

**Marten :** Compose yourself. *End Music cue 49.* Anne, assist your mother to the chair. (*Anne does so and remains standing on her left—MARTEN is on her right and TIM right centre stage*). Now then, tell us how a mere dream can disturb thee thus.

**Mrs. M. :** Oh, husband, it was no dream, but the voice of Heaven conveying to a mother's heart the murder of her darling child. This is the third time that I have seen her murdered.

**Marten :** Tell us exactly what occurred, wife. Dreams are said to be prognostics of some great events, although I find it hard to believe that it is so.

**Mrs. M. :** I sat myself down in this very chair, overpowered with fatigue, and fell asleep. Methought I saw within the Red Barn, our child, Maria, covered in blood, murdered and stretched on the ground. Beside her stood William Corder with a pistol in his hand. Then, I thought I saw him seize my dear child by the silken handkerchief she wore around her neck and drag her body close to the spot where he had been digging. He was in the act of consigning her body within the horrid grave he had just made when, in my frenzy and horror, I awoke.

**Marten** (*putting his arm around her shoulder*): Come, wife, banish these timid fancies. Anne, assist and lead your mother to the air. You take one arm and I the other. (*They lift her gently from the chair and take her across right—TIM remains centre stage*). Maria, our dear child, will be here tomorrow and then we will—

**Mrs. M.** (*breaking from them downstage—out to audience*): No! I am not satisfied. I will never rest until I have learnt the fate of my child. (*To MARTEN*). Go, husband, summon the neighbours—fetch more lights and search the barn at once!

**Marten :** But, wife, I—

**Mrs. M. :** What, do you hesitate? (*Crossing them to exit right*).

Then, out of it—I'll go myself!

**Marten :** Very well, wife, I'll go to please you but rest assured all is well with our Maria. I know the heart of Corder well—he is an honest fellow. (*Crossing to TIM*). Come Tim, you'll with me to the Red Barn?

**Tim** (*backing away left*): You won't catch I going near that barn—oh dear no!

**Anne** (*moving to right of MARTEN*): Come along, you great coward, or I won't marry 'ee.

**Tim :** And shall she marry I if I go, Mr. Marten?

**Marten :** Aye, if she likes thee, I'll give my consent for thou art an honest lad for sure.

**Tim :** Then I'll go get my pitchfork and stable lantern. (*Exit left*).

**Marten :** Go, wife, lie thee down.

**Anne** (*moving to MRS. MARTEN*): I'll go and get thee a cup of green tea. That will settle thy nerves for thee.

**Mrs. M.** (*at door right*): Oh, husband, husband—hasten, for I feel I cannot rest until this mystery is cleared up. (*Exit with ANNE right*).

*Enter TIM from left holding a lantern and pitchfork.*

**Marten :** Are you ready, Tim? Will you assist a heart-broken father to search for his beloved daughter?

**Tim** (*moving to right of MARTEN*): Aye—that I will. To the Red Barn! To the Red Barn!

*Music Cue 50—(Link 'Hurry' Music into Maria Theme).*  
**MARTEN and TIM hurry off right.**

## ACT TWO

### SCENE FIVE

INTERIOR OF THE RED BARN—*Thirty Minutes later. The scene opens in darkness except for a shaft of moonlight which shines on the upstage centre area. MARTEN enters carrying a lantern.*

*End Music Cue 50.*

**Marten :** This is the place. Now then, Tim, I want you to—Tim, where are you, lad? (*Looks off right*). Come on, be not afraid.

**Tim** (*putting his head round door up right*): I ain't frightened, Mr. Marten—only scared to death (*Withdraws his head*).

**Marten :** Come along, boy. (*Goes to door and coaxes him in*). Come along, there's no one here—the old barn has not been used for some time. (*Moves to below bales of straw with TIM on his right*).

**Tim :** That be true. 'Tis twelve months since I was here last. 'Twas two or three days after Maria went off with that William Corder, I comes for my pick and spade, but they had been putting loads of hay in the third bay and I reckon as how they must have buried 'em for, search as I would, I could not find no trace of 'em.

**Marten :** What's that you say—your pick and spade? What were your pick and spade doing in the Red Barn?

**Tim :** Why dang me, didn't I lend 'em to this William Corder the very night they went off together to Lunnon and didn't he promise to pay I ninepence when he saw I again? And has he not cheated I of my ninepence, for I have seen nor it nor he since that very night?