

RS#2 Anthony & Beggar Woman

meet and the song dies on their lips. A hushed moment. Then suddenly a clawlike hand darts out from a pile of trash. ANTHONY jumps and looks down to see the BEGGAR WOMAN, who has been sleeping in the garbage under a discarded shawl, thrusting her bowl at him. JOHANNA, frightened, slips back out of sight)

BEGGAR WOMAN

(Sings)

Alms! . . . Alms! . . .

For a miserable woman . . .

(ANTHONY hurriedly digs out a coin and drops it in her bowl; she peers at him)

Beg your pardon, it's you, sir . . .

Thank yer . . . Thank yer kindly . . .

(ANTHONY turns back to discover JOHANNA gone and the window shut. The BEGGAR WOMAN starts off)

Start



ANTHONY

One moment, mother.

(She turns)

Perhaps you know whose house this is?

BEGGAR WOMAN

That! That's the great Judge Turpin's house, that is.

ANTHONY

And the young lady who resides there?

BEGGAR WOMAN

Ah, her! That's Johanna, his pretty little ward.

(Slyly confidential)

But don't you go trespassing there, young man. Not if you value your hide.

(She nods her head)

Tamper there and it's a good whipping for you—or any other youth with mischief on his mind.

(Leers at him, sings)

Hey! Hoy! Sailor boy!

Want it snugly harbored?

Open me gate, but dock it straight,

I see it lists to starboard.

(She grabs at his crotch and starts to dance around him grotesquely, lifting her skirts. ANTHONY is appalled. He pulls coins out of his pocket and tosses them to her)

ANTHONY

Here and here and here. Take it and off with you. Off!

(The BEGGAR WOMAN, cackling, collects the coins and scampers off. ANTHONY turns back to the house, gazes up at the window. The noise has frightened the birds, who start screeching. ANTHONY becomes aware of them and moves over to the now sleeping BIRD SELLER, shakes him awake, and inspects the cages)

Which one sings the sweetest?

BIRD SELLER

All's the same, sir. Six pence and cheap at the price.

(ANTHONY selects one, gives the man a coin, holds up the cage)

ANTHONY

He sings bravely.

(Watches the cage)

But why does he batter his wings so wildly against the bars?
We blind 'em, sir. That's what we always does. Blind 'em

End