

Tobias Lovett

MRS. LOVETT: You know, dear, it's the strangest thing you coming to chat with me right now of all moments because as I was sitting here with my needles, I was thinking: "What a good boy Toby is! So hard working, so obedient." And I thought. . . know how you've always fancied coming into the bakehouse with me to help bake the pies?

TOBIAS (For the first time distracted): Oh yes, ma'am. Indeed, ma'am. Yes.

MRS. LOVETT: Well, how about it?

TOBIAS: You mean it? I can help make 'em and bake 'em? (MRS. LOVETT kisses him again and, rising, starts drawing him back toward the pie-shop)

MRS. LOVETT: No time like the present, is there? (She leads him through the pie-shop into the bakehouse)

TOBIAS (Looking around): Coo, quite a stink, ain't there?

MRS. LOVETT (Indicating the trap door): Them steps go down to the old cellars and the whiffs come up, love. God knows what's down there — so moldy and dark. And there's always a couple of rats gone home to Jesus. (She leads him across to the ovens) Now the bake ovens is here. (She opens the oven doors. A red glow illuminates the stage)

TOBIAS: They're big enough, ain't they?

MRS. LOVETT: Hardly big enough to bake all the pies we sell. Ten dozen at a time. Always be sure to close the doors properly, like this. {Closes doors. Draws him to the butcher's-block table} Now here's the grinder. (She turns its handle, indicating how it operates) You see, you pop meat in and you grind it and it comes out here. (Indicates the mouth of the grinder) And you know the secret that makes the pies so sweet and tender? Three times. You must put the meat through the grinder three times.

TOBIAS: Three times, eh?

MRS. LOVETT: That's my boy. Smoothly, smoothly. And as soon as a new batch of meat comes in, we'll put you to work. (She starts/or the door back into the pie-shop)

TOBIAS (Blissful): Me making pies all on me own! Coo!

(Noticing her leaving)

Where are you going, ma'am?

MRS. LOVETT: Back in a moment, dear.