

William S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan's

H. M. S. Pinafore

or

The Lass That Loved a Sailor

Libretto adapted by R. Eugene Jackson

Music adapted by David Blackburn

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**PUBLISHED BY
ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
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STORY OF THE PLAY

This lighthearted comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan has enjoyed great audience appeal since it opened in 1878. This version, with its subtle cuts in the libretto and tasteful song selection, features more simplified harmony for the chorus and in some cases easier keys for teen singers. At a trim 90 minutes, it's a perfect length for today's audiences.

The story is as familiar as ever: Old Admiral Sir Joseph Porter plans to marry the much younger Josephine with the consent of her father, Captain Corcoran. But Josephine is in love with Ralph, a common seaman, and they plan to elope with the help of the crew. Dick Deadeye overhears their plan and tells the Admiral. Little Buttercup, an overweight comic woman, professes her love for the Captain and tells him she knows a big secret. The secret is that Ralph and the Captain were switched as babies, so that Ralph is a highborn person while the Captain is lowly. Sir Joseph cannot marry the daughter of a low person so he gives Josephine to Ralph and makes him the new captain. To complete the happy ending, the Captain will probably marry Buttercup. Other female parts include Cousin Hebe and additional female relatives of Sir Joseph.

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CHARACTERS

5 m, 3 w, choruses

Sir Joseph Porter, K. C. B ... First Lord of the Admiralty.

Captain Corcoran* ... Commanding officer of the *Pinafore*.

Ralph Rackstraw ... Able seaman.

Dick Deadeye ... Disliked seaman.

Boatswain ... Head of the sailors.

Josephine ... Captain's daughter.

Hebe ... Sir Joseph Porter's first cousin.

Little Buttercup ... A Portsmouth bumboat woman.

Sir Joseph's Sisters, Cousins, and Aunts ... Female chorus.

Sailors, Marines ... Male chorus.

(*pronounced "CORK-o-run")

SCENE

Quarterdeck of the *H. M. S. Pinafore*, off Portsmouth, England.

ACT I - Noon

ACT II - Night

SETTING

Quarterdeck of the ship, *H. M. S. Pinafore*. DS is the main deck, while the poop, or upper, deck is US and is approached by stairways right and left. There are two doors into cabins between the stairways along with a few windows. At UC, but still on the lower deck, is the helm. At about CS is a hatchway opening into below decks [optional].

(NOTE: The actors should play their parts overly-dramatically throughout.)

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

1. Overture ... *Orchestra*
2. "We Sail the Ocean Blue" ... *Sailors*
3. "I'm Called Little Buttercup" ... *Buttercup*
4. "A Maiden Fair to See" ... *Ralph, Sailors*
5. "My Gallant Crew" ... *Captain, Sailors*
6. "Sorry Her Lot" ... *Josephine*
7. "Over the Bright Blue Sea" ... *Sir Joseph's Female Relatives*
8. "Sir Joseph's Barge Is Seen" ... *Sailors, Female Relatives*
9. "I Am the Monarch of the Sea" ...
Captain, Sir Joseph, Cousin Hebe, and Chorus
10. "A British Tar" ... *Ralph and Sailors*
11. "My Friends, My Leave of Life I'm Taking" ...
Ralph, Cousin Hebe, Buttercup, Relatives, Sailors

ACT II

12. Entr'acte ... *Orchestra*
13. "Things Are Seldom What They Seem" ... *Buttercup, Captain*
14. "A Simple Sailor, Lowly Born" ... *Josephine*
15. "Never Mind the Why and Wherefore" ...
Josephine, Captain, and Sir Joseph
16. "Kind Captain, I've Important Information" ...
Captain and Deadeye
17. "In Uttering a Reprobation" ...
Dick, Ralph, Josephine, Captain, Sailors, Sir Joseph, Relatives
18. "A Many Years Ago" ... *Buttercup, Sailors, Relatives*
19. "Oh Joy, Oh Rapture Unforeseen!" ... *All*

(A rehearsal/performance CD is available from the publisher. To order, call 1.800.447.8243 or on the web at www.histage.com.)

ACT I

1. OVERTURE

(AS THE CURTAIN RISES: SAILORS, led by BOATSWAIN, are cleaning brasswork, splicing rope, swabbing the deck, and other sailor duties.)

2. "WE SAIL THE OCEAN BLUE"

SAILORS: *(Sing.)*

We sail the ocean blue,
And our saucy ship's a beauty;
We're sober men and true,
And attentive to our duty.
When the balls whistle free
O'er the bright blue sea,
We stand to our guns all day;
When at anchor we ride
On the Portsmouth tide,
We've plenty of time to play.

(A brief musical interlude.)

We sail the ocean blue,
And our saucy ship's a beauty;
We're sober men and true,
And attentive to our duty.
We sail the ocean blue.

(LITTLE BUTTERCUP ENTERS from shore carrying a large basket filled with items to sell to the SAILORS.)

BUTTERCUP: Hail, man-o'-war's men. You've got your pay.
Spare all you can afford to welcome Little Buttercup on board.
(SHE sings.)

3. "I'M CALLED LITTLE BUTTERCUP"

BUTTERCUP:

I'm called Little Buttercup, dear Little Buttercup,
Though I could never tell why,
But still I'm called Buttercup, poor Little Buttercup,
Sweet Little Buttercup I!

I've snuff and tobaccy, and excellent jacky,
I've scissors, and watches, and knives;
I've ribbons and laces to set off the faces
Of pretty young sweethearts and wives.

I've treacle and toffee, I've tea and I've coffee,
Soft tommy and succulent chops;
I've chickens and conies, and pretty colonies,
And excellent peppermint drops.

Then buy of your Buttercup, dear Little Buttercup,
Sailors should never be shy;
So, buy of your Buttercup, poor Little Buttercup,
Come, of your Buttercup buy.

BOATSWAIN: Aye, Little Buttercup — and well called, for you're
the rosiest, the roundest, and the reddest beauty in all
Spithead.

BUTTERCUP: Red, am I? And round — and rosy! Maybe, for I
have dissembled well! But hark ye, my merry friend, hast ever
thought that beneath a gay and frivolous exterior there may lurk
a canker-worm which is slowly but surely eating its way into
one's very heart?

BOATSWAIN: No, my lass, I can't say I've ever thought that.

(DICK DEADEYE pushes his way through the SAILORS, and comes forward. He wears a black patch over one eye.)

DICK: *(Gruffly.)* I have thought it often. *(ALL recoil from HIM.)*

BUTTERCUP: Yes, you look like it! *(To the BOATSWAIN.)*
What's the matter with the man? Isn't he well?

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BOATSWAIN: Don't take no heed of him; that's only poor Dick Deadeye.

DICK: I say, it's a beast of a name, ain't it? Dick Deadeye?

BUTTERCUP: It's not a nice name.

DICK: I'm ugly too, ain't I?

BUTTERCUP: You are certainly plain.

DICK: Ha-ha! That's it. I'm ugly, and they hate me for it. *(To the SAILORS.)* For you all hate me, don't you?

SAILORS: We do!

DICK: *(To BUTTERCUP.)* There!

BOATSWAIN: Well, Dick, we wouldn't go for to hurt any fellow creature's feelings, but you can't expect a chap with such a name as Dick Deadeye to be a popular character, now, can you?

DICK: No.

BOATSWAIN: It's asking too much, ain't it?

DICK: It is. From such a face and form as mine, the noblest sentiments sound like the black utterances of a depraved imagination. But it is human nature. I am resigned.

(RALPH ENTERS from the hatchway. He appears sad.)

BUTTERCUP: *(SHE looks upstage.)* But, tell me: who's the youth whose faltering feet with difficulty bear him on his course?

BOATSWAIN: That is the smartest lad in all the fleet — Ralph Rackstraw!

BUTTERCUP: *(Aside.)* Ha! That name! Remorse! Remorse!

RALPH: *(Aside.)* There is pain and sorrow too before me. I love—and love, alas, above my station!

BUTTERCUP: *(Aside.)* He loves—and loves a lass above his station! *(SHE EXITS.)*

(RALPH sings.)

End of Freeview

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