

# Happy Arcadia

Or

## Be Careful What You Wish For

Libretto by W.S. Gilbert  
Music by Arthur Sullivan

*Edited and adapted by Fraser Charlton*

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

<b>Chloe</b> ( <i>A happy Arcadian, betrothed to Strephon</i> ) .....	SOPRANO
<b>Strephon</b> ( <i>A happy Arcadian, betrothed to Chloe</i> ).....	TENOR
<b>Daphne</b> ( <i>An elderly Arcadian, Chloe's mama</i> ) .....	CONTRALTO
<b>Colin</b> ( <i>A virtuous old peasant, father of Chloe</i> ) .....	BASS
<b>Astrologos</b> ( <i>A blighted Bogey</i> ) .....	BARITONE/CONTRALTO
<b>Lycidas</b> ( <i>The handsomest man in all the world</i> ).....	BARITONE

*SCENE: Exterior of STREPHON'S cottage. Entrance to cottage R. Large tree C., with seat round it. Pretty Arcadian landscape, cornfields, water, etc.*

### ORDER OF MUSIC

1.	OPENING DUET - "Tripping hither" ( <i>Iolanthe</i> ) CHLOE & STREPHON.....	2
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15	9. ....IDENTITY QUARTET - "This identity confusion" ( <i>The Sorcerer</i> ) STREPHON, CHLOE, COLIN & DAPHNE.....	19
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*The title in brackets indicates the Gilbert & Sullivan opera from which the music was taken.*

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*Happy Arcadia*

*STREPHON and CHLOE discovered. STREPHON seated beneath tree, playing on flageolet. CHLOE dancing with pet lamb, decorated with ribbons. They are dressed as a "Watteau" shepherd and shepherdess.*

**SONG 1: DUET - STREPHON and CHLOE**

*Music - "Tripping hither", Iolanthe*

**Both** Tripping hither, tripping thither,  
Nobody knows why or whither;  
We must dance and sing and play  
Here in Happy Arcaday.

**Chloe** We're Arcadians, ever singing,  
Ever piping, ever dancing;  
Joy and innocence we're bringing,  
In a fashion most entrancing.  
If you ask the special function  
Of our never-ceasing motion,  
We reply, without compunction,  
That we haven't any notion!

**Both** No, we haven't any notion!  
Tripping hither, etc.

*After song CHLOE sits down impatiently.*

**Chloe** Oh, bother!

**Strephon** (*sulkily*) Certainly. Bother!

**Chloe** "Ever happy, ever dancing"? What nonsense it is! Why, I'm miserable!

**Strephon** So am I. Utterly, completely and intensely miserable. Bored beyond expression. Utterly, unmistakably bored!

**Chloe** Look at this disgusting little lamb that I'm obliged to go about with all day! I, who hate lambs!

**Strephon** And look at this irritating pipe that I'm obliged to play upon from morning to night! I, who hate music!

**Chloe** I always pinch my lamb when nobody's looking.

**Strephon** And I always play out of tune when nobody's listening.

**Chloe** For matter of all that, you were playing out of tune just now.

**Strephon** Ah, you're a nice girl to be engaged to.

**Chloe** So everybody says.

**Strephon** You - you are not as young as you were.

**Chloe** I am!

**Strephon** You're not.

**Chloe** I am - you - you - you - (*bursts into tears, then suddenly*) Here's somebody coming.

*STREPHON and CHLOE resume their singing and dancing as DAPHNE enters, with lamb.*

**Daphne** (*speaking very rapidly*). Oh, what pretty, pretty little birds! Ah, innocent, innocent little people, with their little hearts overflowing with love, and their little bodies moving in harmony with the pretty little songs they sing to one another! Oh, happy, happy, happy little birds!

**Chloe** (*relapsing*). Oh, it's only ma! Never mind ma!

**Strephon** Oh, it's only aunt - never mind aunt!

**Daphne** Oh, what pretty little happy innocent...

**Strephon** Oh, nonsense. Drop it - we're quite alone.

**Daphne** Why - bless my heart alive, you've never been quarrelling - and in Arcadia - happy, happy Arcadia. Oh, naughty, naughty, naughty!

**Chloe** Oh, Strephon is such a donkey!

## Happy Arcadia

**Strephon** So I am - a donkey. A patient, faithful, docile, ill-used, meek, long-suffering - abominably treated animal- a donkey! So I am! Yah!

*Kicks open door of cottage, passionately, and exits in a furious rage.*

**Daphne** Ah, deary, deary, deary, times are dreadfully changed since I was a girl. Those were the early days of Arcadia, and everybody was really happy and contented. But now it seems that nobody is satisfied - even your poor dear papa, who has been an Arcadian for fifty years is discontented!

**Chloe** Why, what's the matter with papa?

**Daphne** Why, he's got all sorts of fancies into his poor old head - he's always wishing he was somebody else. What do you think is his grievance now? Why, that he can't be a woman! I'm sure I'd do anything to make him comfortable, but there are some things I cannot and will not do, and that is one! Hush! here he comes.

*THEY retire behind tree C. as COLIN enters. COLIN is a very ugly and remorseful looking man. He enters singing and playing on a pipe. He leads a lamb and dances with great difficulty.*

**Colin** *(singing)*. "Tripping hither" etc. *(Sees that he is alone.)* Oh, no one here? *(Relapses.)* Ah! *(Sighing and wiping his eyes.)* Here's a miserable object for you! Born with a natural taste for crime, I was taught from my infancy to look upon fraud and dishonesty as the legitimate means of earning a dishonourable competency! How is it that Fate has so far interfered with my intentions? Forty years ago, in sportive mood, I forged a poor little will. It was a very small will, and the testator was dead; still, people were annoyed, and to avoid the consequences I fled to Arcadia, where for forty years I have been compelled, against my will, to lead a life of absolute innocence. I would return at once to the happy iniquitous world if it were not that my doing so would involve immediate arrest, followed by fourteen years penal servitude. Oh, that I were a woman! Women have such privileges, such immunities! A woman forges a will - she pleads ignorance of business - and she is acquitted. She steals silk dresses or Dutch cheeses, and she pleads kleptomania - and she is acquitted. Oh, woman, woman, if you only knew how to work the prerogatives you possess, you might all retire on a comfortable and dishonest fortune in rather less than no time!

### SONG 2: SOLO - COLIN

*Music - "Oh better far to live and die", The Pirates of Penzance*

From the first it was the same,  
Many before I lived have said it  
Where men are saddled with all the blame,  
A woman, a woman gets nought but credit.  
Though life is a toss-up for all our sins,  
The toss always falls as the lady chooses  
If "heads" the poor little maiden wins  
If "tails" it's always the man that loses!

For though she's but a girl,  
A poor, inexperienced girl  
She feathers her nest  
With the softest and best,  
Poor timid and innocent girl!

In business a woman beyond  
The reach of business-like men is  
She fastens you down to the word of your bond  
Like Shylock in the "Merchant of Venice."  
And when she believes that there's a flaw,  
She violates each condition;  
And if then you appeal to the law,  
She answers with seeming deep contrition:

*Happy Arcadia*

That please she is only a girl  
A helpless and innocent girl  
You must be a brute  
To enter a suit  
'Gainst a weak and unbusinesslike girl!

*At end of song COLIN bursts into a loud hysterical wail, which brings everyone in in great alarm. He has sunk on the seat round the tree, but on their entry he springs up and sings:*

**Colin** "Tripping hither," etc.

**Chloe** (*approaching COLIN kindly*). Papa! Are you not well?

**Colin** (*smiling seraphically*). Well? Who is not well in Arcadia?

**Daphne** Perhaps you are unhappy? If there is any silent sorrow tugging at your poor old heartstrings – tell it, oh, tell it to me. Are you unhappy?

**Colin** Unhappy? In Arcadia? For shame! Is not our life the purest and happiest that the intellect of man can devise?

**All** It is!

**Colin** Are not the very breezes scented with innocence?

**All** Invariably!

**Colin** And lastly - and chiefly - and above all- don't the - don't the - (*bursts into tears*). Oh, it's no use - I've done it for fifty years and I can't do it any longer! I do believe I'm the most miserable old dog in existence!

**Strephon** But what's the matter with you? Can it be remorse?

**Colin** It can! More - it is!

**Daphne** But bless us and save us, what in the world has the poor man been and done?

**Colin** Nothing! That's it! For fifty years I have done nothing but dance and tootle on a pipe. Think of what I might have done in' fifty years if I had been permitted to wallow in native wickedness had circumstances not compelled me to become an Arcadian! Ah! It's a weary world!

**Daphne** I have no sympathy with your views, but it certainly is a very weary world!

**Chloe** I repudiate your sentiments, but it is a very, very weary world, indeed.

**Strephon** I am aghast at the state of your morals, but it certainly is a confounded ill-contrived, three-cornered, square-peg-in-a-round-hole sort of a world and I wish I was well out of it altogether! Ah!

**All** (*sighing heavily and shaking their heads*). Ah!

*ASTROLOGOS, a very pale, lank, disconsolate person, dressed in black, puts his head out of an upper window. He plays a flageolet very badly.*

**Colin** (*suddenly*). There's somebody looking!

*They all spring up and take up refrain of song, "Tripping hither," COLIN and STREPHON playing, while DAPHNE and CHLOE dance with lambs.*

**Astrologus** (*at window*). Oh, my! Here's a state of innocence for you! Oh, my goodness! Ain't this a state of innocence for you?

**All** It is!

**Astrologus** Ain't you all happy neither?

**All** Ain't we just!

**Astrologus** Ah, don't I wish I was as happy as you!

**Daphne** Ah, but you see you're not an Arcadian.

**Colin** You're a miserable dweller in cities and know nothing of the beauties of rustic life.

*ASTROLOGOS exits. During this dialogue the Arcadians have been dancing and tootling, but when ASTROLOGOS disappears they relapse.*

**Colin** He's gone!

*Happy Arcadia*

**Strephon** That's an agreeable person. He's occupied my first floor for the last three months. I hate filthy lucre, but he hasn't suggested anything in the shape of rent.

**Daphne** Well, why don't you ask him for it?

**Strephon** An Arcadian dun a lodger for rent? I trust I'm too unworldly to do that. I merely mention, as an incidental fact, that up to the present moment he hasn't suggested anything in the shape of rent.

**Colin** Ha! Strange!

**Daphne** Droll - very droll.

**Strephon** Yes, as a matter of fact it is droll - that's just what it is - it's droll.

**All** Ha! Ha!

*Enter ASTROLOGOS. He is very dismal and lank. He is playing on a pipe and leading a lamb with a ribbon.*

**SONG 3: ASTROLOGUS and ARCADIANS**

*Music - "Oh, why am I moody and sad?", Ruddigore*

**Astrologus** Oh, why am I moody and sad?  
**Others** Can't guess!

**Astrologus** With eyes that are staring and mad?  
**Others** Confess!

**Astrologus** Because I am thoroughly bad!  
**Others** Oh yes--

**Astrologus** You'll see it at once in my face.  
Oh, why am I husky and hoarse?  
**Others** Ah, why?

**Astrologus** I lived in a cellar, of course.  
**Others** Fie, fie!

**Astrologus** A lifestyle I wouldn't endorse,  
**Others** Oh my!

**Astrologus** But there wasn't a choice in my case!

**Astrologus** When in sorcery one is employed--  
**Others** Like you--

**Astrologus** Your expression gets warped and destroyed:  
**Others** It do.

**Astrologus** It's a penalty none can avoid;  
**Others** How true!

**Astrologus** I once was a nice-looking youth;  
But like stone from a strong catapult--  
**Others** (*explaining to each other*). A trice--

**Astrologus** I rushed at my terrible cult--  
**Others** (*explaining to each other*). That's vice--

**Astrologus** Observe the unpleasant result!  
**Others** Not nice.

**Astrologus** Indeed I am telling the truth!

**Astrologus** Oh, innocent, happy though poor!  
**Others** That's we--

**Astrologus** If i had been virtuous, I'm sure--  
**Others** Like me--

**Astrologus** I should be as nice-looking as you're!  
**Others** May be.

**Astrologus** You are very nice-looking indeed!  
Oh, innocents, listen in time--  
**Others** We *doe*,

**Astrologus** Avoid an existence of crime--  
**Others** Just so--

**Astrologus** Or you'll be as ugly as I'm--

*Happy Arcadia*

**Others** (*loudly*).

No! No!

**Sir d.**

And now, if you please, we'll proceed.

*He goes up to DAPHNE, then to CHLOE, then to COLIN. Each walks off, much alarmed, in succession. STREPHON remains.*

**Astrologus** (*in tears*). The simple shepherds seem afraid of me.

**Strephon** Well, you're not a pleasant person.

**Astrologus** To tell you the truth, I believe I'm a sort of demon. Now, would it astonish you to learn that there's a very long and interesting tale attached to me?

**Strephon** Not a bit - though it's wonderful how you stow it away.

**Astrologus** (*shaking his head*). Ah, I could joke like that once - but I don't mean "tail" - an appendage. I mean "tale" - a history.

**Strephon** Oh!

**Astrologus** I'll tell it to you. A quarter of a century ago, I was younger than I am now by some years. The first thing I can remember is being a good young man in spectacles. Everybody ridiculed me for my serious disposition, especially little boys, so I went to Merlin and asked him to make me a bogy. Well, he made me a bogy and taught me all sorts of conjuring tricks. Dreadful, ain't it?

**Strephon** It's appalling.

**Astrologus** Now, it's a proud distinction to be a bogy, but it ain't all pleasure. For instance, I had to live in a coal cellar.

**Strephon** I see - to be called out by nursemaids to frighten naughty little boys.

**Astrologus** No - that wouldn't have been so bad - I wasn't called out at all - I was there to be alluded to.

**Strephon** But they could have alluded to you without your being there, couldn't they?

**Astrologus** Ah, but that would have been a deception.

**Strephon** So it would.

**Astrologus** I hate deception. I wouldn't deceive a nursemaid. Well, I remained in the cellar for twenty years and amused myself conjuring with bits of coal. Can you conjure with bits of coal?

**Strephon** No - can you?

**Astrologus** Can't I just! It's very simple - you take a big bit of coal in your right hand and a little bit of coal in your left. Then you put your hand behind your back and you ask the company which hand the big bit is in. If they guess rightly you slyly change the pieces behind your back and confound them. It frightens them horribly.

**Strephon** I should conceive that it was calculated to strike them with unspeakable terror. But how do you live?

**Astrologus** Well, at first I did very well. Merlin had given me four magic talismans - a cap, a cloak, a ring and a stick. Whoever possesses anyone of these articles has the right to have one wish granted - but only one. So, as I possessed all four, I had four wishes - and I wished four times for beef (of which I am fond), and I got it and I ate it up and now I have no more wishes left, and no more beef. Well, then I earned a living by conjuring with coals, but there are no coals in Arcadia. It's a pity, because it earns me a deal of money.

**Strephon** But won't other things do as well as coals?

**Astrologus** Such as what?

**Strephon** Such as stones for instance - or money (*aside*) - that's a good idea - (*aloud*) Money, such as a fifty-pound note and a hundred-pound note.

**Astrologus** Of course - a fifty-pound note and a hundred-pound note will do capitally - I've got the very thing. (*Producing notes. STREPHON very keen after them.*) I'll go this very day.

**Strephon** I must drop a hint about that rent. (*Aloud.*) Before you go I should like to sing to you a little thing of my own - a simple little thing - just a suggestion of an idea - nothing more.

*Happy Arcadia*

**Astrologus** I should like to hear it very much. (*Sits.*)  
**Strephon** (*aside*). I've got him now. (*Sings unaccompanied.*)

**SONG 4: SOLO - STREPHON**

*Music: "Love feeds on many kinds of food, I know", The Sorcerer*

Fair love, assuage the wearing woe  
That lurks within this bosom pent;  
Thou tellest me that thou must go  
Because thy poor heart is rent  
Is rent - is rent, rent, rent - is rent -  
Because thy heart is rent. (*Pauses significantly.*)

**Astrologus** Exactly-you mean torn, I suppose. You don't mean ha! ha! the hire of a house.  
**Strephon** Oh, no - nothing of the kind - torn. Well, it goes on like this: (*Sings.*)  
Rent though that heart, that heart may be

**Astrologus** Exactly. Rent though that heart may be  
**Strephon** (*sings*). Why, give it, give it, my love, to me.

*Holds out his hand as for money. ASTROLOGOS shakes it heartily.*

**Astrologus** Capital - excellent. Only -

**Strephon** Yes?

**Astrologus** Don't you think you've got rather too much "rent"?

**Strephon** Well, do you know, I *was* thinking I hadn't got quite enough.

**Astrologus** Too much. I should reduce my rent. Good-morning.

*Exit ASTROLOGOS.*

**Strephon** He's gone. Now, anybody but an Arcadian would be disappointed - one can't be sordid even if one wants to. Thank goodness I'm a true Arcadian! It is a happy life, after all, and I wouldn't change it for any consideration.

**SONG 5: SOLO - STREPHON.**

*Music: "When jealous torments", The Yeomen of the Guard*

There's naught but care, and toil, and strife  
For him who leads a city life;  
He dines each day in tip-top fig  
On dainty meats - the pig  
And finishes - unhappy brute  
On first-rate wine and hothouse fruit.  
If first-rate wine were given me  
How wretched I should be!

For I'm a simple, simple swain,  
Who treats such things with much disdain.  
They have no charm for me,  
Such luxuries for which you yearn  
Are merely dross from which I turn  
A simple swain of Arcadee!

The wretched fellow, you will find,  
Gets up just when he feels inclined,  
And always takes his nightly rest  
The hour that suits him best.  
Whene'er he walks abroad, I vow,  
The common people scrape and bow.  
If common people bowed to me  
How wretched I should be!

For I'm a simple, simple swain, etc.

*Happy Arcadia*

He goes to opera, ball and play,  
(Disgusting joys!) and every day  
Some unforeseen enjoyment brings.  
Now, there's a state of things!  
And spite of old duennas grim,  
Fair maidens fall in love with him.  
If maidens fell in love with me  
How wretched I should be!

For I'm a simple, simple swain, etc.

*Enter DAPHNE, very excited.*

**Daphne** Oh, my! Oh, there now! Oh, I've such news! Colin! Chloe! I've such news!

*Enter COLIN and CHLOE.*

**Colin** (*shaking her*). Speak out, woman, can't you? What's wrong?

**Daphne** Nothing. Everything is right. Lycidas - the handsome, wealthy, gifted Lycidas - has determined to renounce the vanities of a worldly life and is going to become an Arcadian!

**Strephon** And who is Lycidas?

**Colin** Lycidas is the richest man in the world!

**Daphne** Lycidas is the noblest man in the world!

**Chloe** Lycidas is the handsomest man in the world!

**Daphne** And why - why do you think he is coming? Because he has taken a fancy to Chloe! There!

**Chloe** To me! Oh, how delightful! How do I look?

**Colin** To Chloe! My dear child! My darling child! This, indeed, is happiness.

**Strephon** But here - I say - it don't seem to occur to you that there is a little difficulty in the way. Chloe is betrothed to me.

**Colin** Don't let that distress you - set your mind at rest. I shall offer no obstacle to the betrothal being cancelled.

**Strephon** Look here. I'm an Arcadian, and as an Arcadian I'm bound to give every stranger a welcome. But if this stranger is coming after Chloe I'll give him the sort of welcome he don't expect. I'll - I'll smash this fellow - (*Suddenly.*) Here he comes!

*All take up pipes and sing. Enter LYCIDAS. He is magnificently dressed and leads two lambs decorated with ribbons.*

**SONG 6: LYCIDAS & CHLOE with ARCADIANS**

*Music - "Welcome gentry", Ruddigore*

**Arcadians** Welcome, stranger,  
Fear no danger,  
Here are gentle hearts a-beating.  
Man of station,  
Admiration  
Prompts this unaffected greeting.  
Hearty greeting offer we!

**Lycidas** When thoroughly tired  
Of being admired,  
By ladies of gentle degree--degree,  
With flattery sated,  
High-flown and inflated,  
Away from the city I flee--I flee!



*Happy Arcadia*

From charms intramural  
To prettiness rural  
The sudden transition  
Is simply Elysian,  
(*To CHLOE*) So, beautiful maiden,  
With charms over-laden,  
Your slave, for the moment, I'll be!

**Chloe** The sons of the tillage  
Who dwell in this village  
Are people of lowly degree--degree.  
Though honest and active,  
They're most unattractive,  
And awkward as awkward can be--can be.  
They're clumsy clodhoppers  
With axes and choppers,  
And shepherds and ploughmen  
And drovers and cowmen,  
And hedgers and reapers  
And carters and keepers,  
But never a lover for me!

**ENSEMBLE**

**Arcadians**  
So welcome gentry, etc.

**Chloe**  
The songs of the tillage, etc.

**Lycidas**  
When thoroughly tired, etc.

**SONG 7: QUARTET – COLIN, DAPHNE, STREPHON  
& CHLOE**

*Music: "Sighing softly to the river", The Pirates of Penzance*

**Colin** Welcome to our humble village  
Free from care and strife,  
Far from wealth and busy pillage,  
Lead a simple life.

**All** Simple life.

**Daphne** Ev'ry night there shines a moon,  
And figs grow thistles on,  
All the piglets squeak in tune,  
And each goose is a swan!.

**All** Yes, beneath the shining moon,  
All the piglets squeak in tune.  
Here is naught but joy and flowers,  
You'll find peace and beauty rare,  
In this village snug of ours,  
There's no taint of grief or care!

**Strephon** Here you'll find in every stream,  
A pleasure boat to launch,  
Every cow gives naught but cream,  
Our mutton's purely haunch!

**All** Purely haunch!

**Chloe** Eat asparagus all year round,  
Apples taste like peach,  
A penny buys of gloves a pound -  
Bonnet halfpence each!

*Happy Arcadia*

- All** Apples always taste like peach,-  
Bonnetts cost a halfpence each!
- Here is naught but joy and flowers,  
You'll find peace and beauty rare,  
In this village snug of ours,  
There's no taint of grief or care!
- Lycidas** (*impetuously*). This is the life for me. I see plainly that this is the life for me. I will be a simple shepherd and come and live with you. Oblige me with the address of a house agent, a field, a fold, a flock of sheep and a list of local charities.
- Colin** It is indeed a charming existence. Beautiful climate - unlimited health - nothing to do.
- Chloe** Lovely things to wear.
- Daphne** Envy, hatred and malice unheard of.
- Strephon** And money a drug.
- Daphne** A drug.
- Colin** A drug.
- Lycidas** I am sorry to hear that. I am wealthy, and as I pride myself on the completeness with which I do everything I undertake, I had provided myself with money with which I should have liked to pay my footing (*producing bags-three small, one large*).
- Strephon** A stranger's whim is sacred. We thwart him in nothing.
- Lycidas** Good.
- He distributes the bags. All endeavour to get the big one, which falls to STREPHON'S share.*
- Daphne** (*opening bag*). Gold!
- CHLOE** . (*opening bag*). Gold!
- Colin** (*opening bag*). Gold!
- Strephon** (*opening bag*). Copper! (*Disappointed.*)
- Lycidas** And now, leave me alone with her. (*Indicating CHLOE.*)
- Colin** (*To DAPHNE*). The gentleman wishes us to leave him with Chloe. Come, Daphne. Incredible as it may appear, you were once young yourself.
- Exit with DAPHNE.*
- Lycidas** (*to STREPHON, who remains*). I said I would be alone with her.
- Strephon** Yes, that's all very well, but -
- Lycidas** (*sternly*). It is the stranger's whim!
- Strephon** Oh, of course, if it is the stranger's whim.
- Exit. Bus.*
- Lycidas** Now we are alone.
- Chloe** So we are.
- Lycidas** Maiden, hear me. I am a man of few words - hot, rash, impulsive. I am a whirlwind - a cataract - a volcano. That being so, you will be prepared to hear that I worship you fondly, madly, recklessly. Be mine.
- Chloe** Really this is so sudden.
- Lycidas** As I said before, I pride myself on the completeness with which I do everything I undertake. That being so, I shall be glad to hear the names of your dressmaker, jeweller, confectioner, livery-stable keeper and favourite clergyman.
- Chloe** But before I reply -
- Lycidas** Ha, an evasion! Then I have a rival! His name and those of his physician, family undertaker and monumental mason!

*Happy Arcadia*

*Enter STREPHON with stick, unobserved.*

**Strephon** (coming forward). He is here. (*LYCIDAS alarmed.*) Perhaps you would like to apologize?

**Chloe** (*aside to LYCIDAS*). You had better go, I think. You can return in half an hour.

**Lycidas** Sir, I retire gracefully. Take the maiden. She is not good enough for you. She is not young enough for you. She is not pretty enough for you - but take her nevertheless. She may improve. (*Aside to CHLOE.*) In half an hour. (*Aloud.*) Good-morning!

*Exit LYCIDAS, followed by STREPHON, shaking his stick significantly.*

**Strephon** And now, miss, understand me. I am no longer an Arcadian. If that fellow presumes to address you again, I will smash that fellow. You understand - I will smash him! It's painful, but it must be done.

*Exit STREPHON.*

**Chloe** It's very hard. The gentleman is handsome, which is a recommendation, and he's affectionate, which is agreeable, and he's wealthy, which don't matter, and he makes love in the manner which of all others I prefer. I like a man who comes to the point at once! Ah, that's the way to woo!

*Enter STREPHON in great agitation. He staggers to a seat.*

**Strephon** He's gone! Gone! Gone! Ha! ha! ha!

**Chloe** Who has gone? Not Lycidas?

**Strephon** Lycidas? No, Astrologos! He's vanished! Disappeared! And he owed me three months' rent! It's of no consequence whatever, but as a matter of fact, or rather as a *don't* matter of fact, he certainly did owe me three months' rent! Ha! Ha! Ha! (*Weeping hysterically.*)

*Enter DAPHNE and COLIN.*

**Daphne** Strephon, my dear Strephon, here is a little parcel which has been sent to you by Astrologos. It's not a matter of any interest to an Arcadian, but I shouldn't be at all surprised if it's an equivalent for the creature's rent.

**Strephon** Perhaps. Who knows? If it is, it would serve him right to keep it. Just to punish him, you know.

**Colin** Yes, to punish him.

**Strephon** I'll open it. (*Does so.*) A stick, a snuff box, a cloak, and a cap! and a note addressed to me. (*Opens and reads.*)  
"These things are no longer of any use to me.  
There is a mystic power attached to them.  
Distribute them as you think fit. ASTROLOGOS."  
Come, that's something!

**Colin** You are to distribute them as you think fit. (*Holding out his hand.*)

**Strephon** Yes, and I think fit to distribute them by auction.

**All** Good - by auction.

**Strephon** (*Table is brought.*) That's it. Now then, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to submit -

**All** No, no - sing it, sing it.

**SONG 8: QUARTET – STREPHON, CHLOE,  
DAPHNE & COLIN**

*Music: "Now take a card and gaily sing", The Grand Duke*

**Strephon** Good people all, attend and see,  
Who shall each item take from me?

**Chloe** I'll give a penny for the cap!

*Happy Arcadia*

- All** A cap, she's bought the cap!!  
Sing cap and cloak and stick and box!  
It's Chloe's cap!  
Without a nap!  
Though, as a rule, she looks a fool -  
Sing cap and cloak and stick and box  
Sing cloak and cap and box and stick!
- Strephon** And now behold a lovely cloak  
The hue of damp and chimney smoke!
- Daphne** I'll give a penny for the cloak!
- All** The cloak, she's bought the cloak!  
Sing cap and cloak and stick and box!  
She'll take the cloak!  
It's not a joke--  
It hides her pins and hides her sins!  
Sing cap and cloak and stick and box  
Sing cloak and cap and box and stick!
- Strephon** Now here's a lot that must be sold,  
A snuff box made of solid gold!,
- Colin** I'll give a penny for the box!
- All** The box, he's bought the box!  
Sing cap and cloak and stick and box!  
He'll take the box!  
The sly old fox--  
The snuff will tease and make him sneeze!  
Sing cap and cloak and stick and box  
Sing cloak and cap and box and stick!

*Exeunt all except DAPHNE.*

**Daphne** (*examining cloak*). Well, there now, I declare, it's not such a very bad bargain. (*Takes out knitting.*) So that disreputable old gentleman declared that whoever possessed one of these things should have one wish granted, did he? Why, bless us and save us, don't we live in Arcadia, where nobody has anything to wish for? But some people are never satisfied. There's my old man - healthy old gentleman - plenty to eat and drink - nothing to do - nothing will satisfy him short of being a woman. There's my nephew Strephon - fine, muscular lad - good-looking, too - he's always grumbling and wishing he was somebody else. Ah! I wish I'd as little to grumble at as he has! There'd be some excuse for a poor feeble old lady - but a fine handsome lad just beginning life! Ah, I wish I was in his shoes.

*(Passes behind tree C. STREPHON comes from other side to convey the idea that the change has been effected. He wears the grey cloak and knits a stocking.)*

**Strephon** (*with manners of DAPHNE*). I'd soon show them that there was little to grumble at! (*Sees coat.*) Eh! What? Why, what an extraordinary thing. Why, bless us and save us, if I haven't come out in Strephon's coat. Now, how could that have happened? (*Passes hand over chin in considering- finds it rough.*) Dear me! (*Rubs it.*) How rough my chin is! It must be the cold wind that has chapped it! (*Feels for pocket in skirt to replace knitting. Finds that he has no skirt.*) Why - oh dear! Oh, bless me! Oh, I must be dreaming! If I haven't got on a pair of - Oh! (*Sits and endeavours to hide his legs under seat. Pulls handkerchief out of pocket to cover knees. Sees STREPHON'S name on it.*) Why, it's Strephon's handkerchief and Strephon's clothes (*looks in glass*) and Strephon's face. Oh, there now! I wished to be Strephon and I'm become Strephon. Bless me, how very embarrassing. But if I'm Strephon, what in the world has become of me?

*Happy Arcadia*

*Enter DAPHNE, striding about the stage with the manner of COLIN and exhibiting in pantomime great remorse.*

- Daphne** *(laughing remorsefully)*. Ha! Ha! Ha! Oh, remorse! remorse!
- Strephon** *(without looking round)*. So you're there, Colin, are you? Well, poor old Daphne-she's dead!
- Daphne** Daphne dead? What do you mean? *(Roughly.)*
- Strephon** *(turning round)*. Why, most extraordinary thing.
- Daphne** What's the matter with you? Ain't you well?
- Strephon** *(much puzzled)*. Well, thank'ee, ma'am, I'm not altogether myself this morning. *(Aside.)* It is a most extraordinary thing! If I, who was Daphne, am now Strephon, the question arises, who is the person who is now Daphne? *(Aloud.)* I beg your pardon, ma'am - I don't know whether you're aware of it, but that's my body you've got on!
- Daphne** Your body? It seems to me it's my wife's body. At all events I married it.
- Strephon** Why, what in the world do you mean?
- Daphne** Mean? Why, I was thinking just now that I'd had enough of this innocent Arcadian existence. I've been good for fifty years, and I determined to begin from that moment a career of blood-curdling Crime.
- Strephon** Gracious! How horrible!
- Daphne** The only drawback is that a man's so soon found out. Now, there's my missus, said I, she's a good, homely, simple, harmless body no one would suspect her. Why wasn't I my own missus? - and then - presto, will you believe it, all at once I became her!
- Strephon** Why, that's just what happened to me! I wished to be Strephon and I became Strephon!
- Daphne** Why, then you are -
- Strephon** Daphne! And you?
- Daphne** Colin!
- Strephon** My husband!
- Daphne** My wife!

*They embrace.*

- Strephon** This is really very curious.
- Daphne** It's the queerest start I ever knew.
- Daphne** Go and change those things directly. I don't approve of my wife going about in those clothes.
- Strephon** Well, but I'm not your wife now, dear - I'm your husband.
- Daphne** I don't care. I insist on your wearing a petticoat.
- Strephon** But people will laugh at me. If I'm a man I must dress as such .
- Daphne** Can't go into that. *(Takes out pipe and puts it in her mouth.)*
- Strephon** Oh, please don't smoke. I never used to smoke when I was you.
- Daphne** Hallo! What's the matter with this tooth?
- Strephon** Oh, please be very careful. That tooth is - I never liked to tell you, but it isn't quite real. If you must smoke, please smoke on the other side of your mouth. *(DAPHNE makes the change.)* Thank you, oh, so much. *(She takes out knitting and begins to knit.)*

*Enter COLIN, skipping girlishly with the manners of CHLOE.*

- Colin** *(running to DAPHNE)*. Oh mamma! mamma! I'm so frightened! Oh, dear! oh, dear! I'm so terrified!
- Daphne** *(roughly)*. Hullo! Why, this is me! What do you mean by being me? Who are you? Can't you speak? *(Shakes him.)*
- Colin** Oh, don't, you hurt me! Please don't be angry. But, if you please - you wouldn't

*Happy Arcadia*

think it, but I'm - I'm Chloe!

**Strephon** Chloe!

**Colin** Yes, such a wonderful thing has happened! I was so angry with Strephon for having quarrelled with me about Lycidas, and so angry with Lycidas for having made me quarrel with Strephon, that I began to wish I wasn't a pretty girl at all! "There now," said I, "I declare that sooner than be tormented with all these tiresome admirers, I'd sooner be a grumpy, ill-conditioned old bear like papa and - and - if you please, I became a bear like papa without knowing it. It's so dreadful for a young lady to be her own papa! And - and - please forgive me, Strephon, for it must be a dreadful disappointment to you!"

**Strephon** Disappointment? Oh, dear, no!

**Colin** What?

**Strephon** Oh, by the bye, I forgot to tell you, it's an awkward thing to admit, but I'm your mamma!

**Colin** Oh, nonsense. This is my mamma; are you not my dear, dear, kind, indulgent mamma? (*Fondling her.*)

**Daphne** Get out! I'm your father.

**Colin** My father?

**Daphne** Yes, I am the grumpy, ill-conditioned old bear in question.

**Strephon** We've all been wishing and we've all got our wishes, and a very pretty kettle of fish we made of it!

**Colin** Oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!

**All** What's the matter?

**Colin** (*Crying.*) If you're my papa and you're my mamma, what's become of my Strephon?

*Enter CHLOE with boxing-gloves.*

**Chloe** Here he is! (*Hitting out.*) One! two! three! four!

**All** Are you Strephon?

**Chloe** Yes, I am. (*As before.*) One! two! three! four!

**Daphne** But how did it all come about?

**Chloe** Oh, simplest thing in the world. One, two, three, four - everybody seemed to dislike me - one, two - and everybody seemed to love Chloe - three, four - so I wished I was Chloe - one, two, three, four - and I became - one, two -Chloe - three, four - all at once - one, two, three, four!

**Colin** Then you are really my darling, darling Strephon!

**Chloe** To be sure; and you are?

**Colin** Chloe!

**Chloe** My love!

**Colin** My pet!

*They embrace.*

**Daphne** But what are you doing with boxing-gloves?

**Chloe** I'm practising, to take it out of Lycidas - one, two, three, four - wait till I meet him. I passed my word that I would smash him, and smash him I will.

**Strephon** But a young lady - oh, I forgot, you are - I.

**Chloe** Yes, and he is me. (*Indicating COLIN.*)

**Daphne** And I am he. (*Indicating COLIN.*)

**Colin** And I am she. (*Indicating CHLOE.*)

**Chloe** No, I am me.

**Colin** You can't be me, if I'm me.

*Happy Arcadia*

**Daphne** I've got it. I'm you, you're me, he's she, she's he - no, she must be she - no, I see very plainly that if we don't settle who we all are we shall make a precious mess of this.

**SONG 9: IDENTITY QUARTETTE – STREPHON,  
CHLOE, COLIN & DAPHNE**

*Music - "I rejoice that it's decided", The Sorcerer*

**Strephon** This identity confusion  
Calmly let us now discuss.  
Though we're someone, in conclusion,  
None of us is truly *us*!

**All** Oh, can someone please tell us now  
If I'm 'ma'am' or if I'm 'sir'?  
Or, perchance, if thee or if thou,  
Or, perhaps, I'm him or her?

**Chloe** If I'm she, and then she is him,  
And he's her, or is it me?  
Rises then the question grim,  
Why then, who on earth are we?!

**Colin** How distressing, should it occur,  
As it may so seem to be,  
That none of us are him or her  
And that all of us are we!

**All** Oh, can someone please tell us now  
If I'm 'ma'am' or if I'm 'sir'?  
Or, perchance, if thee or if thou,  
Or, perhaps, I'm him or her?

**Daphne** If I'm he - I should say she, now,  
Dear madam – well, that is, sir,  
And he's she - that's meaning me, now  
Pray, please tell me, who is her?

**Strephon** It's quite clear that you are not me,  
You are not you – so you say,  
You are not he, you are not she,  
So then, bless my soul, you're they!

**All** So then, bless my soul, you're they!  
This confusion surely must be,  
Such a source of endless fuss;  
If I'm him and he is just me  
But while neither of us is us!

**Daphne** There, you see, confusion from beginning to end. Now, I've an idea. Whoever possesses one of these talismans has a right to have one wish granted, but only one. Well, we've had that one, and a pretty mess we've made of it!

**All** We have indeed.

**Daphne** Then suppose we exchange. You take the cloak, you the ring, you the cap, I the stick,! then we can wish ourselves *ourselves* again.

**All** Capital!

**Strephon** (to *CHLOE*). Allow me. (*Giving cloak.*)

**Chloe** (to *COLIN*). Permit me. (*Giving ring.*)

**Colin** (to *DAPHNE*). Suffer me. (*Giving stick.*)

**Daphne** And here's my cap. (*Giving cap to STREPHON.*) Now! Wish! All at once - one, two, three!

**All** I've wished!

*Happy Arcadia*

*All resume their natural demeanour.*

**Strephon** Why, I'm Strephon again!

**Chloe** And I'm Chloe!

**Colin** And I'm Colin!

**Daphne** And I'm Daphne!

*All embrace. Enter LYCIDAS.*

**Lycidas** I've come to the conclusion that this is no place for me. I shall depart by the next train. Oblige me with a rug, a foot-warmer; a smoking carriage, a shilling for the guard, a cheap novel, and a railway time table.

**Strephon** A railway time table? That's of no use nowadays. But if you are going, perhaps you'd like to take a few little souvenirs with you. We are about to dispose of some by auction.

**Lycidas** Souvenirs of what?

**All** Of happy Arcadia!

**SONG 10: FINALE**

*Music: "Now take a card and gaily sing", The Grand Duke*

**Strephon** Our worldly friend departs today  
What presents can we give away?

**Arcadians** A cap, a cloak, a stick, a box!

The lot! He's got the lot!  
Sing cap and cloak and stick and box!

He's got the lot!  
We are well shot!

They go *en masse* to Lycidas!  
Sing cap and cloak and stick and box  
Sing cloak and cap and box and stick!

**SONG 10a: SOLO and CHORUS - DAPHNE**

*Music: "Fare thee well, attractive stranger", Iolanthe*

**Daphne** Fare thee well, attractive stranger.

**Arcadians** Fare thee well, attractive stranger.

**Daphne.** Shouldst thou be in doubt or danger,  
Peril or perplexitee -  
Keep away from Arcadee!

**Arcadians** Aye! Keep away from Arcadee!

*LYCIDAS takes things and puts them on, and the others hussle him off.*

Tripping hither, tripping thither,  
Nobody knows why or whither;  
We are quite content to stay  
Here in Happy Arcaday!

**CURTAIN**



## **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

When I first read Jane Stedman's seminal 'Gilbert before Sullivan' sometime in the late 1980s, the show that I most liked was 'Happy Arcadia' – it seemed to me the most 'G&S-like', and had a zany, surreal quality to the humour that I really enjoyed. It seemed a shame that the music had been lost, as I felt (and still feel) that 'Ages Ago' was the only show to still be intact, as it is a little long-winded, and I find the melodies to be rather unmemorable.

Fast forward several decades, and Gosforth Musical Society were starting to put on G&S-based shows, and were considering producing 'Ages Ago' or 'A Sensation Novel'. Looking back through Stedman's book, I remembered how much I liked 'Happy Arcadia', and proposed a version using Sullivan's music, which they were interested in. After a few weeks of going through the lyrics and thinking of songs that had a similar mood for the appropriate voices, I set to work, and finished most of it (together with a judicious 'trim' of the dialogue) while on retreat at the monastery at Mirfield. It didn't prove to be as difficult as I feared, as the rhymes were already there, even if the metre was wrong! I also restored a 'lost song' for Daphne, although that didn't make it into the version that was performed.

The song that I had most difficulty fitting was 'From the first it was the same' – primarily fitting the chorus to the Pirate King's song. For the production, they couldn't get it to work, and used 'Young man, despair' from the Mikado, which was an earlier idea. I really wanted to use 'woman' instead of 'girl', as it was closer to the original – but, in the end, 'girl' fits much better, so I've made this a permanent change.

I have made available two versions – one with the full dialogue of Gilbert, and one where it is cut down to make it more performable. The production went pretty well, and the audience seemed to get the joke. Astrologos was played by a woman, which worked very well. Even cut down, the dialogue was, perhaps, a bit much for a show with a limited rehearsal period, so I'll work on an even shorter version eventually!

28<sup>th</sup> May 2022