



Dunfermline Gilbert and Sullivan Society

DGASS H.M.S. Pinafore – Audition Dialogue

RALPH

- BOAT.** Ah! Sir Joseph's a true gentleman; courteous and considerate to the very humblest.
- RALPH.** **True, Boatswain, but we are not the very humblest. Sir Joseph has explained our true position to us. As he says, a British seaman is any man's equal excepting his, and if Sir Joseph says that, is it not our duty to believe him?**
- ALL.** Well spoke! well spoke!
- DICK.** You're on a wrong tack, and so is he. He means well, but he don't know. When people have to obey other people's orders, equality's out of the question.
- ALL** (*recoiling*). Horrible! horrible!
- BOAT.** Dick Deadeye, if you go for to infuriate this here ship's company too far, I won't answer for being able to hold 'em in. I'm shocked! that's what I am – shocked!
- RALPH.** **Messmates, my mind's made up. I'll speak to the captain's daughter, and tell her, like an honest man, of the honest love I have for her.**
- ALL.** Aye, aye!
- RALPH.** **Is not my love as good as another's? Is not my heart as true as another's? Have I not hands and eyes and ears and limbs like another?**
- ALL.** Aye, Aye!
- RALPH.** **True, I lack birth –**
- BOAT.** You've a berth on board this very ship.



RALPH. Well said – I had forgotten that. Messmates – what do you say? Do you approve my determination?

ALL. We do.

Jos. Ralph Rackstraw! (*Overcome by emotion.*)

RALPH. Aye, lady – no other than poor Ralph Rackstraw!

Jos. (*aside*). How my heart beats! (*Aloud.*) And why poor, Ralph?

RALPH. I am poor in the essence of happiness, lady – rich only in never-ending unrest. In me there meet a combination of antithetical elements which are at eternal war with one another. Driven hither by objective influences – thither by subjective emotions – wafted one moment into blazing day, by mocking hope – plunged the next into the Cimmerian darkness of tangible despair, I am but a living ganglion of irreconcilable antagonisms. I hope I make myself clear, lady?

Jos. Perfectly. (*Aside.*) His simple eloquence goes to my heart. Oh, if I dared – but no, the thought is madness! (*Aloud.*) Dismiss these foolish fancies, they torture you but needlessly. Come, make one effort.

RALPH (*aside*). I will – one. (*Aloud.*) Josephine!

Jos. (*indignantly*). Sir!

RALPH. Aye, even though Jove's armoury were launched at the head of the audacious mortal whose lips, unhallowed by relationship, dared to breathe that precious word, yet would I breathe it once, and then perchance be silent evermore. Josephine, in one brief breath I will concentrate the hopes, the doubts, the anxious fears of six weary months. Josephine, I am a British sailor, and I love you!