

TODD

A play in Two Acts

by

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TODD

Cast of Characters

Pope/Todd

Morgan

Crooks

Mudie

Bennett

Penney

Jonathan

Registrar

Baxter

Molly

Tate

Roach

Clarence

Nora

Maggie

Rush

Toby

Mrs. Lovett

Swain

Joanna

Daisy

Claire

Brandon

Bow Street Runners 1 and 2

Bow Street Runners 3 and 4

Main Characters Breakdown

Pope/Todd: In his late thirties. A potentially intelligent working class man who has fallen on hard times due to his family background and involvement in petty crime.

Morgan: A rough necked prison officer in his thirties

Jonathan: A young, naïve, middle class lawyer, who befriends Pope/Todd and assists him in his search for his daughter.

Baxter: A pompous upper middle class Judge on the brink of retirement. He is typical of the judges during the 18th century who passed harsh sentences without any qualms or understanding of the men and women who stood before them in the dock.

Molly: A very young simple barmaid in her late teens who is enamoured by Todd.

Tate: A brash, local thespian in his twenties. He is always looking for an easy way of making a living.

Maggie: A young local entertainer, a member of Tate's group of thespians. She has a lovely singing voice. She also becomes enamoured with Todd.

Rush: A well respected local business man and anthropologist.

Toby: Tate's young scruffy nephew who becomes Todd's barber shop boy.

Mrs. Lovett: The Pie shop owner who enters into a business arrangement with Todd. She also becomes enamoured with him.

Joanna: Jonathan's wife and Claire's friend. She is an aloof young woman, often supercilious.

Claire: Judge Baxter's adopted daughter – Todd's daughter! She is a sensitive, good natured young woman.

Production notes:

The Play is based on the infamous character, 'Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street', yet this story has a more humane approach and the author has depicted Sweeney Todd as a victim of circumstance and of his own vengeance, otherwise the references to the barber shop incidents and Mrs. Lovett's pies remain part of the original story. Set in the late 18th Century London.

Minimal stage furniture and props can be used. Scene changes could be made by lighting different parts of the stage, particularly with spots, a number of which are stated in the script.

Synopsis:

Pope, who later changes his name to Todd is sentenced to be transported to Botany Bay, Australia after spending 4 years in prison. He appeals the sentence and his prison term is extended due to his conspiracy to plan an escape from eventual transportation, the details of which were overheard by Morgan, the rough neck prison officer. Eventually he does escape and the story picks up on his return to London. Pope has changed his name to Todd. He seeks the whereabouts of his daughter Claire whom he has not seen since before his original prison sentence. He also seeks revenge – on Morgan and then Judge Baxter, who passed the extended sentence. In order to earn a living Todd sets up as a Barber in Fleet Street, having acquired barber and surgeon skills during his adventures on the high seas. His passion for revenge affects him deeply and he changes into a bitter, cold hearted murderer with the help of Mrs. Lovett. He finds his daughter in surprising circumstances, with the help of his lawyer friend, Jonathan, who is unaware of Todd's change in personality. As for his quest – revenge is far from sweet for Sweeney Todd.

TODD

ACT ONE

Scene 1: Prison Yard

In order to create the walls of the yard black flats are positioned U from L to and another D of exit UR. Another flat runs at an angle from UR exit of the U flat and another at angle from the UL. There are only two exits as mentioned.. Pope is sitting R of UC against the back wall. Mudie enters UR pursued by Bennett. There is a struggle and eventually Bennett knocks Mudie to the ground. Pope stands and crosses L and watches.

Bennett: Well Mudie, what yer goin' to do now?

Mudie: One day I'll get you Bennett!

Morgan and Crooks enter UR and cross to Mudie. Crooks has a hand to his ear.

Crooks: 'E's cut my ear! Bloody madman!

Morgan: *(His foot on Mudie's chest)* 'Ow d'yer get free Mudie?

Mudie: If I 'ad more energy Morgan, I'd 'ave cut you to pieces.

Pope: Leave him alone. Like all of us, he's had enough of this place.

Morgan: Shut your mouth Pope!

Crooks: I'm bleedin' fast, I am.

Bennett throws a rag at him.

Bennett: Mop it up Crooks, it's only a nick. You'll survive.

Crooks dabs at his wound.

Morgan: What yer cut 'im with, Mudie?

Mudie: You'll 'ave to search me won't yer!

Bennett kicks him and treads on his hand.

Bennett: Open yer other 'and Mudie or I'll break this one.

Mudie scoffs. Bennett applies pressure on his hand with his foot.

Bennett: I'm warning yer! I'll bust both your 'ands if I have to!

Mudie cries out in pain and unclenches his hand.

Morgan: (*removing object from Mudie's hand*) It's slate! Where d'yer get it from? Off the roof?

Bennett applies more pressure on his hand. Mudie yells.

Mudie: Alright, alright. It slipped off the roof!

Bennett and Crooks pull him to his feet.

Morgan: You won't be 'anging around here much longer Mudie, you'll be dangling from a rope I wouldn't wonder. Take 'im away!

Crooks and Bennett jostle him towards UR exit

Mudie: Next time Crooks; I'll cut your 'ead off!

Bennett punches him in the stomach

Mudie's cries in agony

Crooks: (*pulling at Mudie's hair and forcing him to lean back*) If I 'ad my way I'd cut off your ears and make you eat 'em!

Morgan: I said take 'im away!

He is jostled off UR by Bennett and Crooks

He is heard to cry out off stage.

Pope: Tell them to lay off him. You've made 'is life a misery Morgan.

Morgan: Life? (*he laughs*) There's no life in 'ere, Pope, you should know that.

Pope: You're a callous slug, Morgan.

Morgan: Watch yer mouth Pope!

Pope: I promise yer, when I get out of 'ere, you're the first I aim to get rid of. I'll come looking for you.

Morgan: Get out of 'ere? (*He laughs*) You'll die an old man in 'ere Pope. You'll never leave.

At that moment Penney, the Assistant Superintendent of the prison, enters UL

Morgan crosses DL

Penney: Pope! I hope you were not involved in the commotion with Mudie.

Pope: No, I wasn't.

Penney: Then consider yourself lucky. He hangs tomorrow morning.

Pope: Poor bastard. I wanna see the Superintendent, to say a few words on Mudie's behalf. Morgan and his henchman 'ave made life 'ell for him.

Penney smiles sickly

Penney: You have no say Pope. Mudie hangs tomorrow morning and you and the rest of them will witness his departure from this world.

Pope: His was no 'anging offence... (*with contempt*) sir!

Penney: Watch who you are addressing Pope or you'll be joining him!

Pope: I'll be on my way then.

Morgan: You just wait until you're dismissed!

Penney allows Pope to move on UR.

Penney: You might find this bit of news interesting Pope.

Pope stops and turns to him

It appears you might be leaving us.

Pope: What d'yer mean, leavin'?

Penney: It's not for me to say what they'll do with you, but I know what I'd do, given the chance. Come along, we mustn't keep the Superintendent waiting.

Penney crosses to UL exit

Morgan: This could be your lucky day, Pope.

Todd: If it is Morgan, you'd better watch your back. I'll be waiting for you in the shadows.

Penney: Pope!

Penney exits L

He crosses to Penney and turns to Morgan before he exits

Pope: Mark what I said Morgan. I'll be waiting.

Morgan: Get off with yer! *(he laughs)*

Pope exits

Lights Down

Scene 2 – A room in the prison.

The stage is bare and dimly lit. The flats remain on stage.

Pope is standing C with his back to the audience. Jonathan is seated at a table at an angle DL, considering his notes.

Pope: *(enraged)* I don't believe it! Four years! *(He turns to Jonathan)* I'll be an old man before I leave Botany Bay, if I ever do leave. I've already spent six years in 'ere for something I never did!

Jonathan: You know I've tried everything.

Pope: Well try harder!

Pause

(Calmer and crossing DC) Look, you don't 'ave to 'elp me yer know.

Jonathan: I am doing this because I want to. I've never forgotten your kindness when you cared for me on board ship.

Pope: You were a good midshipman. Now you're a good lawyer, I'm told.

Jonathan: You open your mouth too much, Ben. An example has been made of you. You're a trouble maker in their eyes and they want you out of the way.

Pope: So you think I 'm to blame for the mess I'm in?

Jonathan: I don't think that at all, I'm giving it to you from their perspective.

Pope: *(suddenly upturning a chair in anger)* Don't they think I've done my stint?

He crosses DR and stands with his back to Jonathan. He runs his hands through his hair. He massages his neck with a hand and turns to Jonathan.

Pope: Any news of my daughter?

Jonathan: Alas, no. Since your wife's death Claire seems to have disappeared.

Pope: Claire. 'er name might 'ave been changed. She must be about fifteen by now.

Jonathan: She may be married.

Pope: If she is, I 'ope 'er 'usband's a 'andsome young man and 'as the ability to care for 'er and protect 'er.

Jonathan: Rest assured I shall continue the search.

Pope: Yes I know you will, but is it worth it? While I'm wallowing in some den of iniquity on the other side of the world, how will I ever know? The only thing I can do is to try to escape!

Jonathan: I didn't hear that.

Pope: It's the only thing left for me to do and I need your 'elp.

Jonathan: The only help I can give you is by representing you in Court, in some way.

Pope: What d'yer mean, in some way?

Jonathan: Well, It won't be easy.

Pope: Huh, what is? Anyway, I 'ave a plan.

Jonathan: A plan, to escape?

Pope nods and turns away from him

Jonathan stands and moves towards him

Jonathan: It's impossible to escape from here. Forget it, please. We shall make a plea for clemency. It's the only thing open to you.

Pope: (*shakes his head incredulously*) Plea?

Jonathan: That's the point we have arrived at.

Pope: If this plea, as you call it, fails, I'll go ahead with my plan (*taking paper from his pocket*) Take a look.

Pope shows him the paper

Jonathan: (*quickly taking the paper from him*) You must leave this with me until after I make the plea on your behalf. If this is found on you they will have no hesitation but to hang you! I shall remain silent about your intention, but please don't refer to it again. You could place both of us in jeopardy.

Pope: (*smiling sickly*) Don't worry Master Jonathan, my lips are sealed.

Lights Down

Scene 3: A courtroom in London.

The flats from the last scene remain in position. There is a platform U upon which is the Judge's Bench. Below the bench is the Registrar's table. L of the bench is the prisoner's dock. R is a table for Jonathan, Counsel for the Defence.

The lights come up on the Court in session. Jonathan stands on the words of the Registrar.

Registrar: The court will rise!

Judge Baxter a grim, shuffling old Judge enters from UR and takes his place on the bench. An usher follows him and stands at the rear R.

Those in court bow and sit.

Baxter: Mr. Walsh?

Jonathan: (*standing and bowing*) Yes, my lord.

Baxter: I have considered your plea on behalf the prisoner, but it appears that certain further evidence has come to my notice. What have you to say Mr. Walsh?

Jonathan: I am unaware any further evidence, my lord. Therefore, I wish to seek an adjournment to consider the matter.

Baxter: (*flabbergasted*) To consider the matter, sir?

Jonathan: My client is entitled to that, surely?

Baxter: Your client? (*scoffing*) Paying you a fee is he sir?

The Registrar and the usher chuckle

Baxter: Is he not a prisoner who has yet to complete his sentence?

Jonathan: Yes my lord.

Baxter: Then has he any rights, Mr. Walsh?

Jonathan: Well my lord...

Baxter: (*interjecting and thumping the bench top*) He has no rights sir! And he is extremely fortunate to have any representation!

Jonathan: I did not mean to challenge you my lord but my client pleads for clemency and wishes his plea to be fully considered, that is all.

Baxter. I shall put the evidence to the prisoner and then I shall make my decision.

Jonathan: (*sighing deeply*) As you wish my lord.

Baxter: (*sharply*) I do wish! You are teetering on the verge of impertinence sir, Bring up the prisoner!

Registrar: (*to the usher*) Bring up the prisoner!

The usher nods and exits L

Jonathan: I trust that I shall have the opportunity of speaking on behalf of my...er... the prisoner?

Baxter: We shall see Mr. Walsh.

Jonathan: But my lord I have a right to do so.....!

Baxter: (*fiercely*) No Mr. Walsh you have no right as you call it! The prisoner is here today to throw himself on the mercy of the court!

Pope is manhandled into the dock by two gaolers, followed by the usher.

Registrar: Is your name Benjamin Pope, presently a prisoner at the Clink Prison and ordered to be transported to Botany Bay, Australia for a period of four years?

Pope: Yes, I am.

Baxter: I shall not keep you long from your confinement Pope. I must first put to you more evidence I have acquired.

Pope: More evidence? What else have I supposed to have done?

Baxter: (*sharply*) You shall listen and not interrupt!

Pope: Mr. Walsh will be speaking on my behalf and surely 'e must be told what the so called new evidence is?

Baxter: I make the rules in this court.

Pope: I always thought the Law made the rules!

Baxter: I am the law in this court! You are in a higher court from that which placed you in your present position. Therefore take heed and show some respect!

Pope: What's the point, you've made up your mind!

Baxter: (*leaning towards him*) Now then, did you in the presence of your lawyer, Mr. Walsh here, threaten to plan an escape from custody should your plea for clemency not be granted?

Jonathan: This is monstrous my lord!

Baxter: A witness overheard a conversation between you and the prisoner. I shall call him if necessary.

Jonathan: (*interjecting*) My lord, a conversation between a client and his lawyer is a privileged communication!

Baxter: (*wagging a finger at Jonathan*) Mr. Walsh, you are walking on dangerous ground. Any more and you may find the ground slipping away from you! I repeat, the prisoner has no rights but to answer the evidence, without consultation! But since it is alleged you were a party to it, I shall ask you sir! Did such a conversation take place?

Jonathan: I cannot answer that my lord and even if it were so, I would refuse to admit to it.

Baxter: (*enraged*) You are in contempt sir!

Jonathan: I strongly take issue with that my lord....

Baxter: (*Interjecting and thumping the bench*) Mr. Walsh, you are exhausting my patience!

Pope: Yes the conversation did take place! I've paid my dues and to have me transported is wrong! I don't deserve it!

Jonathan: Mr. Pope!

Pope: What's the use? There's no justice in this court, or in any other in the land.

Baxter: Very well, in the light of your admission I shall pass sentence. And it is just as well for you Pope, that you have decided to admit your guilt; otherwise you might be facing a hanging (*looking pointedly at Jonathan*) Something about which perhaps Mr. Walsh had not warned you.

Jonathan: That is harsh my lord!

Baxter: (*ignoring the remark and making a note with the quill pen*) However, I shall at least save your neck. I have no alternative but to dismiss your plea for clemency.

Pope: (*sarcastically*) Oh sir, you surprise me! I 'ope it gives you great satisfaction.

Baxter: Oh indeed it does! Registrar, what were the terms of the prisoner's transportation?

Registrar: A period of four years with hard labour, my lord.

Baxter: (*to Pope*) In that case you shall serve an additional two years, making six years in all. You shall be transported within forty eight hours or until the next vessel is available and the tide is right.

Pope: May you rot in hell Baxter!

Baxter: Make it seven years! And Mr. Walsh, no action will be taken against you for being a party to this conspiracy.

Jonathan: (*shocked*) Conspiracy?

Baxter: (*seething*) That's exactly what I said. I warn you do not challenge me again! (*composing himself*) I wish to discuss the matter with you in my chambers before you leave the court building.

Jonathan: Yes my lord.

Baxter: Take the prisoner down!

The Bailiffs take hold of Pope's arms

Pope: Wait a minute, before I go, tell me, who was the bastard who eavesdropped!

Baxter: Well, I see no reason why I should not do so, since the informant will be free from harm in the light of your departure from these shores. (*consulting notes*) It was the prison officer, Morgan.

Pope: Morgan? (*Shouting out front*) If you are 'ere in this court Morgan, I swear I shall seek you out when I return to London. Judge Baxter, in seven years or earlier, I strongly advise you to watch your back!

Baxter: (*hammering the bench with his gavel*) Take him down before I make it ten years!

Pope is manhandled out of court UL by the bailiffs to his loud objections and threats.

Lights down and up on Jonathan DL, in a spot.

Jonathan: Ben Pope did escape, eventually. While on board a prison ship in the Straits of Malacca he managed to plunge overboard. In such dangerous waters he was left for dead. However, he was assisted by fishermen and soon joined up with a band of pirates with whom he earned a very good living. He narrowly escaped the authorities and witnessed the hanging of several of his comrades.

On the mainland he learned a trade as a barber, and became particularly skilful with a knife and razor. He could give one a close shave and amputate limbs with the skill and precision of a surgeon.

He returned to London and took up the search for his long lost daughter, Claire; alas, he also had one other gnawing thing on his mind. It was like a cancer – revenge! (*he begins to cross UL but stops and addresses the audience*)

Oh yes, he changed his name. He had befriended two piratical rogues who were eventually hanged on the occasion I have mentioned. One was named Sweeney, the other, Todd.

Spot off. Lights down.

Scene 4: The Swan Tavern - Shoreditch, London.

The black flats remain. There is a bar D of UR exit, upon which are pewter mugs, goblets and opaque bottles. C is a long table and six rough wooden chairs upon which are mugs. DR is a small table and two chairs. DL is a small table and a chair. UL is a table and chair where a customer sits and drinks. There are exits UR and R.

The lights come up on Molly, who is collecting mugs from the long table and serving the customer. She smiles at Pope alias Sweeney Todd who enters R. He will hereafter be referred to by the latter name. He wears the clothes of a gentleman, but they have seen better days. Seated at the DL table is Daniel Tate, a slight man, who wears clothes which appear to have been borrowed from a dandy of higher class than he. He drinks from a mug and shows interest in the conversation between Todd and Molly.

Molly: Good afternoon sir. *(Winking at him)* Can I help you in any way?

Todd: I'm looking for work.

Customer: Work?

Molly: *(to Todd)* Don't scare 'im for Gawd's sake! It's a wonder 'e can afford a drink.

The customer scowls at her

You don't look like a man who needs a job.

Todd: I need work, on my own account or for someone else.

Molly: You wouldn't think of working 'ere?

Todd: Yes, if needs must.

Molly: Serving ale?

Todd: Anything.

Molly: I don't think we have need for a barman or a pot man but I'll ask me Pa. *(she looks him up and down and smiles)* Wait there will yer. *(she crosses UR and then turns back to him)* Will you be wanting some ale?

Todd: No. Not while I'm on business.

Customer: *(chuckling)* I'll have one instead, *(to Todd)* eh mate?

Todd: Not from me you won't.

The Customer scowls
Molly smiles and exits UR

Tate: *(from his table)* Arrived today have you?

Todd turns to him

Todd: You talking to me?

Tate: Well I am not talking to myself am I? May I join you?

Todd: I'll have a rum.

Tate: What? Oh, yes, of course.

Tate approaches and sits at his table.

Tate: Daniel Tate's my name.

Todd: They call me Todd.

Tate: *(chuckles)* Todd what?

Todd: Just call me Todd, alright?

Tate: Yes, of course.

Todd: After you order my rum, you can tell me what you want. I take it you were not just passing the time of day?

Tate: Er, no, er Todd.

Molly re-enters UR with an aged man, Isaac Roach, the owner of the Swan Tavern. He wears a dirty white shirt and scruffy brown trousers. His hair is long and unkempt.

Roach: Who wants work?

Tate: Who doesn't?

Roach: I ain't in the mood for mirth, Daniel Tate. Save it for the stage.

Tate: If only I was on it Isaac.

Molly: Mr. Tate is a local actor, Mr. er...

Todd: Todd. *(to Tate)* if you're thinking of getting me a job on the stage, I couldn't act myself out of an empty sack.

Tate: No, I can imagine.

Roach: Look, you've woken me up from a long earned sleep. Who wants work?

Todd: Me.

Tate: Isaac, serve Todd a rum, a large one. I wish to talk business with him.

Roach: Who's paying?

Tate: On my slate please Isaac.

Roach: Your slate was rubbed out months ago. You ain't getting' no more credit for rum in this house Tate *(to Molly)* What yer want to wake me up for?

Molly: He asked for work, Pa.

Todd: Seems as though I have to pay for my own drink. *(He slams coins on table)* Get him one too!

Molly collects coins

Tate: Why, thank you Todd.

Roach: Wasting my time. I dunno.

Todd: *(to Tate)* I hope you're not wasting mine, Tate? *(to Roach)* If he is landlord, I shall call upon you for any work you can offer.

Tate: I'll do my best not to, Todd.

Roach: I can offer you a job in the kitchen. Can you cook?

Todd: I have done some cooking.

Roach: Where?

Todd: On board ship.

Roach: A sailor are yer?

Todd: A pirate!

Roach laughs. Tate throws Todd a strange look.

Molly: There's not much call for pirates in these parts.

Roach: If Tate can't fix you up, and I'm certain of that I can tell yer, you can start tomorrow.

Molly: Pa, how d'yer know he can cook good food?

Roach: If he's desperate, he will.

Roach exits. Molly serves the rum at the table.

Todd: Thank you my dear.

Molly returns to the bar

Todd: Now tell me about this job.

Tate: Well, I haven't actually got a job for you.

Todd utters a short laugh and takes a sip of his drink

Todd: I thought as much.

Tate: *(putting up his hands in defence)* Please Todd, hear me out. I know London like the back of my hand and as your agent I could find you the right work.

Todd: My agent?

Tate: Yes, for a fee of course.

Todd: I want a job to keep me – not you as well!

Tate: Of course, but if I find you a decent job – not working in Roach's filthy kitchen – I shall charge you an agreed fee for my services. We then go our separate ways. You see Todd, life as a thespian....

Todd: A what?

Tate: An actor. I am without funds and have been for some time. I would travel the length and breadth of the city to secure an occupation for you, for a fee together with expenses. I have performed.....

Todd: *(interrupting)* What's this about expenses?

Tate: Expenses to cover my travel. The quicker I go, by carriage, of course, the sooner I shall find suitable employment for you or for both of us, if needs be. Have you any particular skills Todd?

Todd: Yes. I can cut hair, clean wigs and shave beards. I can also do a bit of surgery.

Tate: I should be looking for barbers' shops then?

Todd: If you can.

Tate: There's not much in Shoreditch I'm afraid, but I'm certain we'll find the perfect position for you in another part of London.

Todd: How much?

Tate: What? Oh, we can negotiate a figure, but I shall need money up front for expenses.

Todd: I wasn't born yesterday, Tate. If you are so hard up, I might not see you for dust if I as much as give you a farthing!

Tate: But I can't afford to pay a fare. You must trust me.

Todd: *(rising from his chair, grabbing Tate by his collar and uttering clearly and sinisterly, causing the customer to stand and watch them anxiously)* If you double crossed me I'd come after you. I am good at finding people, Tate, and I'd cut you into tiny pieces and feed you to the eels in the Fleet Ditch. Do you understand?

The customer cautiously slips by them and exits R

Tate: *(weakly)* Decidedly. Does that mean you'd agree to bargain?

Todd: *(letting go of his collar)* We'll talk about your fee later. Expenses I'm prepared to pay. If the job is secure, then I will pay you a fee.

Tate: But I must know how much my cut will be.

Todd: Of course. However, let's hope your cut is not from ear to ear.

Lights Down

Scene 5: The Swan Tavern – a few days later.

The setting is the same as in the previous scene. Molly and Roach are at the bar getting ready for another busy day. Todd enters. He sits at a table. Molly approaches him. The other tables are empty.

Molly: Want something to eat Mr. Todd?

Todd: I'll try the cheese and some bread. That pie I had last night was tasty. Did you make it?

Molly: No, more's the pity. (*calling to Roach*) Pa, is that woman still delivering pies?

Roach: No, she's not making deliveries anymore, can't afford it. Now I have to go back to a local whose pies are not so good, too much pastry, not enough meat.

Todd: Any news of Tate?

Molly: He's many things that man, yet 'e won't let you down.

Roach: Huh! He still owes me for many a slug of port. No chance of getting' it out of 'im though.

Molly: If he had the money he'd give it you, Pa.

Roach: Hell'd freeze over first.

Todd: You paint a rosy picture of him, Roach. I just hope for his sake he hasn't let me down. The pie woman, what's her name?

Roach: Mrs. Lovett they call 'er.

Todd: I might pay her a visit, if I don't hear from Tate today. She might want some help. Where's her shop?

Roach: Somewhere off Fleet Street, Lovett's Pies.

Tate enters L accompanied by a young skinny Clarence Henshaw, dressed in black. His white shirt collar seems too large for his neck. Also in tow is an elderly lady, Nora Wilks, who wears 'widow's weeds. She is as skinny as Henshaw.

Tate: Hermes returns with glad tidings! I believe I have found the key to your future, Todd.

Todd: I was about to give up on you. Who's he?

Clarence: Clarence Henshaw at your service and with good news of a business in which you could follow your future employment....

Todd: Tate, what have you found? (*gesturing to Clarence and Nora*) And what are they doing here?

Tate: Clarence is a lawyer's clerk (*to Clarence*). Present the facts.

Clarence: (*clearing his throat*) Of course. First let me introduce Mrs. Nora Wilks.

Nora bobs a curtsey

She is a client of my firm and sadly her husband Mr. Wilks passed away a few days ago.

Nora whimpers and dabs her nose with a large handkerchief and blows loudly.

Mr. Wilks owned the barber's shop at 186 Fleet Street, close to Temple Bar.

Roach: That's a good area for business.

Tate: *(smiling broadly)* Yes. Indeed it is.

Clarence: The shop and living accommodation are for sale, yet in a bad state of repair. Mr. Wilks's health prevented him from properly maintaining the premises.

Nora sobs quietly. Molly comforts her.

Molly: Would you like a drink my dear?

Roach: Who's payin'?

Molly: Pa! It's the least we can do!

Roach: Yeah, and it's the only thing I'm prepared to do.

Molly: I'll bring you a port, dear.

Nora: That'd be nice. Thank you.

Clarence: *(to Nora)* I apologise, I did not intend to distress you.

Nora sniffs loudly nods and blows her nose.

Todd: *(becoming somewhat impatient)* Come on get on with it!

Tate: Continue Clarence.

Clarence: In short, sir, Mrs. Wilks wants to sell the shop as soon as possible. She says it is a sad reminder of her husband. She cannot bear to visit the place.

Nora: Yes, I mean, no sir.

She dabs at her eyes and again blows loudly into her handkerchief. Molly hands her the port. Molly looks closely at Nora.

Molly: You look familiar. Haven't I met you before, my dear?

Nora: *(quickly)* No, no I don't think so.

Molly: I could have sworn I'd met you before.

Roach: How could you have met her? You don't go no further than the end of the street.

Todd: When can I see the shop?

Tate: Why not this morning?

Todd: Why not, but if you so much as waste my time.

Tate: I can assure you Todd; your time will not be wasted.

Todd: If the premises are dilapidated, beyond repair, I shan't bother.

Clarence: Work is necessary that is true, but it is worthy of inspection.

Todd: Then I would expect to pay according to its state, or less perhaps.

Tate: Of course.

Todd: How much?

Tate: Er, Clarence, how much?

Clarence: Oh, er yes. The price is a hundred and fifty pounds for the lease, and 10 pounds per month for the rental.

Todd: What? (*scoffing*) Mrs. Wilks wants her pound of flesh alright!

Clarence: That is the suggested selling price.

Todd: Suggested price? Then it can't be a firm one can it?

Molly: Pound of flesh! That's where I've seen her! (to Nora) Weren't you Portia in the Merchant of Venice!

Nora becomes flustered and looks to Clarence and Tate for support

Yer, I remember it alright. Tate and his thespian friends performed excerpts from Shakespeare in the inn a few months ago! She was very good.

Todd: What are you going on about?

Tate looks across at Clarence with some concern and then at Molly

Tate: I, er don't understand Molly. How could this dear old woman possibly be an actress?

Molly: That's what she is, an actress! I'm sure of it.

Todd: What's going on Tate?

Tate: *(quickly)* Nothing at all *(scoffing)* Oh really Molly.

Molly approaches Nora and pulls off her wig. Nora's own hair falls about her shoulders and reveals a younger woman.

Nora: I told you it was too risky, Tate!

Todd pulls out a cut throat razor from his jacket pocket and grabs Tate.

Todd: *(wildly angry)* You were about to double cross me, Tate. What did I say I would do to you?

Tate: I had no intention of deceiving you Todd, honestly! Please let me explain. Clarence, help me!

Todd: *(eyes wildly aimed at Clarence)* Don't you move or I'll slit his throat and you will be next.

Clarence: *(shocked and mouthing air, before speaking)* I, I won't move. We can explain.

Roach: Don't you slit 'is throat in 'ere. I don't want to spend the day mopping up blood and gore!

Nora moans fearfully and starts sobbing.

Tate: Please let me explain.

Todd throws him into a chair and pushes his head back. He gently strokes the razor across his throat. Tate screams.

Todd: It's a bit blunt. Luckily for you I haven't used it for months!

Todd pulls Tate's head forwards and closes the razor with a flick and a snap. Tate shudders and sobs uncontrollably.

Todd: Now I'll hear your explanation and it'd better be good!

Tate battles hard to recover his composure.

Todd: *(loudly)* Well, come on then.

Tate fights for breath

Nora: Please sir, allow me to explain.

Todd: It'd better be good!

Nora: The three of us have no income at present. We scrounge for food and live off friends and old patrons' charity. We are desperate.

Tate: Please forgive me Nora.

Todd: Nora, is it?

Nora: Yes, sir, Nora Phelps. Not Wilks.

Todd: You think you can pull at my heart strings? Well, lady, I find that emotion rather difficult. *(To Clarence)* And what's your part in this?

Clarence: I am a lawyer's clerk, alas fallen on hard times.

Todd: Thieved from your employers you mean?

Clarence: I was involved in a monetary problem, yes, but the matter was resolved.

Todd: You were sacked!

Clarence: *(quietly)* Yes.

Todd: So you decided to make a play for me.

Todd approaches him and grabs him by the lapels. Bartholomew Rush, a local businessman enters with a local entertainer, Maggie.

Clarence: No sir! I had no intention of defrauding you,

Rush: Unhand that young man, sir!

Todd: *(without looking up)* Mind your business!

Rush: I insist that you do sir!

Todd turns to him

Todd: And what will you do, eh?

Rush attempts to draw a sword from his belt, but Todd in anticipation quickly grabs the weapon and holds it against Rush's throat.

Todd: You were saying, sir?

Maggie: Leave him be! Nobody here has any intention of causing you harm.

Todd: *(indicating sword)* Then what is this for, stabbing pickled gherkins?

Maggie: I could stab at your heart with a song.

Todd: Are you the entertainment today, then?

Maggie: (*winking*) Yes my dear, if you haven't murdered them all in 'ere, by the time I start.

Clarence: (*quickly*) Mr. Todd, Tate. Please let us discuss this over a drink.

Roach: I 'eard that. You ain't got no money for drinks!

Rush: I shall pay for the victuals. Put down the weapon and allow us to settle the matter once and for all.

Todd: Why not. (*tapping the blade on Rush's shoulder*) However, I shall keep this for the time being.

Rush: If you must.

Rush motions to the large table. Todd waves the blade at Clarence, Tate and Nora, motioning them to join them. They sit.

Tate: I have made a complete fool of myself.

Todd: You nearly made a corpse of yourself.

Rush: (*calling*) Roach! Your finest ale please, for myself and my company.

Todd: (*calling*) A bottle of rum landlord. Compliments of Mr...

Rush: Bartholomew Rush.

Maggie: Mr. Rush owns a tannery and a few other businesses in the area.

Todd: You are slumming it ain't you Mr. Rush?

Rush: I grew up in these parts and I do my best to help those in need, if I can. However, I see to it that those I assist use initiative and display enterprise.

Todd: Well this lot showed initiative, but that's about all.

Rush: Clarence and Tate approached me about your needs. They wanted to make a little profit out of the situation and unfortunately it seems to have misfired. Obviously their theatrical skills were far from convincing.

Todd: Is there a shop?

Rush: (*convincingly*) Oh yes.

Clarence: Mrs. Wilks passed away not long after her husband's death. The executors of her estate are keen to make a speedy sale.

Tate: I am so sorry, Todd.

Todd: Oh be quiet! *(to Rush)* I'd like to inspect the premises.

Rush: I'll take you there in my carriage.

Todd: Thank you Mr. Rush, but Clarence and Tate will go with me later today.

Clarence and Tate: *(enthusiastically)* Yes, of course.

At that moment Molly arrives with the ale and rum and pours. She throws awkward looks at Tate and Nora.

Molly: *(to Nora)* You were so good as Portia, yer know... I've never forgotten your performance.

Nora: I wish I had not been so good for you to remember me, but I suppose it is for the best.

Rush: *(Raising mug)* Let us drink to our settlement.

Todd: A fair deal, I hope.

Rush: Indeed, sir, and to a successful new venture on your part.

They raise their drinking vessels in a toast. Molly returns to the bar.

Todd: *(calling above the growing din)* And let's have a song from our Nightingale!

Maggie acknowledges Todd and cheekily blows him a kiss. Molly throws an admonishing look at Maggie, who pulls a face and laughs. She crosses DR and facing the audience, she sings the traditional folk song, 'Early One Morning', as follows:

Early One Morning

***Early one morning,
Just as the sun was rising,
I heard a maid sing,
In the valley below.***

Chorus:

O, don't deceive me,

**O never leave me,
How could you use
A poor maiden so?**

Chorus:

O, don't.....etc.

**Gay is the garland,
And fresh are the roses,
I've called from the garden,
To the place upon thy brow.**

Chorus:

**Remember the vows,
That you made to your Maggie,*
Remember the bower,
Where you vowed to be true.**

Chorus:

**Thus sang the poor maiden,
Her sorrows bewailing,
Thus sang the poor maid,
In the valley below.**

Chorus:

***Maggie in place of the traditional 'Mary'**

The customers applaud and Maggie curtsies.

Lights Down

Scene 6: The Swan Tavern – 2 days later.

The same setting as in the previous scene. Todd is seated at the table R. Lights come up as Molly, at the bar, approaches him with a drink.

Molly: I shall miss 'aving you around Todd. I wish I was coming with you.

Todd: If things were different I'd ask you along Molly, but at the moment I don't want any complications in my life.

Molly: I'm not sure whether to take that as a compliment or not.

Todd: It's the truth. You're a lovely young woman Molly. You'd be a great catch for any man.

Molly: Now that's a compliment! Worthy of another ale, I'd say.

Todd: No more for me Molly.

Roach enters scratching himself.

Roach: Still 'ere then?

Todd: When I've finished my drink I'll be off. I hope Tate and Clarence have finished cleaning out the shop.

Roach: I don't think Tate knows one end of a broom from the other, and as for the skinny one (*shaking his head*)....I dunno.

Todd: Then they know what to expect when I get there (finishing his drink) I'd better be on my way

Todd stands

Roach: It's been a pleasure to 'ave yer 'ere, I think.

Molly: Course it 'as.

She throws her arms around him and kisses him quickly.

Molly: If things don't work out I'll always be 'ere Todd.

He smiles and kisses her on a cheek. Rush enters R

Rush: I thought you had left Todd?

Todd: I'm on my way, Mr. Rush.

Rush: *(taking Todd's hand and shaking it)* If you need my help at any time you know where to find me. Oh yes, tell our thespian friends, I've arranged an engagement for them, entertaining an eminent member of the city.

Molly: That should please them.

Rush: It's at a retirement function for one of our judges, on the Friday of next week.

Roach: Oh yes, I 'eard the 'anging judge was retiring. Many a poor soul 'as ended 'is days after appearin' in front of 'im.

Molly: Who's that then?

Roach: Baxter.

Todd: Did you say Baxter? Judge Baxter?

Roach: That's 'im.

Todd: *(reflectively)* Old Baxter, eh?

Lights Down

Scene 7: The Barber's Shop at 186 Fleet Street, London.

The black flats remain. UC against the flat is a table. On the table are shaving bottles and jars, and towels. R and D of table are two chairs side by side and at an angle. DL is a large barber's chair which has seen better days. . There are exits UR, R and UL. As the lights come up Maggie is sweeping the floor. Todd enters R carrying towels, which he places on the table. Todd looks around the room and smiles.

Todd: What a difference eh?

Maggie: The boys made a good job. I saw to that. Nora was her useless self. I'd feel sorry for any husband of hers.

Todd takes the broom from her and kisses her. She responds warmly.

Maggie: You're a madman Todd, but any woman would be happy with you.

Todd: You are a beautiful young woman Maggie. You look after that sweet voice of yours.

Maggie kisses him quickly and draws away.

Todd: Good luck for next Friday.

Maggie: Thank you.

Todd: Where's the function being held?

Maggie: In Judge Baxter's chambers in the Temple, off Middle Temple Lane.

Todd: *(smiling broadly)* Just a stone's throw away from here.

Maggie: You're not thinking of coming? I doubt whether you will get an invitation. *(Sarcastically)* You need to be of higher rank, Mr. Todd.

Todd: I wouldn't dream of it, but I would love to hear you sing again.

Maggie: I often sing in the inns in Fleet Street. Look out for me. *(she smiles)* Please.

Todd takes her hands and kisses them. At that moment a doorbell rings and Tate enters UL with a young scruffily dressed lad named Toby, aged about 10 years. His ragged clothes and skin are grimy, especially his bare feet and he appears very nervous.

Tate: This is the boy I told you about, Todd.

Todd: *(unimpressed)* This?

Tate: My sister's boy. The family badly needs the money, however meagre the amount.

Todd: He needs a good wash!

Maggie: A bath more like it!

Toby: I ain't 'avin no bath!

Todd: What's your name boy?

Toby: Tobias, but my family and friends call me Toby.

Todd: I'll call you Toby.

Tate: Does that mean you'll take him on?

Todd: On a temporary basis. I'll lay down some hard and fast rules, mind you.

Toby does not respond. He seems miserable about the thought of working.

Tate: Well, Toby what have you to say to Mr. Todd?

Toby: What?

Todd: Do you want a job or not, boy?

Toby shrugs. Tate slaps him. Toby yelps.

Tate: Show some respect. Mr. Todd is offering you work which nobody else is prepared to do!

Todd: That's encouraging I must say.

Toby: *(softly, yet unconvincingly)* Thank you sir. I'm obliged.

Tate: Well sound as if you mean it!

Todd: That's enough Tate. Leave him to me. As I hear you've got an engagement on Friday. Judge Baxter's retiring, eh?

Tate: Yes, employment at last. Er... Thank you so much for your understanding, Todd.

Todd: You've got nothing to thank me for. Everything I've done has been to my own advantage, its called business.

Maggie looks hard at Todd and shakes her head

Maggie: Why can't you just accept his thanks?

Todd glares at her and turns his back on them.

Maggie: What have I said?

Todd turns to them and smiles weakly.

Todd: *(softly)* I think you'd better go. May good luck go with you both, especially to you my nightingale.

Maggie approaches him expecting a farewell kiss, but Todd holds out his hand, which she takes and bows her head. He then shakes Tate's hand.

Todd: Now go. Tell your sister, Tate, I'll take proper care of the boy. I'll send him home at six o'clock *(to Toby)* You and me need to talk.

Maggie: *(softly)* Goodbye Todd.

Tate: Farewell Todd.

Todd holds up a hand in acknowledgement. They exit UL to the sound of the ringing doorbell.

Todd turns to Toby.

Todd: (*firmly holding Toby's arms*) Let's get one thing straight young man.

Toby: (*wincing*) You're hurting me!

Todd: (*unrelenting and fiercely*) What happens in this shop is a matter between you and me. You understand?

Toby: No, I don't!

Todd: I'm not employing you because I like you. I just happen to appreciate your uncle, Mr. Tate. It's for him and your mother that I'm giving you this job.

He forces him into the barber's chair.

Toby: What are you going to do? Leave me alone!

Todd: I haven't finished with you yet! I shall pay you three shillings a week on a good week, but no less than two shillings on others, alright?

Toby: I think so.

Todd: You'll begin your day at six o'clock and finish at the same hour in the evening. You will then find your own way home. I'll get you whatever I can in the way of food. I expect you to sweep, scrub the floors and make sure you mop up any blood.

Toby: Blood? What d'yer mean?

Todd: We all make mistakes, at times. A little blood can be spilt when shaving a customer. You can also run errands and if you're any good I'll take you on as my apprentice. I'm telling you bluntly and sharply, if you ever tell anyone, including any member of your family, what happens in this shop, no matter how fickle it may be, I shall slit your throat from ear to ear. Do you understand?

Toby: Yes, yes Mr. Todd, I do.

Todd: Not a word you miserable wretch!

Toby: (*beginning to cry*) Oh, yes Mr. Todd.

At that moment the doorbell rings. Todd crosses UL. Maggie enters UL quickly. Todd takes her in his arms and they kiss. Maggie is surprised by his sudden ardour.

Maggie: (smiling) What's up with you then?

Todd turns away from her and massages his neck with a hand, breathing deeply He shakes his head in answer.

Maggie: (awkwardly) I... I'd forgotten. The boy needs cleaning up!

Toby: (climbing out of the chair) I ain't 'avin no bath!

Todd and Maggie look at him and then at each other and smile.

Lights Down and spot on Todd DC

Todd: (addressing audience) It is Tuesday and my business is already picking up. I seem to cater for the gentry, particularly the learned men of law that work in Lincoln's Inn and The Temple. It's amazing what information I hear while shaving customers. Sometimes, I have been tempted to add a few to London's death roll when I hear them talk of their clients or opponents as if they were the scum of the earth and then boast about the fees they charge them. In these parts, lawyers and prostitutes are of similar standing and ply their trades accordingly, as they've always done.

Spot fades

Spot up on Toby.

Toby: (addressing audience) Todd my master is a strange one. E's a fine barber though. We've been open for about a week and already we're busy. 'E tells 'is customers that 'e 'as operated on wounded soldiers and removed pistol balls and bits of metal from 'em. 'E goes about it in gruesome detail. I don't care for 'is moods. One minute 'e can be nice as pie, the next 'e's wild, like a man possessed. Yer, 'e's strange alright.

Todd: (*off*) Tobias! Where are you boy?

Toby: Oh Gawd, when 'e's angry he calls me Tobias (*calling*) Comin' Mr.Todd!

Spot fades

Lights Down

Scene 8: The Barber's Shop at 186 Fleet Street – a few days later.

Same setting as in previous scene.

It is early morning. There is a loud knocking off UL. The doorbell rings crazily.

Todd enters L, adjusting his clothes.

Todd: What the devil's going on?

The knocking and ringing continues.

Todd: *(calling off UR)* Who is it?

Tate: (off) It's me, Tate, and Maggie!

Maggie: (off) Please open the door Todd!

Todd exits UR

Todd, Tate and Maggie enter.

Todd: What a commotion! You must have woken up the whole of Fleet Street, if not London!

Tate: *(recovering his breath)* Toby, is he here?

Todd: I haven't seen him. It must be past the hour of seven. He's late. I had a skin full at the local tavern last night and slept in. Perhaps he couldn't rouse me and went for a wander.

Maggie: Todd, he's in trouble!

Todd: He will be when I get hold of him. He also went off early yesterday, without my say so.

Maggie: He's in serious trouble, Todd.

Tate: He's running from the law and we thought he might have come here as usual. Bow Street Runners are knocking on doors in our neighbourhood.

Todd: What's he done?

Maggie: He's been accused of stealing a loaf of bread and a string of sausages from a stall in a Shoreditch market.

Todd: The fool. He'll hang if they catch him.

Tate: (*almost in tears*) My sister has been ill and without food. The children are starving. Toby left your shop early to buy some meat scraps from the local butcher, but it wasn't enough. He became enraged and said he was going to beg for food or steal it if necessary. The fool of a boy!

Maggie: Yesterday evening he was seen taking the loaf and sausages. When the shouting began he took off and hasn't been seen since.

Todd: Well I haven't seen him. The last thing I want is the law hanging round here. I've got a business to run.

Maggie: I doubt whether the law would have any idea that he works for you, Todd. Isn't that right Daniel?

Tate: (*awkwardly and unconvincing*) Er... no, I think not.

Todd: (*detecting Tate's unconvincing response*) What is it Tate? You don't sound so sure.

Tate: Nothing. Nothing at all!

Maggie: Daniel, what have you done?

Tate: It's just that one of the Bow Street Runners recognised Toby and traced him to my sister's abode.

Maggie: You never mentioned this to me!

Todd: Well? If you are about to tell me that they know that I employed the boy, you won't walk out of this shop – you will be carried out!

He lunges at Tate and grabs him by his shirt collar.

Tate: No, please Todd. Let me finish.

Todd throws him into the barber's chair.

Todd: You'd better convince me Tate otherwise there will be one less entertaining Judge Baxter tomorrow night.

Tate: Toby must have told my sister that he worked in Fleet Street.

Todd: Was my name mentioned?

Tate: Only that he worked for a barber.

Todd: (*sarcastically*) Oh, that's alright then. I don't think the law would be able to pin it down to any one employer, now would they?

Tate: (*weakly*) But there are quite a few barbers in this area.

Todd: (*calmly*) About four of us I believe. (*Wildly*) It wouldn't take them long to get round to me, would it? And Shoreditch is not too far from here!

Maggie: Please Todd. I don't think you can blame Daniel and I'm sure they would believe you.

Todd: Unless of course a neighbour remembers the boy running errands. You talk as though you expect me to protect him. What if he turns up? Eh? I'd be an accomplice if I didn't hand him over and both of us would find ourselves dangling on the end of a rope.

Maggie: In that case, just send him on his way. We came here to warn you, that's all. We thought the boy might be here. I'm sorry we've placed you in awkward position.

Todd: You have! (taking a deep breath and becoming calmer) I've been in worse I suppose. I wouldn't hand him over. If he comes here I'll do the best I can to help him.

Tate: (*rising from the chair*) Thank you Todd.

Todd: One day my friend, you will seek my help and it will be too late.

At that moment sneezing is heard off stage L

Todd: What's that?

Maggie: (pointing UR) It sounded as though it came from over there!

Tate: It couldn't be him, could it?

Todd approaches

Todd: We'll soon find out.

He exits UR

Maggie: Daniel, in future please confide in me. One day you'll get us all into trouble.

Todd: (*Off*) You young fool! Come here!

Toby: (*crying*) Let go of me! Ouch!

Todd enters UR clutching the boy.

Todd: How did you get in here? Come on tell me, you stupid brat!

Tate: Tobias! You are in deep trouble!

Toby: And don't I know it!

Todd: How did you get into the shop?

Toby: Through the tunnels!

Todd: What are you talking about?

Toby: There's tunnels under the shop. Last night, I 'id in St. Dunstan's Church next door. I went down to the underground tunnels.

Tate: The catacombs.

Toby: What?

Tate: Catacombs. They're underground burial chambers.

Toby: D'yer mean there are dead bodies down there? I've been among dead bodies!

Todd: Shut up and get to the point! How did you manage to land up in my shop?

Toby: I'd taken one of the lighted candles from the church and made my way down into the tunnels. I was scared. I walked for a bit and came across a pile of rubbish and wood blockin' me way. I managed to make a gap to get through and then I was in the basement of the shop. I couldn't believe it!

Todd: I'd no idea there were tunnels down there (*Sudden realisation*). You realise the trouble you're in? What you've done is a hanging offence, and if the law had found you in the basement I'd join you.

Tate: What should we do now?

Todd: I've a good mind to hand him over to you, but as I said I'll do my best to help him.

There is a knock UL and the doorbell rings

Tate: Surely they haven't got here already?

Todd: Shut up Tate! Quickly, take Toby down to the basement.

Tate: Me?

Todd: He's your nephew isn't he? Now take him!

Toby: Come on!

Toby and Tate exit. There is another knock UR and ringing

Todd: *(calling through the door)* Who is it?

Molly: *(off)*: It's me, Molly!

Todd exits UR and quickly enters followed by Molly

Molly: Todd, is Toby here? *(taken aback on seeing Maggie)* Oh, am I interrupting somethin'?

Maggie: What are you doing here?

Molly: I was about to ask you the same thing.

Todd: What do you want Molly? Toby is here. Obviously you've come to warn me. The whole of Shoreditch will be here soon at this rate!

Molly: He's here? *(She breaks down and sobs)* His Mother, she's been taken away.

Todd: I'll go and get the boy.

He exits UR

Maggie *(approaching Molly to comfort her)* Are you alright?

Molly: *(shrugging her off)* Course I'm not! I thought I might find you here with 'im!

Maggie: Molly! I'm here for the same reason as you are, Toby!

Molly: Oh yes, of course you are.

Maggie: Oh Molly, please. Not now.

At that moment Todd, Tate and Toby enter UR

Tate: Molly!

Todd: Tell the boy Molly.

Molly: Toby love, your Mother, she's been taken away by the law.

Toby: Taken away? Why?

Molly: They found the sausages in the outhouse at your place.

Todd: Why did you leave them there?

Toby: Me family's starving! Me sister, she's like a livin' skeleton. I thought me muvver would find the sausages. What will 'appen to 'er? I must go to her.

Todd: And what good will that do? You will be spinning on a rope tomorrow morning boy, with your mother beside you!

Toby falls to his knees and sobs loudly

Toby: What 'ave I done?

Maggie: What a horrible thing to say to the boy, Todd! How could you?

Molly sobs quietly.

Tate: God protect them!

Todd: The boy must... look, he has to face up to the situation.

Maggie: There was no need to be so painfully blunt Todd!

Todd: What's the boy goin' to do, eh? What I said is right. No matter what happens one of them or both are going to pay for it with their lives.

Toby sobs louder. Maggie comforts him. Tate bows his head unable to say anything.

Todd: There is something you can do, but you must move quickly Tate.

Tate: Me?

Todd: (*angrily*) You want to help your sister, don't you?

Tate: How can I?

Todd: Go back to Shoreditch and plead for your sister's release. Tell the law everything and pray that they see reason. Make it your best theatrical performance! You should also seek out Mr. Rush. He'll help you. He's some standing in the community, they should listen to him.

Maggie: Todd's right Daniel. Rush will do all he can to help.

Tate: Yes, of course. I'll go.

Maggie: I'll come with you Daniel. Molly?

Molly: (*She looks across at Todd, who nods*) Yes I'll join you.

Toby: (*sobbing*) What about me? I gotta help me muvver!

Todd: (*fiercely*) You'll stay here!

The others are shocked by Todd's ferocity.

Todd: (*sighing deeply*) He has to.

Tate: Tobias, Mr. Todd is right. You have no option.

Toby: Please help her, don't let her die!

Tate: I'll do everything I can.

Molly gently hands Toby over to Todd.

Todd beckons them to go. They quickly exit UR. We hear the door close and the bell ring.

Todd: (*placing an arm around him momentarily*) Come on boy. You must hide in the basement until things quieten down. I'll make sure you are fed and watered.

Toby: They won't take her life, will they?

Todd: Mr. Tate will do everything he can. It's family. Remember, blood is thicker than water.

Toby: Thank you Mr. Todd. I'll go to the basement now.

Todd: No, you'll hide in the tunnels. I'll get you some ale and bread.

Toby: Yes, Mr. Todd. Thank you.

Toby exits UR

Todd: (to audience) What a mess. The boy has to know the truth. God help me I've had to. (*He removes a razor from his pocket*) I'll have to keep my wits about me though. I'd better open up, although I've got a feeling that business is likely to be slow today.

He exits UL. The doorbell rings. Suddenly Todd is pushed back into the room by a Bow Street Runner. Another follows him into the room.

Runner 1: Where is he barber?

Todd: Who?

Runner 2: The boy who goes by the name of Tobias.

Todd: He's not here.

The Runners look at each other in surprise.

Runner 1: Oh, so the boy works for you?

Todd: What's the point in denying it? You are bound to find out sooner or later. He worked for me until yesterday. He ran off and I haven't seen him since.

Runner 2: What was wrong d'yer think? Wasn't the pay good enough?

Runner 1: Mind if we 'ave a look around?

Todd: I do mind gentlemen. I have a business to run. I'm expecting a customer soon and I don't want to lose work now, do I?

Runner 2: We'll be discreet. Mr. er what's your name? Your occupation appears on the sign outside, or am I talking to Mr. Barber the barber?

The Runners chuckle

Todd: I haven't got round to making a proper sign yet, but I can tell you what it will say, Sweeney Todd, Barber, 'Easy shaving for a penny, as good as you'll find any'.

Runner 1: Quite the poet ain't yer?

Todd: *(Taking a razor from his pocket)* I could give you both a shave if you like, free of charge, of course, if you'll wait 'till I make up a lather.

Runner 2: What and cut our throats while you're at it? *(He runs a hand across his throat and makes a cutting noise).*

They laugh

Todd: *(deliberately relishing the moment)* I wouldn't dream of doing such a thing gentlemen. This razor is made of the finest steel and is the sharpest and most proficient of all my razors. A shave with this and you wouldn't feel a thing.

The Runners look at each other and appear unsettled.

Todd: How about it then, a free shave?

Runner 1: We'll just search the place if you don't mind.

Runner 2: Let's have a look at the backroom and the basement.

Todd: As you wish. I've nothing to hide. *(He motions the razor to his pocket but deftly keeps it in his hand and behind his back)*

Runner 1: How often 'ave we 'eard that? Now let's have a peep, shall we?
Open the door.

Todd crosses to UR exit

Todd: After you gentlemen.

They exit and Todd follows quickly.

Runner 2: *(off)* Where does this door lead?

Runner 1: *(off)* I can 'ear someone coughing!

Runner 2: *(off)* 'ere's the boy. Come 'ere you little.....

We hear Toby cry out, followed by shouts and blood curdling screams. Then there is silence. Todd enters UR. He carries a bloodied rag and his hands are splattered with blood. He breathes deeply and suddenly rushes off UL. We hear the door slam, the bell ring and a key turning in a lock. He returns quickly and leans against the back wall, breathing heavily and soon regains his composure.

Todd: *(looking at his blood stained hands)* It was all too easy and not even for a penny *(he laughs and suddenly coughs and stops himself from retching)*.
God, there'll be blood on the door knob!

He hurries off UL

Toby is heard screaming from UR. He stumbles into the room, just as Todd re-enters UL

Todd: *(choking)* I told you to go into the tunnels!

Toby: What 'ave you done Mr. Todd?

Todd: Shut up! Come here!

Toby backs to exit R

Todd: *(wildly)* I said come here!

Toby: What yer goin' to do Mr. Todd.

Todd: Just come here. I won't hurt you.

Toby approaches

Todd: Sit down. *(indicating barber's chair)*

Gingerly, Toby drops into the chair.

Todd: We've to get rid of the mess in there.

Toby: We?

Todd: All I want you to do is mop the floor. I'll get rid of the bodies.

Toby: You didn't 'ave to murder them!

Todd: I had to do it, otherwise you'd be on your way to Newgate Prison by now, ready for a hanging tomorrow (*fiercely*) Understand?

Toby: (*weakly*) Y-yes Mr.Todd.

Todd approaches and leans over him and into his face

Todd: Remember what I said earlier (*firmly*) Not a word, right!

Lights down and spot on Rush DR

Rush: Tate came to see me today. He was in a terrible state. He told me of his sister's plight and that of her son, Toby. I went to the local holding cell. What a place! The stench was deplorable. The poor wretch was huddled into a corner of the cell with her daughter. They were so weak they could hardly stand.

I bribed the officer to release them. As for the boy's mother, I arranged for her to be taken home and for the family to be suitably fed and provided with enough provisions to last them a few days. I don't think any further action will be taken.

He turns to exit and then stops.

Oh yes, should it be convenient, I shall obtain an invitation to the function on Friday for Mr. Todd as a token of our gratitude for his kindness in securing the boy's safety.

Spot off

Scene 9: A Room in Judge Baxter's Chambers

The Black flats are draped in red curtains. There is a sideboard UC upon which is a tray of filled wine glasses. There exits UR and UL

The lights come up on Todd who is browsing through a book. He is neatly dressed. He closes it, takes a glass of wine from a tray on a sideboard and drinks

Todd: *(to audience)* I couldn't resist the opportunity, could I now? It is ironic isn't it, for now I am a murderer, in the company of the gentlemen of the law? At first, I was reluctant to accept the invitation, but I considered the prospect of a reunion with the old judge strangely exciting. The thought that he might recognise me did enter my head, but I shall refrain from socialising too much, unless the wine flows freely.

Maggie and Tate enter UR. Tate takes two glasses of wine and hands one to Maggie.

Maggie: There you are Todd. I thought you had decided to leave.

Todd: *(He adopts a grand style)* The company is not of my taste, present company excluded of course.

Maggie and Tate laugh

Maggie: You look particularly handsome tonight. Who is your tailor?

She laughs and Tate smiles broadly.

Tate: Don't be so unkind Maggie. Todd has put himself out tonight.

Todd: Yes and you'd have no idea by how much.

Maggie: Will Toby be safe enough?

Todd: *(grandly)* As safe as the Tower of London, my dear.

Maggie and Tate are impressed.

Tate: You should join the acting profession, Todd.

Todd: You may scoff Tate. My gin soaked mother was a budding actor, er, thespian. God rest her soul. She introduced me to literature while my father wallowed and eventually died in the local alehouse. So I am not entirely illiterate.

Maggie: *(chuckling)* Perhaps you should perform tonight, with us.

Todd: If only I could Maggie. It would be an honour to entertain Judge Baxter.

Maggie looks at him quizzically.

At that moment Rush and Mrs. Lovett enter UR, both are smartly dressed. Margery Lovett is slim pleasant, determined, and in her thirties. She is fairly well spoken. Rush takes two glasses of wine from the tray and hands one to Lovett.

Rush: Good evening Tate, Maggie.

Tate and Maggie: Good evening.

Rush: Todd, I am so pleased you accepted the invitation.

Todd: I am obliged to you.

Rush: Think nothing of it. You have earned our thanks. *(He smiles at Tate and Maggie who nod and smile)*

Todd: *(smiling at Lovett)* Ma'am?

Rush: Oh, forgive me. Todd, I have pleasure in introducing Mrs. Lovett, a businesswoman of some local fame and utmost respect.

Lovett: Mr. Todd?

Todd: Sweeney Todd, ma'am. And what is your business, Mrs. Lovett?

Lovett: I own the pie shop in Bell Yard. I am a pie maker, and you sir?

Todd: A barber, in the shop between the church and Hen and Chicken Court in Fleet Street, ma'am.

Lovett: Oh, we are neighbours Mr. Todd. Who would have thought - a pie maker and a barber at a judge's function?

Rush: But his lordship is an important customer of yours Mrs. Lovett.

Todd: And I have yet to cut his.....hair.

Rush: Your pies, my dear, are the best in this part of London!

Lovett: Only in this part, Mr. Rush?

Tate: I frequent the Swan Tavern in Shoreditch and I have delighted in your pies, washed down with good ale, of course.

Maggie: An absolute treat ma'am, I must say.

Todd: I share Mr. Tate's and the nightingale's opinions Mrs. Lovett.

Lovett: The nightingale? *(to Maggie)* You must be our singer tonight.

Todd: And an excellent singer she is too.

Maggie: Mr. Todd flatters me.

Lovett: Yes, he is a flatterer, isn't he?

Todd raises his glass to her and winks.

Rush: Well, there we have it ma'am, your pies are famous throughout London.

Lovett: Alas, my reputation is waning Mr. Rush. I can only provide for my local custom now that ingredients are becoming scarce. The price of meat has risen sharply.

Tate: Then you must resort to using rats and I am sure your pies would be just as delicious, ma'am.

The others laugh politely.

Todd: There are a few two legged rats which could assist, I'm sure.

Lovett considers Todd carefully

Maggie: Perhaps we should change the subject rather than promote more ingredients.

Rush: Indeed!

Swain, the Judge's manservant enters UL followed by Baxter who carries a glass of wine.

Swain: *(in the act of announcing)* His Lordship...

Baxter: I made it clear to you Swain that I wanted this evening to be informal. Kindly desist from introducing me to everyone.

Swain: Yes, my Lord.

Baxter: We need wine. We are supposed to be entertaining.

Swain: Yes, my Lord.

Baxter: Well go and get it!

Swain: I have already asked the wine waiter to bring it my Lord.

Baxter: Well it hasn't arrived. Go and hurry him, man!

