

Koko & PoohBah Scene

Ko-Ko. Pooh-Bah, it seems that the festivities in connection with my approaching marriage must last a week. I should like to do it handsomely, and I want to consult you as to the amount I ought to spend upon them.

Pooh-Bah. Certainly. In which of my capacities? As First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chamberlain, Attorney General, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Privy Purse, or Private Secretary?

Ko-Ko. Suppose we say as Private Secretary.

Pooh-Bah. Speaking as your Private Secretary, I should say that, as the city will have to pay for it, don't stint yourself, do it well.

Ko-Ko. Exactly — as the city will have to pay for it. That is your advice.

Pooh-Bah. As Private Secretary. Of course you will understand that, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am bound to see that due economy is observed.

Ko-Ko. Oh! But you said just now "Don't stint yourself, do it well".

Pooh-Bah. As Private Secretary.

Ko-Ko. And now you say that due economy must be observed.

Pooh-Bah. As Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Ko-Ko. I see. Come over here, where the Chancellor can't hear us. *(They cross the stage.)* Now, as my Solicitor, how do you advise me to deal with this difficulty?

Pooh-Bah. Oh, as your Solicitor, I should have no hesitation in saying "Chance it —"

Ko-Ko. Thank you. *(Shaking his hand.)* I will.

Pooh-Bah. If it were not that, as Lord Chief Justice, I am bound to see that the law isn't violated.

Ko-Ko. I see. Come over here where the Chief Justice can't hear us. *(They cross the stage.)* Now, then, as First Lord of the Treasury?

Pooh-Bah. Of course, as First Lord of the Treasury, I could propose a special vote that would cover all expenses, if it were not that, as Leader of the Opposition, it would be my duty to resist it, tooth and nail. Or, as Paymaster General, I could so cook the accounts that, as Lord High Auditor, I should never discover the fraud. But then, as Archbishop of Titipu, it would be my duty to denounce my dishonesty and give myself into my own custody as first Commissioner of Police.

Ko-Ko. That's extremely awkward.

Pooh-Bah. I don't say that all these distinguished people couldn't be squared; but it is right to tell you that they wouldn't be sufficiently degraded in their own estimation unless they were insulted with a very considerable bribe.

Ko-Ko. The matter shall have my careful consideration. But my bride and her sisters approach, and any little compliment on your part, such as an abject grovel in a characteristic Japanese attitude, would be esteemed a favour.

Pooh-Bah. No money, no grovel!

YumYum & NankiPoo Scene

Yum-Yum. (*retreating*) If you please, I think your Highness had better not come too near. The laws against flirting are excessively severe.

Nanki-Poo. But we are quite alone, and nobody can see us.

Yum-Yum. Still, that don't make it right. To flirt is capital.

Nanki-Poo. It is capital!

Yum-Yum. And we must obey the law.

Nanki-Poo. Deuce take the law!

Yum-Yum. I wish it would, but it won't!

Nanki-Poo. If it were not for that, how happy we might be!

Yum-Yum. Happy indeed!

Nanki-Poo. If it were not for the law, we should now be sitting side by side, like that. (*Sits by her.*)

Yum-Yum. Instead of being obliged to sit half a mile off, like that. (*Crosses and sits at other side of stage.*)

Nanki-Poo. We should be gazing into each other's eyes, like that. (*Gazing at her sentimentally.*)

Yum-Yum. Breathing sighs of unutterable love — like that. (*Sighing and gazing lovingly at him.*)

Nanki-Poo. With our arms round each other's waists, like that. (*Embracing her.*)

Yum-Yum. Yes, if it wasn't for the law.

Nanki-Poo. If it wasn't for the law.

Yum-Yum. As it is, of course we couldn't do anything of the kind.

Nanki-Poo. Not for worlds!

Yum-Yum. Being engaged to Ko-Ko, you know!

Nanki-Poo. Being engaged to Ko-Ko!

NankiPoo & KoKo Scene

Nanki-Poo. What's the matter?

Ko-Ko. Is it absolutely certain that you are resolved to die?

Nanki-Poo. Absolutely!

Ko-Ko. Will nothing shake your resolution?

Nanki-Poo. Nothing.

Ko-Ko. Threats, entreaties, prayers — all useless?

Nanki-Poo. All! My mind is made up.

Ko-Ko. Then, if you really mean what you say, and if you are absolutely resolved to die, and if nothing whatever will shake your determination — don't spoil yourself by committing suicide, but be beheaded handsomely at the hands of the Public Executioner!

Nanki-Poo. I don't see how that would benefit me.

Ko-Ko. You don't? Observe: you'll have a month to live, and you'll live like a fighting-cock at my expense. When the day comes there'll be a grand public ceremonial — you'll be the central figure — no one will attempt to deprive you of that distinction. There'll be a procession — bands — dead march — bells tolling — all the girls in tears — Yum-Yum distracted — then, when it's all over, general rejoicings, and a display of fireworks in the evening. You won't see them, but they'll be there all the same.

Nanki-Poo. Do you think Yum-Yum would really be distracted at my death?

Ko-Ko. I am convinced of it. Bless you, she's the most tender-hearted little creature alive.

Nanki-Poo. I should be sorry to cause her pain. Perhaps, after all, if I were to withdraw from Japan, and travel in Europe for a couple of years, I might contrive to forget her.

Ko-Ko. Oh, I don't think you could forget Yum-Yum so easily; and, after all, what is more miserable than a love-blighted life?

Nanki-Poo. True.

Ko-Ko. Life without Yum-Yum — why, it seems absurd!

Nanki-Poo. And yet there are a good many people in the world who have to endure it.

Ko-Ko. Poor devils, yes! You are quite right not to be of their number.

Nanki-Poo. *(suddenly)* I won't be of their number!

Ko-Ko. Noble fellow!

Nanki-Poo. I'll tell you how we'll manage it. Let me marry Yum-Yum to-morrow, and in a month you may behead me.

Ko-Ko. No, no. I draw the line at Yum-Yum.

Nanki-Poo. Very good. If you can draw the line, so can I. *(Preparing rope.)*

VARIOUS Scene

Yum-Yum. Yes, everything seems to smile upon me. I am to be married to-day to the man I love best and I believe I am the very happiest girl in Japan!

Peep-Bo. The happiest girl indeed, for she is indeed to be envied who has attained happiness in all but perfection.

Yum-Yum. In "all but" perfection?

Peep-Bo. Well, dear, it can't be denied that the fact that your husband is to be beheaded in a month is, in its way, a drawback. It does seem to take the top off it, you know.

Pitti-Sing. I don't know about that. It all depends!

Peep-Bo. At all events, he will find it a drawback.

Pitti-Sing. Not necessarily. Bless you, it all depends!

Yum-Yum. (*in tears*) I think it very indelicate of you to refer to such a subject on such a day. If my married happiness is to be — to be —

Peep-Bo. Cut short.

Yum-Yum. Well, cut short — in a month, can't you let me forget it? (*weeping*)

Enter Nanki-Poo, followed by Pish-Tush.

Nanki-Poo. Yum-Yum in tears — and on her wedding morn!

Yum-Yum. (*sobbing*) They've been reminding me that in a month you're to be beheaded! (*Bursts into tears.*)

Pitti-Sing. Yes, we've been reminding her that you're to be beheaded. (*Bursts into tears.*)

Peep-Bo. It's quite true, you know, you are to be beheaded! (*Bursts into tears.*)

Nanki-Poo. (*aside*) Humph! Now, some bridegrooms would be depressed by this sort of thing! (*aloud*) A month? Well, what's a month? Bah! These divisions of time are purely arbitrary. Who says twenty-four hours make a day?

Pitti-Sing. There's a popular impression to that effect.

Nanki-Poo. Then we'll efface it. We'll call each second a minute — each minute an hour — each hour a day — and each day a year. At that rate we've about thirty years of married happiness before us!

Peep-Bo. And, at that rate, this interview has already lasted four hours and three-quarters! (*Exit Peep-Bo.*)

Yum-Yum. (*still sobbing*) Yes. How time flies when one is thoroughly enjoying oneself!

Nanki-Poo. That's the way to look at it! Don't let's be downhearted! There's a silver lining to every cloud.

Yum-Yum. Certainly. Let's — let's be perfectly happy! (*Almost in tears.*)

Pish-Tush. By all means. Let's--let's thoroughly enjoy ourselves.

Pitti-Sing. It's--it's absurd to cry! (*Trying to force a laugh.*)

Yum-Yum. Quite ridiculous! (*Trying to laugh.*)

All break into a forced and melancholy laugh.

KoKo & Katisha Scene

Ko-Ko. (*entering and approaching her timidly*) Katisha!

Katisha. The miscreant who robbed me of my love! But vengeance pursues — they are heating the cauldron!

Ko-Ko. Katisha — behold a suppliant at your feet! Katisha — mercy!

Katisha. Mercy? Had you mercy on him? See here, you! You have slain my love. He did not love me, but he would have loved me in time. I am an acquired taste — only the educated palate can appreciate me. I was educating his palate when he left me. Well, he is dead, and where shall I find another? It takes years to train a man to love me. Am I to go through the weary round again, and, at the same time, implore mercy for you who robbed me of my prey — I mean my pupil — just as his education was on the point of completion? Oh, where shall I find another?

Ko-Ko. (*suddenly, and with great vehemence*) Here! — Here!

Katisha. What!!!

Ko-Ko. (*with intense passion*) Katisha, for years I have loved you with a white-hot passion that is slowly but surely consuming my very vitals! Ah, shrink not from me! If there is aught of woman's mercy in your heart, turn not away from a love-sick suppliant whose every fibre thrills at your tiniest touch! True it is that, under a poor mask of disgust, I have endeavoured to conceal a passion whose inner fires are broiling the soul within me! But the fire will not be smothered — it defies all attempts at extinction, and, breaking forth, all the more eagerly for its long restraint, it declares itself in words that will not be weighed — that cannot be schooled — that should not be too severely criticised. Katisha, I dare not hope for your love — but I will not live without it! Darling!

Katisha. You, whose hands still reek with the blood of my betrothed, dare to address words of passion to the woman you have so foully wronged!

Ko-Ko. I do — accept my love, or I perish on the spot!

Katisha. Go to! Who knows so well as I that no one ever yet died of a broken heart!

Ko-Ko. You know not what you say. Listen!

Mikado Scene

Mikado. Now then, we've had a capital lunch, and we're quite ready. Have all the painful preparations been made?

Pish-Tush. Your Majesty, all is prepared.

Mikado. Then produce the unfortunate gentleman and his two well-meaning but misguided accomplices.

Katisha. Mercy! Mercy for Ko-Ko! Mercy for Pitti-Sing! Mercy even for Pooh-Bah!

Mikado. I beg your pardon, I don't think I quite caught that remark.

Pooh-Bah. Mercy even for Pooh-Bah.

Katisha. Mercy! My husband that was to have been is dead, and I have just married this miserable object.

Mikado. Oh! You've not been long about it!

Ko-Ko. We were married before the Registrar.

Pooh-Bah. I am the Registrar.

Mikado. I see. But my difficulty is that, as you have slain the Heir Apparent —

Nanki-Poo. The Heir Apparent is not slain.

Mikado. Bless my heart, my son!

Yum-Yum. And your daughter-in-law elected!

Katisha. (seizing Ko-Ko) Traitor, you have deceived me!

Mikado. Yes, you are entitled to a little explanation, but I think he will give it better whole than in pieces.

Ko-Ko. Your Majesty, it's like this: It is true that I stated that I had killed Nanki-Poo —

Mikado. Yes, with most affecting particulars.

Pooh-Bah. Merely corroborative detail intended to give artistic verisimilitude to a bald and —

Ko-Ko. Will you refrain from putting in your oar? *(to Mikado)* It's like this: When your Majesty says, "Let a thing be done," it's as good as done — practically, it is done — because your Majesty's will is law. Your Majesty says, "Kill a gentleman," and a gentleman is told off to be killed. Consequently, that gentleman is as good as dead — practically, he is dead — and if he is dead, why not say so?

Mikado. I see. Nothing could possibly be more satisfactory!