

(Enter Rose, L.)

Rose: A maiden, and in tears? Can I do aught to soften thy sorrow? This apple —  
(offering the apple)

Margaret: (R.C. Examines it and rejects it.) No! (mysteriously) Tell me, are you mad?

Rose: If No! That is, I think not.

Margaret: That's well! Then you don't love Sir Despard Murgatroyd? All mad girls love him. I love him. I'm poor Mad Margaret— Crazy Meg— Poor Peg! He! He! He! He!  
(chuckling)

Rose: Thou lovest the bad Baronet of Ruddigore? Oh, horrible— too horrible! (She turns away to L.C.)

Margaret: You pity me? Then be my mother! The squirrel had a mother, but she drank and the squirrel fled! Hush! They sing a brave song in our parts— it runs somewhat thus: (Sings.)

"The cat and the dog and the little puppee  
Sat down in a— down in a— in a—"

I forget what they sat down in, but so the song goes! Listen— I've come to pinch her!  
(coming C. to Rose)

Rose: Mercy, whom?

Margaret: You mean "who?"

Rose: Nay! It is the accusative after the verb.

Margaret: True! (Whispers melodramatically.) I have come to pinch Rose Maybud!

Rose: (stunned) Rose Maybud?

Margaret: Aye! I love him— he loved me once. But that's all gone. Fight! He gave me an Italian glance— thus (business)— and made me his. He will give her an Italian glance, and make her his. But it shall not be, for I'll stamp on her— stamp on her— stamp on her! Did you ever kill anybody? No? Why not? Listen— I killed a fly this morning! It buzzed, and I wouldn't have it. So it died— pop! So shall she!

Rose: But, behold, I am Rose Maybud, and I would fain not die "pop."

Margaret: You are Rose Maybud?

Rose: Yes, sweet Rose Maybud!

Margaret: Strange! They told me she was beautiful. And he loves you! No, no! If I thought that, I would treat you as the auctioneer and land-agent treated the lady-bird— I would rend you asunder!

Rose: Nay, be pacified, for behold I am pledged to another, and lo, we are to be wedded this very day!

Margaret: Swear me that! Come to a Commissioner and let me have it on affidavit! I once made an affidavit— but it died— it died— it died! But see, they come— Sir Despard and his evil crew! Hide, hide— they are all mad— quite mad!

Rose: What makes you think so?

Margaret: Hush! They sing choruses in public. That's mad enough, I think! Go— hide away, they will seize you! Hush! Quite softly— quite, quite softly! (Takes Rose's hand, and they exeunt together on tiptoe, L.)