

**Sweeney Todd**  
**a comedy melodrama in fourteen scenes**  
**adapted by Walter Swan**

**Scene One**

**Fleet Street, outside the door of Sweeney Todd's shop.**

**Todd:** If I am to understand you correctly, Mr Smith, you say you require payment for the clever little contraption you invented for me. Is that right?

**Smith:** Your brain is as sharp as your razor, Mr Todd. That is precisely what I require. I have the bill with me.

**Todd:** Not the Old Bill, I take it.

**Smith:** You'll be police-d to hear it's a brand new one, and what you owe me is a guinea.

**Todd:** Foul fellow! A guinea? That's daylight robbery.

**Smith:** But I learnt my carpentry at night school. Just pay me what you owe me and have done.

**Todd:** I'll be the one who's done if I pay you a guinea, Mr Smith. What would you say to ten shillings?

**Smith:** I've heard that money talks but I'll be damned if I say anything to ten shillings!

**Todd:** And a free shave. I don't want you to get stroppy, if you'll pardon the pun.

**Smith:** Pardon be beggared, it's a guinea you owe me, you rogue. Need I remind you we are not far from the offices of those who ply their trade at the Old Bailey. When will you pay me? Or do I have to reveal the rather unusual nature of the device to officers of the law.

**Todd:** Now, now, Mr Smith, let's not be hasty - (*aside*) though he may quickly find himself in pastry! I'm sure we can settle the matter of a few bob without the bobbies becoming involved. And now I regard you more closely, Mr Smith, I can't help but notice a shadow upon your features, which is swiftly remedied by means of a shave.

**Smith:** It's no shadow but the storm cloud of my rage, Mr Todd. I see no harm in accepting your offer of a free shave, but you'll not be trimming my bill.

**Todd:** Step this way, Mr Smith, and wait for me in my shop. I'll be with you in the ticking of a clock - (*aside*) and your time is about to be up!

*Smith exits into the shop. Sweeney Todd remains and sings his song.*

If your face wants shaving  
Don't go rant and raving  
Sit upon my barber's chair  
Soon your chin will have no hair  
Soon your heart will have no soul  
Down you'll go into my hole!  
Snip snap snip and into chops  
Bones and all including slops  
Don't you mess with Sweeney Todd  
Unless it's time to meet your god!

*Mrs Ragg and her son Tobias enter.*

**Mrs Ragg:** Ah, Mr Todd, I've brought him, my dearest, darling boy.

**Todd:** So I see. And your every word is true - a more angelic looking child I've never seen. Rest assured, young Tobias is in the very best of hands in coming to work for me.

**Mrs Ragg:** You're such a good man, Mister Todd. It breaks our hearts to see him go, me, my husband and the other twelve little Ragg, but it is so reassuring to know that he's to be apprenticed to a craftsman and a gentleman.

**Todd:** Yes indeed, exchanging his sisters for scissors. Naturally he'll feel cut up about leaving his family, but he won't be in a lather very long.

**Mrs Ragg:** And how long do you suppose it will take him to learn the ropes, Mr Todd?

**Todd:** Learn the soaps, I prefer to say. Why, in five short years I'll have taught him all I know - (*aside*) if he lives that long!

**Mrs Ragg:** Five years. Why, Tobias, I'll hardly recognise you when Mr Todd has finished with you.

**Todd:** *(aside)* I'll see to that all right!

**Mrs Ragg:** Now, Tobias, you're to be a good boy to sweet, kind Mr Todd, and you're to consider yourself very lucky that he had a sudden unexpected vacancy for you as an apprentice which spares us the expense of having to feed and clothe you as you grow into manhood. And make sure you write to your old ma and don't go breaking her heart by having such a good time here that you forget all about your family and make your way in the world without remembering who it was who gave you your start in life.

**Todd:** *(clipping Tobias round the head)* You ungrateful dog.

**Tobias:** Ow! What was that for?

**Todd:** That was for your own good, Tobias. Not having a rod about my person, I don't want you spoiling. A barber's hand is just what you need for a clip round the ear!

**Mrs Ragg:** Ah, I can see I'm leaving him in good hands. He's got your best interests at heart, Tobias. Pay heed to Mr Todd and all that he can teach you. He's a master of his trade. *(Tobias starts to cry)* Now don't go a-blubbin' because you won't be seeing me for a while.

**Tobias:** It's not that, Ma - my ear still hurts from Mr Todd clipping me.

**Mrs Ragg:** *(clips him)* And there's another one from me for your ingratitude. *(Departing)* Now work hard for Mr Todd, and I'm sure he'll treat you fair. *(Exits)*

**Todd:** Now come here, boy. Do you know what an apprentice is?

**Tobias:** No sir.

**Todd:** Well, I'll tell you. It's another word for a slave.

**Tobias:** I thought slavery had been abolished.

**Todd:** By will or by force, **you**'ll be abolished if you answer me back again, lad. You do exactly as I tell you. You don't even breathe without my permission, understood?

**Tobias:** Yes, sir. Er, Mr Todd?

**Todd:** Now what is it?

**Tobias:** Permission to breathe, sir?

**Todd:** You cheeky young scoundrel! *(Clips him)* Now, into the shop!

**Tobias:** But I thought you said...

**Todd:** Enough. Now, into the shop.

*As Tobias opens the door, Smith exits, tired of waiting, and Mark Ingestre enters from offstage in seafaring garb.*

**Smith:** Think you can keep me waiting, do you, Todd? I've been in there on me tod for the past five minutes and I'm waiting not a second longer. You'll be hearing from me.

**Todd:** Oh, be off with you. I've got bigger fish to fry. Here's a gentleman worthy of my acquaintance.

**Smith:** *(aside)* You'll be hearing from me all right. *(and he exits)*

**Mark:** I wonder, kind sir, if you know the whereabouts of a Miss Johanna Oakley who once lived hereabouts.

**Todd:** That I don't. Pretty lady, is she, sir?

**Mark:** Indeed she is, and my love. I have been busy seeking my fortune in ventures abroad and am now returned to propose marriage to one I prize more highly than any of the jewels that have fallen into my possession.

**Todd:** Indeed.

**Mark:** But imagine my dismay upon calling at her house to discover the family have moved away during my absence. What good now that I have amassed a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, with a ruby ring to give my bride worth ten thousand more?

*Cash register sound effect and Sweeney Todd's eyes light up.*

**Todd:** Tobias, here at once!

*Tobias enters hurriedly through the door.*

**Todd:** The gentleman here is enquiring after a Miss Oakley. Have you heard of such a body?

**Tobias:** Miss Johanna? Indeed I have. She is one of the kindest souls I've ever met in all my short days. She moved into our street at the beginning of last year after her father had encountered hard times...

**Todd:** The latest Dickens. Very good too. Mind you, I preferred "Great Expectations"...

**Mark:** Be quiet, man! So, young lad, will you be able to escort me to the house? I am most anxious to be re-acquainted with Miss Johanna at the earliest opportunity.

**Todd:** The boy is **mine** to command. If I may make so bold, why not come into my establishment and be shaved and trimmed to present a better appearance when you are reunited with the lady. I would very much enjoy hearing more about your travels and the riches you acquired. At such a time as you are more fit to be seen, begging your pardon, my boy Tobias will be at your disposal - (*aside*) while I dispose of your body and fortune!

**Mark:** That I will - a splendid notion. After all this time on the ocean, a man forgets he must keep up appearances.

**Todd:** Don't dilly-dally, boy. Lead the gentleman into the shop. (*clips Tobias again*)

**Mark:** I say, I can't be doing with corporal punishment.

**Todd:** But I think it's a capital idea.

*Tobias and Mark enter into the shop. Sweeney Todd reprises his song.*

I'm Sweeney Todd the Barber  
 He's sailed into my harbour  
 He thinks I'll just cut his hair  
 But when he sits down in my chair  
 I'm such a fearsome fella'  
 This Salt will end up in my cellar.  
 Snip snap snip and into chops  
 Bones and all including slops  
 Don't you come inside my room  
 Unless it's time to meet your doom!

*At the end of the song, the curtains draw back to reveal the interior of Sweeney Todd's shop.*

## Scene Two

### Inside Sweeney Todd's shop

**Todd:** You'll find this chair the most comfortable, sir. Tobias, fetch me a towel from next door.

*Tobias exits. Sweeney Todd brushes Mark's hair.*

**Todd:** This ruby ring you mentioned. Do you have it about your person?

**Mark:** But of course. I propose proposing to Johanna the moment I see her.

**Todd:** How touching.

**Mark:** Would you mind touching me a little more gently, sir. I trust you're more careful with a razor in your hands.

**Todd:** My reputation depends upon this s-kill of mine, that my customers, once shaved, have no bad word to say against me - (*aside*) not when their throats are cut!

*Tobias enters with the towel. Sweeney Todd wraps it about Mark's neck.*

**Todd:** Now, Tobias, fetch me my strop - (*aside*) this one's for the chop!

*Tobias exits. Sweeney Todd starts lathering Mark's face.*

**Mark:** You asked about the ring. Look here, I have it in this little box. Have you ever seen anything more precious?

**Todd:** (*Examining it*) More precious than life's blood, and of its colour. What might a man not do to own such a jewel? (*He wanders to the door where Tobias exited and locks it*). And now to shave you, sir, as you've never been shaved before.

(*Aside*) But I can't slit his throat here. The boy will see his blood. I'll send him to the cellar and dispose of him later.

**Mark:** You're very slow about your business, barber. Can't you quicken up?

**Todd:** Aye, for the quick and the dead!

*On the word "dead" he operates a lever which tips the chair back and Mark disappears from view with a diminishing scream. Then the chair returns to its normal position. Sweeney Todd pockets the ring then unlocks the door in time for Tobias's return.*

**Tobias:** I'm sorry, sir, I've been so long. I wasn't quite sure what a strop was, except my pa was always in one. Ooh, I say - where's the gentleman gone?

**Todd:** He had to drop in on some old friends. He did seem to be falling over himself to depart as soon as possible.

**Tobias:** But I was to take him to see Miss Johanna. I was so looking forward to seeing her again. Perhaps I should go and inform her that she was to have a caller.

**Todd:** You will inform nobody of nothing, do you hear! All the time you're my apprentice you'll whistle to my tune and no other. Have you got that straight?

**Tobias:** Straight as a die, sir.

**Todd:** "Die" did you say? What made you say "die"?

**Tobias:** It's only a saying, sir.

**Todd:** Well, you'd better start saying your prayers that you don't die before your time, you young scoundrel. Now, into the other room with you and launder the towels.

**Tobias:** Yes sir. *(and he exits)*

*Enter Monsieur Parmine, the jeweller.*

**Parmine:** Ah, Mr Todd, would you shave me?

**Todd:** But of course. What good fortune that you should arrive so opportunely. Monsieur Parmine, as I recall, you are a jeweller by trade.

**Parmine:** That I am, c'est vrai.

**Todd:** Could you readily tell me the value of a ruby ring?

**Parmine:** You can take it as read. Just my leettle joke. Do you 'ave such a ring - I will gladly give it the - 'ow you say - once over.

*Sweeney Todd shows him the ring*

**Parmine:** Mon dieu, I 'ave never seen such a.....such a.....such a clever replica en toute ma vie..

**Todd:** You mean to say it's not real?

**Parmine:** Real? Real? 'ow could you come into possession of such a gem as this were it to be real?

**Todd:** Give it back to me. *(He snatches it back)* Of course it's real and you know it is. Now what's it worth?

**Parmine:** I will be honest with you, Monsieur Todd. This is the most wonderful ruby I 'ave ever seen. I know of a customer who would willingly part with ten thousand pounds for such a stone. To take it off your 'ands I would be prepared to offer you in the region of eight thousand pounds.

**Todd:** Splendid.

**Parmine:** On the clear understanding that you can deliver proof of ownership and that this is not stolen goods.

**Todd:** I see. *(aside)* Such a document could easily be forged.

**Parmine:** An authenticated receipt, no cheap forgery.

**Todd:** How dare you question my integrity when you yourself have tried to persuade me this precious gem was paste - *(aside)* I'll have him soon inside some pastry!

**Parmine:** You scoundrel, Todd. I'll tell you what I think, that you came by this jewel by foul means, not fair - I think the local constabulary may be interested in 'earing your account of 'ow you came by it. *(He makes to go).*

**Todd:** Oh, you think so, do you? *(he pushes him into the chair, operates the lever and Parmine disappears just as Mark did before him).* Now they'll have to account for your sudden disappearance, ha ha!

*However, when the chair returns to its normal position, Smith is sitting in it.*

**Smith:** Ha ha, indeed, Mr Todd! Oh yes, I know all about your secret cellar, and its secret entrance. Trouble is, I'm not very good at keeping secrets.

**Todd:** Enough. I see you have a hold over me. I'll settle with you in full.

**Smith:** I should think you will – and a good deal more besides.

**Todd:** You would think to blackmail me, the blackest-hearted villain in London? Think again.

*He produces a pistol and shoots Smith, who claps his hand to his forehead to produce a blood effect. Sweeney Todd rapidly disposes of Smith by tipping up the chair.*

**Todd:** Three in one day. This must be some kind of criminal record!

*Tobias enters looking concerned.*

**Tobias:** I don't mean to pry, Mr Todd...

**Todd:** Pie, did you say?

**Tobias:** No, pry, Mr Todd. I just heard what sounded very like a gunshot. It can't have been a car back-firing...

**Todd:** Why not?

**Tobias:** Because the internal combustion engine is only just about to be invented.

**Todd:** Rest easy, young Tobias, it was simply the wind slamming the door closed.

**Tobias:** *(to audience)* But it isn't even windy. I am, though. I'm going to have to get to the bottom of this.

**Todd:** *(to audience)* The boy's suspicious. Perhaps his apprenticeship will be short-lived, just like the last one's.

*He laughs an evil laugh and Tobias shivers with fear as the curtains close.*