

**Sides for *The Pirates of Penzance***

- Pirate King, Frederic, Samuel and Ruth, I-2 to I-6
- Ruth, I-7 and I-8
- Girls (Edith, Kate and Isabel), I-11 and I-12
- Major-General, Girls, Pirate King, Samuel, Frederic and Mabel, I-22 to I-24
- Mabel and Frederic, II-2
- Sergeant (song spoken as monologue), II-21 and II-22

KING

Yes, Frederic, from today you rank as a full-blown member of our band.

PIRATES

Hurrah!

40

FREDERIC

My friends, I thank you all, from my heart, for your kindly wishes. Would that I could repay them as they deserve!

KING

What do you mean?

45

FREDERIC

Today I am out of my indentures, and today I leave you forever.

KING

But this is quite unaccountable. A keener hand at scuttling a Cunarder or cutting out a White Star never shipped a handspike.

50

FREDERIC

Yes, I have done my best for you. And why? It was my duty under my indentures, and I am the slave of duty. As a child, I was regularly apprenticed to your band. It was through an error. No matter: the mistake was ours, not yours, and I was in honour bound by it.

SAMUEL

55 An error? What error?

FREDERIC

I may not tell you. It would reflect upon my well-loved Ruth.

(RUTH rises and comes forward.)

RUTH

60 Nay, dear master, my mind has long been gnawed by the cankering tooth of mystery. Better have it out at once.

**2** “When Frederic was a little lad”

RUTH

65 When Frederic was a little lad he proved so brave and daring,  
His father thought he'd 'prentice him to some career seafaring.  
I was, alas, his nursery-maid, and so it fell to my lot  
To take and bind the promising boy apprentice to a pilot.

70 A life not bad for a hardy lad, though surely not a high lot;  
Though I'm a nurse, you might do worse than make your boy a pilot!

I was a stupid nursery-maid, on breakers always steering,

RUTH (Continued)

And I did not catch the word aright, through being hard of hearing.  
Mistaking my instructions, which within my brain did gyrate,  
75 I took and bound this promising boy apprentice to a pirate.

A sad mistake it was to make, and doom him to a vile lot!  
I bound him to a pirate — you — instead of to a pilot!

80 I soon found out, beyond all doubt, the scope of this disaster;  
But I hadn't the face to return to my place and break it to my master.  
A nursery-maid is not afraid of what you people call work,  
So I made up my mind to go as a kind of piratical maid of all work.

85 And that is how you find me now a member of your shy lot,  
Which you wouldn't have found, had he been bound apprentice to a pilot!

RUTH

(Kneeling at FREDERIC's feet)

Oh, pardon, Frederic! Pardon!

90 FREDERIC

Rise, sweet one. I have long pardoned you.

(RUTH rises.)

RUTH

The two words were so much alike!

95 FREDERIC

They were! They still are, though years have rolled over their heads!

(RUTH goes up with SAMUEL.)

FREDERIC

100 But this afternoon my obligation ceases. Individually, I love you all with affection unspeak-  
able. But collectively, I look upon you with a disgust that amounts to absolute detestation.  
Oh, pity me, my beloved friends, for such is my sense of duty that, once out of my indentures,  
I shall feel bound to devote myself, heart and soul, to your extermination.

PIRATES

Poor lad! Poor lad!

105 (PIRATES weep.)

KING

Well, Frederic, if you conscientiously feel that it is your duty to destroy us, we cannot blame you for acting on that conviction. Always act in accordance with the dictates of your conscience, my boy — and chance the consequences.

110 SAMUEL  
 Besides, we can offer you but little temptation to remain with us. We don't seem to make piracy pay. I'm sure I don't know why, but we don't.

FREDERIC  
 I know why, but alas! I mustn't tell you; it wouldn't be right.

115 KING  
 Why not, my boy? It's only half past eleven, and you are one of us until the clock strikes twelve.

SAMUEL  
 True, and until then you are bound to protect our interests.

120 PIRATES  
 Hear, hear!

FREDERIC  
 Well, then, it is my duty as a pirate to tell you that you are too tender-hearted. For instance, you make a point of never attacking a weaker party than yourselves — and when you attack  
 125 a stronger party, you invariably get thrashed.

KING  
 There is some truth in that.

FREDERIC  
 Then again, you make a point of never molesting an orphan.

130 SAMUEL  
 Of course: we are orphans ourselves, and know what it is.

FREDERIC  
 Yes, but it has got about, and what is the consequence? Everyone we capture says he's an orphan! The last three ships we took proved to be manned entirely by orphans, and so we  
 135 had to let them go. One would think Great Britain's mercantile navy was recruited solely from her orphan asylums, which we *know* is not the case.

SAMUEL  
 But, hang it all — you wouldn't have us absolutely merciless?

FREDERIC  
 140 There's my difficulty. Until twelve o'clock I would; after twelve o'clock I wouldn't. Was ever a man placed in so delicate a situation?

(RUTH comes down.)

RUTH  
 145 And Ruth, your own Ruth, whom you love so well, and who has won her middle-aged way into your boyish heart — what is to become of her?

KING

Oh, he will take you with him.

(KING hands RUTH to FREDERIC.)

FREDERIC

150 Well, Ruth, I feel some difficulty about you. It is true that I admire you very much, but I have been constantly at sea since I was eight years old, and yours is the only woman's face I have seen during that time. I think it is a sweet face —

RUTH

— It is! Oh, it is!

155

FREDERIC

I say I *think* it is — that is my impression. But as I have never had an opportunity of comparing you with other women, it is just as possible I may be mistaken.

KING

True.

160

FREDERIC

What a terrible thing it would be if I were to marry this innocent person, and then find out that she is, on the whole, plain!

KING

Oh, Ruth is very well — very well indeed.

165

SAMUEL

Yes, there are the remains of a fine woman about Ruth.

FREDERIC

Do you really think so? Then I will not be so selfish as to take her from you. In justice to her and in consideration for you, I will leave her behind.

170

(FREDERIC hands RUTH to KING.)

KING

No, Frederic, this must not be. We are rough men who lead a rough life, but we are not so utterly heartless as to deprive thee of thy love. I think I am right in saying that there is not one here who would deprive thee of this inestimable treasure for all the world holds dear.

175

PIRATES

(Loudly)

Not one!

KING

No, I thought there wasn't. Keep thy love, Frederic, keep thy love!

180

(KING hands RUTH back to FREDERIC.)

FREDERIC

You're very good, I'm sure.

KING

185 Well, it's the top of the tide, and we must be off. Farewell, Frederic. When your process of extermination begins, let our deaths be as swift and painless as you can conveniently make them.

FREDERIC

I will. By the love I have for you, I swear it. Would that you could render this extermination unnecessary by accompanying me back to civilization?

190

KING

No, Frederic, it cannot be. I don't think much of our profession, but, contrasted with respectability, it is comparatively honest. No, Frederic, I shall live and die a Pirate King.

**3** "Oh, better far to live and die"

KING

195

Oh, better far to live and die  
Under the brave black flag I fly,  
Than play a sanctimonious part  
With a pirate head and a pirate heart.

200

Away to the cheating world go you,  
Where pirates all are well to do;  
But I'll be true to the song I sing,  
And live and die a Pirate King!

205

For I am a Pirate King!

PIRATES

You are! Hurrah for the Pirate King!

KING

210

And it is, it is a glorious thing  
To be a Pirate King!

PIRATES

It is! Hurrah for the Pirate King!

KING

215

When I sally forth to seek my prey,  
I help myself in a royal way.  
I sink a few more ships, it's true,

KING (Continued)

Than a well-bred monarch ought to do.

220 But many a king on a first-class throne,  
If he wants to call his crown his own,  
Must manage somehow to get through  
More dirty work than ever I do!

For I am a Pirate King!

225 PIRATES

You are! Hurrah for our Pirate King!

KING

And it is, it is a glorious thing  
To be a Pirate King!

230 PIRATES

It is! Hurrah for our Pirate King!

ALL

Hurrah for the Pirate King!

235 (Exeunt all except FREDERIC and RUTH. FREDERIC comes  
down, followed by RUTH.)

RUTH

Oh, take me with you! I cannot live if I am left behind.

FREDERIC

240 Ruth, I will be quite candid with you. You are very dear to me, as you know, but I must be  
circumspect. You see, you are considerably older than I: a lad of twenty-one usually looks  
for a wife of seventeen.

RUTH

A wife of seventeen! You will find me a wife of a thousand!

FREDERIC

245 No, but I shall find you a wife of forty-seven, and that is quite enough. Ruth, tell me candidly  
and without reserve: compared with other women, how are you?

RUTH

I will answer you truthfully, master: I have a slight cold, but otherwise I am quite well.

FREDERIC

250 I am sorry for your cold, but I was referring rather to your personal appearance. Compared  
with other women, are you beautiful?

RUTH  
(Bashfully)

I have been told so, dear master.

255 FREDERIC

Ah, but lately?

RUTH

Oh, no; years and years ago.

FREDERIC

260 But what do you think yourself?

RUTH

It is a delicate question to answer, but I think I am a fine woman.

FREDERIC

That is your candid opinion?

265 RUTH

Yes: I should be deceiving you if I told you otherwise.

FREDERIC

Thank you, Ruth. I believe you, for I am sure you would not practise on my inexperience. I wish to do the right thing, and if — I say *if* — you are really a fine woman, your age shall  
270 be no obstacle to our union.

(They shake hands. A chorus of girls is heard in the extreme distance, singing "Climbing over rocky mountain," etc.)

FREDERIC

Hark! Surely I hear voices. Who has ventured to approach our all but inaccessible lair? Can  
275 it be the Coast Guard? No, it does not sound like the Coast Guard.

RUTH

(*Aside*) Confusion! It is the voices of young girls! If he should see them, I am lost.

FREDERIC

(Climbing on the rocks to get a better view)

280 By all that's marvellous, a bevy of beautiful maidens!

RUTH

(*Aside*) Lost! Lost! Lost!

FREDERIC

How lovely — how surpassingly lovely — is the plainest of them! What grace! What  
285 delicacy! What refinement! And Ruth — Ruth told me she was beautiful!

EDITH

Let us gaily tread the measure,  
 Make the most of fleeting leisure,  
 Hail it as a true ally,  
 355 Though it perish by and by.

GIRLS

Hail it as a true ally,  
 Though it perish by and by.

EDITH

360 Every moment brings a treasure  
 Of its own especial pleasure;  
 Though the moments quickly die,  
 Greet them gaily as they fly.

GIRLS

365 Though the moments quickly die,  
 Greet them gaily as they fly.

KATE

Far away from toil and care,  
 Revelling in fresh sea air,  
 370 Here we live and reign alone  
 In a world that's all our own.

Here in this, our rocky den,  
 Far away from mortal men,  
 375 We'll be queens and make decrees;  
 They may honour them who please.

GIRLS

We'll be queens and make decrees;  
 They may honour them who please.  
 380

Let us gaily tread the measure,  
 Make the most of fleeting leisure,  
 Hail it as a true ally,  
 385 Though it perish by and by.

KATE

What a picturesque spot! I wonder where we are!

EDITH

And I wonder where Papa is. We have left him ever so far behind.

ISABEL

390 Oh, he will be here presently. Remember, poor Papa is not as young as we are, and we came over a rather difficult country.

KATE

But how thoroughly delightful it is to be so entirely alone! Why, in all probability, we are the first human beings who ever set foot on this enchanting spot.

395

ISABEL

Except the mermaids. It's the very place for mermaids —

KATE

Who are only human beings down to the waist —

EDITH

400 And who can't be said, strictly, to set foot anywhere. Tails they may, but feet they cannot.

KATE

But what shall we do until Papa and the servants arrive with the luncheon?

(All listen and come down.)

EDITH

405 We are quite alone, and the sea is as smooth as glass. Suppose we take off our shoes and stockings and paddle?

GIRLS

Yes, yes, the very thing!

(They prepare to carry out the suggestion. They have all taken off one shoe when FREDERIC comes forward from the cave.)

410

**6** “Stop, ladies, pray!”

FREDERIC

Stop, ladies, pray!

GIRLS

(Hopping on one foot)

415

A man!

FREDERIC

I had intended  
Not to intrude myself upon your notice  
420 In this effective but alarming costume;  
But, under these peculiar circumstances,

MAJ.-GEN.

740 For my military knowledge, though I'm plucky and adventury,  
Has only been brought down to the beginning of the century:  
But still, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral,  
I am the very model of a modern Major-General!

ALL

745 But still, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral,  
He is the very model of a modern Major-General!

MAJ.-GEN.

And, now that I've introduced myself, I should like to have some idea of what's going on.

KATE

750 Oh, Papa! We —

SAMUEL

— Permit me. I'll explain it in two words: we propose ...

MAJ.-GEN.

... Yes?

755 SAMUEL

... to marry your daughters.

MAJ.-GEN.

Dear me!

GIRLS

760 Against our wills, Papa! Against our wills!

MAJ.-GEN.

Oh, but you mustn't do that! May I ask ... this is a picturesque uniform, but I'm not familiar with it. What *are* you?

KING

765 We're all single gentlemen!

MAJ.-GEN.

Yes, I gathered that. Anything else?

KING

No, nothing else.

770 EDITH

Papa, don't believe them! They are pirates — the famous Pirates of Penzance!

MAJ.-GEN.

The Pirates of Penzance! I *have* often heard of them.

775 MABEL  
 (Indicating FREDERIC)  
 All except this gentleman, who was a pirate once, but who is out of his indentures today, and who means to live a blameless life evermore.

FREDERIC  
 And to marry your daughter.

780 MABEL  
*With* her consent.

MAJ.-GEN.  
 But wait a bit. I object to pirates as sons-in-law!

785 KING  
 And we object to Major-Generals as fathers-in-law. But we waive that point. We do not press it. We look over it.

MAJ.-GEN.  
 (*Aside*) Hah! An idea! (*Aloud*) And do you mean to say that you would deliberately rob me of these, the sole remaining props of my old age, and leave me to go through the remainder  
 790 of my life unfriended, unprotected and alone?

KING  
 Well, yes, that's the idea.

MAJ.-GEN.  
 Tell me, have you ever known what it is to be an orphan?\*

795 PIRATES  
 (Disgusted)  
 Oh, dash it all!

KING  
 Here we are *again*!

800 MAJ.-GEN.  
 I ask you, have you ever known what it is to be an orphan?

KING  
 (Sighing)  
 Often.

805 MAJ.-GEN.  
 Yes, orphan. Have you ever known what it is to be one?

KING  
 I say, often.

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\*The word "orphan" *must* be pronounced the same way as "often."

PIRATES

810 (Disgusted)

Often, often, often!

(They turn away.)

MAJ.-GEN.

815 I don't think we quite understand one another. I ask you, "Have you ever known what it is to be an orphan?" And you say, "Orphan." As I understand you, you are merely repeating the word "orphan" to show that you understand me.

KING

I didn't repeat the word often.

MAJ.-GEN.

820 Pardon me; you did indeed.

KING

No, I repeated it only once.

MAJ.-GEN.

True, but you repeated it.

825 KING

But not often.

MAJ.-GEN.

Stop! I think I see where we are getting confused. When you said "orphan," did you mean "orphan," a person who has lost his parents, or "often," frequently?

830 KING

(Laughing)

Oh, I beg your pardon. I see you meant frequently.

MAJ.-GEN.

Ah! So you said "often," frequently.

835 KING

No, only once.

MAJ.-GEN.

(Irritated)

Exactly. You said "often," frequently, only once.

35

MABEL

Oh, Frederic, cannot you, in the calm excellence of your wisdom, reconcile it with your conscience to say something that will relieve my father's sorrow?

FREDERIC

I will try, dear Mabel. But why does he sit, night after night, in this draughty old ruin?

40

MAJ.-GEN.

Why do I sit here? To escape from the pirates' clutches, I described myself as an orphan — and I am no orphan. I came here to humble myself before the tombs of my ancestors, and to implore their pardon for having brought dishonour on the family escutcheon.

FREDERIC

45 But you forget, sir, you only bought the property a year ago and the stucco on your baronial castle is scarcely dry.

MAJ.-GEN.

Frederic, in this chapel there *are* ancestors; you cannot deny that. I don't know whose ancestors they *were*, but I know whose ancestors they *are*, and I shudder to think that their  
50 descendant by purchase (if I may so describe myself) should have brought disgrace upon what I have no doubt was an unstained escutcheon.

FREDERIC

Be comforted. Had you not acted as you did, these reckless men would assuredly have called in the nearest clergyman, and have married your large family on the spot.

55

MAJ.-GEN.

I thank you for your proffered solace, but it is unavailing. I assure you, Frederic, that such is the anguish and remorse I feel at the abominable falsehood by which I escaped these easily deluded pirates, that I would go to their simple-minded chief this very night and confess all, did I not fear that the consequences would be most disastrous to myself. At what time does  
60 your expedition march against these scoundrels?

FREDERIC

At eleven. And before midnight I hope to have atoned for my involuntary association with the pestilent scourges by sweeping from the face of the earth — and then, dear Mabel, you will be mine!

65

MAJ.-GEN.

Are your devoted followers at hand?

FREDERIC

They are. They only await my orders.

POLICE

Right-O!

680 (Exit MABEL. The SERGEANT turns to face his men, and  
speaks to them in his normal tone of voice. They continue  
with their manner of speech.)

SERGEANT

This is perplexing.

685 POLICE

We cannot understand it at all.

SERGEANT

Still, if he is actuated by a sense of duty ...

POLICE

690 That makes a difference, of course. At the same time, we repeat: we cannot  
understand it.

SERGEANT

No matter. Our course is clear: we must do our best to capture these pirates alone.

SERGEANT

695 (Begins chanting on E, until C# for "the" slurring to D# for  
"force.")

It is most distressing to us to be the agents whereby our erring fellow creatures  
are deprived of that liberty which so dear to us all. ... But we should have  
thought of that before we joined the force.

700 POLICE

We should!

SERGEANT

It's too late now!

POLICE

705 It is!

**24** "When a felon's not engaged in his employment"

SERGEANT

When a felon's not engaged in his employment,

POLICE

710 His employment,

SERGEANT

Or maturing his felonious little plans,

POLICE

Little plans,

715

SERGEANT

His capacity for innocent enjoyment

POLICE

'cent enjoyment

SERGEANT

720

Is just as great as any honest man's.

POLICE

Honest man's.

SERGEANT

Our feelings we with difficulty smother

725

POLICE

'culty smother

SERGEANT

When constabulary duty's to be done.

POLICE

730

To be done.

SERGEANT

Ah, take one consideration with another,

POLICE

With another,

735

SERGEANT

A policeman's lot is not a happy one.

SERGEANT AND POLICE

Ah, when constabulary duty's to be done, to be done,  
A policeman's lot is not a happy one, happy one.