

Gilbert And Sullivan

"A British Tar"

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Ralph, Boatswain & Carpenter.
A British tar is a soaring soul,
As free as a mountain bird,
His energetic fist should be ready to resist
A dictatorial word.

His nose should pant
and his lip should curl,
His cheeks should flame
and his brow should furl,
His bosom should heave
and his heart should glow,
And his fist be ever ready
for a knock-down blow.

Chorus.
His nose should pant
and his lip should curl,
His cheeks should flame
and his brow should furl,
His bosom should heave
and his heart should glow,
And his fist be ever ready
for a knock-down blow.

Ralph, Boatswain & Carpenter.
His eyes should flash with an inborn fire,
His brow with scorn be wrung;
He never should bow down
to a domineering frown,
Or the tang of a tyrant tongue.

His foot should stamp, and his throat should growl,
His hair should twirl, and his face should scowl;
His eyes should flash, and his breast protrude,
And this should be his customary attitude.

Chorus.
His foot should stamp, and his throat should growl,
His hair should twirl, and his face should scowl;
His eyes should flash, and his breast protrude,

And this should be his customary attitude,
His attitude
His attitude
His attitude. (pose)

(All dance off excepting Ralph, who remains, leaning pensively against bulwark.)

DIALOGUE

(Enter Josephine from cabin)

Josephine.
It is useless - Sir Joseph's attentions nauseate me. I know that he is a truly great and good man, for he told me so himself, but to me he seems tedious, fretful, and dictatorial. Yet his must be a mind of no common order, or he would not dare to teach my dear father to dance a hornpipe on the cabin table. (Sees Ralph.) Ralph Rackstraw! (Overcome by emotion.)

Ralph.
Aye, lady -- no other than poor Ralph Rackstraw!

Josephine.
(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?

Josephine.
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!

Josephine. (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!

Josephine.
Sir, this audacity! (aside) Oh, my heart, my beating
heart! (aloud) This
unwarrantable presumption on the part of a common
sailor
(aside) Common! oh, the irony of the word! (crossing,
aloud) Oh, sir,
you forget the disparity in our ranks.

Ralph.
I forget nothing, haughty lady. I love you desperately,
my life is in
your hand - I lay it at your feet! Give me hope, and what
I lack in
education and polite accomplishments, that I will
endeavour to acquire.
Drive me to despair, and in death alone I shall look for
consolation. I
am proud and cannot stoop to implore. I have spoken
and I wait your
word.

Josephine.
You shall not wait long. Your proffered love I haughtily

reject.

Go, sir, and learn to cast your eyes on some village
maiden in
your own poor rank - they should be lowered before
your captain's
daughter.

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