

THE BUCCANEERS OF BOSCASTLE

(Based on The Pirates of Penzance by W S Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan)

But.....

**Outrageously plagiarised by Mrs Evelyn Cavendish with
additional material by Mortimer Cavendish, her son.**

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SAMUEL (*a Pirate*)
FREDERIC (*the Pirate Apprentice*)
THE PIRATE KING
RUTH (*a Pirate Maid of all Work*)
JACK (*a Pirate*)
LENNY (*a Pirate*)
BILL (*a Pirate*)
ROGER (*a Pirate*)
ISABEL
KATE
EDITH
MABEL
MAJOR-GENERAL STANLEY
PARSON SNOWS
SERGEANT OF POLICE
P.C. CHANG
P.C. BERLUSCONI
P.C. O'REILLY
P.C. BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
NANNY WELLBELOVED

Additional Pirates, Police, and General Stanley's Daughters if required.

ACT I

A rocky sea-shore on the North Cornish coast

ACT II

A ruined chapel by moonlight

ACT I

SCENE. – *A rocky seashore on the coast of Cornwall. In the distance is a calm sea, on which a schooner is lying at anchor. As the curtain rises groups of rag tag pirates are discovered – some drinking, some playing cards. SAMUEL, the Pirate Lieutenant, is going from one group to another, filling the cups from a flask. FREDERIC, a handsome young man, is seated in a despondent attitude at the centre of the scene. The pirates suddenly surround Frederic and sing*

ALL. Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday to you
Happy Birthday dear Frederic
Happy Birthday to you

One of the pirates gives him a 21st birthday balloon

SAM. 21 today! Where does the time go, eh? Why it only seems like yesterday that you were crawling around here on all fours slurring the words, tomorrow I'm gonna be twenty one. My life is passing me by....

FRED. Please don't remind me. My head feels like it's full of little men all trying to kick their way out. Why did you persuade me that pre-birthday drinks would be a good idea?

SAM. Because it's all downhill from now on Frederic me old mate. Twenty One! What have you got to look forward to now? Nothing but years and years of pirating until you walk that final plank. But you've one thing in your favour, you certainly don't look 21. How do you manage it?

FRED. I moisturise daily. I have a very strict morning and evening cleansing ritual.

SAM. Yeah, we'd noticed. You might want to rethink that, now that you're a man and all.

FREDERIC rises and comes forward with PIRATE KING, a strapping muscular hunk with muscles in all the right places!, who enters.

KING. Yes, Frederic, from to-day you rank as a full-blown member of our cut throat pirate band.

ALL. Hurrah!

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

KING. What do you mean?

FRED. To-day my apprenticeship is finished, and I leave you for ever.

ALL. Gasp!

JACK. Leave us?

LENNY. Your old shipmates?

FRED. It's true. I love you all as brothers, each and every one of you. You, dear, Lobster Lenny and you, my dear friend, Crabby Jack. And Barnacle Bill, why you taught me my first hornpipe...

BILL. And I still have the blisters to prove it.

FRED. And Roger the cabin boy....

The Pirates start to form a queue

ROGER. Belay that order! *(to audience)* Every bleedin' time someone introduces me....

KING. But this is quite unaccountable; why a keener hand at scuttling a Cunarder or cutting out a P. & O. never shipped a handspike.

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

SAM. An error? What error?

FRED. I may not tell you; it would reflect upon my well-loved Ruth.

RUTH, a lady well past her prime, enters and comes forward.

RUTH. Nay, dear master, my mind has long been gnawed by the cankering tooth of mystery. Better have it out at once. Gather round shipmates and hear my sorry tale. When Frederic was a little lad he was so brave and daring that his father thought he'd apprentice him to some seafaring mariner. I was, alas, his nurserymaid, and so it fell to me to take and bind the promising boy apprentice to a *pilot*. But what a mistake that was for I was nothing but a stupid nurserymaid and I did not catch the word aright, through being a bit hard of hearing; Mistaking my instructions I took and bound this promising boy apprentice to a *pirate*. A sad mistake indeed that has doomed him to a vile life. Yes! I had bound him to a pirate – you – *instead* of to a pilot.

JACK. Well.... 's an easy mistake to make

BILL. Could've 'appened to anyone.

RUTH. I soon found out, and too late to rectify, the scope of this disaster, but I hadn't the courage to return to my employer, Frederic's father, and break it to him. But *this* nurserymaid is not afraid of what *you* call work so I made up my mind to join you as a kind of piratical maid-of-all-work. And that is how you find me, a member of your crew. Which you wouldn't have done had he been bound apprentice to a pilot in the first place! Oh, I am such a fool.

LENNY. It's been alright. You've 'ad your uses.

ROGER. *(wistfully)* Gave me a bit of peace for a while anyway

RUTH. Oh, pardon! Frederic, pardon! *(kneels)*

FRED. Rise, sweet one, I have long pardoned you.

RUTH. *(rises)* The two words were so much alike!

FRED. They were. They still are, but the years rolled on and there you have it. But this afternoon my obligation ceases. Individually, I love you all with affection unspeakable; but, collectively, I look upon you with a disgust that amounts to absolute detestation. Oh! pity me, my beloved friends, for such is my sense of duty that, now free of my duty to you, I shall feel myself bound to devote myself heart and soul to your extermination!

ALL. Poor lad – poor lad! *(All weep.)*

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

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

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

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

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

ALL. Hear, hear!

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

KING. There is some truth in that.

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

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

FRED. Yes, but word has got about, and what is the consequence? *Everyone* we capture says he's an orphan. The last three ships we took proved to be manned entirely by orphans, and so we had to let them go. You'd think that Great Britain's merchant navy was recruited solely from the orphanages – which we know is not the case.

SAM. But, hang it all! you wouldn't have us absolutely merciless?

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

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

KING. Oh, he will take you with him. My men are exhausted. Well, most of them. (*Hands RUTH to FREDERIC.*)

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

RUTH. It is – oh, it is!

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

KING. (*aside*) True.

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

KING. Oh, Ruth is very well, very well indeed.

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

FRED. Do you really think so?

SAM. I do.

FRED. Then I will not be so selfish as to take her from you. In justice to her, and in consideration for you, I will leave her behind. (*Hands RUTH to KING.*)

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

ALL. (*loudly*) Not one!

ROGER. I would!

KING. Ignore him, he doesn't count! No, I thought there wasn't. Keep your love, Frederic, *please* keep your love. (*Hands her back to FREDERIC.*)

FRED. You're very good, I'm sure.

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