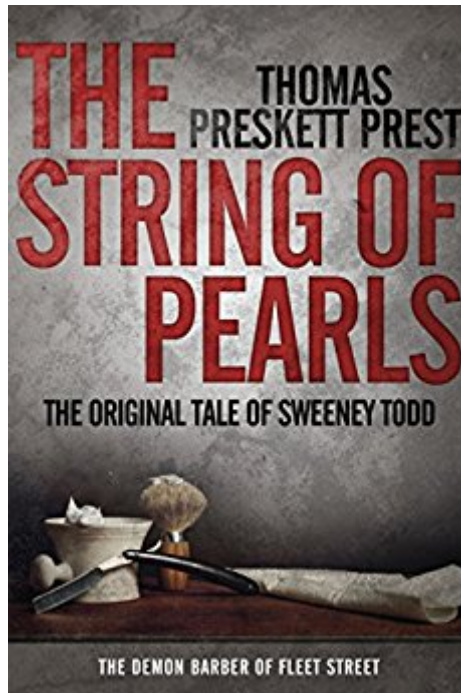


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# The String Of Pearls: The Original Tale Of Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street



## Synopsis

Read the book that sparked the legend. Look beyond the musical to the real tale of the demon barber of Fleet Street. The myth of Sweeney Todd has long been speculated to come from a true story and this novel, written at the height of the legend, is perhaps as close to the truth as it is possible to get. The original Sweeney Todd – “A String of Pearls” is a classic from 1846 that is set in the dark underbelly of London. Written as a series of Penny Dreadfuls by Thomas Preskett Press, the series has since been collected into a single novel that will have readers itching to find out the next dark twist. See the characters as you have never seen them before, the way they first appeared. A String of Pearls follows Sweeney Todd as he descends deeper and deeper into madness. Having murdered Johanna’s suitor, Sweeney sets in motion the events that lead to his downfall. Johanna sets out to track her fiancé down and in that process she will unearth a gruesome truth. Meanwhile Toby, Sweeney’s apprentice, will be driven mad by what he finds. Sweeney Todd’s dark agreement with Mrs Lovett and her sinister pie shop has stunned Victorian and modern audiences alike. This classic and brilliant novel will take you back through time and show you a past filled with tragedy and beauty as Johanna goes in search of her lost love. Johanna’s loyalty and bravery stand out all the more as she risks everything to find the demon barber’s secret. Todd is a brilliant character – both compelling and horrifying – who has drawn people again and again into his story. As suspicion grows and Todd becomes more manic and terrifying and Mrs Lovett grows more and more desperate, the two will drive each other further into darkness. Through the years this timeless tale has captured the imagination. The world over, A String of Pearls is a classic that went on to spawn both a hit musical and an Oscar-winning movie. Thomas Preskett Prest (1810-1859) was a British writer, journalist and musician. He was a prolific producer of penny dreadfuls. He wrote under several pseudonyms including Bos, a takeoff of Charles Dickens’ own pen name, Boz. Before joining Edward Lloyd’s publishing factory, Prest had made a name for himself as a talented musician and composer. Albion Press is an imprint of Endeavour Press, the UK’s leading independent digital publisher. For more information on our titles please sign up to our newsletter at [www.endeavourpress.com](http://www.endeavourpress.com). Each week you will receive updates on free and discounted ebooks. Follow us on Twitter: @EndeavourPress and on Facebook via <http://on.fb.me/1HweQV7>. We are always interested in hearing from our readers. Endeavour Press believes that the future is now.

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## Customer Reviews

When I first purchased the OCR soundtrack of Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd," back in 1979, I discovered, through the liner notes, that the story's origins lie in a serialized novel entitled "The String of Pearls," published in 1846-7. I searched for that Victorian era penny dreadful, in bookstores and libraries, with no success. Nearly thirty years later, on a whim, I searched and, to my delight, found that the book was available, along with an explanation as to why I was never able to find it before. It had, for all intents and purposes, vanished from the public eye, until Wordsworth Classics published it, complete and unabridged, in 2005. The novel, in part, tells the story of Johanna Oakley, who is desperate to discover the fate of her intended, Mark Ingestrie, when he fails to return to her, as promised, after a long voyage at sea. It also focuses on the (mis)adventures of Tobias Ragg, the boy who works in the barber shop of Mr. Sweeney Todd. There is quite a large cast of characters and, when reading, one must remember that the story was published in installments, so it may not have the flow one is accustomed to when reading a novel, and, as Dick Collins points out in his informative introduction, there could have been as many as three authors penning the tale, "hack" writers with varying degrees of talent. Overall, however, the story is a gripping yarn; there were a good number of tightly written chapters, true page turners, that spurred me to read on, anxious to discover what happened next. Anyone familiar with Sondheim's musical

will already know the "secrets," but I recommend this nonetheless. In fact, knowing the musical will add to the enjoyment of the novel.

[The following review refers to the Wordsworth Classics edition of "The String of Pearls."]The famous story of Sweeney Todd, "demon barber" of the Fleet Street and Mrs. Lovett's delicious meat pies need no new introduction. Like any well-told urban legends, the figure has become part of our culture with several filmed and musical adaptations. But what is the "original" story after all? Now you have the original tale of Sweeney Todd, lurid novel published as a weekly serial in 1846-47 published by Edward Lloyd, one of the entrepreneurs of "Penny Dreadfuls," cheaply priced magazines featuring mostly pirated stories of other popular writers for the working teenagers or pre-teens eager to read any bloody tales. Unfortunately the author (or perhaps authors) of "The String of Pearls" is still unknown, according to Dick Collins, editor of the Wordsworth Classics edition, despite some claims that it was written by James Malcolm Rymer. (Read the book's introduction for more details.) The story of "The String of Pearls" is a blend of blood-curdling Victorian horror and pure melodrama. It is nothing like Stephen Sondheim musical based on Christopher Bond's play. In this novel Sweeney Todd is just a despicable, (delightfully, I might add) villainous figure, whom no one would feel sympathy with. It is closer to a 1936 British film featuring much-underrated Todd Slaughter with exaggerated mannerism which is fun to see.[TWO VERSIONS] The story, whoever wrote it, is generally fast-paced and largely gripping, but there is one thing you should remember. There are two versions of "The String of Pearls" published by the same Edward Lloyd -- original 1847 version and extended 1850 version.

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