

PIPPA. Well, there are the letters he wrote me. Or the paper bag filled with his breath. But it is the anvil that really holds the memories.

~~More barking from offstage. POPPY looks that way.~~

POPPY. Oh dear, my puppy has found another bone. We probably ought to stop taking him for walks in a graveyard.

PIPPA. Why, I think it is the late Mrs Carrington's right tibia.

POPPY. You are so clever at anatomy, Pippa!

PIPPA. Well, my second word was 'cervix'. And I am teaching myself, in hope that one day soon society may allow women to become doctors.

~~More barking from off.~~

~~Ooh, looks like he's got Mr Barnett's left ulna now.~~

POPPY. And Mr Barnett isn't even dead.

~~A shout from Mr Barnett, off. POPPY and PIPPA head off in that direction.~~

POPPY. Let go, Wellesley! Put him down!

PIPPA. Pip!

PIP. I'll catch you up in a bit. Just need a rest.

As PIPPA and POPPY go, PIP puts down the anvil and sits against a gravestone. A beat, then a hand comes round the gravestone and grabs him. It belongs to BAKEWELL HAVERTWITCH.

Aargh! Ghost! Ghoul! Spirit!

BAKEWELL. Hush, boy. I am none of them. I'm just a man.

PIP. Aargh! Man! Horrible, scary man!

BAKEWELL. Come, lad. I didn't mean to frighten you.

PIP. Then why did you reach round a gravestone and grab me?!

BAKEWELL. Now you mention it, I can see how that could be misinterpreted.

Audition: Pip + Bakewell

ACT ONE

PIP. Could be?!

PIP *hyperventilates*.

BAKEWELL. Hey now, get a grip, young cully. This panic is positively Italian.

PIP. Then... I shall... de-continentalise myself.

PIP *slows down his panicked breathing*.

BAKEWELL. That's it, lad. Now, tell me: what's your name?

PIP. It's Pip, sir. Pip Bin. What is yours?

BAKEWELL. My name is Havertwitch. Bakewell Havertwitch.

PIP. And do you have a twitch?

BAKEWELL. No. But I do bake well. Eccles cake?

He offers PIP an Eccles cake. PIP takes a bite.

PIP. Delicious. Truly you are well named, sir.

BAKEWELL. That I am be.

PIP. Are you perchance an escaped convict, sir?

BAKEWELL. Aye. I was due to be transported.

PIP. To Australia?

BAKEWELL. Aye, and all just for stealing a loaf of bread!

PIP. Such a harsh sentence for such a small crime!

BAKEWELL. Technically I didn't steal bread. I originally stole some flour, yeast, salt and water. But the peelers gave chase, I shoved it all down my trousers, and as I ran, everything got mixed up, I got hot and by the time they caught me I'd baked a nice little trouser loaf.

PIP. You really are a good baker!

BAKEWELL. Now, I don't suppose you have some way of breaking these shackles, do you, young bucko-me-lad?

He motions to the shackles round his ankles. And PIP motions to PIPPA's anvil.

PIP. Would this anvil help?

BAKEWELL. Perfect! Especially when combined with one of my deliberately overbaked rock cakes.

He takes a rock cake from his pocket and smashes his chains on the anvil.

I am free! I must run now, but I'll not forget the help you gave me this day, young Pip Bin.

He starts heading off.

One day I shall repay your kindness! I promise! Honestly! Totally not lying! (*Offstage now.*) Repaid it shall be!

A small pause. Then:

PIP. Yeah. Right. Like that'll ever happen.

SIR PHILIP. Alas, this jarring encounter proved to be the start of a string of events that turned my blissful childhood into something far more grim, gruesome and gr-*orrible*...

~~PIPPA is at her anvil as POPPY repeatedly hits one note on a piano and PIP reads.~~

~~RIP. Dear Poppy, that is not much of a tune.~~

~~POPPY. Alas, I am not yet allowed the finicky of tunes. My tutor Miss Glass is teaching me the piano one note at a time.~~

~~PIP. How minimalist of her.~~

PIPPA. Dear Pip, what are you reading?

PIP. It is a book called *Manliness for Boys*.

POPPY. Are you not reading *One Hundred and One Ways to Kill a Frenchman* any more?

PIP. Not after the incident with Jean-Pierre.

POPPY. Poor Jean-Pierre...

PIPPA. And is the new book any good?

PIP. I should say! I have already mastered the art of pretending to like brandy. And my pacing while showing no emotion is really coming along. *Look.*

He demonstrates his pacing while showing no emotion.

PIPPA. I can practically sense your insides curdling like repressed yogurt! Papa would be so proud of you.

PIP. As he would of you for your anvil work.

~~PIP examines her work and holds up a tiny horseshoe.~~

~~I see you have made a tiny horseshoe.~~

PIPPA. No, I have made a normal-sized dog shoe. For Poppy's puppy.

POPPY. Dear Pippa, you are so kind to the animals. ~~And their feet.~~

PIPPA. ~~One day I hope to free all God's tiny creatures from paw print!~~

PIP. Oh, how I am blessed to have such wonderful sisters! And such a wonderful family! Truly, your existence is perfect and will surely ever more remain so!

At which point AGNES rushes in.

AGNES. Children! Terrible news! Your father is dead!

PIP. Ah.

PIPPA. No! Papa dead! Me miserere!

POPPY. Sadius Latinus!

SIR PHILIP. At that moment a shadow fell over the gilded perfection of my life and a numb glumness filled my soul like sad cement. Though not everyone seemed to share my misery...

BENEVOLENT enters - and stands laughing.

PIP. You laugh, sir? I can only assume that as a good Englishman you are repressing your sad emotions so well that they have accidentally come out the other side as happiness.

BENEVOLENT. Um, yes. Yup. That's it. Definitely.

PIPPA. Sir... do you know what happened to poor Papa?