

Dr. Seuss's *The Pirates of Penzance*
by Daniel Florip

ACT I.

[Pirates enter with Frederic and Ruth; general merriment.]

PIRATES:

Dear Frederic, let us celebrate,
For you have come of age – how great!
And as your birthday now has passed,
You may be one of us at last!

FREDERIC:

Dear pirate friends, I must admit
Your kind words make me weep a bit,
And though I'd like to with you stay,
I take my leave of you today!

PIRATE KING:

But why, if you would like to stay,
Would you ever go away?

SAMUEL:

Yes, yes, don't make us rave and rant,
You couldn't, mustn't, and you shan't!

FREDERIC:

My friends, to you it can't be clear
Why I would leave a band so dear,
And so I must direct you to
My nursemaid Ruth, who'll tell you true.

RUTH:

Oh pirates, listen as I say
That I was young and cute one day.

PIRATE KING:

You were?

PIRATES:

You were?

RUTH:

Yes, yes, you know,
A-many, many years ago!

But although young, I could not hear,
And Frederic, whom I loved so dear,
His father wanted 'prenticed to
A pilot with a naval crew.

And although "pilot" he did say,
Heard "pirate" I from him that day,
And lo, young Frederic did become
Like you: a pirate, swilling rum!

PIRATE KING:

Like us?

RUTH:

Like you! He did become
A pirate, pirate swilling rum!

FREDERIC:

Now see you all how I am not
Part of your filthy, vile lot,
But 'twas my duty here to stay
Years twenty-one, until today!

With pirate ways I've ne'er agreed.
In me you'd plant an evil seed.
And so although I love you still,
I now must kill you, and I will!

PIRATE KING:

Young Frederic, if you feel this way,

For you we cheer!

PIRATES:

Hooray! Hooray!

PIRATE KING:

We wish for you the best of luck,
But heed the dangers of your pluck!

[*Exit Pirates.*]

RUTH:

Young master, I must with you leave.

FREDERIC [*aside*]:

She truly is my biggest peeve.

[*aloud*]:

Are you as fair as you have claimed?

RUTH:

My sturdy looks remain unmaimed.

FREDERIC:

Fine, fine, your sentiments I trust.
I will be yours, it seems I must.
But soft, what harks near yonder sky?
A dozen maidens by-and-by!

Ruth, you fool, you wretched hag!
Why did I trust a broken nag?
These maidens each with fire and flame
Can put your ashen looks to shame!

RUTH:

Oh Frederic, have I heard you right?

FREDERIC:

Unclog your ears, you palsied fright!

[*Exit Ruth.*]

I must a maiden try to wed
Before old age may strike me dead!

[*Frederic hides in cave. Enter General Stanley's Daughters.*]

MAIDENS:

It would be nice if father dear
Were not so slow and now were here,
Though now we've time to dip our feet
Before our picnic we must eat.

FREDERIC [*jumping out*]:

Dear maidens –

MAIDENS:

Eeek! Sir, who are you?

FREDERIC:

A member of a pirate crew,
Who from that wicked crew has fled
In the hopes that he may wed!

MAIDENS [*excited*]:

May wed? May wed? Yes, yes, may wed!
In the hopes that he may wed!

FREDERIC:

You seem to me to be quite nice –

MAIDENS [*now fickle*]:

Oh sir, we like you less than mice!
We're much too good to be allied
To one with clothes so torn and dyed!

[*Enter Mabel.*]

MABEL:

Oh, be ashamed, my sisters dear!
For this poor boy I shed a tear.
Next morning will the deal be done
When *I* wed this poor, wandering one!

MAIDENS [*to each other*]:

Just look at them so cute and sprite,
To me it doesn't seem quite right.
But let them stray without a tether,
We'll just talk about the weather!

FREDERIC:

Maidens, I should warn you that
I hear some noises (not the cat!).
I think it is the pirates who
Would be content in marrying you!

[*Enter Pirates suddenly, grabbing girls.*]

PIRATES:

Ha ha ha! Make no mistake,
You are the girls we wish to take!
Now our decks you will adorn
When we all wed tomorrow morn!

MAIDENS [*worried*]:

Tomorrow morn?

PIRATES:

Tomorrow morn!
That's when our ship you will adorn!

MABEL:

But pirates, you are very wrong,
For here to sing his famous song,
Arrives our General father who

Will cause you all to bid adieu.

SAMUEL [*to Pirates*]:

We might rethink our mighty quest
And this endeavor lay to rest,
For he, if what she says is true,
May well outwit our mighty crew.

PIRATES:

Our mighty crew, our mighty crew,

[*Enter General Stanley.*]

GENERAL STANLEY:

Yes, yes, it's time you bid adieu!

I am a Major-General
(And all that rhymes is "mineral"),
And as I'm singing Dr. Seuss,
Hex'decameter's no use.

So I will just proceed to say
That I can beat you any day
At formulating rhymes and more,
And singing airs from *Pinafore*!

Now, what goes here? It seems to me
My daughters face some jeopardy.

PIRATE KING:

We've lawfully your girls procured,
And they'll be safe, please rest assured.

EDITH:

Oh Father, listen please I pray,
You must not heed what they may say!
The Pirates of Penzance they are:
From noble birth...

MAIDENS:

Much, much too far!

GENERAL STANLEY [*aside*]:

Dear me, my word, what can be done?
For these strong lads we can't outrun.
But stay, I've hatched a cunning plot!

MAIDENS [*to themselves*]:

We hope it's good! It's all we've got!

GENERAL STANLEY:

Brave Pirate King, before you try
To all my daughters from me pry,
Do you know what it's like to grow
Without a mom and pop to know?

PIRATE KING:

Do you mean to say that you
Have grown up as an orphan too?
We'll honor such a saddening plight.

PIRATES:

We're foiled again! No girls tonight!

PIRATE KING:

You may go, for we believe
You have tricks stuck up your sleeve.
We make you now on wave and sand
A member of our pirate band!

MAIDENS:

Hurrah! Hooray! On wave and sand
Papa's a member of their band!

ALL:

Oh happy day with joyous glee,
We will away and merry be!

[*General rejoicing; end of Act I.*]

ACT II.

[*General Stanley weeps in his chapel; Daughters enter to comfort him.*]

MAIDENS:

It pains us, Father, very much
To see you weep and cry and such,
And as we loyal to you are,
We'll never from your side be far!

[*Enter Frederic.*]

MABEL:

Oh Frederic, can you make things right
And lift dear Father's spirits tonight?

FREDERIC:

I will, sweet Mabel, if you tell
Me why his bubbly spirits fell.

GENERAL STANLEY:

Frederic, lad, I must confess,
That lies enormous me possess,
For since my birth a-way back when,
I never have an orphan been!

FREDERIC:

Take heart, good sir, and cry no more –
A mighty battle is in store!
For as before this night is done,
The pirates shall die! They'll live not one!

[*Enter Police.*]

POLICE:

We are very, very brave,
But also frightened of the grave!
And when we into battle go,

Our courage never seems to show!

When we into battle go!
When we into battle go!
When we into battle go!

GENERAL STANLEY [*frustrated with the delay*]:

Move out and into battle go!

MAIDENS:

Now they go! Now they go!

POLICE:

We really into battle go!

[*Exit all but Frederic. Enter Pirate King and Ruth.*]

Frederic! Good to see you, boy!

FREDERIC:

Pirate King! My old employ!
Know you not that I have said
This very night I'll kill you dead?

RUTH:

Frederic, spare us, for we're here
To share some cranks and quibbles queer.

PIRATE KING:

We had laid the fact to rest
That you had left our pirate nest,
But as we read your papers old,
We noticed something good as gold!

Yes, it seems that you were born
In '56 on leap-year morn,
And when we count by days of birth,
You've been five years upon the Earth!

FREDERIC [*to Ruth*]:

Five years?

RUTH:

Five years!

FREDERIC [*to Pirate King*]:

Five years?

PIRATE KING:

Five years!

FREDERIC:

I'm five years old, as it appears!

RUTH:

So do not think your work is done –
You owe us *birthdays* – twenty-one!

FREDERIC:

I must remain a pirate still?
It is my duty, and I will!

[*aside*]:

But horror! Now I must reply
By telling them the General's lie!

[*aloud*]:

My friends, it pains me much to say
The General fibbed with you today,
And though I fear it leads to strife,
Two parents had he all his life!

PIRATE KING:

It angers me to think that one
So friendly-like would with us pun,
And so because to us he lied,

We shall not rest till he has died!

[Exit Pirate King and Ruth. Enter Mabel.]

MABEL:

Dear Frederic, why are you in tears?

FREDERIC:

Oh Mabel, 'tis my heart's arrears.
I love you tenderly, you know,
But it's my duty now to go.

MABEL:

Why, oh why? What can be wrong?
Is it the way I sang my song?

FREDERIC:

No, sweet maiden! You did well!
I thought "Poor Wandering One" was swell!

But as a pirate, I have found
That I am dutifully bound
To serve whichever ends up more:
Years twenty-one or eighty-four!

MABEL:

I'll wait, dear Frederic, till you're through,
And then continue loving you.
I'll love you as I do today,
And even if your tresses gray!

[Exit Frederic. Enter Police as before.]

POLICE:

We're not sure why we've returned,
For we're afraid of fights, you've learned,
And so we're marching to and fro
Ere we into battle go!

Ere we into battle go!

Ere we into battle go!
Ere we into battle go!
Ere we into battle go!

MABEL:

Oh Sergeant brave, this I implore,
Please make these pirates live no more!

SERGEANT:

Young maiden, listen please to me,
Of course we will!

1st POLICEMAN [*aside*]:

Not me!

2nd POLICEMAN [*aside*]:

Not me!

[*Exit Mabel. Police hide. Enter Pirates and Frederic stealthily.*]

PIRATES:

We're trying to be very hushed,
For this great heist cannot be rushed.
We'll break into the general's house
And be as quiet as a mouse.

SAMUEL:

So take you all your burgling stuff,
And lift your crowbars, sniff your snuff,
For we'll be celebrating when
The Major-General killed has been!

PIRATES:

Yes, we'll be celebrating when
The Major-General killed has been!

FREDERIC:

Hush, hush, I think the General comes!

He must not see us pirate scums!

[Enter General Stanley. Pirates hide.]

GENERAL STANLEY:

As sleeplessly I lay awake,
I heard some feet some footsteps take,
And fearing pirate men and boys,
I thought I'd see what was the noise.

But now my worried heart's at ease,
I see it only was the breeze.
Yes, yes, yes, the breeze, the breeze,
I hope it only was the breeze.

[Enter Daughters.]

MAIDENS:

Dear Father, why aren't you at rest?
You need your sleep to be your best!

[Pirates jump out of hiding and seize General Stanley and Daughters.]

PIRATE KING:

Forward, forward, former earls!
Kill the General! Take the girls!

MAIDENS:

Help us, help us! Can you hear?

[Police jump out of hiding.]

POLICE:

We will save you never fear!

[Pirates and Police fight; Police succumb.]

PIRATES:

We are the best! We've beaten you!
And those who've beaten us are few!

SERGEANT:

Surrender, pirates! End your game
In Queen Victoria's treasured name!

PIRATE KING:

To submit we are so keen
Because we love our glorious Queen.

[Pirates let up Police and release General Stanley and Daughters.]

GENERAL STANLEY *[to Police]*:

Lock them up, to jail they go!

RUTH:

What you say you do not know!
They are not of the common throng,
They're noblemen who've all gone wrong!

GENERAL STANLEY:

It seems they're peers, as things befall,

[turning to Pirate King]:

So take my daughters: beauties all!

[Frederic and Mabel pair up. Each man pairs with a daughter.]

ALL:

Oh, happy day with joyous glee,
We will away and married be!

CURTAIN.

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