

Rose Maybud: Very prim and proper and a slave to etiquette, Rose is very inexperienced in the ways of the world. Her heart is easily won depending on circumstance. She takes herself very seriously. A child pretending to be all grown up.

2 speeches to prepare

HAN. Whither away, dear Rose? On some errand of charity, as is thy wont?

ROSE A few gifts, dear aunt, for deserving villagers. Lo, here is some peppermint rock for old gaffer Gadderby, a set of false teeth for pretty little Ruth Rowbottom, and a pound of snuff for the poor orphan girl on the hill.

HAN. Ah, Rose, pity that so much goodness should not help to make some gallant youth happy for life! Rose, why dost thou harden that little heart of thine? Is there none hereaway whom thou could'st love?

ROSE And if there were such an one, verily it would ill become me to tell him so.

HAN Nay, dear one, where true love is, there is little need of prim formality.

ROSE Hush, dear aunt, for thy words pain me sorely. Hung in a plated dish-cover to the knocker of the workhouse door, with naught that I could call mine own, save a change of baby-linen and a book of etiquette, little wonder if I have always regarded that work as a voice from a parent's tomb. This hallowed volume (producing a book of etiquette), composed, if I may believe the title-page, by no less an authority than the wife of a Lord Mayor, has been, through life, my guide and monitor. By its solemn precepts I have learnt to test the moral worth of all who approach me. The man who bites his bread, or eats peas with a knife, I look upon as a lost creature, and he who has not acquired the proper way of entering and leaving a room is the object of my pitying horror. There are those in this village who bite their nails, dear aunt, and nearly all are wont to use their pocket combs in public places. In truth I could pursue this painful theme much further, but behold, I have said enough.

ROSE Sir, you are agitated –

RICH. Aye, aye, my lass, well said! I am agitated, true enough! – took flat aback, my girl; but 'tis naught – 'twill pass. (aside) This here heart of mine's a-dictatin' to me like anythink. Question is, have I a right to disregard its promptings?

ROSE Can I do aught to relieve thine anguish, for it seemeth to me that thou art in sore trouble? This apple – (offering a damaged apple).

RICH. (looking at it and returning it). No, my lass, 'tain't that: I'm – I'm took flat aback – I never see anything like you in all my born days. Parbuckle me, if you ain't the loveliest gal I've ever set eyes on. There – I can't say fairer than that, can I?

ROSE No. (aside) The question is, Is it meet that an utter stranger should thus express himself? (Refers to book.) Yes – “Always speak the truth.”

RICH. I'd no thoughts of sayin' this here to you on my own account, for, truth to tell, I was chartered by another; but when I see you my heart it up and it says, says it, "This is the very lass for you, Dick" – "speak up to her, Dick," it says – (it calls me Dick acos we was at school together) – "tell her all, Dick," it says, "never sail under false colours – it's mean!" That's what my heart tells me to say, and in my rough, common-sailor fashion, I've said it, and I'm a-waiting for your reply. I'm a-tremblin', miss. Lookye here – (holding out his hand). That's narvousness!

ROSE (aside) **Now, how should a maiden deal with such an one?** (Consults book.) **"Keep no one in unnecessary suspense."** (aloud) **Behold, I will not keep you in unnecessary suspense.** (Refers to book.) **"In accepting an offer of marriage, do so with apparent hesitation."** (aloud) **I take you, but with a certain show of reluctance.** (Refers to book.) **"Avoid any appearance of eagerness."** (aloud) **Though you will bear in mind that I am far from anxious to do so.** (Refers to book.) **"A little show of emotion will not be misplaced!"** (aloud) **Pardon this tear!** (Wipes her eye.)

RICH. Rose, you've made me the happiest blue-jacket in England! I wouldn't change places with the Admiral of the Fleet, no matter who he's a-huggin' of at this present moment! But, axin' your pardon, miss (wiping his lips with his hand), might I be permitted to salute the flag I'm a-goin' to sail under?

ROSE (referring to book). **"An engaged young lady should not permit too many familiarities."** (aloud) **Once!** (RICHARD kisses her.)