

(Enter Robin, R.)

Robin: Richard!

Richard: Robin! (*Hugs him.*)

Robin: My beloved foster-brother, and very dearest friend, welcome home again after ten long years at sea! It is such deeds as yours that cause our flag to be loved and dreaded throughout the civilized world!

Richard: Why, lord love ye, Rob, that's but a trifle to what we *have* done in the way of sparing life! I believe I may say, without exaggeration, that the merciful little *Tom-Tit* has spared more French frigates than any craft afloat! But 'taint for a British seaman to brag, I'll just stow my jawin' tackle and belay. (*Robin sighs.*) But 'vast heavin', messmate, what's brought you all a-cockbill?

Robin: Alas, Dick, I love Rose Maybud, and love in vain!

Richard: You love in vain? Come, that's too good! Why you're a fine strapping muscular young fellow— tall and strong as a to'-gall'n—tst—taut as a forestay— aye, and a barrowknight to boot, if all had their rights!

Robin: Hush, Richard— not a word about my true rank, which none here suspect. Yes, I know well enough that few men are better calculated to win a woman's heart than I. I'm a fine fellow, Dick, and worthy any woman's love— happy the girl who gets me, say I. But I'm timid, Dick; shy— nervous— modest— retiring— diffident— and I cannot tell her, Dick, I cannot tell her! (*crossing L.*) Ah, you've no idea what a poor opinion I have of myself, and how little I deserve it.

Richard: Robin, do you call to mind how, years ago, we swore that, come what might, we would always act upon our hearts' dictates?

Robin: Aye, Dick, and I've always kept that oath. In doubt, difficulty, and danger, I've always asked my heart what I should do, and it has never failed me.

Richard: Right! Let your heart be your compass, with a clear conscience for your binnacle light, and you'll sail ten knots on a bowline, clear of shoals, rocks, and quicksands! Well, now, what does my heart say in this here difficult situation? Why, it says, "Dick", it says— (it calls me Dick as it's known me from a baby)— "Dick," it says, "*you ain't shy— you ain't modest— speak you up for him as is!*" Robin, my lad, just you lay me alongside, and when she's becalmed under my lee, I'll spin her a yarn that shall sarve to fish you two together for life!

Robin: Will you do this thing for me? Can you, do you think? Yes (*feeling his pulse*). There's no false modesty about *you*. Your— what I would call bumptious self-assertiveness (I mean the expression in its complimentary sense) has already made you a bos'n's mate, and it will make an admiral of you in time, if you work it properly, you dear, incompetent old impostor! My dear fellow, I'd give my right arm for one tenth of your modest assurance!