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*Dramatic Publishing*

# H.M.S. PINAFORE

## or The Lass That Loved a Sailor



Musical Comedy

Adapted from Gilbert and Sullivan  
for younger performers by  
Lynne Bartlett, David Billings,  
Mark Leehy and Kevin O'Mara

# H.M.S. PINAFORE

OR

## The Lass That Loved a Sailor

***Musical comedy. Adapted from Gilbert and Sullivan for younger performers by Lynne Bartlett, David Billings, Mark Leehy and Kevin O'Mara. Cast: 5m., 3w., plus chorus as desired.*** Originally premiered at the Opera Comique, May 28, 1878. Able seaman Ralph Rackstraw is love struck with a lass above his station—the captain's daughter. But the captain of the *Pinafore* has promised his daughter's hand to The Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, KBC (First Lord of the Admiralty—followed everywhere by his sisters and his cousins and his aunts). A common person can hardly expect to compete with a high-born person ... but are Ralph and the captain really from different classes? Poor Little Buttercup, the bumboat lady, has a secret ... Who will end up with whom? *Unit set. Approximate running time: 1 hour. Code: HC1.*

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**H.M.S. PINAFORE**  
**or**  
**The Lass That Loved a Sailor**

By  
W.S. GILBERT and SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN

Adapted for Younger Performers  
By  
LYNNE BARTLETT, DAVID BILLINGS,  
MARK LEEHY and KEVIN O'MARA



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Original production premiered at the Opera Comique on  
May 28, 1878.

\* \* \* \*

*For Kenneth Woodward (dec), a father beyond compare  
– L.B.*

*To the memory of Tim Neeson, punter, gentleman and  
friend – D.B.*

*For my wife, Sandra, a lass above my station – M.L.*

*For my wife, Alison, as we look to the future – K.O'M.*

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# **H.M.S. PINAFORE**

**or**

## **The Lass That Loved a Sailor**

### CHARACTERS

The Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, KBC - First Lord of the  
Admiralty

Captain Corcoran - commanding *H.M.S. Pinafore*

Bosun

Bosun's Mate

Ralph Rackstraw (pronounced "Rafe") - able seaman

Dick Deadeye - able seaman

Josephine - the captain's daughter

Hebe - Sir Joseph Porter's first cousin

Little Buttercup - a Portsmouth bumbo woman

CHORUS: Ladies (First Lord's sisters, cousins and aunts),  
Sailors, etc.

SETTING: The action takes place on the quarterdeck of  
*H.M.S. Pinafore*, 1878. ACT I, Noon – ACT II – Night.

See helpful production notes at end of playbook.



## SONGS, MUSICAL PIECES AND SFX

### ACT I

1. Overture
2. We Sail the Ocean Blue . . . . . Sailors
3. Poor Little Buttercup. . . . . Buttercup & Sailors
4. Madrigal . . . . . Ralph & Sailors  
FX: bosun's whistle
5. Fanfare
6. The Captain of the *Pinafore* . . . . . Captain & Sailors
7. Josephine's Lament . . . . . Josephine & Sailors
8. Entry of Sailors & Ladies . . . . . Ladies & Sailors
9. Ladies Love the Shipping . . . . .  
SFX: bosun's whistle
10. Monarch of the Sea (Sir Joseph's Song) . . . . Sir Joseph,  
Hebe, Ladies & Sailors
11. Ruler of the Queen's Navee . . . . . Sir Joseph & All
12. Playout
13. Glee! . . . . . Ralph, Bosun & Sailors  
Recorder note #1  
Recorder note #2
14. Recitative: Refrain, Audacious Tar (Stings #1 & #2) . . .  
Josephine & Ralph
15. Recitative: Messmates, Ahoy! (Sting #3) . . . . Ralph, All  
& Dick Deadeye
16. Recitative: Ah! Stay Your Hand! (Sting #4) . . Josephine,  
Ralph & All  
Recitative: This Very Night. . . . Josephine, Hebe, Bosun  
& Ralph
17. Recitative: Forbear (Sting #5) . . . . . Dick Deadeye
18. Act I Finale . . . . . All

## ACT II

19. Entr'acte (use for intermission or overture to Act II - unless a break is not used)
20. Fair Moon to Thee I Sing . . . . . Captain
21. Duet: Things Are Seldom What They Seem. . . . . Buttercup  
& Captain (with Sailors & Ladies)
22. Scena . . . . . Josephine (spoken)
23. Trio: Ring the Merry Bells . . . . . Sir Joseph, Captain,  
& Josephine (with Sailors & Ladies)
24. The Merry Maiden and the Tar. . . . . Captain & Dick Deadeye
25. He Is an Englishman . . . . . Bosun & All
26. Recitative: Hold! (Sting #6) . . . . . Buttercup
27. Many Years Ago . . . . . Buttercup & All
28. Act II Finale. . . . . All
29. Curtain: We Sail the Ocean Blue . . . . . All

### MUSIC AND/OR CDS (available from publisher)

The CD contains vocal demonstrations and instrumental backing tracks for rehearsal/performance. There is a vocal score available.

### SOLOISTS

If strong soloists are not available, the lead can be strengthened by adding the chorus, e.g., for “Monarch of the Sea,” the Sailors could join in for the whole song.

## PRODUCTION NOTES"

### STAGING"

The show can be staged in two acts, with an intermis-"  
sion, or (as the running time is approximately sixty"min  
utes) can be performed straight through, without an"inter  
mission. In the latter case, the intermission"Entr'acte  
music can be used to strike the set of Act I"and bring on  
the set for Act II."

This adaptation is intended to faithfully represent the"  
original intent of Gilbert and Sullivan. Changes have"  
been made to original dialogue, melodies, keys and ar  
-"rangements only to enable the work to be done by"  
young performers."

*H.M.S. Pinafore* is a timeless social satire of every  
thing"from the ruling classes and institutions (and any  
kind of class system) to patriotism, politicians and the  
public"service...and the heroic (and sometimes pomp  
ous) na-"ture of serious opera. It is over the top and we  
encour-"age you to perform it that way. Be melodra  
matic, be"outrageous...and have as much fun as possi  
ble!"

## THE SET"

There is one basic set—the deck of the ship *H.M.S. Pin-afore*. The deck can be represented with a poop deck" above the cabin entrance—the hatchway. In this case,"entrances and exits can be made through the hatchway"(as indicated in the script)."

Alternately, a simpler set can be used, without the" hatchway. If using this style of set, the actors will not" be able to enter or exit through the hatchway and may," instead, make their entrances and exits UL or UR." These changes will need to be made in the script."

## PROPS"

### ACT I"

Ropes, cleaning gear, buckets and mops for Sailors;"basket of goodies for Buttercup; small basket and flow-"ers for Josephine; photograph of Sir Joseph for Cap-  
tain; sheets of music for Sir Joseph; recorder; pistol for Boat-"swain."

### ACT II"

Cat-o'-nine-tails for Captain; cloak for Captain; bundle" of "necessaries" suitcase for Josephine."

# ACT I

SCENE: *Quarterdeck of H.M.S. Pinafore.*

*Lights down, curtain closed.*

## MUSIC #1: OVERTURE

### OVERTURE ENDS

*Curtain opens, lights up.*

*Instrumental introduction for “We Sail the Ocean Blue” begins.*

*Enter SAILORS, led by BOSUN. They begin cleaning brasswork, splicing rope, swabbing deck, etc., under his direction. After about a minute, when the music begins to build, BOSUN calls out “Right, lads, form up,” and SAILORS take up position to sing.*

## SONG #2: WE SAIL THE OCEAN BLUE

SAILORS.

We sail the ocean blue  
And our saucy ship’s a beauty  
We are 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 for play

GROUP 1. Ahoy! Ahoy!

GROUP 2. The balls whistle free

GROUP 1. Ahoy! Ahoy

GROUP 2. O'er the bright blue sea

ALL. We stand to our guns

To our guns all day

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

Our saucy ship's a beauty  
Attentive to our duty  
We're sober men and true  
We sail the ocean blue

### SONG ENDS

*(ENTER LITTLE BUTTERCUP, L, with large basket on her arm.)*

BUTTERCUP (*in a loud voice*).

Hail, men-o'-war's men—safeguards of your  
nation—welcome home!  
You've got your pay—spare all you can afford  
To welcome Little Buttercup on board.

(*BUTTERCUP mingles as she sings.*)

### SONG #3: POOR 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!

(*She may take items out of basket as she names them.*)

(*Spoken in rhythm.*)

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 polonies\*  
And excellent peppermint drops

(*Sung.*)

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!

SAILORS & BUTTERCUP.

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!

SONG ENDS

*\*Jacky—beef jerky; soft tommy—bread; conies—rabbits; polonies—cured sausages (like salami).*

*(BOSUN escorts BUTTERCUP to MID-CENTER STAGE.)*

BOSUN. 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 aged well!

SAILORS (*agreeing*). Yes—VERY well!

BUTTERCUP (*melodramatically*). But hark ye, my merry friend—have you ever thought that beneath a happy exterior there sometimes lurks a great sadness?

BOSUN. No, lass, I can't say I've ever thought that.

*(ENTER DICK DEADEYE, UR. He pushes through SAILORS and comes forward, DR.)*

DICK. *I have thought it often. (All recoil from him.)*



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

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

DICK (*to audience*). I say—it's a beast of a name, ain't it—Dick Deadeye?

BUTTERCUP (*walking forward, DC*). It's not a nice name.

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

BUTTERCUP. You are certainly plain.

DICK (*coming to front of stage*). Ha! ha! That's it. I'm ugly, and they hate me for it. (*To SAILORS.*) You all hate me, don't you?

ALL. We do!

DICK (*to audience*). There!

BOSUN. Well, Dick, we don't want to hurt your 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.

(*RALPH ENTERS through hatchway, sighing melodramatically, hand on heart, etc.*)

BUTTERCUP. Tell me—who's that sad lad?

BOSUN. That is the smartest lad in all the fleet—Ralph Rackstraw!

BUTTERCUP (*melodramatically, to audience, moving DOWNSTAGE*). Oh! That name! Remorse! Remorse!

(*RALPH moves DC.*)

*SAILORS flank him as he sings.*

*BUTTERCUP watches sadly from the side.*

*DICK remains where he is, arms folded, ignoring the song.)*

### **SONG #4: MADRIGAL**

RALPH.

La la-la-la  
la la, la la-la-la

SAILORS.

La la-la-la  
la la, la la-la-la

RALPH.

I sing "Ah well-a-day"

SAILORS.

He sings "Ah well-a-day"

RALPH.

Doo doo-doo-doo  
Doo doo, doo doo-be-doo

SAILORS.

Doo doo-doo-doo  
Doo doo, doo doo-be-doo

RALPH.

I sing "Ah well-a-day"

SAILORS.

He sings "Ah well-a-day"

*(Music continues as underscore.)*

RALPH (*spoken in rhythm*).

I love—and love, alas, above my station!

BUTTERCUP (*aside*).

He loves—and loves a lass above his station!

ALL (*sung*).

Yes, yes, the lass is much above his station!

### SONG ENDS

(*EXIT BUTTERCUP L.*

*SAILORS go back to their jobs around the stage.*)

BOSUN (*coming to RALPH*). Ah, my poor lad, you've climbed too high; our worthy captain's daughter won't have nothin' to say to a poor chap like you. (*To SAILORS.*) Will she, lads?

ALL. No, no.

DICK (*to audience*). Told ya so—captains' daughters don't marry foremast hands.

ALL (*to DICK*). Shame! shame!

BOSUN. Dick Deadeye, don't rub it in!

RALPH. But it's strange that the daughter of a man of privilege may not love a man who is common. For, after all, a man is but a man.

### SFX: BOSUN'S WHISTLE

BOSUN. My lads, our gallant captain! Let us greet him as so brave an officer and so gallant a seaman deserves.

**MUSIC #5: FANFARE**

*(ENTER CAPTAIN CORCORAN, through the hatchway, to the fanfare. He ascends the poop deck and addresses the crew, who have moved into two columns.)*

CAPTAIN. My gallant crew, good morning.  
ALL *(saluting)*. Good morning, sir!  
CAPTAIN. I hope you're all quite well.  
ALL *(saluting)*. Quite well; and you, sir?  
CAPTAIN. I am in reasonable health, and happy  
To meet you all once more.  
ALL *(saluting)*. You do us proud, sir!

**SONG #6: THE CAPTAIN OF THE PINAFORE**

*(During the intro, SAILORS salute and stand at ease.)*

CAPTAIN. I am the captain of the *Pinafore*  
SAILORS. And a right good captain, too  
CAPTAIN. You're very, very good  
And be it understood  
I command a right good crew  
SAILORS. We're very, very good  
And be it understood  
He commands a right good crew  
CAPTAIN. Though related to a peer  
I can competently steer  
A ship quite easily  
I am never known to quail  
At the fury of a gale  
And I'm never, never sick at sea!

SAILORS.           What, never?  
CAPTAIN.           No, never!  
SAILORS.           What, *never*?  
CAPTAIN.           Hardly ever!  
SAILORS.           He's hardly ever sick at sea!  
                      Then give three cheers, and one cheer more  
                      For the hardy captain of the *Pinafore*!  
                      Give three cheers, and one cheer more  
                      For the captain of the *Pinafore*!

CAPTAIN.           I do my best to satisfy you all—  
SAILORS.           And with you we are quite content  
CAPTAIN.           You're exceedingly polite  
                      And I think it only right  
                      To return the compliment  
SAILORS.           We're exceedingly polite  
                      And he thinks it's only right  
                      To return the compliment  
CAPTAIN.           Bad language or abuse  
                      I never, never use  
                      Whatever the emergency  
                      Though "Bother it" I may  
                      Occasionally say,  
                      I never use a big, big D\*  
SAILORS.           What, never?  
CAPTAIN.           No, never!  
SAILORS.           What, *never*?  
CAPTAIN.           Hardly ever!  
SAILORS.           Hardly ever swears a big, big D  
                      Then give three cheers, and one cheer  
                      more  
                      For the well-bred captain of the *Pinafore*!

Give three cheers, and one cheer more  
For the captain of the *Pinafore!*

*\*The “big, big D” refers to the word “damn,” which was most improper in those days.*

### SONG ENDS

*(ALL EXIT either side during PLAYOUT—except the CAPTAIN.*

*ENTER BUTTERCUP, L.)*

BUTTERCUP. Sir, you are sad! Your eyes reveal a deep sorrow. Confide in me—fear not—I am a mother!

CAPTAIN *(coming down to her)*. Yes, Little Buttercup, I'm sad and sorry. My daughter, Josephine, is sought in marriage by Sir Joseph Porter, our Admiralty's First Lord.

BUTTERCUP. Oh.

CAPTAIN. But for some reason...she does not seem to take kindly to it.

BUTTERCUP *(with emotion)*. Ah, poor Sir Joseph! Ah, I know too well the anguish of a heart that loves but vainly! *(Looks UL.)* But see, here comes your most attractive daughter. I go—Farewell! *(EXIT BUTTERCUP DL.)*

CAPTAIN *(looking after her)*. A plump and pleasing person! *(EXIT CAPTAIN through hatchway.)*

*(ENTER JOSEPHINE, UL. She is twining some flowers, which she carries in a small basket.)*

**SONG #7: JOSEPHINE'S LAMENT**

*(JOSEPHINE moves CENTER STAGE.)*

*SAILORS ENTER, slowly, during the song, looking concerned for her.)*

JOSEPHINE.

Heavy the sorrow that bows the head  
When love is alive and hope is dead!  
When love is alive and hope is dead!

*(JOSEPHINE bursts into tears, as SAILORS finish the song.)*

SAILORS.

Heavy the sorrow that bows the head  
When love is alive and hope is dead!  
When love is alive and hope is dead!

*(SAILORS EXIT as SONG ENDS.)*

*ENTER CAPTAIN through hatchway.)*

CAPTAIN (*coming to JOSEPHINE*). My child, I grieve to see that you are sad. You should look your best today. Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., will be here this afternoon to claim your promised hand.

JOSEPHINE. Ah, Father, Sir Joseph, is a great and good man; but oh, I cannot love him! My heart is already given.