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Adapted from the 1846-47 serialized penny dreadful,
The String of Pearls: A Romance

Norman Maine Publishing

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Sweeney Todd
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For Nathan and Jacob

Sweeney Todd and the String of Pearls

CLASSIC HORROR. Adapted from the 1846-47 serialized penny dreadful, *The String of Pearls: A Romance*. Last seen at Sweeney Todd's barbershop on Fleet Street, Lieutenant Thornhill has mysteriously gone missing. Thornhill was on his way to deliver a valuable string of pearls to Johanna Oakley on behalf of her fiancé who was thought to be lost at sea. Suspecting Todd had something to do with Thornhill's disappearance, Johanna disguises herself as a boy and works undercover as Todd's assistant. In the meantime, unbeknownst to Johanna, her fiancé has been imprisoned by Todd's friend, Mrs. Lovett, in a cellar beneath her pie shop. Todd's murderous activities are finally uncovered when the smell of decaying bodies from a crypt under St. Dunstan's church tips off authorities to Todd's grisly crimes. A specially constructed barber chair propels Todd's victims through a trapdoor into the basement, where he slits their throats with a straight razor. Todd then robs his victims of their valuables and drags their bodies through an underground tunnel to Mrs. Lovett's shop, where the bodies are butchered, made into meat pies, and sold to unsuspecting customers.

Performance Time: Approximately 100-120 minutes.

About the Story

The razor-wielding, murderous barber, Sweeney Todd, first appeared as a character in *The String of Pearls: A Romance*, which was published as a penny dreadful and appeared in 18 weekly parts in *The People's Periodical and Family Library* from 1846-47. Penny dreadfuls were printed in England beginning in the 1830s and featured sensational storylines that unfolded over a series of weeks. The penny dreadfuls were illustrated and were usually eight pages long. Printed on cheap pulp paper, they cost just one penny and were sold at newsstands and dry goods stores.

Since its publication, the story of Sweeney Todd has spurred numerous stage and film adaptations. The story was first adapted for the stage by George Dibdin Pitt as *The String of Pearls: The Fiend of Fleet Street* and debuted on March 1, 1847. British playwright Christopher Bond's 1973 adaptation, *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, was later adapted into the 1979 musical by Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler.

Meat Pies

(From *A Propre New Booke of Cokery*, 1545)

1 ½ lbs. beef or lamb roast, cooked, minced in small pieces
½ tsp. pepper (or to taste)
½ tsp. salt (or to taste)
½ cup beef suet or marrow, diced or cubed
¼ cup vinegar, red wine or cider
½ cup prunes, sliced
⅓ cup raisins
⅓ cup dates, chopped
1-2 cups beef broth

In a large bowl, combine meat, spices, suet or marrow, vinegar, and fruit. Add enough broth to thoroughly wet the mixture. The final consistency should be runny. Line a 9-inch pie pan with pastry dough (see recipe below) and fill with the meat mixture. Add a pastry lid or leave open-faced. Bake at 375° F until filling is bubbling and the pastry is cooked, approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.

4 cups pastry flour
1 tsp. salt (optional)
1 ½ cup butter
4 egg yolks, slightly beaten
2-4 Tbs. ice cold water (optional, but potentially necessary)

In a large bowl, combine flour and salt. Cut in butter with a pastry knife until mixture is crumbly and resembles coarse sand. Add egg yolks. Knead, adding water a spoonful at a time until pastry forms a ball and leaves sides of bowl. Separate dough into 2 equal portions, cover with a towel and let rest for 10-15 minutes. Roll out one portion for pie shell, and another for the lid.

Characters

(8 M, 7 F, 4 flexible, extras)

SWEENEY TODD: Murderous barber who owns a barbershop on Fleet Street; wears a vest, coat, and pants.

MRS. LOVETT: Sweeney Todd's partner in crime; Todd took her off the streets and set up with her own meat pie business.

JOHANNA OAKLEY: Spectacle-maker's daughter who is secretly engaged to Mark Ingestrie.

LIEUTENANT THORNHILL: British military officer who sets out to deliver a string of pearls to Johanna Oakley; good-looking, weather-beaten, wears a wig and hat and carries a fancy walking stick.

JARVIS WILLIAMS/MARK INGESTRIE: Mrs. Lovett's meat pie cook who has been imprisoned in her bake house.

TOBIAS RAGG: Sweeney Todd's young apprentice.

ARABELLA WILMOT: Johanna's friend.

CHARLOTTE: A serving girl at Mrs. Lovett's pie shop.

EDITH: A serving girl at Mrs. Lovett's pie shop.

SIR RICHARD BLUNT: Court magistrate.

COLONEL JEFFERY: Colonel in the Indian Army and friend of Lieutenant Thornhill; wears a coat.

MR./MRS. MUNDEL: Moneylender; flexible.

MR./MRS. FOGG: Caretaker at Newgate Prison and asylum; flexible.

MR./MRS. WATSON: Fogg's assistant at Newgate; flexible.

MR. WRANKLEY: Tobacconist who becomes one of Sweeney Todd's victims; thickset and not very well upon his feet.

MRS. WRANKLEY: Mr. Wrankley's wife who is in search of her missing husband.

CUSTOMER 1: Customer at Mrs. Lovett's pie shop; female.

CUSTOMER 2: Customer at Mrs. Lovett's pie shop; male.

BOY/GIRL: Messenger; can be played by an adult; flexible.



EXTRAS: As Wealthy Gentleman, Woman, Pie Shop Customers, and Passerbys.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change the script accordingly.

Setting

1785, London, late summer.

Set

Upstage, a scrim spans the length of the stage. At center, Saint Dunstan's Church is visible, complete with two spires and a bracket clock. To represent Temple Gardens a small sliding set unit can be used along with a small garden bench. For Mundel's pawnshop, a small sliding set unit can be used along with a counter or table. Three primary acting areas are evident and are described below.

Sweeney Todd's Barbershop. At SR is Todd's barbershop, elevated 12"-18" off the floor. The exterior displays a sign that reads, "Sweeney Todd's Barbershoppe. 186 Fleet Street. 'Easy shaving for a penny, As good as you will find any'." A door leads into the shop, and a stationary red-and-white barber's pole hangs to one side of it. The interior features several shelves with various equipment, a small bench for waiting customers, and a large, old-fashioned oak chair. This chair is permanently fixed to an area of the floor, which is capable of being triggered on the downstage side such that a patron falls feet first into Sweeney's cellar. A locked door on the right wall leads to an unseen parlor. A stairwell against the upstage wall leads to Todd's private quarters. The shop has a front window.

Mrs. Lovett's Pie Shop. At SL is Mrs. Lovett's pie shop, elevated 24"-36" off the floor. A sign reads, "Mrs. Lovett's

Meat Pies. ‘The best pies in London.’” When open for business, a couple of tables are set out on the street and an additional two or three tables are inside the shop. A U-shaped bar accommodates several stools for patrons. On the upstage wall is a lift that is used to bring meat pies up from the cellar.

Undefined area CS. At stage level at center, separating Todd’s Barbershop and Mrs. Lovett’s Pie Shop, is an undefined area used for several locales including the vaults of St. Dunstan’s Church, the cellar of Mrs. Lovett’s shop, etc. These areas are defined by the simple addition of a few necessary set items: benches, tables, wooden chairs, a desk, etc.

Mrs. Ragg’s home. Table and chairs.

Tobias’ cell. At USC, behind the scrim, is a small platform, 8’-10’ high, which will serve as the cell.

Office at Newgate Prison. Desk and two wooden chairs.

Old Bailey. Benches and chairs.

NOTE: The set can be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows. If possible, the two shops, Todd’s and Mrs. Lovett’s, can present an exterior façade capable of being unhinged, revolved, slid back, or totally removed to reveal their interiors. Both shops feature a second story, the sleeping quarters for Todd and Lovett, though neither is practical.

Synopsis of Scenes

The action of the play is intended to be ongoing with as few blackouts as possible. The scenes should blend into one another, sometimes with the aid of sound during transitions. The scenes below are indicated throughout the script only to facilitate ease of rehearsal during production.

Act I

Prologue: Old Bailey courtroom.

Scene 1: Todd's barbershop.

Scene 2: Temple Gardens.

Scene 3: Todd's barbershop

Scene 4: Mrs. Lovett's pie shop.

Scene 5: Temple Gardens.

Scene 6: Mrs. Lovett's pie shop.

Scene 7: Mundel's pawnshop.

Scene 8: Temple Gardens.

Scene 9: Mrs. Ragg's home.

Scene 10: Newgate Prison office and Old Bailey courtroom.

Intermission

Act II

Scene 1: Old Bailey courtroom.

Scene 2: Sir Richard Blunt's office.

Scene 3: Tobias's cell at Newgate.

Scene 4: Todd's barbershop.

Scene 5: Mrs. Lovett's pie shop.

Scene 6: Todd's barbershop.

Scene 7: Mrs. Lovett's pie shop.

Props

Barber's razor strap	Ledger
Fancy walking stick	Desk
White strip of cloth	Small leather money purse
Shaving cream	Money
Newspaper	Whip
Sealed letter	2 Letters
Wig stand	Placard that reads, "Wanted: A lad, one of strict religious principles preferred."
Coin	Straight razor
Meat pies	Newspaper
Dishrag	Small vial
White rose	Brandy decanter
Trays of meat pies	2 Glasses
Velvet coat, cravat, gloves, silk stockings, for Sweeney Todd	Stack of handbills
Tricorn hat, for Sweeney Todd	Broom
Black eye patch	Handcuffs
String of pearls	Boy's cap and clothes, for Johanna
Check	Farmer's clothing, for Sir Richard Blunt
Potatoes	
Wooden chairs	

Special Effects

Organ music

Judge's gavel

Church chimes

Ghastly scream

Pastoral music

Bustling street sounds

Inmates screaming

Sound of a bolt being drawn
back

Sound of a bolt sliding into
place

Sound of Townspeople
gathering

Sweeney Todd

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“Oh, do not look upon me
with those dead eyes!”

—Sweeney Todd

ACT I

Prologue

(AT RISE: London, 1785. A courtroom in the Old Bailey. House goes to one-half. Organ music in for 20-30 seconds. Lights fade. A judge's gavel is heard three times. We hear the voice of Sir Richard Blunt, the court magistrate, offstage as a spot slowly begins to fade in on Sweeney Todd, standing DSC facing the "judge." Note: At the beginning and end of each act, the actor playing Todd will assume this position, focusing on a spot at the back and center of the audience.)

BLUNT: *(Voiceover.)* Mr. Sweeney Todd, you are brought forth this day in this courtroom of Bailey Hall accused of the most heinous crimes ever perpetrated against the citizens of London. We have heard a great deal of testimony against your person with precious little presented on your behalf. According to the statutes of the King's law, you are hereby granted the opportunity to speak in your own defense. Do you so choose, Mr. Todd, to indulge in said opportunity?

(By this time, Todd's spot is fully up.)

TODD: Oh, indeed, sir, I never pass up an opportunity to...indulge. *(Pause.)* Allow me to clarify. It is not my intent, Your Honor, to summon any defense of my actions. They speak for themselves and have been well documented in this court. However, permit me to illuminate but a few details of my past experiences, at the end of which I shall heartily relinquish my involvement with these and all other...proceedings. When I was a boy, my father fell prey to the far-reaching tentacles of the insatiable and monstrous appetite that today marks the city of London in this year of 1785. *(Behind the scrim, a light comes up to reveal a Woman*

being “courted” by a Wealthy Gentleman.) When he abandoned us, my mother, destitute, became a whore, servicing those wealthy, aristocratic gentlemen so far removed from the city’s squalor and, over time, establishing a fair reputation among them. Within two years, she had become syphilitic. She died a short time thereafter. (*We see the image of a Young Boy being escorted into a cell, thrown onto the floor, and beaten with a strap.*) Being thus orphaned, with no relatives nor guardian, I was placed in the children’s wing at Newgate. Like my mother, I, too, was...consumed throughout my tenure there, though without recompense of any sort. I was trained to provide haircuts and sometimes shavings for the others in my ward. Thus, it happened when I came of age and was finally released that I was able to set up my own practice. Gradually, I earned a certain degree of notoriety as a reputable barber—quiet, capable, skilled in my trade. (*Stage lights fade in, revealing the exterior of Todd’s barbershop. Tobias Ragg draws away the exterior façade, preparing for the day.*) The years passed, my clientele increased, and I began to have need of additional help. I have, in my time, graciously allowed a number of apprenticeships to fortunate boys... (*Heads into the shop.*) ...those willing to meet the most basic of requirements.

(The special on Sweeney now fades as the interior of the barbershop comes into view. The chimes of St. Dunstan’s sound as the lights crossfade.)

Scene 1

(August 19, 1785. Interior of Sweeney Todd's barbershop. Tobias sweeps the floor as Todd crosses into the scene.)

TODD: *(To Tobias.)* You will remember, Tobias Ragg, that you are now my apprentice, that you have of me had board, washing, and lodging, with the exception that you don't sleep here, that you take your meals at home, and that your mother, Mrs. Ragg, does your washing, which she may very well do, being a laundress in the Temple and making no end of money. As for lodging, you lodge here, you know, very comfortably in the shop all day. Now, are you not a happy dog?

TOBIAS: *(Timidly.)* Yes, sir.

TODD: You will acquire a first-rate profession, and quite as good as the law, which your mother tells me she would have put you to, only that a little weakness of the headpiece unqualified you. And, now, Tobias, listen to me, and treasure up every word I say.

TOBIAS: Yes, sir.

TODD: I'll cut your throat from ear to ear if you repeat one word of what passes in this shop, or dare to make any supposition, or draw any conclusion from anything you may see, or hear, or fancy you see or hear. Now, do you understand me?

TOBIAS: Yes, sir, I won't say nothing. I wish, sir, as I may be made into veal pies at Lovett's if I as much as says a word.

TODD: Very good. I am satisfied. I am quite satisfied. And mark me—the shop, and the shop only—is your place.

TOBIAS: Yes, sir.

TODD: And if any customer gives you a penny, you can keep it, so that if you get enough of them you will become a rich man...only I will take care of them for you, and when I think you want them, I will let you have them.

TOBIAS: Thank you, sir.

TODD: But look sharp, boy. Our first customer approaches. *(Lieutenant Thornhill, with walking stick in hand, enters the shop. Tobias wipes the seat of the chair and retrieves a white strip of cloth for Todd to wrap Thornhill's neck prior to shaving. To Thornhill.)* Good morning, sir. Good morning. I suppose you want to be shaved, and it is well you have come here, for there isn't a shaving shop, although I say it, in the whole city of London that ever thinks of polishing anybody off as I do.

THORNHILL: Indeed so, sir.

(Todd make preparations to shave Thornhill. Tobias removes his wig and takes his walking stick.)

TODD: Yes, very good. Take a seat, sir, and tell me...I've not seen you around these parts before. Who are you? Where did you come from? And where are you going?

THORNHILL: My name is Lieutenant Thornhill. I have just returned from an expedition to India. As for the rest, since you are so fond of asking questions, answer me one.

(Todd starts to lather Thornhill's face and neck with shaving cream.)

TODD: Yes, of course. What is it, sir?

THORNHILL: Do you know of a Mr. Oakley who lives somewhere in London and is a spectacle maker?

TODD: Yes, to be sure I do. John Oakley, the spectacle maker. Lives on Fore Street with his nag of a wife and a beautiful daughter, name of Johanna.

THORNHILL: Ah, poor thing.

TODD: Why poor?

THORNHILL: I spoke of my recent voyage to India. On that same ship sailed a young man to whom young Johanna was betrothed. How he used to go on about her during the long night watches. I could almost see her sometimes as he told

me of her soft beaming eyes; her little, gentle pouting lips; and the dimples that played about her mouth. But it's no use grieving. He is dead and gone, poor fellow, and the saltwater washes over as brave a heart as ever beat. Now it is my melancholy errand to inform poor Johanna that Mark Ingestrie is no more.

TODD: 'Tis pity, to be sure. But death comes to us all, Lieutenant, with but little recompense.

THORNHILL: Yes. His sweetheart, though, shall have the string of pearls for all that.

TODD: String of pearls?

THORNHILL: How the poor young sailor came by them in the first place, we never knew. But they were entrusted to me. And if she cannot be his wife in this world, she can, at least, be rich and happy until she meets him aloft.

TODD: You carry these pearls with you now?

THORNHILL: Of course, for I must deliver them to Miss Oakley as soon as we are finished here, now that I have found out her address.

TODD: Yes, you'll see it at once over on Fore Street. Tobias, my lad, go to Leadenhall Market and bring a small bag of the thick biscuits from Mr. Peterson's. Say they are for me.

TOBIAS: Yes, sir. *(Exits.)*

TODD: Now, then, where can my strop be? I had it this minute. Oh, I recollect, I took it into the parlor. Sit still, sir. I shall not be gone a moment. *(Hands Thornhill a newspaper.)* By the by, you can amuse yourself with the "Courier."

(Todd disappears into the parlor. Shortly thereafter, the barber chair on which Thornhill is seated collapses, sending him into the depths below. A few moments later, we hear a ghastly scream. Todd has slashed Thornhill's throat. Pastoral music is heard as the lights fade on the shop and rise on the garden bench unit, which slides on from DSL. Note: Several Passersbys meander across the stage throughout the ensuing scene in the Temple Gardens.)

Scene 2

(Temple Gardens. An anxious young woman, Johanna Oakley, stands DSL. After a few moments, Arabella Wilmot, enters DSR. Music fades. Arabella spies Johanna.)

ARABELLA: *(Calls.)* Johanna?

JOHANNA: Arabella!

(Arabella and Johanna cross to each other, meet CS, and embrace.)

ARABELLA: I have kept you waiting.

JOHANNA: No matter. You are here now. Thank you for coming.

ARABELLA: Why, Johanna, you so seldom call upon me now that I suppose I must esteem it as a very special act of grace and favor to see you.

JOHANNA: Arabella, I do not know what you will say to me when I tell you that my invitation to you is because I am in a difficulty and want your advice.

ARABELLA: You surprise and alarm me by your serious countenance, Johanna.

JOHANNA: The subject is a serious one: I love.

ARABELLA: Of that, I'm afraid I know but little, my friend. But why so distraught? You do not mean to tell me that it is possible for you to love any man without his loving you in return?

JOHANNA: You are right there, Arabella. I did not ask to meet you to speak of a hopeless passion...far from it. *(Close to tears.)*

ARABELLA: *(Concerned.)* Why, Johanna...what is it?

JOHANNA: It is the 20th day of August! It is! It is! *(Crosses DSL.)* I thought I could have controlled this, but I cannot!

(Arabella follows her.)

ARABELLA: My dear Johanna, what is this? What has happened? And what of it being the 20th of August?

(Johanna turns to Arabella and leads her to the bench, where they both sit.)

JOHANNA: Lend me your serious attention, Arabella, and you shall hear. It was on this day two years ago, here in these very gardens, when last I met with someone. He had just come from a stormy interview.

ARABELLA: Of what nature?

JOHANNA: Of his future profession. He had met with his uncle and his guardian. The two quarreled irreconcilably. Mr. Grant wanted to make a lawyer of him, you see. But Mark would hear nothing of it. He abhorred the very idea of a profession in the Temple.

ARABELLA: Mark...Ingestrie?

JOHANNA: *(Nods.)* At length he told me that he must go and seek his fortune—that fortune which he hoped to share with me. He said that he had an opportunity of undertaking a voyage to India, and that if he were successful, he should return and commence some pursuit in London more congenial to his thoughts and habits than the law.

ARABELLA: What next?

JOHANNA: He told me that he loved me.

ARABELLA: And you believed him?

JOHANNA: Arabella, you would have believed him had you heard him speak. There are times and seasons when we know that we are listening to the majestic voice of truth, and there are tones which sink at once into the heart, carrying with them a conviction of their sincerity which neither time nor circumstance can alter. Such were the tones in which Mark Ingestrie spoke to me.

(Pause.)

ARABELLA: Does your father know?

JOHANNA: He knew us only as friends and frowned even upon that. Arabella, Father and Mr. Grant are very old and dear friends.

ARABELLA: Oh, Johanna.

JOHANNA: Mark and I made an agreement on this precise day, two years ago, that he was to come to me or send to me news of his whereabouts. If I heard nothing from him, I was to conclude he was no more, and I cannot help so concluding now!

ARABELLA: But the day has not yet passed!

JOHANNA: I know it has not, and yet I rest upon but a slender hope. And, now, Arabella, you know all I have to tell you. You know how truly I have loved, and how after teaching myself to expect happiness, I have met with nothing but despair. You may judge for yourself how sadly the fate of Mark Ingestrie must deeply affect me, and how lost my mind must be in all kinds of conjecture concerning him.

ARABELLA: My dear Johanna, I never expected to hear from your lips so sad a tale. This is most mournful. Though I was half inclined before to quarrel with you for this tardy confidence—for this is the first I have heard of this whole affair—the misfortunes that oppress you are quite sufficient without my adding to them by the shadow of any reproach.

JOHANNA: I will own I did hesitate to inflict upon you my miseries.

ARABELLA: But did you think so lightly of our friendship that it was to be entrusted with nothing but what wore a pleasant aspect? True friendship is surely best shown in the encounter of difficulty and distress. I grieve, Johanna, indeed, that you have so much mistaken me.

JOHANNA: Nay, now you do me an injustice. It was not that I doubted your friendship for one moment, Arabella, but that I did, indeed, shrink from the shadow of my sorrows over what should be and what I hope is the sunshine of your

heart. That was the respect which deterred me from making you aware of what I suppose I must call this ill-fated passion.

ARABELLA: Not ill-fated, Johanna. Let us believe that the time will come when it will be far otherwise than ill-fated.

JOHANNA: But what do you think of all that I have told you? Can you gather from it any hope?

(A Young Boy/Girl enters SR, carrying a sealed note. He approaches Arabella and Johanna.)

ARABELLA: Abundance of hope, Johanna. You have no certainty of the death of Ingestrie.

YOUNG BOY: *(To Arabella.)* Miss Johanna Oakley?

JOHANNA: I am Johanna Oakley.

(Young Boy hands Johanna the letter and exits SL.)

ARABELLA: How very curious.

JOHANNA: Indeed. *(Unfolds the letter. Reads.)* "For news of Mark Ingestrie, come to the Temple Gardens one hour before sunset, and do not fear addressing a man who will be holding a white rose in his hand."

ARABELLA: *(Places her hand on Johanna's shoulder.)* Johanna!

JOHANNA: He lives! He lives! Oh, it is daylight now and sunshine compared to the black midnight of despair. Mark Ingestrie lives, and I shall be happy yet!

ARABELLA: You will go?

JOHANNA: Of course, I shall go! The white rose is an emblem of his purity and affection, and that is why his messenger carries it. I will be there. One hour before sunset—aye, two hours before sunset! Perchance he returns to tell me he can now make me his and that no obstacle can now interfere to frustrate our union. *(Rises and crosses a few steps DSL.)* Oh, that this messenger had come but yesterday! What hours of anguish I should have been spared! But I will

not complain. In the consciousness that I shall soon hear blissful tidings of Mark Ingestrie, I will banish every fear.

(Arabella rises and joins Johanna.)

ARABELLE: Always, Johanna, abundance of hope.

(Arabella and Johanna embrace and exit DSL. Bustling street sounds of London are heard. The garden unit slides off SL as the lights crossfade back to Todd's barbershop.)

Scene 3

(Todd's barbershop. Tobias is in the shop staring at Lieutenant Thornhill's wig, which he had removed prior to Thornhill being shaved in Scene 1. After a few moments, Todd enters from the parlor.)

TODD: What are you doing here, boy? Did I not discharge you to fetch some biscuits from Mr. Peterson?

(Tobias hastily returns the wig to its wig stand.)

TOBIAS: If you please, sir, I have forgot the money and have run all the way back from St. Paul's churchyard.

TODD: *(Advancing.)* Speak the truth, or your last hour has come! How long were you peeping through that door before you came in?

TOBIAS: Peeping, sir?

TODD: Yes, peeping! Don't repeat my words but answer me at once. You will find it better for you in the end.

TOBIAS: I wasn't peeping at all, sir. I only just come back because I hadn't any money to pay for the biscuits.

TODD: And what are you doing standing there with those items?

TOBIAS: Nothing, sir. Only some gentleman seems to have left his hat and stick.

(Todd takes the hat and walking stick from Tobias and places the wig on a shelf.)

TODD: So he has. As my apprentice, I am obligated to teach you certain lessons in your station, one of which is to instruct you to make no remarks about that which does not concern you. You may think what you like, Tobias Ragg, but you shall say only what I like.

(Todd strikes Tobias with the stick.)

TOBIAS: I won't take it no more! I won't be forever knocked about in this way, I tell you, Sweeney Todd, I won't!

TODD: You won't? Have you forgotten your mother?

TOBIAS: You say you have a power over my mother, but I don't know what it is, and I cannot and will believe it no more! I'll leave you, and come of it what may. I'll go to sea or anywhere rather than stay in such a place as this!

TODD: Oh, you will, will you? Tobias, you and I must come to some explanation. I'll tell you what power I have over your mother and then perhaps you will be satisfied. Last winter, when the frost had continued 18 weeks and you and your mother were starving, she was employed to clean out the chambers of a Mr. King in the Temple, a cold-hearted, severe man, who never forgave anything in all his life and never will.

TOBIAS: I remember. We were starving and owed a whole guinea for rent. But Mother borrowed it and paid it, and after that got a situation where she now is.

TODD: Ah, you think so. The rent was paid, but, Tobias, my boy, a word in your ear. She took a silver candlestick from Mr. King's chambers to pay it. I know it. I can prove it. Think of that, Tobias, and be discreet.

TOBIAS: Have mercy upon us. They would take her life!

TODD: Aye, to be sure, they would. They would hang her. Hang her, I say. *(Todd grabs Tobias by the hair and draws him near. Into Tobias's ear.)* Now mind, if you force me, by any conduct of your own, to mention this thing, you are your own mother's executioner.

(Colonel Jeffery enters, looking for a barbershop.)

TOBIAS: *(To Todd.)* Oh, horrible! Horrible!

TODD: Oh, you don't like that? Indeed, that don't suit you, Master Tobias? Be discreet then, and you have nothing to

fear. Do not force me to show a power which will be as complete as it is terrible.

(Colonel Jeffery has now located Todd's shop and quietly enters.)

TOBIAS: I will say nothing! I will think nothing!

(Todd raises the stick, preparing to strike Tobias a second time. He stops when he notices Tobias staring at Colonel Jeffery. Todd hastily rises. Colonel Jeffery stares with concern at Tobias and with suspicion at Todd.)

TODD: *(To Colonel Jeffery.)* But forgive me, sir. My apprentice here begs tutoring. *(Ushers Colonel Jeffery into the chair.)* Shaved, cut, or dressed, I am at your service. But, first, excuse me, sir. *(Turns back to Tobias and gives him a coin.)* Tobias, back to Leadenhall Market with you, and don't say that I didn't give you the money this time. I think I did before, but you swallowed it. And when you return, remember the words I gave to you. *(Tobias scurries out. Todd turns his attention to Colonel Jeffery.)* And now, sir, with what shall we begin?

JEFFERY: *(On his guard.)* I am not interested in being shaved at the present, sir.

TODD: No? What is it, then, you require of me?

JEFFERY: I inquire after a friend of mine, an officer in the Navy, who, I have reason to believe, visited your shop in recent days.

TODD: Officer?

JEFFERY: That's right. The Navy. Recently returned from India.

TODD: Good-looking man, weather-beaten, with [bright blue eyes, and rather fair hair]? *[Or insert description of actor playing Thornhill].*

JEFFERY: Indeed. Lieutenant Thornhill.

TODD: Oh, to be sure, he came here, and I shaved him and polished him off.

JEFFERY: What do you mean by "polishing him off"?

TODD: Brushing him up a bit and making him tidy. He said he had somewhere to go in the city and asked me the address of a Mr. Oakley. I gave it to him, and then he went away. However, as I was standing at my door about five minutes afterwards, it seemed to me, as well as I could see in the distance, that he got into some row near the market.

JEFFERY: A Mr. Oakley, you say?

TODD: Yes...spectacle maker.

JEFFERY: And that's all you heard from Lieutenant Thornhill?

TODD: You never spoke a truer word in your life.

JEFFERY: Well, he was going in search of just such a person. As he had property of considerable value about him, I shall go there and ascertain if he reached his destination.

TODD: A very good idea, sir. Oakley...on Fore Street, remember. Little shop with two windows. You cannot miss it.

JEFFERY: *(Eyeing Todd warily.)* Yes, well, we shall see. *(Rises and starts out. Turns to Todd.)* Perhaps I shall see you again, Mr. Todd.

TODD: Indeed so, sir.

JEFFERY: For a shave, of course.

TODD: Of course.

(Jeffery exits the shop. With a frown, Todd picks up Thornhill's wig and stares at it. He glances at the door as the lights crossfade into the next scene. The clock of St. Dunstan's strikes eleven.)

Scene 4

(Mrs. Lovett's pie shop. Two serving girls, Charlotte and Edith, are opening up Mrs. Lovett's pie shop. Tobias sits at one of the outside tables devouring a meat pie. Charlotte is wiping down the table where Tobias is sitting.)

CHARLOTTE: *(To Tobias.)* Here, now, don't be making a mess before the lawyers come.

TOBIAS: Almost done.

CHARLOTTE: What's your hurry? If you wait a few minutes, I'll bring you a fresh pie hot from the oven instead of that old thing from yesterday.

TOBIAS: It's all the same to me. Besides, I got to get these biscuits back or Todd'll have my hide.

LOVETT: *(Impatiently.)* Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE: Coming! *(To Tobias.)* You never come 'round no more. Why don't you stop by this evening on your way home?

TOBIAS: *(Nearly finished eating the pie.)* Can't. Got to go to my mother's.

(Todd enters SR.)

CHARLOTTE: *(Disgustedly.)* Your mother's. She can't give you what I can.

LOVETT: *(Shouts.)* Charlotte, the pies are up! Are you coming or ain't you?!

CHARLOTTE: *(Returning to work.)* Yes, Mrs. Lovett.

(Todd stands behind Tobias, watching him finish the pie. As Tobias rises and turns, he is startled to find Todd standing there.)

TODD: Couldn't resist the pie shop, eh, Tobias?

TOBIAS: No, sir. But I've only been here a minute. And I've got your biscuits, sir.

TODD: Hark ye, Tobias. The only thing I can excuse in the way of delay upon an errand is one of Mrs. Lovett's pies. That I can look over, so think no more about it. Now, get you back to the shop at once and mind any customers there. I have some small business to attend to, but I shall return within the hour.

TOBIAS: Yes, sir. Right away, sir.

(Tobias returns to the barbershop. Mrs. Lovett crosses to Todd.)

LOVETT: *(To Todd.)* Where does one find adequate help these days?

TODD: Not on Fleet Street, I assure you, ma'am.

(Todd and Mrs. Lovett are not only business associates, but friends as well, enjoying a special bond with each other. They kiss each other on the cheek.)

LOVETT: Good day, Mr. Todd.

TODD: Good day, Mrs. Lovett.

(Mrs. Lovett and Todd sit at one of the outside tables, so as not to be heard by Charlotte and Edith, who continue their preparations during the following exchange.)

LOVETT: You can entrust your shop to the boy?

TODD: For the time being, though I fear not for long. You can take this moment?

LOVETT: Edith and Charlotte have both turned out fine workers, though the same, unfortunately, cannot be said of Skinner.

TODD: The new cook?

LOVETT: *(Nods.)* This one has had a particularly brief duration. Six weeks ago to the day I first hired him.

TODD: What danger do you apprehend?

LOVETT: Great and immediate. He has refused to work, a sign that he has gotten desperate, hopeless, and impatient.

TODD: So it goes with mine as well. *(Note: The following actions occur during the ensuing dialogue between Todd and Lovett. Tobias is seen in the barbershop. He stares at the locked parlor door, deliberating. He goes to the street door and peers out, checking to make sure the coast is clear. Closing the door, he returns to the shop and begins looking for something with which to break the lock on the parlor door. Finally, he retrieves an iron bar used to lock the windows and proceeds to the parlor door surreptitiously.)* He grows suspicious, and he knows too much. His very dimwittedness endangers the situation further, for he lacks discretion in the company of strangers. On top of it, he has grown surly. I do not appreciate surliness in a boy. Something must and shall be done. For your part with the Skinner lad, I will be here at midnight. We shall see if a vacancy cannot be made in your establishment.

LOVETT: It will be necessary. It is but one more. Eat or be eaten, Mr. Todd.

TODD: That's all, that's all. And I must say you have a very perfect and philosophic mode of settling the question.

LOVETT: And when is this all to have an end?

TODD: Secure your patience, Mrs. Lovett.

LOVETT: So I have, Mr. Todd, for nigh on eight years now.

TODD: Has it been so long?

LOVETT: You were a mere lad, love.

TODD: And you a bonny lass.

LOVETT: Not so bonny for all that. I'll never forget what you did, Mr. Todd. How you took me in off the street...set me up in my own business.

TODD: Now, now, love, don't get all weepy on me. We must also remember your own creative contribution to our little collaboration.

LOVETT: Indeed, Mr. Todd. Bound we are together, indeed.
But I have begun to fear the night.

TODD: Ah, Mrs. Lovett, but a few more weeks. Then, never-ending rest from all these sordid matters shall be yours.
(Rises.) I tarry. I must go to the West End for a charming bit of intrigue. And your lawyers will soon be here, as they forever descend at the hour of noon, vultures demanding their veal and pork pies, their...carrion.

(Mrs. Lovett rises.)

LOVETT: The law must be served, Mr. Todd.

TODD: Yes, mustn't it?

(Mrs. Lovett returns to her shop to prepare for the noon onslaught of customers. Todd exits the shop. He begins to exit SL when he hears an unusual sound coming from his own shop. It is Tobias, who has managed at this precise moment to break the parlor door padlock. Tobias freezes, petrified and uncertain of whether to proceed. Todd stares suspiciously at his shop for a moment before exiting SL. At the same time Todd exits, Colonel Jeffery enters SR. Tobias returns to check the exterior door at the same instant that Jeffery happens upon the shop. Thinking for an instant that Todd has returned, Tobias is startled, falling backward upon the floor. Colonel Jeffery crosses to help Tobias up.)

JEFFERY: Here now, boy, settle down. I mean you no harm.

TOBIAS: You startled me is all, sir. I thought you were Mr. Todd, see.

JEFFERY: And what if I were? You reside with him here, do you not? Is he not a kind master to you who seems so anxious?

TOBIAS: No...I mean, yes...I mean...

JEFFERY: What is the meaning of this confusion?

TOBIAS: Nothing, nothing.

(Colonel Jeffery pulls out a coin.)

JEFFERY: I say, lad, here is a guinea for you, if you will tell me what became of the man of a seafaring appearance who came to your master's house to be shaved.

TOBIAS: I cannot tell you. I cannot tell what I do not know.

JEFFERY: But you have some idea, probably. Come, I will make it worth your while. You must speak frankly what you think.

TOBIAS: I know nothing. I think nothing. Please, I have nothing to say, except that he was shaved and went away.

JEFFERY: Come, now. It is evident that you know something but hesitate either from fear or some other motive to tell it. Shall I take you before the magistrate?

TOBIAS: Do with me what you will. I cannot help it. I have nothing to say to you, nothing whatsoever. *(Steps away from Colonel Jeffery. To himself.)* Oh, my poor mother! If it were not for you...

JEFFERY: What then?

TOBIAS: Please...

(Panicked, Tobias runs from the shop, starts SL in the direction of Mrs. Lovett's, thinks better of it, turns around, and runs off SR. Colonel Jeffery calls after him from the doorway of the shop. The lights crossfade as the garden unit slides on.)

Scene 5

(Temple Gardens. Johanna is seated upon the bench, nervously awaiting word about Mark Ingestrie. From the doorway of the barbershop, Colonel Jeffery approaches the bench. He sees Johanna, extracts a white rose from his coat, and approaches her.)

JEFFERY: I have the honor of speaking to Miss Johanna Oakley?

(Johanna rises.)

JOHANNA: Yes, sir. You are Mark Ingestrie's messenger?

JEFFERY: I am. That is to say, I am he who comes to bring you news of Mark Ingestrie, although I grieve to say I am not the messenger who was expressly appointed by him to do so.

JOHANNA: Your look is sad and serious. You seem as if you would announce that some misfortune had occurred.

JEFFERY: This is one of the saddest errands I ever came upon. There is much to impart, and if from all that I have learned I cannot, dare not, tell you that Mark Ingestrie lives, I likewise shrink from telling you he is no more.

JOHANNA: There is a hope then. Oh, there is a hope!

JEFFERY: I ought to tell you who I am, that you may have confidence in what I have to relate to you. My name is Jeffery, and I am a colonel in the Indian Army.

JOHANNA: I am much beholden to you, sir.

JEFFERY: I must begin by asking you if you are aware under what circumstances Mark Ingestrie went abroad?

JOHANNA: I am aware that a quarrel with his uncle was the great cause and that his main endeavor was to better his fortunes so that we might be happy and independent.

JEFFERY: And were you further aware of the sort of adventure upon which he embarked?

JOHANNA: I know nothing further. We met here, on this spot. We parted the gate, and we have never met again.

JEFFERY: Allow me, then, Miss Oakley, to share what it was which so much inflamed the imagination of Mark Ingestrie.

JOHANNA: Please.

JEFFERY: There came to London a gentleman with a well-authenticated report that there had been discovered in one of the small islands near the Indian Seas a river which deposited an enormous quantity of gold dust in its progress to the ocean. Mark attended a preliminary meeting wherein he was told that were he to join the expedition, he would share in any subsequent proceeds. Destitute, but enthusiastic, Mark readily embraced the opportunity. Among the adventurers on the chartered vessel was one Lieutenant Thornhill, with whom Mark developed a remarkable friendship. It was from Thornhill that I received my information.

JOHANNA: A suspicion already crosses my mind.

JEFFERY: I, myself, was aboard a vessel homeward bound from India. Less than 50 miles from land, we sighted a dull red light toward the horizon.

JOHANNA: A ship...on fire!

JEFFERY: Alas, yes. We steered toward it and began to hear the roar of the flames. The vessel was doomed. Long before we could reach the spot upon which it idly floated, a bright shower of sparks rushed up into the air. Then came a roaring sound, after which all was still. The ship had disappeared, and the water had closed over her forever.

JOHANNA: But how knew you that the ship was Mark's?

JEFFERY: Though we had seen the ship go down, we kept our course, hoping to pick up some of its crew, who we presumed had managed to escape the burning vessel. We found only one—a man clinging to a floating piece of the wreck. In ten minutes, the man was onboard our vessel.

JOHANNA: Lieutenant Thornhill.

JEFFERY: Yes. He was, of course, exhausted. But several days later, he told me of the expedition and of Mark Ingestrie, with whom he forged such a strong attachment. Some time before the vessel went down, Mark begged Thornhill to call upon a young lady named Johanna Oakley, the daughter of a spectacle maker in London, should Thornhill be saved and Mark perish.

JOHANNA: (*Grief-stricken.*) Oh, Mark! Mark!

JEFFERY: When we reached the river Thames, Thornhill showed me a string of pearls he was to present to Miss Oakley in his name. He left three days ago with his string of pearls to find out where you reside.

JOHANNA: I never saw him.

JEFFERY: No. From the inquiries I've made since that time, it seems he disappeared somewhere about Fleet Street.

JOHANNA: Disappeared?

(Jarvis Williams enters SR. He seems highly interested in Johanna and Jeffery. Unseen by the two, he eavesdrops on their conversation.)

JEFFERY: Yes. He can be traced to these gardens, and from here, to a barbershop kept by a man named Sweeney Todd. Beyond there, I could obtain no further information.

JOHANNA: Sweeney Todd.

JEFFERY: You know him?

JOHANNA: I know of him.

JEFFERY: I visited his shop and left it most impressed by his peculiarities. Indeed, Thornhill had been there, said Sweeney, but left after he was shaved to seek you out on Fore Street.

JOHANNA: I am left without hope. Mark is lost to me forever!

JEFFERY: The fate of our two friends seems, indeed, to rest upon a very slender foundation. I fear that those precious pearls have figured in shaking even that tenuous base.

JOHANNA: So it would seem. But what are pearls to me? We might have been poor here, but we should have been happy.

JEFFERY: Miss Oakley, I ask that you meet me here again on this day, in a week, at this same hour. I have resolved to discover what has become of Mr. Thornhill, although you care so little for the string of pearls, which he has in trust for you.

JOHANNA: I do, indeed, care little for them, if anything at all.

JEFFERY: Still, they are yours. Your mind is so occupied with grief that you quite forget such strings are of great value. I have seen those pearls, Johanna, and can assure you that they are in themselves a fortune.

JOHANNA: I suppose it is too much for human nature to expect two blessings at once.

JEFFERY: You will meet me again to hear if I have any news for you?

JOHANNA: I will endeavor to do so. *(Rises.)* Farewell, sir. I owe you my best thanks as well for the trouble you have taken as for the kindly manner in which you have detailed to me what has passed.

(Johanna embraces Jeffery.)

JEFFERY: Remember that I bid you adieu with the hope of meeting you again.

(Johanna exits DSL. Colonel Jeffery exits DSR. Jarvis Williams emerges from the shadows, looking after Colonel Jeffery before making his way to Mrs. Lovett's shop.)

Scene 6

(Mrs. Lovett's pie shop. The garden bench slides off as lights fade in on Mrs. Lovett's shop. Edith and Charlotte are cleaning up when Jarvis approaches them.)

JARVIS: *(To Edith.)* Excuse me, miss. Be you the proprietor of this shop?

(Hearing this, Charlotte bursts into laughter.)

EDITH: *(Admonishing.)* Charlotte! *(To Jarvis.)* No, sir. Only a working girl I am.

JARVIS: Then can you direct me to the gentleman who is?

EDITH: I'm afraid I cannot, sir, for no gentleman owns this shop. Nor gentlewoman, either.

CHARLOTTE: Edith, stop being clever. *(Turns to exit.)* I'll get Mrs. Lovett. *(Exits.)*

EDITH: *(To Jarvis.)* Not from around here, are you?

JARVIS: *(Hungrily eyeing a tray of pies.)* Not recently, no.

EDITH: Hungry, are you?

JARVIS: A bit.

EDITH: Money?

JARVIS: No.

EDITH: Friends?

JARVIS: None.

EDITH: Lady?

JARVIS: She whom I loved is false.

EDITH: Oh, pity. *(Crosses to get Jarvis a pie.)* You ain't a bad-looking one, for all that.

(Mrs. Lovett enters and snatches the pie away from Edith.)

LOVETT: *(To Jarvis.)* Go away. We never give to beggars.

JARVIS: I'm not a beggar, ma'am. My name is Jarvis Williams.

LOVETT: Indeed. Charlotte says you want to see me. I'm Mrs. Lovett. I own this shop.

JARVIS: Mrs. Lovett, I do not come to ask alms of you but to know if you can recommend me to any employment.

LOVETT: Recommend you?! A ragged wretch leeching off others?

JARVIS: I am a ragged wretch, and, moreover, quite destitute. I frankly tell you that I would seek for something better if I could, but who would employ one resenting such a wretched appearance as I? It is only some common and ordinary employment that I can hope to obtain and that made me come to you.

LOVETT: Fortune smiles upon you, lad, for just recently have I lost my baker. Insolent young man he was...lazy and ungracious despite my best efforts to preserve him. He has gone to some of his very oldest friends, who will be quite glad to see him, I'm sure. Well, I don't see why we should not make a trial of you, at all events. I will shortly take you down to the bake house and show you what needs to be done. You must live entirely upon the pies unless you like to purchase for yourself anything else, which you may do if you can get the money. We give none, and you must likewise agree never to leave the bake house.

JARVIS: Never to leave it?

LOVETT: Never, unless you leave it for good, and for all. Now, are you willing, or are you not, to take the situation?

JARVIS: My poverty and my destitution consent, if my will be adverse. I quite understand that I leave when I please.

LOVETT: Oh, of course. We never think of keeping anybody many hours after they begin to feel uncomfortable.

JARVIS: I am thankful for a shelter. All the brightest visions of my early life have long since faded away. I have no friends, no money, and not a relation but who would turn his back upon me. It matters little what now becomes of me.

LOVETT: I understand your words. How quickly do those worldly aspirations dissipate in the night air. We wake up one morning only to discover they have quietly departed, helped along by some thief in the night. *(Pause.)* If you are ready, follow me.

(Charlotte and Edith watch as Mrs. Lovett exits with Jarvis and escorts him into the "cellar," an abstract area at CS. During the following dialogue, Mrs. Lovett can be seen instructing Jarvis on how to manufacture the pies and feed the furnaces.)

CHARLOTTE: *(To Edith.)* She's gone.

EDITH: And the young man with her.

CHARLOTTE: Another new cook whose likes we'll never see again.

EDITH: But what of Skinner?

CHARLOTTE: Went to sea, she said.

EDITH: They all go to sea.

CHARLOTTE: Rather fancy this one, do you?

EDITH: Got a soft heart for his kind. Not a penny to his name, nobody to turn to...no girl, no family...

CHARLOTTE: Easy on the eyes, too.

EDITH: That he is. Leastways with a bit of cleaning up.

CHARLOTTE: Fat chance of that happening, now that she's got him in that hellhole downstairs.

EDITH: Maybe this one won't sail away.

CHARLOTTE: Shut your gob, Edith. You're drifting away again. Come on now, she'll be up soon.

(Edith and Charlotte return to work as the lights come up in the cellar.)

LOVETT: *(To Jarvis.)* And each crust will thus be manufactured just large enough for one pie. The flour will always be let down through a trapdoor from the shop as well as everything required for making the pies but the

meat, and that you will always find ranged upon shelves either in lumps or steaks in a small room through that door. It is only at particular times you will find the door open. Whenever you do, you had better always take out what meat you think you will require for the next batch.

JARVIS: I understand all that, madam, but how does it get there?

LOVETT: That is no business of yours. So long as you are supplied with it, that is sufficient for you. The finished trays of pies are then sent directly up to the shop through the trapdoor you see above. You simply turn the windlass and they are delivered right up to the very counter. And, now, I must leave you. As long as you are industrious, you will get on very well. Remember your duty. I warn you that any attempt to leave here will be as futile as it will be dangerous.

JARVIS: Except with your consent, when I relinquish the situation.

LOVETT: Oh, certainly, certainly. You are quite right there. Everybody who relinquishes the situation goes to his old friends, whom he has not seen perhaps for many years.

JARVIS: Indeed.

LOVETT: Farewell, lad. Enjoy the pies.

(Mrs. Lovett exits the cellar, locking the door behind her. Jarvis looks around apprehensively and half-heartedly bites into one of the pies as the lights fade.)

Scene 7

(Mundel's pawnshop. The SR unit has come on. Mr. Mundel, a moneylender, stands behind a counter. Sweeney Todd enters SL dressed as a wealthy gentleman or nobleman in a silk-lined lace-trimmed velvet coat with cravat, gloves, and silk stockings to match. He sports a black eye patch, a tricorne hat, and carries a fancy walking stick, which had belonged to Thornhill. After a few moments, Mr. Mundel turns around and seems immediately impressed with the customer in his shop.)

MUNDEL: Ah! Forgive me, sir. I did not hear you enter.

TODD: It's quite all right, Mr. Mundel.

MUNDEL: *(Studying Todd.)* But excuse me, sir. Have I met you?

TODD: I do not believe so, sir. I am here on behalf of a rather illustrious lady and wish to know if you are inclined to help her out of a little pecuniary difficulty.

MUNDEL: Indeed, yes.

TODD: I should have myself accommodated the illustrious lady with the sum of money she requires, but as I could not do so without encumbering some estates, she positively forbade me to think of it.

MUNDEL: Certainly, yes. She is a very illustrious lady, I presume?

TODD: Very illustrious, indeed, but it must be a condition of this transaction, if you at all enter into it, that you are not to inquire precisely who she is, nor are you to inquire precisely who I am.

MUNDEL: That is exactly the manner to which I am accustomed in my business.

TODD: And it was by hearing of that very character that I stand before you today. Now, the illustrious lady placed in my hands security to a third greater amount than she required.

MUNDEL: Certainly, certainly...a very proper arrangement, your grace. May I ask the nature of the proffered security?

TODD: Jewels.

MUNDEL: Highly satisfactory and unexceptionable security. They go into a small space and do not deteriorate in value.

(Todd presents the string of pearls.)

TODD: And if they do, it would make no difference to you, for the illustrious person's honor will be committed to their redemption.

MUNDEL: *(In awe of the pearls.)* I thought there was but one string like this in the kingdom and that those belonged to the Queen.

TODD: Indeed.

MUNDEL: I humbly beg your pardon. How much money does your grace require on these pearls?

TODD: Twelve-thousand pounds is their current value, if a sale of them was enforced. Eight-thousand are required of you on their security.

MUNDEL: Eight-thousand is a large sum. As a general principle, I lend but half the value upon anything. But, in this case, to oblige your grace and the illustrious personage, I do not, of course, hesitate for one moment but for one month lend the required amount.

TODD: That is satisfactory.

MUNDEL: In what name shall I draw a check upon my banker?

TODD: In the name of Colonel George.

MUNDEL: Certainly, certainly. If your grace will give me an acknowledgement for 8,000 pounds and please to understand that at the end of a month from this time the transaction will be renewed if necessary, I will give you a check for 75-hundred pounds.

TODD: Why 75 hundred only when you mentioned 8,000?

MUNDEL: The 500 is my little commission upon the transaction. Your grace will perceive that I appreciate highly the honor of your grace's custom and consequently charge the lowest possible price. I can assure your grace that I could gain more for my money by a great deal, but the pleasure of being able to meet your grace and aid the illustrious lady on whose behalf you come today enables me to make such a sacrifice.

TODD: Peace, peace. Give me the money. If it be not convenient to redeem the jewels at the end of a month from this time, you will hear from me most assuredly.

(Mundel draws up the check and hands it to Todd.)

MUNDEL: I am quite satisfied of that.

TODD: I need scarcely urge upon you, Mr. Mundel, the propriety of keeping this affair profoundly secret.

MUNDEL: Indeed, you need not, your grace, for it is part of my business to be discreet and cautious. I should very soon have nothing to do in my line, your grace may depend, if I were to talk about it. No, this transaction will forever remain locked up in my own breast, and no living soul but your grace and I need know what has occurred.

TODD: A pleasure, Mr. Mundel.

MUNDEL: Thank you, your grace.

(Todd and Mundel shake hands. Todd exits as Mundel fingers the pearls in his hands. His shop disappears and the lights crossfade as the garden unit slides on.)

Scene 8

(Temple Gardens. Johanna and Arabella are seated on the bench.)

JOHANNA: And he is to meet me here a second time before the hour is up.

ARABELLA: What a remarkable tale.

JOHANNA: There is another thing. Since I last visited with Colonel Jeffery, a supposition has grown stronger and stronger within me.

ARABELLA: What supposition?

JOHANNA: That this Mr. Thornhill of whom Colonel Jeffery spoke was none other than Mark Ingestrie himself!

ARABELLA: Indeed! Do you really think it?

JOHANNA: Consider the improbability of the story related by Thornhill. Why should Mark have given him the string of pearls and the message to me, trusting to the preservation of Thornhill and assuming, for some reason, that he himself must fail?

ARABELLA: There is good argument in that, Johanna.

JOHANNA: And Mark told me that he meant to change his name when he left England, for he wished only me to know anything of him or what had become of him. His intention was to baffle inquiry, should it be made, particularly by Mr. Grant.

ARABELLA: It seems each moment more probable to me. Oh, that fateful string of pearls!

JOHANNA: Fateful, indeed. If Mark Ingestrie and Thornhill be one and the same person, the possession of those pearls has been the temptation to destroy him.

ARABELLA: Johanna, you must perceive that all the evidence you have regarding this Thornhill follows him up that barbershop in Fleet Street and no farther.

JOHANNA: It does, indeed.

ARABELLA: Can you not imagine then that there lies the mystery of his fate, and from what you have yourself seen of that man, Todd, do you think he is one who would hesitate even at a murder?

JOHANNA: My own thoughts have taken that awful turn, but I dreaded to pronounce the word that would embody them. Arabella, assist me with what advice you can, so that I may go about what I propose with the best prospect of success.

ARABELLA: An idea forms in my mind—a mission which, by a single false step, might be made frightfully dangerous.

JOHANNA: Why should I hesitate at taking such a risk for him who has risked so much for me?

ARABELLA: All right, then. Here it is. Yesterday, at market, I happened to pass by Todd's shop and noticed a newly posted placard in the window to say that he wanted a lad as an assistant in his business.

JOHANNA: Go on.

ARABELLA: It would be possible for you to accomplish the object by going disguised to the barber's and accepting such a situation for a period of a few days only in order that some opportunity might be taken of searching in his house for some evidence upon the subject nearest to your heart.

JOHANNA: And if at any moment, if any grave danger should beset me, I need only rush into the street and claim protection from the passersby.

ARABELLA: You would go on such a mission remembering you go with my knowledge. Consequently, I would bring you assistance if you failed to appear at the end of the specified time of your return.

(Johanna embraces Arabella.)

JOHANNA: Thank you, dear friend. Your plan is a splendid one. But how am I to provide myself with the necessary means?

ARABELLA: Be at rest upon that score. My cousin Albert and you are as nearly of a size as possible. He will be staying with us shortly, and I will secrete from his wardrobe a suit of clothes, which will answer to your purposes.

JOHANNA: That is well. And I shall question Colonel Jeffery closely as to the personal appearance of this Mr. Thornhill, in addition to hearing if he has confirmed any suspicions on the subject. (*Sees Jeffery enter SR.*) But go now. He has arrived.

ARABELLA: Come to me tomorrow morning and we shall consult again.

(*Arabella exits SL. Colonel Jeffery approaches.*)

JOHANNA: (*Extending her hand.*) Colonel Jeffery.

JEFFERY: Miss Oakley. Thank you for seeing me.

JOHANNA: Of course.

JEFFERY: I have heard nothing that can give you any satisfaction concerning the fate of Mr. Thornhill. However, I suspect that something serious must have happened to him and that barber on Fleet Street knows something of that circumstance.

JOHANNA: Colonel, had Mr. Thornhill fair hair and large clear grey eyes?

JEFFERY: Yes, he had such, and I think his smile was the most singularly beautiful I ever beheld in a man.

JOHANNA: Heaven help me!

JEFFERY: What reason have you for asking that question?

JOHANNA: God grant that I had not. But I feel that, in Thornhill, I must recognize Mark Ingestrie himself!

JEFFERY: I am astonished.

JOHANNA: It must be so. You have described him to me. I do not doubt it. I knew that he was going to change his name when he went upon that wild adventure to the Indian Sea.

JEFFERY: I cannot think, Miss Oakley, that you are correct in that supposition. There are many things which induce me to think otherwise, the first and foremost being that the ingenuous character of Mr. Thornhill forbids the likelihood of such a thing occurring.

JOHANNA: The proofs are too strong for me, Colonel Jeffery. I dare not doubt it.

JEFFERY: Miss Oakley, dim and obscure as is the hope that Mark Ingestrie may have been picked up from the wreck of his vessel, it is yet stronger than the supposition that Thornhill has escaped the murderous hands of Sweeney Todd, the barber. (*Johanna begins weeping softly.*) You have cause for great grief, but not for despair. You are young. Allow me to entertain a hope that, even if a feeling of regret may mingle with your future thoughts, time will achieve something in tempering your sorrow, and if not great happiness, you may come to know great serenity.

JOHANNA: I will ascertain his fate, or perish.

JEFFERY: You alarm me by those words. Let me implore you, Miss Oakley, to attempt nothing rash.

JOHANNA: But how can I endure this dreadful suspense?

JEFFERY: It is too common an affliction on human nature, Johanna. Pardon me for addressing you thus.

JOHANNA: It requires no excuse. I am accustomed so to be addressed by all who feel a kindly interest in me. I hope you will continue to be my friend.

JEFFERY: Of that, Johanna, remove any doubt. And, now, may I hope that this day in a week, I may see you here again in order that I may tell you if I have made any discovery and that you may tell me the same. My own interest in Thornhill is that of a sincere friend, to say nothing of the deep interest in your own happiness which I feel.

(*Johanna embraces Colonel.*)

JOHANNA: I shall come, and I hope to bring you news of him in whom you are so much interested. It shall be no fault of mine if I come not.

(The lights fade on the scene as the garden bench slides off.)

Scene 9

(Mrs. Ragg's home. Abstract area CS. She sits at a table peeling potatoes. Tobias enters.)

TOBIAS: Mother!

MRS. RAGG: *(Startled.)* Tobias, my boy! *(Rises and embraces him.)* Ah, it is so good to see you.

TOBIAS: Mother, I cannot stay with Sweeney Todd any longer, so do not ask me.

MRS. RAGG: Not stay with such a respectable man?

TOBIAS: A respectable man, Mother?! Alas, how little you know of him! Would that I could tell you. But what am I saying? I dare not speak. Oh, that fatal, fatal candlestick.

MRS. RAGG: But how are you to live, and what do you mean by a fatal candlestick?

TOBIAS: Forgive me...I did not mean to say that. Farewell, Mother! I am going to sea.

MRS. RAGG: To see what, my dear? You don't know how much I am obliged to Sweeney Todd.

TOBIAS: I do, and that's what drives me mad to think of.

MRS. RAGG: I am astonished at Mr. Todd telling you about the candlestick. It's true enough, though, for all that. I recollect it as if it were yesterday. It was a very hard winter, and I was minding a set of chambers when Todd came to shave the gentleman, and I saw him with my own eyes put a silver candlestick in his pocket. Then I went over to his shop and reasoned with him about it, and he gave it back to me. I brought it to the chambers and laid it down exactly on the spot where he took it from.

TOBIAS: *(Astonished.)* Todd stole the candlestick himself?

MRS. RAGG: Why, yes, but he gave it back, I told you. We must take the good with the bad, you know. He has been a very good friend to me ever since, but that I suppose is for fear I should tell and get him hung or transported.

TOBIAS: Why did you not tell me this before? The agony that would have been spared! (*Reaching a decision.*) I must go at once, Mother, perhaps forever. If I see you not again, farewell!

(*Tobias hastily exits, leaving Mrs. Ragg dumbfounded.*)

MRS. RAGG: (*Calls.*) Tobias? (*To herself.*) The boy is touched. Always been a bit funny in the head, and now I fear the worst. (*Resumes peeling potatoes. Todd enters from the opposite direction and knocks on the door. He has changed back into his more familiar clothes. Rises.*) Lord, now who could it be? (*Opens the door.*) Mr. Todd! Is it you?

TODD: I come looking for your son. Is he here?

MRS. RAGG: Lord, sir, you are as good as a conjurer, sir, for he was just here.

TODD: Where has he gone?

MRS. RAGG: Bless you, sir. I know no more where he is gone to than the man in the moon. He said he was going to sea, but I am sure I should not have thought it.

TODD: To sea! Did he tell you his reason for leaving me?

MRS. RAGG: Indeed, no, sir. He seemed to me to be a little bit out of his senses.

TODD: Ah, Mrs. Ragg, there you have it. From the first moment that he came into my services, I knew and felt confident that he was out of his senses. There was a strangeness of behavior about him, which soon convinced me of that fact. I am only anxious about him in order that some effort may be made to cure him of such a malady, for it is a serious one which, unless taken in time, will yet be the death of Tobias.

MRS. RAGG: Oh, it's too true...it's too true. He did say some extraordinary things tonight, Mr. Todd, and he said he had something to tell, which was too horrid to speak of.

TODD: I am sure that his conduct is such as you never would be guilty of, Mrs. Ragg.

(Knock at the door.)

MRS. RAGG: Yet another! *(Goes to answer the door.)*

TODD: Stop a moment! What if it be Tobias?

MRS. RAGG: Goodness gracious, it can't be him, for he would have come in at once.

TODD: No. I slipped the bolt of the door because I wished to talk to you without observation. Let me hide somewhere, so that I may hear what he says and be able to judge how his mind is affected. I will not hesitate to do something for him, let it cost me what it may.

MRS. RAGG: The Lord bless you. There's the cupboard, Mr. Todd. To be sure there is some dirty saucepans and a frying pan in it, and of course it ain't a fit place to ask you to go into.

TODD: Never mind that. Only you be careful, for the sake of Tobias's very life, to keep secret that I am here.

(Todd disappears into the closet. Mrs. Ragg goes to unbolt the door.)

TOBIAS: Mother! I have taken a new thought and have returned to you.

MRS. RAGG: And a very good thing it is that you have.

TOBIAS: Listen to me. I had thought of fleeing from England forever and of never setting foot upon its shores again, but I have changed that determination completely. I feel now that it is my duty to do something else.

MRS. RAGG: To do what, Tobias?

TOBIAS: To tell all that I know—to make a clean breast, Mother, and let the consequences be what they may.

MRS. RAGG: But what is it, Tobias, that you know?

TOBIAS: Something too dreadful for me to utter to you alone. Suffice it to say that Sweeney Todd is guilty of many more dreadful things than robbing a candlestick. You must go to the Temple, Mother, to some of the gentlemen whose chambers you attend to and ask them to come to me and

listen to what I have to say. They may well hear that which will save their own lives. (*Thinking him to be insane, Mrs. Ragg recoils and gasps.*) I know I am half mad, Mother, but yet I know well what I am saying. Please, for both our sakes, go and fetch someone at once to listen to what I have to relate.

MRS. RAGG: Well, my dear, if it must be, it must be. I will go. But I hope while I have gone, somebody will speak to you and convince you that you ought to try to quiet yourself.

(*Mrs. Ragg starts to exit but stops and embraces her son. Tobias escorts her to the door and watches her leave. He then goes to the table and sits.*)

TOBIAS: (*To himself.*) He is a liar, and a murderer. Although how he disposes of his victims is a complete mystery. I have never seen him do the deed. Yet, occasionally, when a well-dressed gentleman comes into the shop, he sends me out on some errand to a distant part of the town. What a relief it will be when he is hanged, as I think he is tolerably sure to be. It is my duty to stand forward and face the enemy.

(*Todd emerges from the closet.*)

TODD: As it is mine, Tobias. (*Tobias freezes. He is terrified as Todd approaches him from behind.*) Did it never strike you that Todd was not so easily overcome as you would wish him? (*Tobias lets loose a blood-curdling shriek, which startles even Todd, who momentarily places his hands on Tobias's shoulders. Threateningly.*) Cry again, and it is the last you ever live to utter. (*Slides his hands down until they encircle Tobias's neck.*) So this is the way in which you have dared to disregard my injunctions. But no matter, no matter! Very soon you shall have plenty of leisure to reflect upon what you have done for yourself. (*Tobias faints, his head lolling forward.*) So, he has

fainted, has he? Dull child...that is all the better. Let us begin our journey, child of mine.

(Todd hoists Tobias over his shoulder and exits as the lights fade. We hear sounds of inmates screaming as the scene shifts to the office of Mr. Jonas Fogg, caretaker of the insane at Newgate.)

Scene 19

(Newgate Prison office. Lights up. Tobias, still unconscious, is slumped in a wooden chair. Todd speaks to the attendant, Mr. Watson.)

WATSON: Well?

TODD: I have a patient for Mr. Fogg. I wish to see him immediately.

(Watson lifts up Tobias's head to look at him.)

WATSON: Is he tolerably quiet?

TODD: As you can see, he is a mere boy, and he is not violently mad, but very decidedly so as regards to what he says.

WATSON: Oh, that's it, is it? He can say what he likes here. It makes no difference in the world to us.

TODD: So I thought.

WATSON: Wait here. I'll fetch Mr. Fogg. *(Exits.)*

TODD: *(To the unconscious Tobias.)* Well, Master Tobias, I have you now. Your troubles will soon be over. I am really very much afraid that you will die suddenly, and then there will be the end of you altogether, which will be a very sad thing, although I don't think I shall go into mourning because I have an opinion that that only keeps alive the bitterness of regret, and it is a great deal better done without.

(Watson enters, followed by Mr. Fogg, who takes a seat opposite Todd. Watson remains standing upstage of Tobias.)

FOGG: Mr. Todd, I believe, unless my memory deceives me.

TODD: The same.

FOGG: *(Consulting a ledger on his desk.)* Mr. Sweeney Todd, Fleet Street, London. Paid one year's keep and burial of

Thomas Simkins, aged 13, found dead in his bed, after a residence in the asylum of 14 months and four days. I think, Mr. Todd, that was our last little transaction. What can I do for you, sir?

TODD: I am rather unfortunate with my boys. I have another here who has shown such decided symptoms of insanity that it has become absolutely necessary to place him under your care.

FOGG: Indeed. Does he rave?

TODD: The most absurd nonsense in the world. To hear him, one would really think that instead of being one of the most humane of men, I was in point of fact an absolute murderer.

FOGG: A murderer, Mr. Todd!

TODD: Could anything be more absurd? I, who have the milk of human kindness flowing in every vein and whose appearance ought to be sufficient to convince anybody at once of my kindness of disposition.

FOGG: For how long do you think this malady will continue?

TODD: I will pay for 12 months, but I don't think that the case will last anything like so long. I suspect he will die suddenly.

FOGG: I shouldn't wonder if he did. Some of our patients do die very suddenly, and somehow or another, we never know exactly how it happens, but it must be some sort of fit, for they are found dead in the morning in their beds, and then we bury them privately and quietly without troubling anybody at all. It saves a great annoyance to friends and relations.

TODD: You are wonderfully correct and considerate. I am quite delighted to hear you talk in so elevated a strain.

FOGG: Like the rest of the community, we make ourselves useful. We could not expect people to send their mad friends and relatives here unless we took good care that their ends and views were answered by so doing. We make no remarks. We ask no questions. Those are the principles upon which we have conducted business so successfully and

for so long. Those are the principles upon which we shall continue to conduct it, and to merit, we hope, the patronage of the British public.

TODD: Unquestionably.

FOGG: (*Indicating Tobias.*) He is quite young.

TODD: Yes. More's the pity. Of course, we deeply regret his present situation.

FOGG: Of course. But see...he opens his eyes.

TOBIAS: (*Groggily.*) Where...where am I? (*Spies Todd, shrieks, and springs to his feet. Watson restrains him. Pointing at Todd, shouts.*) He is a murderer!

(*Todd rises.*)

TODD: (*To Fogg.*) You hear? You hear?

(*Fogg rises.*)

FOGG: Mad, indeed.

TOBIAS: Save me from him! Save me! It is my life he seeks, because I know his secrets.

TODD: (*To Fogg.*) You hear him? Was there anybody so mad?

FOGG: Desperately mad. (*To Tobias.*) Come, young fellow, we shall be under the necessity of putting you in a straight waistcoat if you go on in this way.

TOBIAS: I do not know who you are, sir, or where I am, but let me beg of you to go to the house of Sweeney Todd. There you will find that he is a murderer.

FOGG: How uncommonly mad!

TOBIAS: Search his house. There are at least a hundred hats, walking sticks, watches, and rings all belonging to unfortunate persons who met their deaths at his hands. If those things be not found, then say that I am mad and have but dreamed them. There is a great mystery to me yet, but that he does kill them, I have no doubt.

FOGG: Watson.

WATSON: Yes, sir?

FOGG: You will take this lad, as he seems extremely feverish and unsettled. Put a straight waistcoat upon him, and let him be put in one of the dark, damp cells. Too much light encourages delirium and fever.

WATSON: Yes, sir.

TOBIAS: *(To Fogg.)* Be this a madhouse, then? What have I done that I should receive such cruel treatment?

FOGG: *(To Watson.)* Give him nothing but bread and water. The first symptoms of his recovery, which will produce better treatment, will be his exoneration of his poor master.

TOBIAS: If it be madness to know that Sweeney Todd is a murderer, then mad am I, for I do know it!

FOGG: Take him away, Watson. I begin to find that the boy is a very dangerous character and more viciously mad than anybody we have had here for a considerable time.

(Watson gleefully leads Tobias away, who continues to scream accusations and shouts for mercy.)

TODD: Is such a fuss common among new admissions?

FOGG: Oh, it's nothing, let me assure you, Mr. Todd. If you had resided here as long as I have, you would get accustomed to hearing slight noises now and then. The worst of it is when half a dozen of the mad fellows get shrieking against each other in the middle of the night. That, I grant, is a little annoying.

TODD: What do you do with them?

FOGG: We send in one of the keepers with the lash and soon put a stop to that. We are forced to keep the upper hand of them or else we should have no rest.

TODD: Indeed. *(Extracts a small leather money purse.)* While I think of it, I may as well pay you the year's money for the lad. You see, I have not forgotten the excellent rule you have of being paid in advance. Here is the amount.

(Todd hands Fogg some money.)

FOGG: Thank you, Mr. Todd. It is a pleasure to conduct such transactions with such a thorough businessman as yourself. Do you know, Mr. Todd, this is a line of life which I have often thought would have suited you. I am certain you have a genius for such things.

TODD: Not equal to you, I am sure. But as I am fond, certainly, of what is strange and out of the way, some of the scenes and characters you come across would, I have no doubt, be highly entertaining to me.

FOGG: That they would, Mr. Todd. That they would.

TODD: Good day, Mr. Fogg.

FOGG: Mr. Todd.

(They shake hands. Fogg exits. Todd walks into his light special as in the Prologue. He once again addresses the magistrate at the Old Bailey.)

TODD: *(To Magistrate.)* Thus was I able to rid myself of Tobias Ragg. It was safer, unquestionably, to have him put away. He had become, of late, the most serious enemy I had ever had. I would have been most pleased to shut down my shop once and forever. However, when the string of pearls was not claimed, I knew that Mr. Mundel would sell them. Much attention would ensue, and someone might come forward who knew of their history. I would keep quiet. I would remain in obscurity. For three months longer, only three, I would carry on the task so that any sudden alteration in my fortunes would not give rise to suspicion. *(A light comes up on Mrs. Lovett, Charlotte, and Edith busily serving Customers in the pie shop.)* Mrs. Lovett, for her part, went about her business, and mine, though the trade had fallen a bit due to a curious odor, which had begun to emanate from the vaults of St. Dunstan's Church. The

bishop was due to arrive in a matter of weeks for the annual Confirmation, resulting in a concerted effort to rid the church of its malodorousness. (*Another light comes up on Jarvis Williams in the cellar of Mrs. Lovett's shop, anxiously pacing.*) Her newly hired cook, one Jarvis Williams, soon had his fill of the pies and began to give thought to his increasingly tedious situation. It was not long before he discovered, to his great dismay, that he was nothing less than a prisoner... (*A third light shows Tobias behind the scrim being whipped by Mr. Watson, a similar silhouette to that which was seen in the Prologue.*) ...not unlike poor Tobias, whose own screams, as Mr. Fogg had correctly prophesied, had soon to be stifled. (*Tobias screams at the lashing and cries out for mercy.*) But dead men tell no tales, nor women, nor boys, and they should all die, after which there would be a serious fire on Fleet Street. As for me, I hastened home at once from Newgate. I needed to hire a replacement, of course, to assist me in my enterprise for the following three months. As I rounded the corner onto Fleet Street, I saw that fortune had once again smiled upon me. (*A fourth light comes up on the barbershop, outside of which approaches none other than Johanna Oakley, now disguised as a young man.*) There, standing right outside the door as if deliberating on whether or not to enter, stood a curious young boy, intently studying the placard I had just posted there. But that can wait. (*The four light specials now fade, leaving only Todd in his special.*) Forgive me, Your Honor. I grow a bit weary and find myself in need of a bit of nourishment...say...a cold mug of ale and a nice meat pie?

(Lights fade on Todd. The same organ music heard at the beginning of the Prologue sounds again. Intermission.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]