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rit. *a tempo* *Exit ROSE.*

coun - sel true; I'll tell that maid what she ought to do!

coun - sel true; I'll tell that youth what he ought to do!

rit. *a tempo* *f*

Rob. Poor child! I sometimes think that if she wasn't quite so particular I might venture—but no, no—even then I should be unworthy of her!

He sits desponding. Enter OLD ADAM.

Adam. My kind master is sad! Dear Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd—

Rob. Hush! As you love me, breathe not that hated name. Twenty years ago, in horror at the prospect of inheriting that hideous title and with it, the ban that compels all who succeed to the baronetcy to commit at least one deadly crime per day, 10 for life, I fled my home, and concealed myself in this innocent village under the name of Robin Oakapple. My younger brother, Despard, believing me to be dead, succeeded to the title and its attendant curse. For twenty years I have been dead and buried. Don't dig me up now.

Adam. Dear master, it shall be as you wish, for have I not sworn to obey you for ever in all things? Yet, as we are here alone, and as I belong to that particular description of good old man to whom the truth is a refreshing novelty, let me call you by your own right title once more! (ROBIN assents) Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd! Baronet! Of Ruddigore! Whew! It's like eight hours at the sea-side!

Rob. My poor old friend! Would there were more like you!

Adam. Would there were indeed! But I bring you good tidings. Your foster-brother, Richard, has returned from sea—his ship the *Tom-Tit* rides yonder at anchor, and he himself is even now in this very village!

Rob. My beloved foster-brother? No, no—it cannot be!

Adam. It is even so—and see, he comes this way!

CHORUS

Alto

Alto

Piano

8

15

Rich-ard, all



Enter OLD HANNAH, from cottage.

Han. Nay, gentle maidens, you sing well but vainly, for Rose is still heart-free, and looks but coldly upon her many suitors.

Zor. It's very disappointing. Every young man in the village is in love with her, but they are appalled by her beauty and modesty, and won't dare declare themselves; so, until she makes her own choice, there's no chance for anybody else.

Ruth. This is, perhaps, the only village in the world that possesses an endowed corps of professional bridesmaids who are bound to be on duty every day from ten to four—and it is at least six months since our services were required. The pious charity by which we exist is practically wasted!

Zor. We shall be disendowed—that will be the end of it! Dame Hannah—you're a nice old person—you could marry if you liked. There's old Adam—Robin's faithful servant—he loves you with all the frenzy of a boy of fourteen.

Han. Nay—that may never be, for I am pledged!

All. To whom?

Han. To an eternal maidenhood! Many years ago I was betrothed to a god-like youth who woo'd me under an assumed name. But on the very day upon which our wedding was to have been celebrated, I discovered that he was no other than Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, one of the bad Baronets of Ruddigore, and the uncle of the man who now bears that title. As a son of that accursed race he was no husband for an honest girl, so, sadly as I loved him, I left him then and there. He died but ten years since, but I never saw him again.

Zor. But why should you not marry a bad Baronet of Ruddigore?

Ruth. All baronets are bad; but was he worse than other baronets?

Han. My child, he was accursed.

Zor. But who cursed him? Not you, I trust!

Han. The curse is on all his line and has been, ever since the time of Sir Rupert, the first baronet. Listen, and you shall hear the legend.