

Patience Dialogue Audition Pieces

Patience First Piece

PATIENCE. What on earth does it all mean? Why does he love me? Why does he expect me to love him? He's not a relation! It frightens me!

(Enter ANGELA.)

ANGELA. Why, Patience, what is the matter?

PATIENCE. Lady Angela, tell me two things. Firstly, what on earth is this love that upsets everybody; and, secondly, how is it to be distinguished from insanity?

ANGELA. Poor blind child! Oh, forgive her, Eros! Why, love is of all passions the most essential! It is the embodiment of purity, the abstraction of refinement! It is the one unselfish emotion in this whirlpool of grasping greed!

PATIENCE. Oh, dear, oh! (*Beginning to cry.*)

ANGELA. Why are you crying?

PATIENCE. To think that I have lived all these years without having experienced this ennobling and unselfish passion! Why, what a wicked girl I must be! For it *is* unselfish, isn't it?

ANGELA. Absolutely! Love that is tainted with selfishness is no love. Oh, try, try, try to love! It really isn't difficult if you give your whole mind to it.

PATIENCE. I'll set about it at once. I won't go to bed until I'm head over ears in love with somebody.

ANGELA. Noble girl! But is it possible that you have never loved anybody?

PATIENCE. Yes, one.

ANGELA. Ah! Whom?

PATIENCE. My great-aunt –

ANGELA. Great-aunts don't count.

PATIENCE. Then there's nobody. At least – no, nobody. Not since I was a baby. But *that* doesn't count, I suppose.

Patience Second Piece

PATIENCE. Archibald!

GROS. (*Turns and sees her.*) Patience!

PATIENCE. I have escaped with difficulty from my Reginald. I wanted to see you so much that I might ask you if you still love me as fondly as ever?

GROS. Love you? If the devotion of a lifetime – (*Seizes her hand.*)

PATIENCE. (*indignantly*) Hold! Unhand me, or I scream! (*He releases her.*) If you are a gentleman, pray remember that I am another's! (*Very tenderly.*) But you *do* love me, don't you?

GROS. Madly, hopelessly, despairingly!

PATIENCE. That's right! I never can be yours; but that's right!

GROS. And you love this Bunthorne?

PATIENCE. With a heart-whole ecstasy that withers, and scorches, and burns, and stings! (*Sadly.*) It is my duty.

GROS. Admirable girl! But you are not happy with him?

PATIENCE. Happy? I am miserable beyond description!

GROS. That's right! I never can be yours; but that's right!

PATIENCE. But go now. I see dear Reginald approaching. Farewell, dear Archibald; I cannot tell you how happy it has made me to know that you still love me.

GROS. Ah, if I only dared – (*Advances towards her.*)

PATIENCE. Sir! this language to one who is promised to another! (*Tenderly.*)

Oh, Archibald, think of me sometimes, for my heart is breaking! He is unkind to me, and you would be so loving!

GROS. Loving! (*Advances towards her.*)

PATIENCE. Advance one step, and as I am a good and pure woman, I scream! (*Tenderly.*)

Farewell, Archibald! (*Sternly.*) Stop there! (*Tenderly.*) Think of me sometimes! (*Angrily.*)

Advance at your peril! Once more, adieu!

Reginald Bunthorne First Piece

After audition song

BUN. Ah! Patience, come hither. I am pleased with thee. The bitter-hearted one, who finds all else hollow, is pleased with thee. For you are not hollow. *Are you?*

PATIENCE. No, thanks, I have dined; but – I beg your pardon – I interrupt you.

BUN. Life is made up of interruptions. The tortured soul, yearning for solitude, writhes under them. Oh, but my heart is a-weary! Oh, I am a cursed thing! Don't go.

PATIENCE. Really, I'm very sorry.

BUN. Tell me, girl, do you ever yearn?

PATIENCE. (*misunderstanding him*) I earn my living.

BUN. (*impatiently*) No, no! Do you know what it is to be heart-hungry? Do you know what it is to yearn for the Indefinable, and yet to be brought face to face, daily, with the Multiplication Table? Do you know what it is to seek oceans and to find puddles? – to long for whirlwinds and yet have to do the best you can with the bellows? That's my case. Oh, I am a cursed thing! Don't go.

PATIENCE. If you please, I don't understand you – you frighten me!

BUN. Don't be frightened – it's only poetry.

PATIENCE. Well, if that's poetry, I don't like poetry.

BUN. (*eagerly*) Don't you? (*Aside.*) Can I trust her? (*Aloud.*) Patience, you don't like poetry – well, between you and me, I don't like poetry. It's hollow, unsubstantial – unsatisfactory. What's the use of yearning for Elysian Fields when you know you can't get 'em, and would only let 'em out on building leases if you had 'em?

PATIENCE. Sir, I –

BUN. Patience, I have long loved you. Let me tell you a secret. I am not as bilious as I look. If you like, I will cut my hair. There is more innocent fun within me than a casual spectator would imagine. You have never seen me frolicsome. Be a good girl – a very good girl – and one day you shall. If you are fond of touch-and-go jocularities – this is the shop for it.

Reginald Bunthorne Second Piece

GROS. It is very pleasant to be alone. It is pleasant to be able to gaze at leisure upon those features which all others may gaze upon at their good will! (*Looking at his reflection in hand-mirror.*) Ah, I am a very Narcissus!

BUN. It's no use; I can't live without admiration. Since Grosvenor came here, insipidity has been at a premium. Ah, he is there!

GROS. Ah, Bunthorne! Come here – look! Very graceful, isn't it!

BUN. (*taking hand-mirror*) Allow me; I haven't seen it. Yes, it is graceful.

GROS. (*taking back the mirror*) Oh, good gracious! not that – this –

BUN. You don't mean that! Bah! I am in no mood for trifling.

GROS. And what is amiss?

BUN. Ever since you came here, you have entirely monopolized the attentions of the young ladies. I don't like it, sir!

GROS. My dear sir, how can I help it? They are the plague of my life. My dear Mr. Bunthorne, with your personal disadvantages, you can have no idea of the inconvenience of being madly loved, at first sight, by every woman you meet.

BUN. Sir, until you came here I was adored!

GROS. Exactly – until I came here. That's my grievance. I cut everybody out! I assure you, if you could only suggest some means whereby, consistently with my duty to society, I could escape these inconvenient attentions, you would earn my everlasting gratitude.

BUN. I will do so at once. However popular it may be with the world at large, your personal appearance is highly objectionable to *me*.

GROS. It is? (*Shaking his hand.*) Oh, thank you! thank you! How can I express my gratitude?

BUN. By making a complete change at once. Your conversation must henceforth be perfectly matter-of-fact. You must cut your hair, and have a back parting. In appearance and costume you must be absolutely commonplace.

GROS. (*decidedly*) No. Pardon me, that's impossible.

BUN. Take care! When I am thwarted I am very terrible.

GROS. I can't help that. I am a man with a mission. And that mission must be fulfilled.

BUN. I don't think you quite appreciate the consequences of thwarting me.

GROS. I don't care what they are.

BUN. Suppose – I won't go so far as to say that I will do it – but suppose for one moment I were to curse you? (GROSVENOR *quails*.) Ah! Very well. Take care.

GROS. But surely you would never do that? (*In great alarm.*)

BUN. I don't know. It would be an extreme measure, no doubt. Still –

GROS. (*wildly*) But you would not do it – I am sure you would not. (*Throwing himself at BUNTHORNE'S knees, and clinging to him.*) Oh, reflect, reflect! You had a mother once.

BUN. Never!

GROS. Then you had an aunt! (BUNTHORNE *affected*.) Ah! I see you had! By the memory of that aunt, I implore you to pause ere you resort to this last fearful expedient. Oh, Mr. Bunthorne, reflect, reflect! (*Weeping.*)

BUN. (*aside, after a struggle with himself*) I must not allow myself to be unmanned! (*Aloud.*) It is useless. Consent at once, or may a nephew's curse –

GROS. Hold! Are you absolutely resolved?

BUN. Absolutely.

GROS. Will nothing shake you?

BUN. Nothing. I am adamant.

GROS. Very good. (*Rising.*) Then I yield.

BUN. Ha! You swear it?

GROS. I do, cheerfully. I have long wished for a reasonable pretext for such a change as you suggest. It has come at last. I do it on compulsion!

BUN. Victory! I triumph!

Archibald Grosvenor First Piece

GROS. Patience! Can it be that you don't recognize me?

PATIENCE. Recognize you? No, indeed I don't!

GROS. Have fifteen years so greatly changed me?

PATIENCE. Fifteen years? What do you mean?

GROS. Have you forgotten the friend of your youth, your Archibald? – your little playfellow? Oh, Chronos, Chronos, this is too bad of you!

PATIENCE. Archibald! Is it possible? Why, let me look! It is! It is! It must be! Oh, how happy I am! I thought we should never meet again! And how you've grown!

GROS. Yes, Patience, I am much taller and much stouter than I was.

PATIENCE. And how you've improved!

GROS. Yes, Patience, I am very beautiful! (*Sighs.*)

PATIENCE. But surely that doesn't make you unhappy?

GROS. Yes, Patience. Gifted as I am with a beauty which probably has not its rival on earth, I am, nevertheless, utterly and completely miserable.

PATIENCE. Oh – but why?

GROS. My child-love for you has never faded. Conceive, then, the horror of my situation when I tell you that it is my hideous destiny to be madly loved at first sight by every woman I come across!

PATIENCE. But why do you make yourself so picturesque? Why not disguise yourself, disfigure yourself, anything to escape this persecution?

GROS. No, Patience, that may not be. These gifts – irksome as they are – were given to me for the enjoyment and delectation of my fellow-creatures. I am a trustee for Beauty, and it is my duty to see that the conditions of my trust are faithfully discharged.

PATIENCE. And you, too, are a Poet?

GROS. Yes, I am the Apostle of Simplicity. I am called "Archibald the All- Right" – for I am infallible!

PATIENCE. And is it possible that you condescend to love such a girl as I?

GROS. Yes, Patience, is it not strange? I have loved you with a Florentine fourteenth-century frenzy for full fifteen years!

PATIENCE. Oh, marvellous! I have hitherto been deaf to the voice of love. I seem now to know what love is! It has been revealed to me – it is Archibald Grosvenor!

GROS. Yes, Patience, it is!

Archibald Grosvenor Second Piece

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The Lady Angela

ANGELA. Why, Patience, what is the matter?

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ANGELA. Poor blind child! Oh, forgive her, Eros! Why, love is of all passions the most essential! It is the embodiment of purity, the abstraction of refinement! It is the one unselfish emotion in this whirlpool of grasping greed!

PATIENCE. Oh, dear, oh! (*Beginning to cry.*)

ANGELA. Why are you crying?

PATIENCE. To think that I have lived all these years without having experienced this ennobling and unselfish passion! Why, what a wicked girl I must be! For it *is* unselfish, isn't it?

ANGELA. Absolutely! Love that is tainted with selfishness is no love. Oh, try, try, try to love! It really isn't difficult if you give your whole mind to it.

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ANGELA. Noble girl! But is it possible that you have never loved anybody?

PATIENCE. Yes, one.

ANGELA. Ah! Whom?

PATIENCE. My great-aunt –

ANGELA. Great-aunts don't count.

PATIENCE. Then there's nobody. At least – no, nobody. Not since I was a baby. But *that* doesn't count, I suppose.

ANGELA. I don't know. Tell me about it.

The Lady Saphir and Ella (both to read Lady Saphir lines)

SAPHIR. Jealousy is merged in misery. While he, the very cynosure of our eyes and hearts, remains icy insensible – what have we to strive for?

ELLA. The love of maidens is, to him, as interesting as the taxes!

SAPHIR. Would that it were! He pays his taxes.

ANGELA. And cherishes the receipts!

SAPHIR. Happyreceipts!

JANE. (*suddenly*) Fools!

ANGELA. I beg your pardon?

JANE. Fools and blind! The man loves – wildly loves!

ANGELA. But whom? None of us!

JANE. No, none of us. His weird fancy has lighted, for the nonce, on Patience, the village milkmaid!

SAPHIR. On Patience? Oh, it cannot be!

JANE. Bah! But yesterday I caught him in her dairy, eating fresh butter with a tablespoon. Today he is not well!

SAPHIR. But Patience boasts that she has never loved – that love is, to her, a sealed book! Oh, he cannot be serious!

The Lady Jane

JANE The fickle crew have deserted Reginald and sworn allegiance to his rival, and all, forsooth, because he has glanced with passing favour on a puling milkmaid! Fools! Of that fancy he will soon weary – and then, I, who alone am faithful to him, shall reap my reward. But do not dally too long, Reginald, for my charms are ripe, Reginald, and already they are decaying. Better secure me ere I have gone too far!

Continue into song

Colonel Calverley

After audition song

COLONEL. Well, here we are once more on the scene of our former triumphs. But where's the Duke?

(Enter DUKE, *listlessly, and in low spirits.*)

DUKE. Here I am! (*Sighs.*)

COLONEL. Come, cheer up, don't give way!

DUKE. Oh, for that, I'm as cheerful as a poor devil can be expected to be who has the misfortune to be a Duke, with a thousand a day!

MAJOR. Humph! Most men would envy you!

DUKE. Envy *me*? Tell me, Major, are you fond of toffee?

MAJOR. Very!

COLONEL. We are all fond of toffee.

ALL. We are!

DUKE. Yes, and toffee in moderation is a capital thing. But to *live* on toffee – toffee for breakfast, toffee for dinner, toffee for tea – to have it supposed that you care for nothing *but* toffee, and that you would consider yourself insulted if anything but toffee were offered to you – how would you like *that*?

COLONEL. I can quite believe that, under those circumstances, even toffee would become monotonous.

DUKE. For “toffee” read flattery, adulation, and abject deference, carried to such a pitch that I began, at last, to think that man was born bent at an angle of forty- five degrees! Great heavens, what is there to adulate in me? Am I particularly intelligent, or remarkably studious, or excruciatingly witty, or unusually accomplished, or exceptionally virtuous?

COLONEL. You're about as commonplace a young man as ever I saw.

Duke of Dunstable

(Enter DUKE, listlessly, and in low spirits.)

DUKE. Here I am! (*Sighs.*)

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COLONEL. You're about as commonplace a young man as ever I saw.

ALL. You are!

DUKE. Exactly! That's it exactly! That describes me to a T! Thank you all very much! Well, I couldn't stand it any longer, so I joined this second-class cavalry regiment. In the army, thought I, I shall be occasionally snubbed, perhaps even bullied, who knows? The thought was rapture, and here I am.

COLONEL. (*looking off*) Yes, and here are the ladies!

DUKE. But who is the gentleman with the long hair?

Major Murgatroyd

After audition song

COLONEL. (*attitude*) Yes, it's quite clear that our only chance of making a lasting impression on these young ladies is to become as æsthetic as they are.

MAJOR. (*attitude*) No doubt. The only question is how far we've succeeded in doing so. I don't know why, but I've an idea that this is not quite right.

DUKE. (*attitude*) I don't like it. I never did. I don't see what it means. I do it, but I don't like it.

COLONEL. My good friend, the question is not whether we like it, but whether they do. They understand these things – we don't. Now I shouldn't be surprised if this is effective enough – at a distance.

MAJOR. I can't help thinking we're a little stiff at it. It would be extremely awkward if we were to be "struck" so!

COLONEL. I don't think we shall be struck so. Perhaps we're a little awkward at first – but everything must have a beginning. Oh, here they come! 'Tention!

(*They strike fresh attitudes, as ANGELA and SAPHIR enter.*)

ANGELA. (*seeing them*) Oh, Saphir – see – see! The immortal fire has descended on them, and they are of the Inner Brotherhood – perceptively intense and consummately utter.

(*The OFFICERS have some difficulty in maintaining their constrained attitudes.*)

SAPHIR. (*in admiration*) How Botticelican! How Fra Angelican! Oh, Art, we thank thee for this boon!

COLONEL. (*apologetically*) I'm afraid we're not quite right.

ANGELA. Not supremely, perhaps, but oh, so all-but! (*To SAPHIR.*) Oh, Saphir, are they not quite too all-but?

SAPHIR. They are indeed jolly utter!

MAJOR. (*in agony*) I wonder what the Inner Brotherhood usually recommend for cramp?

