

The Pirates of Penzance

RUTH and KING. Yes, yes!

FRED. He escaped from you on the plea that he was an orphan?

KING. He did.

FRED. It breaks my heart to betray the honoured father of the girl I adore, but as your apprentice I have no alternative. It is my duty to tell you that General Stanley is no orphan!

RUTH and KING. What!

FRED. More than that, he never was one!

KING. Am I to understand that, to save his contemptible life, he dared to practise on our credulous simplicity? (*FREDERIC nods as he weeps.*) Our revenge shall be swift and terrible. We will go and collect our band and attack Tremorden Castle this very night.

FRED. But stay –

KING. Not a word! He is doomed!

TRIO.

KING and RUTH.

FREDERIC.

Away, away! my heart's on fire;
I burn, this base deception to repay.
This very night my vengeance dire
Shall glut itself in gore. Away, away!

Away, away! ere I expire –
I find my duty hard to do today!
My heart is filled with anguish dire,
It strikes me to the core. Away, away!

KING. With falsehood foul
He tricked us of our brides.
Let vengeance howl;
The Pirate so decides.
Our nature stern
He softened with his lies,
And, in return,
Tonight the traitor dies.

ALL. Yes, yes! tonight the traitor dies!

RUTH. Tonight he dies!
KING. Yes, or early tomorrow.
FRED. His girls likewise?
RUTH. They will welter in sorrow.
KING. The one soft spot –
RUTH. In their natures they cherish –
FRED. And all who plot –
KING. To abuse it shall perish!
ALL. Tonight he dies, etc.

Exeunt KING and RUTH. Enter MABEL.

RECITATIVE. – MABEL.

All is prepared, your gallant crew await you.
My Frederic in tears? It cannot be

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FRED. That lion-heart quails at the coming conflict?
No, Mabel, no. A terrible disclosure
Has just been made. Mabel, my dearly-loved one,
I bound myself to serve the pirate captain
Until I reached my one-and-twentieth birthday –
MABEL. But you are twenty-one?
FRED. I've just discovered
That I was born in leap-year, and that birthday
Will not be reached by me till nineteen forty!
MABEL. Oh, horrible! catastrophe appalling!
FRED. And so, farewell!
MABEL. No, no! Ah, Frederic, hear me.

DUET. – MABEL and FREDERIC.

MABEL. Stay, Frederic, stay!
They have no legal claim,
No shadow of a shame
Will fall upon thy name.
Stay, Frederic, stay!

FRED. Nay, Mabel, nay!
Tonight I quit these walls,
The thought my soul appalls,
But when stern Duty calls,
I must obey.

DUET. – MABEL and FREDERIC.

Ah, leave me not to pine
Alone and desolate;
No fate seemed fair as mine,
No happiness so great!
And Nature, day by day,
Has sung in accents clear
This joyous roundelay,
“He loves thee – he is here.
Fa-la, la-la, Fa-la, la-la”.

FRED. Ah, must I leave thee here
In endless night to dream,
Where joy is dark and drear,
And sorrow all supreme –
Where nature, day by day,
Will sing, in altered tone,
This weary roundelay,
“He loves thee – he is gone.
Fa-la, la-la, Fa-la, la-la.”

FRED. In 1940 I of age shall be,
I'll then return, and claim you – I declare it!

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MABEL. It seems so long!
FRED. Swear that, till then, you will be true to me.
MABEL. Yes, I'll be strong!
By all the Stanleys dead and gone, I swear it!

ENSEMBLE.

Oh, here is love, and here is truth,
And here is food for joyous laughter:
He/She will be faithful to his/her sooth
Till we are wed, and even after.

FREDERIC *rushes to window and leaps out.*

MABEL. (*almost fainting*) No, I'll be brave! Oh, family descent,
How great thy charm, thy sway how excellent!
Come one and all, undaunted men in blue,
A crisis, now, affairs are coming to!

Enter Police, marching in single file.

SERG. Though in body and in mind,
POLICE. Tarantara! tarantara!
SERG. We are timidly inclined,
POLICE. Tarantara!
SERG. And anything but blind –
POLICE. Tarantara! tarantara!
SERG. To the danger that's behind.
POLICE. Tarantara!
SERG. Yet, when the danger's near,
POLICE. Tarantara! tarantara!
SERG. We manage to appear –
POLICE. Tarantara!
SERG. As insensible to fear
As anybody here.
POLICE. Tarantara! tarantara!, etc.

MABEL. Sergeant, approach! Young Frederic was to have led you to death and glory.

POLICE. That is not a pleasant way of putting it.

MABEL. No matter; he will not so lead you, for he has allied himself once more with his old associates.

POLICE. He has acted shamefully!

MABEL. You speak falsely. You know nothing about it. He has acted nobly.

POLICE. He has acted nobly!

MABEL. Dearly as I loved him before, his heroic sacrifice to his sense of duty has endeared him to me tenfold. He has done his duty. I will do mine. Go ye and do yours.

Exit MABEL.

POLICE. Right oh!