful skin, a new snake with a new and lovelier skin. That is birth.

EVE: I have seen that. It is wonderful.

Arms and the Man

George Bernard Shaw

Catherine and Raina

Catherine: Imagine their meeting that Swiss and hearing the whole story! The very first thing your father asked for was the old coat we sent him off in. A nice mess you have got us into!

Raina: The little beast!

Catherine: Little beast? What little beast?

Raina: To go and tell! Oh, if I had him here, I'd cram him with chocolate creams 'til he couldn't ever speak again!

Catherine: Don't talk such stuff. Tell me the truth, Raina. How long was he in your room before you came to me?

Raina: Oh, I forget.

Catherine: You cannot forget! Did he really climb up after the soldiers were gone; or was he there when that officer searched the room?

Raina: No. Yes: I think he must have been there then.

Catherine: You think! Oh, Raina! Raina! Will anything ever make you straightforward? If Sergius finds out, it will be all over between you.

Raina: Oh, I know Sergius is your pet. I sometimes wish you could marry him instead of me. You would just suit him. You would pet him, and spoil him, and mother him to perfection.

Catherine: Well, upon my word!

Raina: I always feel a longing to do or say something dreadful to him – to shock his propriety – to scandalize the five senses out of him. I don't care whether he finds out about the chocolate cream soldier or not. I half hope he may.

Catherine: And what should I be able to say to your father, pray?

Raina: Oh, poor father. As if he could help himself!

Catherine: Oh, if you were only ten years younger!

A Woman of No Importance

Oscar Wilde

Lady Caroline and Hester

Lady Caroline: I believe this is the first English country house you have stayed at Miss Worsley?

Hester: Yes, Lady Caroline.

Lady Caroline: You have no country houses, I am told, in America?

Hester: We have not many.

Lady Caroline: Have you any country? What should we call country?

Hester: We have the largest country in the world, Lady Caroline. They used to tell us at school that some of our states are as big as France and England put together.

Lady Caroline: Ah! You must find it very draughty, I should fancy.

Well, you couldn't come to a more charming place than this Miss Worsley, though the house is excessively damp, quite unpardonably damp, and dear Lady Hunstanton is a little lax about the people she asks down here. Lord Illingworth, of course, is a man of high distinction. It is a privilege to meet him. But Mrs Allonby is hardly a very suitable person.

Hester: I dislike Mrs Allonby. I dislike her more than I can say.

Lady Caroline: I am not sure, Miss Worsley, that foreigners like yourself should cultivate likes or dislikes about the people they are invited to meet. Mrs Allonby is very well born.

Hester: Mr Arbuthnot is very charming.

Lady Caroline: Ah yes! The young man who has a post in the bank. In my young days Miss Worsley, one never met any one in society who worked for their living. It was not considered the thing.

Hester: In America, those are the people we respect most.

Lady Caroline: I have no doubt of it.

Hester: Mr Arbuthnot has a beautiful nature! He is so simple, so sincere. He has one of the most beautiful natures I have ever come across. It is a privilege to meet *him*.

Lady Caroline: It is not customary in England Miss Worsley, for a young lady to speak with such enthusiasm of any person of the opposite sex. English women conceal their feelings till after they are married.

Hester: Do you, in England, allow no friendship to exist between a young man and a young girl?

Lady Caroline: We think it very inadvisable.

A Woman of No Importance

Oscar Wilde

Hester and Mrs Arbuthnot

Hester: What a lovely night it is, Mrs Arbuthnot.

Arbuthnot: Is it?

Hester: Mrs Arbuthnot, I wish you would let us be friends. You are so different from the other women here. When you came into the drawing-room this evening, somehow you brought with you a sense of what is good and pure in life. I had been foolish. There are things that are right to say, but that may be said at the wrong time and to the wrong people.

Arbuthnot: I heard what you said. I agree with it, Miss Worsley.

Hester: I didn't know you had heard it. But I knew you would agree with me. A woman who has sinned should be punished, shouldn't she?

Arbuthnot: Yes.

Hester: She shouldn't be allowed to come into the society of good men and women?

Arbuthnot: She should not.

Hester: And the man should be punished in the same way?

Arbuthnot: In the same way. And the children, if there are children, in the same way also?

Hester: Yes, it is right that the sins of the parents should be visited on the children. It is a just law. It is God's law.

Arbuthnot: It is one of God's terrible laws.

Hester: You are distressed about your son leaving you, Mrs Arbuthnot?

Arbuthnot: Yes.

Hester: Do you like him going away with Lord Illingworth? Of course, there is position too, no doubt, and money, but position and money are not everything, are they?

Arbuthnot: They are nothing; they bring misery.

Hester: Then why do you let your son go with him?

Arbuthnot: He wishes it himself.

Hester: But if you asked him he would stay, would he not?

Arbuthnot: He has set his heart on going.

Hester: He couldn't refuse you anything. He loves you too much. Ask him to stay. Let me send him to you.

Arbuthnot: Don't trouble, Miss Worsley, I can wait. It is of no consequence.

Hester: No, I'll tell him you want him. Do – Do ask him to stay.

(Hester Leaves)

Arbuthnot: He won't come – I know he won't come.

