

*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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### **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.

*H.M.S. Pinafore*

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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](http://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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