

The Wreckers of Red Rock

OR

The Force of Destiny

A Brand New and Original Melodramatic Operetta
based on the works of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan

by

Fraser Charlton

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Maximillian Blackheart (*a Villain*) BASS
Jessie McPhee (*an Old Lady with a Secret*) CONTRALTO
Maggie McPhee (*Jessie's Daughter; a Heroine*) SOPRANO
William Valiant (*a Hero*) TENOR
Molly O'Brian (*Head Wrecker*) MEZZO-SOPRANO
Faith Jarvis (*her Second-in-Command*) MEZZO-SOPRANO
Hamish Walters (*Head Revenueman*) BARITONE
Seth Appleby (*his Second-in-Command*) HIGH BARITONE

Chorus of WRECKERS and REVENUEMEN.

Time - Somewhere in the 19th Century

Location - The Cliff face at Red Rock

Scene - A Cove with an overhanging cliff. A Lighthouse is represented by a circle on the floor, or perhaps a spot light. To ascend and descend it is necessary to walk around this circle (clockwise = up). There are five floors in total. Exits R and L.

ACT I

OVERTURE

SCENE ONE - *Night*. MAGGIE is seen walking the clifftop downstage with her lamp, looking out to sea. As she exits the female WRECKERS, led by MOLLY and FAITH, creep on, cloaked and hooded. They carry various bags and tea chests and pick up new treasures from the stage as they enter. They strike evil and melodramatic poses as they sing.

OPENING CHORUS - MOLLY, FAITH *and* WRECKERS¹

Music - "With cat-like tread", The Pirates of Penzance

With cat-like tread,
Upon our prey we steal,
In silence dread
Our cautious way we feel.
No sound at all,
We never speak a word,
A fly's foot-fall
Would be distinctly heard -
So stealthily the wrecker creeps,
While all the village soundly sleeps.

Come, friends, who plough the sea,
Ships of ev'ry nation
Join in devastation,
Come, meet thy destiny -
Wreckers of Red Rock are we!

MOLLY & FAITH We're the wreckers from the Red Rock village,
We come to plunder - we come to pillage!
Following orders from an evil master,
We're the wicked ones who profit from disaster!

ALL With cat-like tread, etc.

Enter JESSIE.

MOLLY This has indeed been a successful night. Yet another ship has met its doom on the desolate crags of Red Rock and yet another fortune has been salvaged by us from the wreckage.

FAITH It's a wicked business, Molly. Every night, innocent young Maggie McPhee walks the clifftop with her lantern, little realising that by her actions scores of vessels are lured to certain destruction on the rocks below!

JESSIE Aye, Faith, it is a bitter irony that while she, in her artless, gude-haired way, looks for the arrival of her long-prophesied lover from over the sea, scores o' bonny sailors die in terrible agonies beneath her!

MOLLY And to think we used to mock her for it! She can little suspect what great wealth she has amassed for us!

JESSIE That is tae true. But dinna forget the ither debt we owe, lassie. We'd no have thought o' robbing the floundering vessels had not the evil inhabitant of yonder lighthouse suggested it to us.

FAITH You mean Maximillian Blackheart? How I hate him - how we all hate him! Even his name reeks of infamy and wickedness.

JESSIE Dinna be sae hasty, girlie. Nae matter how revolting his personality, muckle are the fortunes that we have gained by following his advice.

¹ See Appendix for alternative Opening Chorus

MOLLY You're right, Jessie, but it does seem heartless to exploit Maggie's gullibility in this way. How do you square it with your conscience? After all, she is your own daughter. Have you not thought of telling her about the havoc she's causing?

JESSIE Weel, I hae given it mickle thought, but my ainly bairn is a varra, varra sensitive soul, and if she kent the truth it would break her puir wee hairt. Now, I'm sure that naebody here cares about the money...

ALL (*Shaking their heads vigorously*) Not me, never thought of it, heaven forbid, etc.

JESSIE And neither dae I - it's only my wee darling's happiness that I care about. So, I argued to myself, the agonising death o' a few hundred sailors is surely a reasonable price for my Maggie's peace o' mind. Nae loving mither would o' thought otherwise.

MOLLY I'm sure you're right, Jessie. Oh, if only we had daughters of our own to love, but it seems highly likely that we shall all die spinsters. I mean, how were we to know that the very day after our first wrecking expedition all the single men in the village would, as a body, become Custom's Officials? How can we explain to them our reluctance to marry, when if we did we would most surely be sent to the gallows?

FAITH It really is most vexing. As there is no way we could hide our nocturnal activities from any husband, we have had to end up choosing between wealth or weddings!

JESSIE Ach, who knows as well as I that destiny can play cruel tricks on us mortals. But hide your misgivings, lassies - our leader approaches. Look! He is descending his lighthouse as we speak!

MAX appears, descending several floors of the lighthouse. He is a classic stage villain - top hat, voluminous black cloak and a mask that covers most of his face. He strikes a melodramatically evil pose at every chord during the introductory music.

SONG - MAX and CHORUS

Music - "I once was as meek as a new-born lamb", Ruddigore

I am a most thoroughly evil man,
Destruction is my goal - ha, ha!
A loathing blind
Of humankind
Consumes my twisted soul - ha, ha!

To curse the innocent is my plan,
To prove how cruel is fate - ha, ha!
I show them why
All love's a lie,
And teach them how to hate - ha, ha!

I once was honest, good and true,
As virtuous as all of you,
Till destiny revealed its plan
To make of me a villainous man!

GIRLS A villainous man!

MAX A villainous man - ha, ha!

MAX You summon me from my lighthouse, my friends, and I am here. I trust that you bring me some more valuable salvage?

JESSIE Aye, we dae. A braw merchantman had its belly ripped open on the Northern reefs tonight, spilling its valuable contents into our waiting hands. We hae brought you rare spices, bonny silks and muckle valuable jewels.

- MAX** Excellent, my loyal crew, excellent. But tell me, were there any survivors amongst the wreckage?
- FAITH** I found one half-drowned sailor flapping about on the rocks like a landed fish.
- MAX** And what was your action, young Faith?
- FAITH** I did what I do to all such fish, and put him back in the sea where he belonged!
- MAX** Very good, you are learning fast! Now, quickly, put the haul in my storeroom. The Revenuemen will be along shortly - it's almost midnight, and their patrols are so fortunately punctual! (*Exeunt all the GIRLS except FAITH and MOLLY.*)
- MOLLY** I wonder if we could have a moment's word with you, Mr Blackheart. We must tell you that we are not happy with the present arrangement.
- MAX** Oh yes? Do you feel that you are not being well paid?
- MOLLY** No, that's not the problem. It's just that while we carry on with this wrecking it seems increasingly unlikely that we will ever marry. I was about to wed Hamish Walters until I started this business, but when he became a revenue man I obviously had to break it off. Mr Blackheart, we've all made a goodly amount of money. Could we not stop this evil and return to our former lives?
- MAX** You're surely not concerned about losing the pathetic specimens of manhood in this village? Just think, ladies, a few more months of wrecking and you'll have amassed such fortunes that the finest bachelors in England will be flocking to your door! Stop now and you'll just return to the gutter that bred you!
- FAITH** There's something in that, Molly.
- MOLLY** Aye, he does have a point.
- MAX** Why settle for rags when you could have riches? Why settle for a cottage when you could have a castle? And why settle for a peasant when you could have a prince?
- MOLLY** I could marry a prince?
- MAX** It's a distinct possibility.
- MOLLY** People have often said that I'm as pretty as a princess, but I never dreamed that I could actually become one! Oh, Mr Blackheart, please accept our apologies - we won't settle for second best. Only a fool would give up a fortune for a man!
- FAITH** Aye, when you think of it, love's but a transitory pleasure, but gold lasts forever!
- MAX** Good girls. Now, you'd best return to your hovels ere the patrol arrives. (*Exeunt MOLLY and FAITH*) What right have these women got to complain - who told them that life would be fair? Destiny is a cruel mistress, and I am the slave of destiny. Many years ago I too was a virtuous man, I played by the book, I trusted in fate. And what happened? Everything I held dear was destroyed! Thus I adopted the name of Maximillian Blackheart and vowed to do all I could to spread unhappiness throughout the world. For seventeen years I wandered this country, desolate and distraught, until I arrived at Red Rock village as nightfall was approaching. Preparing to sleep in this very cove I saw Maggie McPhee walking the clifftops. I instantly fell in love with her, but before I could approach I witnessed the appalling spectacle of a mighty warship crashing onto the jagged reef below. At that moment, a plan formed in my mind. I moved into this abandoned lighthouse and soon persuaded the greedy women of the town to loot the wrecked shipping for me. Despite my ever-growing love for her, I have carried on exploiting Maggie's midnight

walks, and, with the wealth I accrued, I bought the mansion over yonder hill and took the alias of Sir Bernard Booth. Under the guise of this rich philanthropist I have assembled a large army of evil accomplices spread throughout the country. They creep into people's houses on washing day and steal two odd socks! They knock on people's doors when they are in the bath - then run away! They sneak into privies and take all the toilet paper! They break into public libraries and tear the last page out of all the detective novels, ha, ha ha! Little irritations, perhaps, but they all add up. Soon everyone will share my terrible fate, and curse the Force of Destiny! (*Exits*)

SCENE SECOND - *Morning. Music ("The sun whose rays" - The Mikado). Enter JESSIE with a shopping basket. MAGGIE dawdles along behind, gazing dreamily into the middle distance. She is a pretty, girlie and innocent type of heroine.*

JESSIE Ach, Maggie, will ye no get a move on? The market'll be finished by the time we get there. What is it that bothers your pretty wee heid?

MAGGIE Oh, mother, I was just thinking of my future husband. Don't you realise that it is a year today since I was given the prophecy by that mysterious gypsy?

JESSIE I ken ainly tae weel.

MAGGIE I still remember her words. 'He will not have parents, yet have them. He will be from abroad, yet not a foreigner. He will arrive at night, yet be met by day. And he will be valiant in more ways than one.' What can it all mean?

JESSIE Ach, ye shouldnae fill yer heid with such nonsense. Let's be off tae the village.

MAGGIE Oh, mother, mother, I feel sure that I shall meet him soon! You will consent to my marriage, won't you? After all, you're my only surviving relative.

JESSIE Oh, my wee Maggie. (*Aside*) Shall I tell her? Aye, she is auld enough noo. (*Aloud*) Maggie, I must tell you a terrible secret that has been eating away at my hairt for these past eighteen years. Maggie, my darling Maggie, I am not your real mither!

MAGGIE You? Not my... (*She swoons*)

JESSIE (*Producing smelling salts. MAGGIE revives*) Maggie, I'm sorry, but it was time you kent the truth. You are the bairn of anither mither! (*MAGGIE faints again*)

MAGGIE (*Reviving*) But how did this all happen?

JESSIE Ach, I hate to fret your gude wee hairt, but if you really want to ken the truth, then I must tell it you. Listen, my child, and lairn what it is to be fortune's toy!

SONG - JESSIE

Music - "When Frederic was a little lad", The Pirates of Penzance

When I was young, I found and wed a handsome young stockbroker,
A goodly man, who never drank and rarely was a smoker.
We had a house, we had a coach, but still we were not happy,
So nine months later there arrived a baby in a nappy!
This bouncing child, so meek and mild, was loved by mum and
daddy;
But I must state, to set you straight, the baby was a *laddie!*
(*MAGGIE faints*)

A fairy tale of wedded bliss you think this is a version?
Our happiness was soon cut short by a holiday excursion!
The sun was out, the sky was blue, and as we felt so merry,
The perfect way to spend the day was sailing on a ferry.
An island fair where you take the air was our general inclination -
The Isle of Wight, we thought was right to make our destination.

When we left port, the gentle wind to hurricane increases,
A giant wave attacks our ship and smashes it to pieces!
My husband was washed overboard, and midst the hurly burly
I grabbed, I thought, my baby boy - but found he was a girlie!
Though in a daze, I vowed I'd raise that baby from the water -
But I don't mock, it's quite a shock when son becomes a daughter!

MAGGIE So I am that baby that you accidentally saved from a sinking ship?

JESSIE Aye, lassie - as the ferry went down I snatched the nearest baby tae me. I tell you, it was a muckle shock when I finally came tae unwrap the nappy! But I said to myself 'Jessie, this may not be your bairn, but it's somebody's bairn, and if you dinna raise her, naebody will. Treat her as your ain, and bring her up as best you can.' I have carried this terrible secret for near eighteen years - I canna conceal the dreadful truth any longer.

MAGGIE Oh, mother - and I still call you that - I cannot say this hasn't been a shock, but motherhood is more than a mere biological fact. Even if you are not my flesh and blood, you are still dearer to me than my true parents could ever be. Be at peace - I still love you.

JESSIE Oh, Maggie, you are the finest daughter any mither could wish for. You're ample compensation for the loss of my braw husband and bonny wee son. (*Wiping her eye*) But come along, my bairn, the Custom House men will be along shortly. We dinna wish to disturb them in their search for smugglers.

MAGGIE Of course not, mother. Let's be off to market. (*Exits*)

JESSIE Ah, if ainly those half-witted revenue men could see what villainy goes on under their very noses! Our wrecking is surely safe from being discovered while such men as these patrol our shores! (*Exits*)

Enter the REVENUEMEN, full of unfounded bravado.

CHORUS OF REVENUEMEN

Music - "The soldiers of our Queen"

Patience

The guardians of the sea
Are linked in friendly tether;
Custom men are we
Who fight the foe together!
No secret hide or cave
Is safe from our inspection -
The bravest of the brave,
We're masculine perfection!

SONG - HAMISH and CHORUS

Music - "When a felon's not engaged in his employment", The Pirates of Penzance

HAMISH We're the Custom House officials of this town -
ALL Of this town,
HAMISH Who protect our gallant island's barren shores -
ALL Barren shores,
HAMISH We collect the excise money for the Crown -
ALL For the Crown,
HAMISH From the naughty men who break importing laws -
ALL 'Porting laws.
HAMISH Although we're always pleased to do our duty -
ALL Do our duty,
HAMISH There's a problem that we've often verified -
ALL Verified,
HAMISH When we see a burly smuggler with his booty -
ALL With his booty,
HAMISH To be honest we're completely terrified!

ALL With so many violent smugglers on the run -
On the run,
A Custom House is not a happy one!

HAMISH Though we boast that we're the bravest of our youth -
ALL Of our youth,
HAMISH And we claim that we are manhood in its prime -
ALL In its prime,
HAMISH Our bravado hides the sorry, shameful truth -
ALL Shameful truth,
HAMISH We're the biggest weeds and cowards of all time -
ALL Of all time.
HAMISH We're scared to leave our comfy little station -
ALL Little station,
HAMISH When there's trouble we pretend that we don't know -
ALL We don't know,
HAMISH For if we are faced with brutal confrontation -
ALL Confrontation,
HAMISH Our control of body functions tends to go!
ALL With so many violent smugglers on the run -
On the run,
A Custom House is not a *nappy* one!

HAMISH At ease, men. Now, did anybody see anything on this patrol?
ALL No.
HAMISH That's a relief! You know, we've had a good deal less bother since we stopped doing continuous patrolling and only come out at midday and midnight - and not at all on Sundays and public holidays.
SETH I thought it was an especially good idea to publish our timetable in the newspapers. That way, all the smugglers know when to creep ashore to avoid us...
HAMISH And thus we avert any danger of putting ourselves at the slightest risk of personal violence. I must say, this is certainly an extremely pleasant form of employment.
SETH Aye, the job's fine - it's the rest of my life that I'm not happy with. Tell me, Hamish, how can we be truly content when all the girls of the village steadfastly refuse our advances? I can't understand it - we were all courting before we became revenue men, and now all we get is the cold shoulder.
HAMISH It certainly is a mystery, Seth Appleby. I thought Molly would've been impressed by my splendid new uniform but instead she practically stopped speaking to me. You don't think there up to anything they don't want us to find out about, do you?
ALL (*Worried*) No, never, etc.
SETH Let's hope not... Some of those girls look quite strong...
HAMISH You're right - let's not think on it further. (*Enter MOLLY*) Speak of the devil! I've just remembered, men, we forgot to check the area over there for smugglers.
SETH Yes, we did, we've just come from...
HAMISH (*Cuffing him*) I think you're brain's going soft, Seth Appleby! I'll just wait for you here - alone.
SETH But why d'you want to be left... (*Seeing MOLLY*) Right you are captain, nod's as good as a wink. Come along, everybody, there's work to be done... Er, *behind those rocks*. (*Exeunt REVENUE-MEN*)
MOLLY Good morning, Hamish. Are you well?

- HAMISH** I could be better, Molly. I'm healthy enough, I've got a nice cottage and a good bit of gold, but I've got no one to share it with...
- MOLLY** Oh, Hamish, you're not still pining after me, are you? How many times have I told you that we can never wed?
- HAMISH** But why, Molly, why?
- MOLLY** I... I... I cannot say. It is all part of my feminine mystique.
- HAMISH** Doh, I do wish you'd stop playing games with me! I'm a simple man...
- MOLLY** You can say that again...
- HAMISH** I'm a simple man and I just don't understand you at all. We were as good as engaged a year ago, but now you treat me as though I've got the plague! A year ago I was happy - now I'm just frustrated. Why can't we go back to where we were? What do you say, Molly, my dear - will you marry me?
- MOLLY** Oh, don't be such a silly donkey, Hamish! Perhaps a year ago I might've accepted, but now...
- HAMISH** Dash it all! If I hadn't been so diffident back then we'd now be man and wife. Oh Molly, just think of it - how happy we'd be...
- MOLLY** (*Moving closer*) Aye, that we would...
- HAMISH** Our own little cottage...
- MOLLY** Our own little garden...
- HAMISH** Our own little kitchen...
- MOLLY** Our own little bedroom...
- HAMISH** Our own little stove...
- MOLLY** Our own little bed! (*She suddenly realises what she's said and moves away*) It's no good, Hamish. We shouldn't think about it.
- HAMISH** I try, I really try, but it's hard Molly, it's hard! Oh, what I wouldn't give to know how you'd love me.
- MOLLY** How would I love you? Why, Hamish, I would love you like no woman could!

SONG - MOLLY

Music - "Were I thy bride", The Yeomen of the Guard

Were I thy bride,
Then all the world beside
Were not too wide
To hold my wealth of love -
Were I thy bride!

Upon thy breast
My loving head would rest,
As on her nest
The tender turtle dove -
Were I thy bride!

This heart of mine
Would be one heart with thine,
And in that shine
Our happiness would dwell -
Were I thy bride!

And all day long
Our lives should be a song:
No grief, no wrong
Should make my heart rebel -
Were I thy bride!

The silvery flute,
The melancholy lute,
Were night-owl's hoot
To my low-whispered coo -
Were I thy bride!

The skylark's trill
Were but discordance shrill
To the soft thrill
Of wooing as I'd woo -
Were I thy bride!

The rose's sigh
Were as a carrion's cry
To lullaby
Such as I'd sing to thee,
Were I thy bride!

A feather's press
Were leaden heaviness
To my caress.
But then, of course, you see,
I'm not thy bride!

Exit MOLLY.

HAMISH Curse that woman! I seem to spend my whole life in a state of advanced frustration!

SETH's head appears from the wings.

SETH Has she gone yet?

HAMISH Yes, she's gone. Call everyone back here, will you.

SETH Come on, men. He's finished!

REVENUEMEN appear from the various entrances that they have been watching from.

HAMISH Now, gather round, I've got some important news for you all. I just got word this morning that we are to expect a new revenue man today from Dover Custom House. He goes by the name of William Valiant.

SETH Not *the* William Valiant? The man who single handedly brought to justice the notorious Dover Delinquents, the scourge of the English Channel?

HAMISH The very same. I must remark that he sounds a little brave to fit in properly here at Red Rock, but I'm afraid we don't have any choice - orders from above, and all that. But look lively, lads, here comes Sir Bernard Booth, the well known philanthropist. I wonder what good deed he has done today?

Enter MAX dressed as Sir Bernard Booth, a smooth aristocratic type.

MAX A very good day to you, Mr. Walters. That is a fine troupe of men you command.

HAMISH The best in the area, Sir Bernard.

MAX I hear that you are about to have a new addition to your ranks - a most distinguished young man, I believe.

HAMISH That's right, sir - William Valiant from Dover.

MAX As I'm sure you're aware, Mr. Walters, I am keen to support any attempt to fight crime in the area. With this in view I wish to invite the whole village to my mansion for a banquet this afternoon to celebrate the arrival of young Mr. Valiant.

HAMISH You are a true gentleman, Sir Bernard!

MAX You flatter me, Mr Walters! Now, be sure and tell the rest of the villagers, will you? I look forward to seeing you all later. Goodbye.

The REVENUEMEN tug their forelocks as MAX exits.

SETH Now that's the sort of aristocrat for me!

HAMISH Aye, you're right there, Seth. But look! William Valiant has arrived - and with quite a crowd, by all accounts!

SETH Curse the handsome devil! Look at the way the women are flocking round him!

HAMISH Bah! Some men have all the luck!

Enter WILLIAM with all the GIRLS except MAGGIE and JESSIE. He is handsome, dashing and brave - the archetypal hero.

CHORUS OF GIRLS

Music - "From the briny sea", Ruddigore

From the Dover quay
Comes young William, all victorious!
Valorous is he -
His achievements are all glorious!
Let the village ring
With the news we bring
Sing it - shout it -
Tell about it -
Bold and handsome, strong and tall,
He's the bravest of them all!

SONG - WILLIAM *and* CHORUS

Music - "A magnet hung in a hardware shop", Patience

Young William Valiant is my name,
A revenue man of enormous fame!
But though I seem so gay and free
My life began in misery!
In happiness this baby grew,
With loving parents (numbered two),
Till shipwreck robbed me of my joy
And I became an orphan boy!

ALL An orphan boy?
WILLIAM An orphan boy!

This happy go lucky,
Jolly and plucky,
Baby was full of joy,
Till sudden sinking,
Briny drinking,
Made him an orphan boy!

ALL This happy go lucky, etc.

Alone I floated within my cot,
I feared that drowning would be my lot,
Till fortune answered my childish plea -
A passing warship rescued me!
I lost two parents but gained a crowd
Who raised me to be strong and proud,
So when of age this boy became
From that good ship I took my name!

ALL You took your name?

WILLIAM I took my name.

When this young stripling,
Muscles-a-rippling,
Eighteen years became,
The ship to save me
A surname gave me,
So 'Valiant' is my name!

ALL When this young stripling, etc.

MOLLY That is a strange tale you spin, William Valiant. A man with a whole crew of sailors as his parents - 'tis a blessing you turned out normal!

WILLIAM Do not besmirch the good name of the British Navy, young lady. The company of the Valiant were as fine a parent, collectively, as any man could hope for.

MOLLY But why then did you not stay with them and seek your fortune in the Navy? Surely working for Custom House must be dull compared to a life on the waves?

WILLIAM You may well think that, pretty miss, but the sea is a fickle mistress - she took away one lot of parents and yet repaid me twenty fold! Well, I didn't want to risk losing any more family, so I decided that a landlubber's life was for me. Still, I couldn't forsake the briny entirely, so I did the next best thing - I vowed to protect her shores from evil-doers with all my strength.

FAITH What an exciting life you have led compared to *some men* I could mention! Do tell us all about your adventures! What beauties and horrors have you seen on your travels?

WILLIAM I am afraid, ladies, that there is no time for that now. I shall be happy to meet you all here tomorrow, so could you kindly prepare questions. Good day to you. (*Exeunt GIRLS*) Ah, 'tis a curse being so handsome - the girls will scarce give me a moment to myself!

HAMISH Welcome, young William. I am Hamish Walters, head revenue man, and I am happy to receive you into our gallant band. I hope you won't find Red Rock too tranquil for your tastes.

WILLIAM I thank you, Mr. Walters. To be frank, I am pleased to be in such a peaceful place after the dangers of Dover.

SETH Well, you can't get much quieter than here. We haven't had a smuggler here since... Ever!

WILLIAM You must patrol your coastlines most fastidiously!

HAMISH Aye, well, something like that... Now you must hurry and get settled in, for a banquet in your honour is to be given this afternoon by Sir Bernard Booth.

WILLIAM Bernard Booth? Who may he be?

HAMISH He's the gentleman who lives in the mansion on the hill. He came to our village about a year ago, and he's enormously wealthy. Anyway, he's anxious to improve his standing in the community, so he's decided to throw a party for our local hero - you!

WILLIAM That is most generous of him. I shall look forward to it.

HAMISH Now, let's relieve you of your tackle - my men will take it to the station house for you. Seth and I have been elected to show you around the village. (*The REVENUEMEN take WILL's bags and exit.*)

SETH Gor! A banquet and all the women drooling over you - by the Gods, William Valiant, you're a lucky dog!

HAMISH Seth! That's not very polite!

SETH I don't care! Here we all are, starved of the company of females for the past year, then he comes along and they're hanging off him. I just don't understand women!

WILLIAM Calm yourself, my friend. Would you act so differently if a devastatingly attractive new maiden arrived in the village?

SETH Aye, I suppose you're right. I'd never thought of it that way before.

WILLIAM That's psychology for you!

SETH *Psychology?*

WILLIAM Yes, my friend, the best way that man's invented to woo a maiden! What you try and do is to see like a woman, feel like a woman and think like a woman - for that's the way to understand them, and that's the way to win their hearts!

TRIO - WILLIAM, HAMISH and SETH

Music - "I am a maiden", Princess Ida

WILLIAM I am a maiden, cold and stately,
Heartless I, with a face divine.
What do I want with a heart, innately?
Every heart I meet is mine!

ALL Haughty, humble, coy, or free,
Little care I what maid may be.
So that a maid is fair to see,
Every maid is the maid for me!

SETH I am a maiden frank and simple,
Brimming with joyous roguery;
Merriment lurks in every dimple,
Nobody breaks more hearts than I!

ALL Haughty, humble, coy, or free, etc.

HAMISH I am a maiden coyly blushing,
Timid am I as a startled hind;
Every suitor sets me flushing:
I am the maid that winds mankind!

ALL Haughty, humble, coy, or free, etc.

SETH Maybe you're not so bad after all, William! Come along, let's show you around this village of ours...

WILLIAM Stop! I have more news to divulge. I am here not just to join your band but to lead it. My success at overcoming the Dover Delinquents lead to head office giving me control of my own group of revenue men. There weren't any decent jobs left, so I got yours.

HAMISH But this is ridiculous! I've heard nothing about it!

WILLIAM The decision was rather sudden. I have the papers here. (*Handing them to HAMISH*). There is no doubting what they say. I am sorry, Hamish, but orders are orders. Do you think that you could see to it that all the men are gathered together after the banquet to receive new instructions? (*HAMISH nods*) Well, come along then, let's have a look at your station house - I want to see what calibre of man you have here at Red Rock.

*Exeunt WILLIAM, HAMISH and SETH (who look distinctly worried).
Enter MAGGIE.*

MAGGIE The girls of the village are all talking about the arrival of an handsome new stranger. Could it be the man prophesied to be my husband? No, that would be too much of coincidence. This day has already yielded too many surprises. You know, it is a little unsettling to an artless girl like me to find out that she

could well be an orphan, or the daughter of a prince, or goodness knows what! Oh dear, I'm starting to feel a little faint. I'll sit here a moment and rest my nerves.

Enter MAX as Bernard Booth pensively smoking a cigarette in a holder. He does not see MAGGIE.

MAX It's no good - I am unable to extinguish my love for Maggie McPhee. I have waited a year and can control myself no longer. I simply must have her for myself - and if she won't accept me willingly I shall have to take her by force! (Sees MAGGIE) But soft! Yonder is the source of my desires - alone, unprotected and ripe for abduction! Beware Maggie - thou art about to meet thy destiny! (WILLIAM is heard whistling "Young William Valiant is my name" off stage) Curses! Someone is coming! I cannot risk being discovered. I shall conceal myself until the danger is past. (He hides at the back of the stage)

Enter WILLIAM.

WILLIAM Never have I met such a collection of lily-livered poltroons! When I agreed to undertake this secret mission to investigate the mysterious wreckings at Red Rock I didn't think that I would have to do all the fighting myself! Oh, how tiresome! This looks like being a job with few compensations... (Sees MAGGIE) But who is this attractive stranger I see here? She looks like a most agreeable distraction! (Crossing to MAGGIE) Good morning, miss, I don't believe we've met. It is a fine day, is it not? (MAGGIE looks up, stares at him for a few seconds and promptly faints into his arms) I say, things are looking up!

MAGGIE (Recovering) Oh my good sir, I am so sorry, but when I saw your face I thought that you... (Faints)

WILLIAM I'm used to turning girls' heads, but this is taking it a little too far! (Slapping her, gently) Miss, miss - pray recover yourself - it is unseemly for us to be seen like this.

MAGGIE (Recovering) Thank you, gentle stranger. I feel stronger now. It's just that you're so like the gentleman that has been prophesied to be my... Husband!

WILLIAM Now *that* is a story I should very much like to hear, pretty miss.

MAGGIE Then, kind sir, I shall tell it to you.

SONG - MAGGIE

Music - "The sun, whose rays", The Mikado

Not long ago,
A year or so,
I was a doleful maiden.
Without a spouse
To share my house,
My life was sorrow-laden,
I'd pine and mope,
With fading hope,
Of finding true devotion.
No local boy
Could bring the joy
To raise my dead emotion.

It may suspend belief
To think this pearl
Was slave to woe and grief -
A lonely girl!

But then one day
There came my way
A curious gypsy dancer,
Her mystic scry
Did prophesy
My prayers would have their answer!
My love-to-be,
From o'er the sea,
Would soon arrive in Dover.
And then, she said,
We would be wed
Before a day was over!

And now you've come to me,
My heart's a whirl!
No longer must I be
A lonely girl!

- WILLIAM** Are you sure that I am the one who is prophesied to be your future husband?
- MAGGIE** I felt certain of it the moment I saw your face! But we must be sure about such things before we do anything rash. The exact prophesy runs as follows (*Producing paper*) 'He will not have parents, yet have them.'
- WILLIAM** Well, I certainly had parents once, but now I know not whether they be alive or dead. That description suits my situation admirably.
- MAGGIE** Good. (*Makes a tick*) 'He will be from abroad, yet not a foreigner.'
- WILLIAM** That's me exactly! I was raised on board a ship, shunted from port to port, and yet I'm told that my true home is old Blighty.
- MAGGIE** Excellent! (*Makes a tick*) 'He will arrive at night, yet be met by day.'
- WILLIAM** Another coincidence! My boat docked last night, but now it's morning and we're meeting.
- MAGGIE** Wonderful! (*Makes a tick*) One last prediction. 'He will be valiant in more ways than one.'
- WILLIAM** It's uncanny! Not only is my name William Valiant, but I am the most valiant revenue man ever to wield a cutlass!
- MAGGIE** Then you are he - my future husband!
- WILLIAM** My future wife! (*They embrace*)
- MAGGIE** I hope you don't think me vulgarly forward, proposing marriage so soon after we have met, but I am a simple, uncorrupted maid who knows but little of the correct manners of society.
- WILLIAM** Don't fret, pretty one. Who are we to argue with destiny?
- MAGGIE** Oh, William, my love, I knew that one day you would come. Many times I was told to forget you, but I held firm. Night after night I wandered the clifftops with my lantern looking for you...
- WILLIAM** What was that?
- MAGGIE** I was just saying how, every night, I would walk the clifftops looking for my lover from across the sea. At least I won't have to do that any more.
- WILLIAM** (*Aside*) Neptune's beard, that must be how all those ships were wrecked! This innocent girl was unwittingly luring vessels to destruction with her lamp while awaiting my arrival. But who is evilly exploiting this misfortune? There is only one way I can find out... (*To MAGGIE*) My dear, I think perhaps you should walk the cliffs one more night.
- MAGGIE** But why? You're here now!

- WILLIAM** Please, my love, do it for my sake. I will explain why later.
- MAGGIE** Very well, I shall do as you bid. Oh, my heart is so happy I fear it shall burst! But when shall we marry? I feel it should be soon, before we get to know each other.
- WILLIAM** You're right, for I might find out that I can't stand you. How about tomorrow morning?
- MAGGIE** I've nothing planned. How wonderful - it's just like the prophesy! Oh William!
- WILLIAM** Oh... Oh... Just a minute. What exactly is your name?
- MAGGIE** Maggie. Maggie McPhee.
- WILLIAM** Maggie! What a beautiful, beautiful name! Oh Maggie! (*They embrace. MAX emerges and comes forward*)
- MAX** Miss McPhee, you didn't tell me you had an admirer!
- MAGGIE** Oh, Sir Bernard! How unexpected to meet you here!
- MAX** But still a pleasure none the less. And who is the young gentleman?
- WILLIAM** William, William Valiant.
- MAX** Ah - the famous Mr. Valiant! They call me Booth, Bernard Booth. Delighted to meet you. (*They shake hands. WILLIAM has a very strong grip*)
- WILLIAM** Sir Bernard, Maggie and I are to be married tomorrow morning.
- MAX** My, this is all very sudden. Does anyone else know?
- MAGGIE** No. We've only just found out ourselves.
- MAX** Then let me be the first to congratulate you. Perhaps you'd do me the honour of announcing it to the village at the banquet? Consider it a celebration of your engagement!
- WILLIAM** Sir, you are too kind. Come along, Maggie, let us summon forth the villagers and tell them the good news! (*Exit MAGGIE and WILLIAM off opposite sides*)
- MAX** I know your game, William so-called Valiant! You seek to deprive me of my love - but I shall soon put an end to your dream of wedded bliss. I overheard your plan to catch my wreckers red-handed tonight - well I'm afraid, my innocent little hero, that it's *you* who shall be caught in *my* trap! Once your men have drunk their fill of wine at my banquet they won't be able to stand, let alone fight! Your own defeat shall swiftly follow! You will soon learn not to meddle with the Force of Destiny!

MAX retires, laughing melodramatically. Enter WILLIAM and MAGGIE followed by JESSIE, the GIRLS and the REVENUEMEN

FINALE ACT I

CHORUS

Music - "Won't it be a pretty wedding?", The Grand Duke

Won't it be a pretty wedding?
Will not Maggie look delightful?
Smiles and tears in plenty shedding -
Which in brides of course is rightful.
One could say, if one were spiteful,
Contradiction little dreading,
That her hair is simply frightful -
Still, 'twill be a pretty wedding!
Such a pretty, pretty wedding!
Such a charming, charming wedding!

FAITH I must say it's unexpected,
She could not have married quicker!

MOLLY If our wrecking weren't affected
I would join her with the vicar!

FAITH But if you or I should marry
Then the consequence I'm dreading -

MOLLY So the burden we must carry -
Let's not spoil their pretty wedding!

CHORUS Such a pretty, pretty wedding!
Here they come, the couple plighted -
On life's journey gaily start them.
Man and maid for aye united,
Till divorce or death shall part them.

DUET - WILLIAM *and* MAGGIE

WILLIAM Pretty Maggie, fair and tasty,
Tell me now, and tell me truly,
Haven't you been rather hasty?
Haven't you been rash unduly?
Am I quite the dashing *sposo*
That your fancy could depict you?
Perhaps you think me only so-so?
(She expresses admiration)
Well, I will not contradict you!

CHORUS No, he will not contradict you!

MAGGIE Who am I to raise objection?
I'm a child, untaught and homely -
When you tell me you're perfection,
Tender, truthful, true and comely -
That you've conquered all who fought you,
Though dissensions always grieve you -
As it's Destiny that brought you
Then, of course, I must believe you!

CHORUS Yes, of course, she must believe you!

If he ever acts unkindly,
Shut your eyes and love him blindly -
Should he call you names uncomely,
Shut your mouth and love him dumbly -
Should he rate you, rightly - leftly -
Shut your ears and love him deafly.
Ha! ha! ha!
Thus and thus and thus alone
William's wife may hold her own!

MAX instructs MOLLY and FAITH to bring wine and glasses. They distribute them while he sings.

SOLO *and* CHORUS - MAX

Music - "Be happy all", The Sorcerer

RECIT. - MAX

Be happy all - the feast is spread before ye;
Fear nothing, but enjoy yourselves, I pray!
Eat, aye, and drink - be merry, I implore ye,
For once let thoughtless Folly rule the day.

Eat, drink and be gay,
Banish all worry and sorrow,
Laugh gaily today,
Weep, if you're sorry, tomorrow!
Toil, sorrow, and plot,
Fly away quicker and quicker -
Come, drink up the lot -
There's nothing to pay for this liquor!

CHORUS We're as happy can be
When drinking good wine that is free,
Ha! Ha!
When drinking good wine that's free!

MAX Pain, trouble, and care,
Misery, heart-ache, and worry,
Quick, out of your lair!
Get you all gone in a hurry!
Drain the bottomless cup -
Shun what the Puritans tell us -
Come, drink it all up -
There's plenty more left in my cellars!

CHORUS We're as happy can be
When drinking good wine that is free,
Ha! Ha!
When drinking good wine that's free!

RECIT. - MAX

Music - "Come to my mansion", The Sorcerer

Come to my mansion, all of you! There we'll
Celebrate this wedding with a splendid meal!

**SOLOS and CHORUS - MAGGIE, JESSIE, WILLIAM
and MAX**

Music - "Oh, joy unbounded", Trial By Jury

MAGGIE Oh, joy unbounded,
With wealth surrounded,
The knell is sounded
Of grief and woe.

JESSIE With love devoted
On you he's doted.
So, now you've gloated,
Away we go!

WILLIAM What e'er the weather,
We'll live together
In marriage tether
In manner true!

MAX (Aside) It seems quite clear, sir,
For you, my dear sir,
The end is near, sir,
And a good job too!

CHORUS Oh, joy unbounded,
With wealth surrounded,
The knell is sounded
Of grief and woe.

With love devoted
On you he's doted.
So, now you've gloated,
 Away we go!

MAX

So, away to the feast!

ALL

 And a good feast too!

MAX

Yes, away to the feast!

ALL

 And a good feast too!

MAX

With the money that I've fleeced,
Well, I think it is the least
That I give you all a feast!

ALL

 And a good feast too!

MAX

Here's a toast to the bride!

ALL

 And a good bride too!

MAX

And a toast to the groom!

ALL

 And a good groom too!

Now we've toasted groom and bride,
And the knot that they have tied,
Let us get us all inside
 For a good feast too!

Everyone dances off, followed by MAX, rubbing his hands and laughing evilly.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE ONE - Evening, the same day. Everyone enters in jubilant spirits, having just finished the banquet, most a little worse the wear for drink.

SOLOS *and* CHORUS - HAMISH *and* MOLLY

Music - "Pour, oh, pour the pirate sherry", *The Pirates of Penzance*

Pour, oh, pour the wine and sherry;
Fill, oh, fill the empty glass;
And, to make us more than merry,
Let the flowing bumper pass.

HAMISH Let us toast the youth and maiden
Soon to live as man and wife.
May their lives be pleasure-laden
And be free from care and strife!

ALL Raise a glass to lovers plighted -
May their marriage n'er be blighted!

MOLLY Eight-and-ten the lady blushing,
Eight-and-ten the handsome man,
Into marriage madly rushing
Just as quickly as they can!

ALL Raise a glass to lovers plighted -
May their marriage n'er be blighted!
Pour, oh, pour the wine and sherry, etc.

HAMISH My friends, I'd like to propose a toast to our host, Sir Bernard Booth, to thank him for his great generosity!

ALL (*Toasting*) Sir Bernard!

MAX Thank you, my friends, thank you. It is indeed a pleasure to give a party to such an appreciative crowd!

MOLLY But, Sir Bernard, the cost of that magnificent banquet for the whole village...

MAX A mere nothing. I have so much money that, to me, this party was just loose change². Now, would anyone care for a port or liqueur?

MEN Oh, yes please, etc.

WILLIAM I'm afraid, Sir Bernard, that my men and I have some important work to do. (*Cries of disappointment.*) If you'd excuse us...

MAX Come on, Mr Valiant, you've hardly drunk anything all evening. Just one little liqueur...

WILLIAM Drinking's not 'big', it's not 'clever' and it doesn't impress anybody. I like to keep in control.

MAX (*Aside*) Little good that will do you with this party of inebriates! (*Aloud*) In that case, gentlemen, ladies, I must take my leave - I have estate business to attend to. I bid you good night. (*Exit MAX*)

WILLIAM You've all drunk your fill now, men. Go and get ready for your patrol. I shall be with you presently. (*Exeunt REVENUEMEN*)

MAGGIE (*Coming forward*) Oh, William, must we part so soon?

WILLIAM It is just one night, my love. I have already booked the local vicar, the Reverend Osbourne Road, for the wedding service tomorrow morning.

MAGGIE I know that I shouldn't be so impatient. It's just that after waiting so long...

² You may insert the song 'Take my advice when deep in debt' at this point – see Appendix

- WILLIAM** One night will make no difference. Now, you know what I told you to do tonight?
- MAGGIE** Walk the cliffs again with my lamp. But why?
- WILLIAM** You will soon know. (*Kisses her*) Farewell my love, farewell! (*Exit WILLIAM*)
- JESSIE** (*Coming forward*) Come along, my gude wee lassie. We hae muckle needlework awaiting us at hame. I want my ain darling to hae the bonniest wedding gown this village has ever seen!
- MAGGIE** Let us go then, mother. Tomorrow shall be the happiest day of my life!
- JESSIE** Just wait till you get to the night! (*Exeunt JESSIE and MAGGIE*)
- MOLLY** Faith, don't you realise what's happened? Now that Maggie's going to get married she won't be walking the clifftops at night!
- FAITH** Which means that there won't be any more shipwrecks - and that we can give up our life of crime!
- MOLLY** Isn't it wonderful? We're free at last to marry whoever we choose.
- FAITH** Aye - and we're free of that demon Blackheart. William's arrival has made more than one lady happy!
- Enter JESSIE agitatedly.*
- JESSIE** Hoots mon, disaster has befallen us!
- MOLLY** What is it, Jessie?
- JESSIE** I was just talking to my wee Maggie when she telt me that she'd still be going out wi' her lamp tonight! Apparently William ordered her to do it.
- MOLLY** Fate has cursed us again! Will we never be free of that monster?
- JESSIE** I dinna ken, lassie, I dinna ken. Come along, girls, away and get ready. (*Exit GIRLS. Manet FAITH and MOLLY*) I'm afraid I winna be able tae join you on the rocks this e'en - I have received this note from Blackheart (*producing it*) instructing me to stay behind and make sure Maggie's bridal gown is ready by dawn. I dread to think what hideous plot that man is hatching, but I dare not frustrate his plans... (*Exit JESSIE*)
- FAITH** Well, it looks like we've got no choice, Molly. We're still under Blackheart's command.
- MOLLY** Oh Faith, I can't stand it any longer. Don't you think that the time has come to make a stand against Blackheart? Unless we do something now we'll never be free of him.
- FAITH** You really think that we should refuse to do any more wrecking?
- MOLLY** I do. We shouldn't be greedy - we've plenty of money now. I'm sure we could survive without him. Besides, I don't think I live any longer with this terrible guilt.
- FAITH** I know, Molly - crime so often seems the easy option, but in the long term the cost is far higher.
- MOLLY** Then it's decided. I'll walk straight up to Blackheart, look him in the eye and tell him... Tell him... Oh Faith, I'm trembling at the thought of it!
- FAITH** You must be brave, Molly. Don't worry, you won't be alone - I'll be there to back you up.
- MOLLY** And I'll be there to back *you* up. Together we'll confront this villain - and together we'll put an end to the wreckers of Red Rock!

DUET - FAITH *and* MOLLY

Music - "So go to him", Patience

MOLLY I'll go to him and stare at him, with confidence unshakeable -
FAITH Sing 'Hey to you -
Good day to you' -
And that's what you should say!

MOLLY I'll sneer and then I'll tell him with defiance unmistakable -
FAITH Sing 'Bah to you -
Ha! ha! to you' -
And that's what you should say!

MOLLY Unless he will agree to halt his governing imperious -
And stops us doing crimes that British law regards as serious -
The consequences to his health could be quite deleterious!
FAITH Sing 'Booh to you -
Pooh, pooh to you' -
And that's what you should say!

BOTH Sing 'Hey to you - good day to you' -
Sing 'Bah to you - ha! ha! to you' -
Sing 'Booh to you - pooh, pooh to you' -
And that's what we shall say!

FAITH Disdaining personal safety I will give a speech tiradeable -
MOLLY Sing 'Booh to you -
Pooh, pooh to you' -
And that's what you should say!

FAITH I'll tell him that we're leaving and our minds are unpersuadable -
MOLLY Sing 'Bah to you -
Ha! ha! to you' -
And that's what you should say!

FAITH 'We've had enough oppression and enough tyrannic harrying -
We're going and no feeble threats of yours will keep us tarrying -
For we won't let a bully stop these two young ladies marrying!'
MOLLY Sing 'Hey to you -
Good day to you' -
And that's what you should say!

BOTH Sing 'Booh to you - pooh, pooh to you' -
Sing 'Bah to you - ha! ha! to you' -
Sing 'Hey to you - good day to you' -
And that's what we shall say!

When the song finishes MAX, dressed in his cape and mask, reappears at the back of the stage.

MAX Do you two ladies wish to see me?
MOLLY No - I mean yes... It's about tonight.
MAX Quite. Shouldn't you be getting ready now?
FAITH No, we shouldn't because - because - because we're not going!
MAX Not going, eh? Still feeling rebellious, are we? Money not good enough?
MOLLY We don't need any more money. What we want is our freedom.
MAX You fools! This is not some childish game that you can pick up and discard at will! I *need* this money to fund my own despicable schemes - your happiness is of little concern to me! If you so much as think of leaving my service, I shall instantly denounce you to the revenue men!
MOLLY But then we'll tell them who's behind all this - and you'll be off to the hangman with us!

MAX How little you innocents know of the way this country works! It'll be your word against mine. A rich, highly educated gentleman versus a rabble of illiterate yokels! I think even *you* could predict the outcome.

FAITH He's right, Molly. The scales of justice are easily tipped by a well-filled purse. We'd better join the others.

MOLLY Aye, I suppose you're right. I curse you, Blackheart, but I'll do your bidding.

MAX Don't be so upset, ladies - Fate is a harsh mistress. Once, I too was like you - I had virtue, morals, standards - at least until that terrible day when I took my family on a day trip to the Isle of Wight! The ferry was wrecked by a freak storm, and my own dear wife and baby son were lost for ever! When you've suffered like I have you realise the ultimate truth - life is just one big, cruel joke!

SONG - MAX *with* FAITH *and* MOLLY

Music - "First you're born", Utopia limited

First you're born - and I'll be bound you
Find a dozen strangers round you.
'Hallo' cries the new-born baby,
'Where's my parents? which may they be?'
Awkward silence - no reply -
Puzzled baby wonders why!
Father rises, bows politely -
Mother smiles (but not too brightly) -
Doctor mumbles like a dumb thing -
Nurse is busy mixing something -
Every symptom seems to show
You're decidedly *de trop* -

ALL Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!
Life's teetotum,
If you spin it,
Gives its quotum
Once a minute.
I'll go bail
You hit the nail,
And if you fail
The deuce is in it!

You grow up and you discover
What it is to be a lover.
Some young lady is selected -
Poor, perhaps, but well-connected,
Whom you hail (for Love is blind)
As the Queen of fairy kind.
Though she's plain - perhaps unsightly
Makes her face up - laces tightly,
In her form your fancy traces
All the gifts of all the graces.
Rivals none this maiden woo,
So you take her and she takes you!

ALL Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!
Joke beginning,
Never ceases,
Till your inning
Time releases,
On your way
You blindly stray,
And day by day
The joke increases!

Ten years later - Life progresses -
Sours your temper - thins your tresses;
Fancy, then, her chain relaxes;
Rates are facts and so are taxes.

Fairy Queen's no longer young -
Fairy Queen has got a tongue.
Twins have probably intruded -
Quite unbidden - just as you did -
They're a source of care and trouble -
Just as you were - only double,
Comes at last the final stroke -
Life has had his little joke!

ALL Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!
Daily driven
(Wife as drover)
Ill you've thriven -
Ne'er in clover;
Lastly, when
Three-score and ten
(And not till then),
The joke is over!
Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!
Then - and then
The joke is over!

Exeunt.

SCENE TWO - *Night. The stage darkens and the moon appears. MAGGIE appears on the clifftop with her lamp. As she walks off, enter WILLIAM leading the REVENUEMEN, singing very quietly and nervously.*

CHORUS OF REVENUEMEN (*Pianissimo*)

Music - "The soldiers of our Queen"

Patience

The guardians of the sea
Are linked in friendly tether;
Custom men are we
Who fight the foe together!
No secret hide or cave
Is safe from our inspection -
The bravest of the brave,
We're masculine perfection!

SOLO and CHORUS - WILLIAM

Music - "A rollicking band of pirates we", The Pirates of Penzance

GIRLS (*Offstage*) A rollicking band of wreckers we,
Who prey on sailors on the sea,
Are coming to wreak their villainy
On unsuspecting weaklings!

WILLIAM Hush, hush! I hear them on the clifftop poaching,
With silent step the wreckers are approaching.

HAMISH They come in force, with stealthy stride,
Our obvious course is now - to hide.

The REVENUEMEN conceal themselves as the WRECKERS enter, hooded and masked so as to conceal their identity. They creep about in such a way as to make their evil intentions known (i.e. flashing weapons about, etc.)

CHORUS

Music - "In a doleful train/Now is not this ridiculous", Patience

WRECKERS Stealthily we creep
By the moon's celestial glow.
While the goodly sleep,
'Bout our wickedness we go.
Who knows whose ship's doom is nigh?
Who will live, and who will die?

REVENUEMEN Now is not this detestable - and is not this arrestable -
So brazen-faced a felony you've never seen before!
These evil ones are giving us a proof quite incontestable
That they're the ones who're causing all the wreckings on the shore!
The guilty way they're sneaking at us,
Secrets that they're speaking at us,
Taunting at us, flaunting at us, trying to incite.
They're actually sneering at us, fleering at us, jeering at us
Just the sort of villainy our duty is to fight!

E N S E M B L E

WRECKERS Stealthily we creep, etc. **REVENUEMEN** Now is not this detestable, etc.

WILLIAM (*Over music*) Forward men and capture these villains!

Over fight music (Coda of "Melodrame" from Ruddigore) both sides draw weapons and engage in battle. The REVENUEMEN fight bravely but are overcome one by one, WILLIAM being defeated last of all. When the music stops, all the REVENUEMEN (including WILLIAM) have been disarmed and are being held at knife point by the still-masked and hooded WRECKERS. Enter MAX, dragging MAGGIE. He releases her and she runs to WILLIAM.

MAX Ha, ha, ha! What a pathetic display of fighting your men put on, William Valiant!

WILLIAM How do you know my name, you black fiend?

MAX Maximillian Blackheart knows many things, you young upstart. For instance, I knew all about this little surprise ambush you were going to attempt tonight. Why do you think we were so easy to find?

WILLIAM I suspected it all along!

MAX Did you, Mr. Valiant? Well, let us see whether you suspected my other little secret. My friends! Throw off your disguises!

The WRECKERS take off their hoods and masks. The REVENUEMEN are aghast.

HAMISH Molly O'Brian! You're a wrecker?

MOLLY Aye, Hamish, and I have been for nigh on a year.

SETH Faith, my own Faith. Tell me that you're not mixed up in this too?

FAITH I can't deny my guilt, Seth. Now perhaps you can see why none of us could marry you.

MAX My, my, this is a touching reunion. It quite brings a tear to the eye!

WILLIAM Don't pretend that there are feelings inside that empty frame of yours. Tell us what you intend to do with us.

MAX You're so impatient, William - I was just coming to that. I have decided to let the Custom House men leave with their lives. I feel that this little demonstration of my power will convince them to turn a blind eye to my proceedings in the future.

- WILLIAM** And what of me?
- MAX** I'm afraid that you will have to die, Mr. Valiant. I could never trust you to compromise your integrity for my sake.
- WILLIAM** If I am to perish, then do it quickly. You will not see me begging on my knees for mercy. I shall show you how a real man can die!
- MAX** Quite the *prima donna*, aren't we? No, you shall not die now. I want to make you suffer a bit first. You will live just long enough to see me marry Maggie McPhee at dawn!
- MAGGIE screams and rushes to WILLIAM. MAX pulls her off him while WILLIAM struggles vainly to free himself from his captors.*
- WILLIAM** You detestable toad! You malevolent fiend!
- MAX** Oh, don't break my heart! Ladies, set the revenue men free. Come, Maggie, come to my lighthouse. Osbourne Road will be here at daybreak to make us one - forever! Sleep well, William my friend, sleep well! Ha, ha!
- MAGGIE** Will, Will, save me, save me!
- MAX drags MAGGIE towards the area of floor marked out to be the lighthouse and starts 'ascending' the stairs.*
- WILLIAM** This is more than any man can bear! Shall I take this insult without rebuke? Shall I turn the other cheek and let this demon marry the girl I love? No! William Valiant will never let evil triumph! *(With a tremendous effort WILLIAM breaks free of the WRECKERS who hold him and grabs a scimitar)* Beware, Maximillian Blackheart! You are about to meet your destiny!
- The crowd parts, allowing MAX to see WILLIAM approaching. He starts to run up the lighthouse, dragging MAGGIE behind him. WILLIAM is hot on his heels, and they 'ascend' the lighthouse's staircase until they reach the roof.*
- WILLIAM** Prepare to die, Blackheart!
- MAX** Ha, ha! Such ill-advised bravado! *En guard!* *(He draws a sword)*
- WILLIAM** *En guard!*
- As WILLIAM and MAX begin to duel, everyone else commences singing.*

CHORUS

Music - "This is our duty plain towards", Princess Ida

Upon the lighthouse roof they duel,
Our hero and the evil one!
The love of Maggie is the fuel
For bloody conflict now begun!
Oh, William!
Oh, William!
Oh stop this foul perversity!
With trusty blade
Release the maid
And conquer o'er adversity!
Oh, William! Oh, William! Oh, William!

As the song finishes, WILLIAM strikes MAX's sword out of his hand and stands over him, the point of his sword to MAX's breast.

- WILLIAM** So, Maximillian Blackheart, now *you* are in *my* power! Do you yield your claim on Maggie's hand?
- MAX** I do. I shall never marry her.

- WILLIAM** Good. (*Dropping his sword*) I hope that this teaches you a lesson.
- MAX** (*Getting up*) I think that it's *you* who will learn the lesson. If I am not to marry Maggie McPhee, then no man shall! (*He rushes to MAGGIE and grabs her*) See - I cast her off the rooftop to her death on the rocks below!
- MAX *'throws'* MAGGIE *off the lighthouse. She stands to the side of the lighthouse floor area, waving her arms, screaming and pretending to fall.*
- WILLIAM** You monster! You shall not get away with this!
- WILLIAM *pushes* MAX *over the other side of the lighthouse. Over chase music, WILLIAM runs down the lighthouse (anticlockwise) while MAGGIE and MAX continue to fall. Just before WILLIAM reaches MAGGIE both she and MAX jump into the air - MAGGIE to be caught by WILLIAM and MAX to land on the rocks. A general cheer goes up.*
- MAGGIE** Oh William, my hero!
- WILLIAM** My own Maggie! (*Maggie swoons*) Ladies! Go and fetch Jessie so that she can comfort her daughter. (*exit GIRLS*) Revenuemen! Bring some brandy to help her recover.
- HAMISH** But what about him? (*Pointing to MAX*)
- WILLIAM** Don't worry. No mortal could survive a fall like that! (*Exit REVENUEMEN*)
- MAGGIE** (*Recovering*) Where am I? Oh, William, am I safe now?
- WILLIAM** Don't worry, my love, you are indeed safe. Within these arms no harm could ever come to you.

DUET - WILLIAM *and* MAGGIE

Music - "The battle's roar is over", Ruddigore

- WILLIAM** The battle's roar is over,
O my love!
Embrace thy tender lover,
O my love!
From tempests' welter
From war's alarms,
O give me shelter
Within those arms!
Thy smile alluring,
All heart-ache curing,
Gives peace enduring,
O my love!
- MAGGIE** If heart both true and tender,
O my love!
A life-love can engender,
O my love!
A truce to sighing
And tears of brine,
For joy undying
Shall aye be mine,
- BOTH** And thou and I, love,
Shall live and die, love,
Without a sigh, love -
My own, my love!

Unnoticed by WILLIAM and MAGGIE, MAX recovers.

- MAX** (*Aside*) No! My plans fall through again! This cannot be! I must succeed, for I am the Slave of Destiny! (*Running up to MAGGIE and WILL*) Beware, you despicable goody-goodies! If I am not to triumph then we must all perish

together! (*He produces a bomb. MAGGIE screams and the GIRLS, the REVENUEMEN and JESSIE rush on*)

- HAMISH** Look, he's got a bomb! (REVENUEMEN *exit*)
- MOLLY** Keep away from him! (WRECKERS *exit*)
- MAX** Ha, ha, ha! Once I have lit this device you will see how cruel fate really is! William and Maggie, prepare to die!
- JESSIE** (*Rushing to MAX's feet*) Nae, you fiend, dinna dae it! Dinna kill my ain wee Maggie, the nearest thing I hae to a bairn! You canna be so hairless as tae... (*Pulls his mask off*)
- ALL** (*Except JESSIE, including offstage*) Sir Bernard Booth!
- JESSIE** It canna be! But now I look mair closely... It is! Maximillian Blackheart - you are my ain lost husband!
- MAX** (*Recognising JESSIE*) Jessie? Jessie McPhee? My wife? But you were drowned!
- JESSIE** And I thought you were deid, tae! But you are alive! My ain Norman!
- MAX** Jessie, my love, my wife! (*They embrace*) But what became of our son? Is he with you?
- JESSIE** Nae, I'm afraid no'. Amidst the confusion of the sinking ship I grabbed the nearest baby, which unfortunately turned oot tae be a wee lassie. She grew up to be young Maggie here. I'm afraid that oor son is drowned, my dear.
- WILLIAM** Stop a bit! Did you say that you lost your young son when your ship sank?
- JESSIE** Aye, that is the jist o' what I was saying.
- WILLIAM** And where was this ship heading?
- MAX** To the Isle of Wight.
- WILLIAM** Neptune's beard, it must be true! Jessie, Maximillian, I lost my parents on a ferry sailing to the Isle of Wight! I believed myself to be an orphan, but now I find I have a family after all! Mummy! Daddy!
- MAX & JESSIE** Our long-lost son! (*They all embrace as MAGGIE swoons*)

TRIO - JESSIE, WILLIAM *and* MAX

Music - "Here's a how-de-do!", The Mikado

- JESSIE** Here's a how-de-do!
How can this be true?
Husband who I thought departed
Was reborn the evil-hearted
Leader of our crew!
Here's a how-de-do!
- WILLIAM** Here's a pretty mess!
Witness my distress -
Wicked monster I was spurning
Is my father, now returning
In a villain's dress!
Here's a pretty mess!
- MAX** Here's a state of things!
Fortune pulls the strings!
Now my life must change direction
For a wife and son's affection
To my conscience clings!
Here's a state of things!

- ALL** What a fickle thing is fate,
What tangled tales you spin!
When the people that you hate
Become your kith and kin!
If what I hear is true,
My family is *you*!
Here's a pretty state of things!
Here's a pretty how-de-do!
- MAX** (*Breaking away*) By the Gods, this is terrible. All my life I have done the most foul and evil acts in the belief that I was cursed by fate, and now I find that my family is still alive! How can I atone for all the wrong that I have done?
- MOLLY** (*ALL rush on looking stage R*) Look, look! All this light has attracted a ship to the shore! See, a great Merchantman is about to crash into the reef! What can we do the advert this disaster? (*General distress*)
- MAX** (*Aside*) Another victim of my evil! Another stain on my conscience! What can I do to prevent it? Of course, this device may provide the answer! (*Aloud*) I shall save that vessel by using this powerful bomb as a warning flare! Let no man stand in my way! (*Exit stage R*)
- JESSIE** No, Norman, dinna risk your ain life for the sake of others! (*Rushing after him*)
- WILLIAM** (*Restraining JESSIE*) Leave him. He must fulfil his own destiny.
- HAMISH** (*Looking off*) See, he climbs the rocks to reach the highest crag.
- MOLLY** Behold, he lights the fuse! There is no turning back now!
- SETH** He holds it aloft but does not throw it! He'll be killed!
- There is a tremendous explosion and flash of light offstage.*
- FAITH** Look - the boat must have seen the explosion! It turns away from the rocks!
- MOLLY** He has saved the Merchantman! Hurrah! (*General rejoicing*)
- MAX staggers back on, his cloak ragged and his face black with soot. A space is cleared for him centre stage where he collapses in JESSIE's arms.*
- MAX** Did... Did I save the boat?
- JESSIE** You did. You are a hero, my ain beloved Norman.
- MAX** That is good. I hope it may provide some small compensation for bad deeds I have committed in the past. (*Coughs*) William, Maggie, come here, my children. (*They approach and kneel. He grasps their hands*) Live well and be happy - your union has my blessing. I still have some considerable wealth in my coffers - take it for yourself, and use it to do good. And Jessie, my dear Jessie, despite our separation, I always loved you. I have done great evils in my past, evils that can never be absolved, but can you somehow find it in your heart to forgive me?
- JESSIE** Oh, Norman, I forgive you, I forgive you!
- MAX** Good. Then I may die a happy man. (*He coughs, splutters, shakes and, after a few false alarms, dies. His body is carried off*)
- HAMISH** So, Molly O'Brian, this is how you spend your evenings. You always told me you were washing your hair!
- MOLLY** Aye, well, would you have preferred we'd told you the truth?
- HAMISH** Of course not, you outnumber us... But it might have sounded good in court. As it is, we have more than enough evidence to send you all to the gallows!

MOLLY (*Rushing to HAMISH*) Oh, no, Hamish, you can't do that. (*Signals to the other GIRLS to pair up with the remaining MEN*) You wouldn't want to have Red Rock village emptied of all women, would you?

HAMISH Well, you do have a point there...

MOLLY You heard Jessie forgive her husband. Can you not over-look our misdemeanours? (*Suggestively*) We could make it worth your while...

HAMISH In what sort of way?

MOLLY Well, as we'd no longer be wrecking any more, I really can't see any objection to us... Getting married!

HAMISH In that case, Molly, of course I forgive you! (*Embraces her*) We all do!

MEN We do! (*They all embrace*)

MOLLY (*Aside*) I'm not sure this won't be worse than the gallows!

MAGGIE and WILLIAM come forward.

WILLIAM Oh, Maggie, hasn't everything worked out perfectly... Maggie? But you're crying!

MAGGIE Aye, William, I am crying. Don't you see - Jessie and Maximillian have found her long-lost son, you've found your parents... But the question remains - who am I?

MOLLY Maggie, I have a secret to tell. I myself have a long-lost sister!

MAGGIE You do?

MOLLY I do! Tell me, do you have a birthmark in the shape of a cormorant on your left thigh?

MAGGIE Yes.

MOLLY And one in the shape of a perambulator on your right forearm?

MAGGIE Yes, yes.

MOLLY And one in the shape of a Brussels sprout on your left buttock?

MAGGIE Yes, yes, yes!

MOLLY Then you *can't* be her - my sister had no birthmarks!

FAITH Molly, *I* have no birthmarks!

MOLLY You don't? Come to my arms! My long-lost sister! (*They embrace*)

MAGGIE Disappointed again! My friends, has nobody else lost a baby on the Isle of Wight ferry? Surely one of you must be a parent of mine! (*They all shake their heads except... Enter OSBOURNE ROAD, MAX once again in a dog collar and a moustache*)

OSBOURNE Did I hear you say you had a birthmark in the shape of a cormorant?

MAGGIE Yes.

OSBOURNE And a perambulator?

MAGGIE Yes, yes.

OSBOURNE And a Brussels sprout?

MAGGIE Yes, yes, yes!

OSBOURNE I lost a daughter of that description on a ferry to the Isle of Wight!

MAGGIE My father!

OSBOURNE My long-lost daughter! (*They embrace. MAGGIE faints.*)

- JESSIE** But Reverend Road, we were friends back then - dae you no you mind what we did? My wee bairn was betrothed to your bairn in marriage! (MAGGIE *revives*) William, Maggie - you didnae ken it, but you have been engaged for the last eighteen years!
- MAGGIE** Oh, William, you heard what your mother said - it is fate speaking to us again! Come, my dear, there is no use in delaying. Let us marry at once!
- HAMISH** Let us *all* be married!
- ALL** Hurrah!
- MAGGIE** For, after all, what are our wishes compared to *The Force of Destiny*!

FINALE

QUARTET - WILL, MAGGIE, HAMISH *and* MOLLY

Music - "Oh joy, oh rapture unforeseen", H.M.S. Pinafore

Oh joy, oh rapture unforeseen,
For now the sky is all serene;
We won't deny our happy fate,
So welcome love, farewell to hate,
Let celebrations start!

- WILLIAM & HAMISH** With you, my darling, for my wife
ALL We'll start a new and joyful life!
Let gloomy tales of former times
Be deafened by the marriage chimes -
Let rapture fill each heart!

CHORUS

Music - "Pray observe the magnanimity", The Pirates of Penzance

- REVENUEMEN** Here's a first rate opportunity
To get married with impunity,
And indulge in the felicity
Of unbounded domesticity.
We shall quickly be parsonified,
Conjugally matrimonified,
By a doctor of divinity,
Who is located in this vicinity.
- WRECKERS** Here's a first rate opportunity
Of escaping with impunity,
So farewell to the felicity
Of our maiden domesticity.
We shall quickly be parsonified,
Conjugally matrimonified,
By a doctor of divinity,
Who is located in this vicinity.
- ENSEMBLE** We shall quickly be parsonified, etc.

The couples dance off, leaving OSBOURNE ROAD/MAX alone. He tears off his moustache and addresses the audience.

- MAX** Ha, ha, ha! Fooled them all - it was me all the time! (*Exit, laughing maniacally*)

CURTAIN

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I wrote this show because of two main inspirations.

The first was the result of a bout of reading 19th 'Blood and Thunder' melodramas, and wanting to write one of my own. These were the same sources that Gilbert mined so successfully in 'Pinafore', 'Pirates' and, particularly, 'Ruddigore', but I thought there were a few tropes that he had missed, and I wanted to write an 'ultimate melodrama', with every single cliché in it: a thoroughly decent hero who rescues a helpless heroine, a mysterious old woman with a mysterious accent, children separated at birth, and, in particular, a really good Stage Villain who could chew the scenery!

The second source was a sketch that my father wrote and performed when he was a dental student, which was basically the same as the lighthouse duel. He described this to me many times, and the fantastic response it got from the audience, and it lay in my subconscious until I was looking for a dramatic climax for a melodrama... Consequently, doing the lighthouse business correctly is critical. It sounds odd when reading it, but the audience soon gets the idea and they really lap it up – there's nothing like people frantically running around a stage to get people going!

Initially, this was a one-act show for principals and chorus, to provide an alternative to 'Trial by Jury' and 'The Zoo', which Newcastle Gilbert and Sullivan Society frequently performed as a summer show (paired with 'Cox and Box' and, later, my shows 'The Philanderer' and 'Modern Girls'). The opportunity to produce this version didn't arise, so I decided to expand it to two acts. There a few songs and scenes added throughout, but the main additions were the finale of Act I, Max's party at the beginning of Act 2 and the introduction of Max's *alter ego*, Sir Bernard Booth. You can see the original on my website. I'm gratified that this extra 'padding' didn't come across as such in performance!

A few notes:

- Jessie's accent is written in 'Victorian Scotch', and is *not* supposed to be realistic (I spent half my childhood in Scotland, so I do know the genuine article!) It sound be said like a bad impersonation, making the most of the dialect words to draw attention to their incongruity!
- The name of 'Bernard Booth' may be familiar to those who watched the famously-bad ITV soap opera 'Crossroads' – he was the oily chef, who lead to our family catchphrase 'As smooth as Bernard Booth!' In fact, smooth peanut butter is still called 'booth' in his honour...
- William's comments about drinking are a parody of the anti-smoking cartoons that used to appear in children's comics in the 1960s-70s.
- The location was inspired by 'Red Rock' cider, which was heavily advertised at the time (strapline delivered by Leslie Nielsen: 'It's not red, and there's no rocks in it!') At one time I considered changing it to 'Marsden Rock', which is a local landmark.
- The style of the performance should be serious, and the characters should not be aware of how ridiculous everything is. This follows Gilbert's aim 'to treat a thoroughly farcical subject in a thoroughly serious manner'. Trust me – it makes the jokes funnier!

I had set myself the restriction of never re-using songs in my shows, which is why the show originally opened with a song written to 'Search throughout the panorama' from 'Princess Ida' and *didn't* have 'Won't it be a pretty wedding' in the Finale Act I. Before the first production, I realised that the girls would really enjoy the chance to sing 'With cat-like tread', so re-wrote the opening song to fit that tune, and it makes a much punchier opening. The first revival used the original version, and it doesn't work as well – much less exciting. The new Finale Act 1 was definitely better, though. The original opening and the alterative Act I finale beginning are in the Appendix. You'll also find an extra song for Max, there – I played the part in the first production and had always wanted to sing the 'Roulette song' from Grand Duke – but, in retrospect, felt this was, perhaps, a little self-indulgent. However, it is a good song, and you may wish to include it.

Have fun!

28th May 2022

APPENDIX - Alternative & Optional Songs

1. Alternative Opening Chorus

OPENING CHORUS - MOLLY *and* CHORUS

Music - "Search throughout the panorama", Princess-Ida

Ladies from the Red Rock Village
Come to plunder and to pillage;
For some vessel on the water
Has met grim and grisly slaughter
Wrecking is our game!

Guided by the lamp of Maggie
They found devastation craggy,
So the ladies from the village
Come to plunder and to pillage
Wrecking is our game!

MOLLY We're wreckers who all profit from disaster,
ALL That we do!
MOLLY We follow orders from an evil master,
ALL That we do!
MOLLY We go to any lengths to get our treasure,
ALL That we do!
MOLLY So if survivors keep us from our pleasure;
ALL They die who'er they be!
If any one should see
Our wicked villainy,
To death they go, and so,

Ladies from the Red Rock Village
Come to plunder and to pillage;
For some vessel on the water
Has met grim and grisly slaughter
Wrecking is our game!

2. Alternative Finale to Act I

CHORUS

Music - "Now, pray, what is the cause", The Gondoliers

Now, pray, what is the cause of this remarkable hilarity?
This sudden ebullition of unmitigated jollity?
Has anybody blessed you with a sample of his charity?
Or have you been adopted by a gentleman of quality?

DUET *and* CHORUS - WILLIAM *and* MAGGIE

Music - "Good morrow, good mother!", Iolanthe

Good morrow, good village!
Good village, good morrow!
Ye sons of the tillage
Pray banish your sorrow!
With joy beyond telling
Our bosoms are swelling,
So join in a measure
Expressive of pleasure,
For we're to be married today - today -
Yes, we're to be married today!

CHORUS For they're to be married today - today -
Yes, they're to be married today!

The Finale then continues from 'Be happy all'.

3. Optional Song & Dialogue from Act II

MAX A mere nothing. I have so much money that, to me, this party was just loose change. You know, I was once as poor as many of you, and I would've remained so, had I not discovered the game of Roulette...

HAMISH But what on earth is the game of Roulette?

MAX Roulette? Why, it's the fastest way to make money ever invented!

SONG - MAX and CHORUS

Music - "Take my advice when deep in debt", The Grand Duke

Take my advice - when deep in debt,
Set up a bank and play Roulette!
At once distrust you surely lull,
And rook the pigeon and the gull.
The bird will stake his every franc
In wild attempt to break the bank -
But you may stake your life and limb
The bank will end by breaking him!

Allons, encore -

Garçons, fillettes -

Vos louis d'or

Vos roues d'charette!

Holà! Holà!

Mais faites vos jeux -

Allons, la classe -

Le temps se passe -

La banque se casse -

Rien n'va plus!

Le dix-sept noir, impair et manque!

Holà! Holà! vive la banque!

For every time the board you spin,

The bank is bound to win!

CHORUS For every time, etc.

A cosmic game is this Roulette!
The little ball's a true coquette -
A maiden coy whom "numbers" woo -
Whom six-and-thirty suitors sue!
Of all complexion, too, good lack!
For some are red and some are black,
And some must be extremely green,
For half of them are not nineteen!

Allons, encore -

Garçons, fillettes -

Vos louis d'or

Vos roues d'charette!

Holà! Holà!

Mais faites vos jeux -

Allons, la foule!

Ça roule - ça roule

Le temps s'écoule -

Rien n'va plus!

Le trente-cinq rouge - impair et passe!

Très bien, étudiants de la classe -

The moral's safe - when you begin
The bank is bound to win!

CHORUS

The moral's safe, etc.

The little ball's a flirt inbred -
She flirts with black - she flirts with red;
From this to that she hops about
Then back to this as if in doubt.
To call her thoughtless were unkind -
The child is making up her mind,
For all the world like all the rest,
Which *prétendant* will pay the best!

Allons, encore -

Garçons, fillettes -

Vos louis d'or

Vos roues d'charette!

Holà! Holà!

Mais faites vos jeux -

Qui perte fit

Au temps jadis

Gagne aujourd'hui!

Rien n'va plus!

Tra, la, la, la! le double zéro!

Vous perdez tout, mes nobles héros-

Where'er at last the ball pops in,

The bank is bound to win!

CHORUS

Where'er at last, etc.

MAX.

Now, would anyone care for a port or liqueur? (*The action continues as above*)