ANTHONY READING

(MRS. LOVETT)

NOW GOES QUICKLY—
SEE, NOW IT'S PAST!
SOON WILL COME,
SOON WILL LAST.
WAIT.

(TODD grows calm again)

DON'T YOU KNOW,
SILLY MAN,
HALF THE FUN IS TO
PLAN THE PLAN?
ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO
THOSE WHO CAN
WAIT.

(Looking around the room)

GILLYFLOWERS, MAYBE,
'STEAD OF DAISIES ...
I DON'T KNOW, THOUGH ...
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

TODD

(Docilely)

Yes.

MRS. LOVETT

(Gently taking the razor from him)

Gillyflowers, I'd say. Nothing like a nice bowl of gillies.

(During this, we have seen ANTHONY moving down the street. HE sees the sign and stops. HE goes to the bell and rings it, then starts running up the stairs. The effect on TODD is electric. Even MRS. LOVETT, affected by his tension, alerts. SHE hastily gives him back the razor. ANTHONY bursts enthusiastically in.)

TODD

Anthony.

ANTHONY

Start Mr. Todd, I've paced Fleet Street a dozen times with no success. But now the sign! In business already.

TODD

Yes.

ANTHONY

I congratulate you.

(Turning to MRS. LOVETT)

And ... er ...

MRS. LOVETT

Mrs. Lovett, sir.

ANTHONY

A pleasure, ma'am. Oh, Mr. Todd, I have so much to tell you. I have found the fairest and most loving maid that any man could dream of! And yet there are problems. She has a guardian so tyrannical that she is kept shut up from human eye. But now this morning this key fell from her shuttered window.

(HE holds up JOHANNA's key)

The surest sign that Johanna loves me and ...

MRS. LOVETT

Johanna?

ANTHONY

That's her name, ma'am, and Turpin that of the abominable parent. A judge, it seems. But, as I said, a monstrous tyrant. Oh Mr. Todd, once the Judge has gone to court, I'll slip into the house and plead with her to fly with me tonight. Yet when I have her — where can I bring her till I have hired a coach to speed us home to Plymouth? Oh Mr. Todd, if I could lodge her here just for an hour or two!

(HE gazes at the inscrutable TODD)

MRS. LOVETT

(After a beat)

Bring her, dear.

ANTHONY

Oh thank you, thank you, ma'am.

(To TODD)

I have your consent, Mr. Todd?

TODD

(After a pause)

The girl may come.

(ANTHONY grabs his hand and pumps it, then turns to grab MRS. LOVETT's)

ANTHONY

I shall be grateful for this to the grave. Now I must hurry for surely the Judge is off to the Old Bailey.

(ANTHONY)

(Turning at the door)

My thanks! A thousand blessings on you both! Finish

(HE hurries out and down the stairs)

MRS. LOVETT

Johanna! Who'd have thought it! It's like Fate, isn't it? You'll have her back before the day is out.

TODD

For a few hours? Before he carries her off to the other end of England?

MRS. LOVETT

Oh, that sailor! Let him bring her here and then, since you're so hot for a little ...

(Makes a throat-cutting gesture)

... that's the throat to slit, dear. Oh Mr. T. we'll make a lovely home for her. You and me. The poor thing. All those years and not a scrap of motherly affection. I'll soon change that, I will, for if ever there was a maternal heart, it's mine.

(During this speech PIRELLI, accompanied by TOBIAS, has appeared on the street. THEY see the sign and start up the stairs without ringing the bell. Now, as MRS. LOVETT goes to TODD coquetishly, PlRELLI and TOBIAS suddenly appear at the door. TODD pulls violently away from MRS. LOVETT.)

PIRELLI

(With Italianate bow)

Good morning, Mr. Todd — and to you, Bellissima Signorina.

(HE kisses MRS. LOVETT's hand)

MRS. LOVETT

Well, 'ow do you do, Signor, I'm sure.

PIRELLI

A little business with Mr. Todd, Signora. Perhaps if you will give the permission?

MRS. LOVETT

Oh yes, indeed, I'll just pop on down to my pies.

(Surveying TOBIAS)

Oh lawks, look at it now! Don't look like it's had a kind word since half past never!

(Smiling at him)

What would you say, son, to a nice juicy meat pie, eh? Your teeth is strong, I hope?

TOBIAS

Oh yes, ma'am.