

Sir Rod: Whose cheque?

Robin: Old Adam's

Sir Rod: But old Adam hasn't a banker.

Robin: I didn't say I forged his banker— I said I forged his cheque. On Saturday I disinherited my only son.

Sir Rod: But you haven't got a son.

Robin: No— not yet. I disinherited him in advance, to save time. You see— by this arrangement— he'll be born already disinherited.

Sir Rod: I see. But I don't think you can do that.

Robin: My good sir, If I can't disinherit my own unborn son, whose unborn son can I disinherit?

Sir Rod: Humph! These arguments sound very well, but I can't help thinking that, if they were reduced to syllogistic form, they wouldn't hold water. Now quite understand us. We are foggy, but we don't permit our fogginess to be presumed upon. Unless you undertake to— well, suppose we say, carry off a lady? (*addressing Ghosts*) Those who are in favour of his carrying off a lady? (*All hold up their hands except a Bishop.*) Those of a contrary opinion? (*Bishop holds up both hands.*) Oh, you're never satisfied! Yes, unless you undertake to carry off a lady at once— I don't care what lady— you perish in inconceivable agonies.

Robin: Carry off a lady? Certainly not, on any account. I've the greatest respect for ladies, and I wouldn't do anything of the kind for worlds! No, no. I'm not that kind of baronet, I assure you! If that's all you've got to say, you'd better go back to your frames.

Sir Rod: Very good— then let the agonies commence.

(*ghosts make masses. Robin begins to writhe in agony.*)*

Robin: Oh! Oh! Don't do that! I can't stand it!

Sir Rod: Painful, isn't it? It gets worse by degrees.

Robin: Oh! Oh! Stop a bit! Stop it, will you? I want to speak.

(*Sir Roderic makes signs to the Ghosts, who resume their positions.*)

Sir Rod: Better?

Robin: Yes, better now! Whew!

Sir Rod: Well, do you consent?

Robin: But it's such an ungentlemanly thing to do!

Sir Rod: As you please. (*to Ghosts*) Carry on!

Robin: Stop— I can't stand it! I agree! I promise! It shall be done!

Sir Rod: Today?

Robin: Today!

Sir Rod: At once?

Robin: At once! I retract! I apologize! I had no idea it was anything like that!

*This is the printed stage direction. The original and very effective staging was as follows: The Ghosts are in an arc across the stage, Roderic being in front, center. Robin has walked to center as he ends his last speech. The Ghosts, taking their cue from Roderic, all raise their right arms, then throwing all their weight onto a step forward, bring down their arms with all forefingers pointing at Robin, who promptly falls to the ground on his "Oh! Oh!" They resume their position, and repeat the gesture. Robin says "Don't do that!" They do it again, and he says "I can't stand it!" Roderic speaks, and they repeat their gestures once more, and then drop their arms at a sign from Roderic. When he says "Carry on!" they again repeat this gesture, holding it until Robin says "At once!" Then they relax, and laugh as they go into their Chorus.)