

BEING AN
ACCOUNT OF
THE LIFE
AND DEATH
OF THE
EMPEROR
HELOGABOLUS



by Neil Gaiman.

A 24 hour comic

Like I said, I was really into Gilbert and Sullivan when I was a kid.

THE BAS BALLADS ETC W.S. GILBERT

THE WORLD OF GILBERT AND SULLIVAN. Vol I

WILLIAM THE PIRATE

CANNON THE ADVENTURER

BURNING CRUISE

was all back of an "historic" play I bought from the school library because I had

When I was nine I won the local paper's Gilbert and Sullivan competition. I didn't really win - my entry wasn't the first in - but I got tickets to a local production of "Patience" - the first prize - anyway. Because I was nine.

THE PRODUCTION (in my sister's school hall) was crap. I thought this was a real pity, because I quite liked "Patience". The hero, Bunthorne is a parody of Oscar Wilde.

In fact, I read once that D'Oyly Carte (the producer) sponsored Wilde's American tour.

YOU MEAN EXCLUDING THE GIBBERTS?

SO, LET ME SEE THAT REMIN...

I HAVE NOTHING TO DECLARE EXCEPT MY GENIUS.

THERE

THOUGH THE PHILISTINES MAY JUSTICE YOU WILL RANK AS THE PRODIGE IN THE HIGH AESTHETIC BAND... IF YOU WALK DOWN PISCARILLY WITH A POPPY OR A LILY IN YOUR AERIAL HAND...

So that the Americans could get the joke.

I read a biography of Wilde, back then. I think it was written by his son.

OSCAR WILDE

It said he was sent to prison, and died, in France, a broken man.

I wondered what he was sent to prison for. The book didn't say.

I'LL TELL YOU WHEN YOU'RE OLDER

Adults went vague when asked.

Eventually I decided he must have been a glamorous jewel - thief, trading witty epigrams with the bumbling officers of the law.

WENT INSPECTOR TAIL... I WAS UP ALL NIGHT WITH A SICK CARNATION...

Like "Raffles" or "The Saint".

OSCAR'S TRUMP PRINCESS

The truth was faintly disappointing...