Acting Edition

HIGH SCHOOL BAKE OFF

BY GINNA HOBEN

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CHARACTERS (AND THEIR BAKED GOODS)

OLIVIA – Highly driven. (Janice's Chocolate Chip Cookies.)

DUFFY – Here to help.

POSY – Selfless, earnest, a helper. (Sugar Cookies.)

JENNA – Future professional baker. (S'mosts Bars.)

MEG – Supports other people, has a creative streak. (Bumble Bread Loaf.)

REGGIE – Talented high achiever. (Vegan Maple Syrup Bars, Gluten-Free Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies, Country Cream Cupcakes.)

MARCUS – Oddly competitive. (Brownie Bombs.)

BOB – Great intentions, doesn't bake.

COLLETTE – Passionate young activist. (Flaky Cakes.)

EVIE – Senior. She's so over high school she can barely keep her eyes open.

All characters are underclassmen (ages fourteen to seventeen), except for Evie who is seventeen or eighteen.

SETTING

High school auditorium. Early morning into first period.

NOTES ON PROPS

The baked goods can look realistic or not, but as a collection, they should look really impressive: colorful, large, stage-worthy. Have fun!

Text on the display cards should be big enough that at least some of the audience can make out the words.

It would be great if Bob's PowerPoint presentation could be projected on a big screen as a backdrop to the whole play.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Dialogue that is italicized in brackets is not meant to be spoken. It's there so the actor knows where the thought is going.

No pauses unless indicated. The pace should be brisk!

PART ONE

(From the darkness.)

OLIVIA. Table!

POSY. Table!

OLIVIA. Display cards?

POSY. Display cards!

OLIVIA. Ten assorted batches of baked goods?

POSY. Baked goods en route!

OLIVIA. Lights?

(Beat.)

Lights?

POSY. I'm not on lights. Duffy?

DUFFY. *(Over a megaphone.)* Yo!

OLIVIA.
Lights?

POSY.
Lights?

(The lights come on to reveal **OLIVIA** *and* **POSY** *with platters heaping with cookies.)*

POSY. Oh, that's helpful! Light is helpful. Thanks, Duffy.

*(***DUFFY** *enters.)*

DUFFY. *(Still – needlessly – on the megaphone.)* You are welcome.

POSY. *(Amused.)* You sound like a robot.

DUFFY. *(His best robot impression.)* I. Am. Not. A. Robot.

*(***POSY** *laughs.* **OLIVIA** *does not.)*

OLIVIA. Okay. Let's get to work! I'm seeing chocolate things over here and non-chocolate things over there.

POSY. Or we could mix them up so no one gets palate fatigue.

OLIVIA. Palate fatigue?

POSY. Oh, yeah. You know, like when you're eating something – even something you love – but then after too much of it, it's just not as good? Like with a really big order of frozen yogurt?

DUFFY. *(Back on the megaphone.)* That has never happened to me.

OLIVIA. Are you going to do that all morning?

*(***DUFFY** *lowers the megaphone.)*

POSY. *(Back to palate fatigue.)* Like not even with pancakes?

DUFFY. No…

POSY. Spicy foods?

DUFFY. I don't think so…

POSY. Vegetables?

DUFFY. *(Thinks.)* No. Hmm-mm. Never run out of palate.

OLIVIA. He really loves food.

POSY. Yeah, sure, so do I, but sometimes, you can just stop tasting a food.

DUFFY. *(Considers this.)* I don't knoooow…no, I don't think I do.

POSY. You probably do. Everybody does.

DUFFY. Nope, not me. But if you want to run an experiment with loaded potato skins, I'm in.

OLIVIA. Okay, we'll alternate chocolate and non-chocolate platters as soon as the other entries get here. We can start making the display cards now.

(Indicating **POSY***'s baked goods.)* Posy, what do you call those?

POSY. *(Despite her casual response, she is very proud of her entry.)* They don't have a specific name. Just sugar cookies.

(Unthinkingly, **OLIVIA** *includes the word "just" on the display card. As* **OLIVIA** *writes...)*

DUFFY. What's in them?

POSY. Butter, sugar, flour, vanilla, the usual stuff.

DUFFY. Is there frosting?

POSY. No.

DUFFY. Sprinkles?

POSY. Hmm-mm.

DUFFY. Nuts? I'm allergic to some nuts.

POSY. No nuts.

OLIVIA. Do you think we need to list the ingredients of everything?

POSY. Oh, probably. For allergies.

DUFFY. *(Back to* **POSY***'s cookies.)* What's special about them?

OLIVIA. Or we could just say you can't be a taste tester if you have allergies.

POSY. That's not very inclusive though.

POSY. *(To* **DUFFY**.*)* I guess, it's the attention required. You have to be really precise for them to come out right. But when they do – *[…they are wonderful.]*

OLIVIA. Inclusive. You're right. What do we do? Different categories? The nut allergies and the non-nut allergies?

POSY. But what about gluten-free diets? And vegans?

OLIVIA. I feel pretty confident that the "GFs" and vegans won't pay us money to eat baked goods.

POSY. Fair point. But now I'm wishing I made something that everyone can enjoy.

*(***REGGIE** *enters with a catering cart overflowing with three types of goodies. This is going to be a real competition.)*

REGGIE. I did!

(All heads turn.)

OLIVIA. *(A little too formal.)* Hello, Reggie.

REGGIE. *(Matching her tone.)* Hello, Olivia.

OLIVIA. Welcome. What did you bake?

REGGIE. Cookies, cupcakes, and bars.

DUFFY. *(À la* The Wizard of Oz.*)* Oh my.

POSY. Oh! That could be a good way to display.

OLIVIA. What could?

POSY. Cookie entries here…cupcakes here…and bars over here.

OLIVIA. *(Earnestly; she needs this to work.)* And that won't cause palate fatigue?

POSY. Not if I do it right. Here, Reggie, why don't you give me the cookies first. Olivia is labeling everything –

OLIVIA. Wait, wait, wait. He can't have three entries.

REGGIE. Why not? They're all registered.

OLIVIA. That's…that triples your chance of winning.

REGGIE. Only if one of them is the best. Maybe they're all terrible.

DUFFY. Are they terrible?

REGGIE. No.

OLIVIA. I'm going to have to run this by Mrs. Parks.

REGGIE. Already did.

OLIVIA. And she said yes?

REGGIE. Well, once I explained Baking Inclusiveness…

POSY. Plus, we kind of need all three entries. Our tasters are paying for ten samples. And we have exactly ten entries registered.

OLIVIA. Right. Okay. So, what do you call those cookies?

REGGIE. Gluten-Free Oatmeal Chocolate Chip.

(As **OLIVIA** *writes down the name and* **POSY** *places the cookies on the display table…)*

DUFFY. Oh, I love oatmeal chocolate chip! Can I try one?

REGGIE. Are you a taster?

DUFFY.
Yes.

OLIVIA.
No.

REGGIE. You are?

DUFFY.
No.

OLIVIA.
Yeah, okay.

REGGIE. This should be easier. Duffy, are you paying the tasting fee for the chance to vote?

DUFFY. Olivia said I can't.

OLIVIA. I just said "okay"!

DUFFY. No, that's alright.

REGGIE. Why is she in charge of what you do?

DUFFY.
She's not.

OLIVIA.
I'm not.

DUFFY. …It's just that since we're dating, Olivia felt that it wouldn't be fair of me to taste. She wants to win fair and square.

REGGIE. *(Indicating* **OLIVIA***'s cookies.)* With those?

OLIVIA. Yes. I mean, maybe.

*(***OLIVIA** *reveals the display card for her treat: "Janice's Chocolate Chip Cookies.")*

REGGIE. Janice's Chocolate Chip Cookies?

OLIVIA. Yes.

REGGIE.
Who's Janice?

POSY.
Who's Janice?

OLIVIA. Nobody knows. But this cookie recipe has been in my family for decades. Maybe centuries. They're a huge hit at sleepovers!

REGGIE. Yeah, she's not gonna win.

POSY. What else do you have, Reggie?

REGGIE. Vegan Maple Syrup Bars…

*(***OLIVIA** *writes a display card,* **POSY** *places the bars on the display table.)*

(Continuing.) …and Country Cream-Filled Cupcakes.

*(***OLIVIA** *writes a new display card.)*

POSY. What's "country cream"?

REGGIE. Just the best cream filling…in the whole country! I created it.

POSY. Wow, that's amazing.

(**POSY** *tries to take the cupcakes to add them to the display table.)*

REGGIE. *(Not yielding his cupcakes.)* It is amazing.

POSY. Want me to…? *[add them to the table.]*

REGGIE. I'll do it. They're fragile.

(**REGGIE** *places the cupcakes and their display card where* **POSY** *indicates.* **MARCUS** *enters, dramatic, as always.)*

MARCUS. Hail, Reginald! Fellow Bake-ists.

REGGIE. Go away, Marcus. The contest hasn't started yet.

MARCUS. Still setting up, are we?

REGGIE. Yes. Now, go away.

MARCUS. I bite my thumb at you, Reginald! I'm here to compete. With my own entry!

OLIVIA. *(Unaware of any tension.)* Oh! I'm making display cards. What's your treat called?

REGGIE. Marcus, you don't care about baking. What are you doing?

MARCUS. I'm here to take you DOWN, Reginald Arthur Germain!

POSY. Well, there are several contestants, so technically – *[…you'd have to beat us all.]*

MARCUS. DOWN!

(To **OLIVIA**.*)* Brownie Bombs. Bam!

OLIVIA. Did you say "bomb" as in "weapon"?

MARCUS. As in "an explosion in your mouth"!

(Mimics an extravagant explosion.)

REGGIE. Ugh. Drama students.

POSY. Aren't you a drama student, Reggie? I thought I saw you in rehearsal for *Romeo and Juliet*.

MARCUS. We shall not speak of it!

REGGIE. To be clear: I've never taken the drama class here, but, yes, I was cast in –

MARCUS. SHHHHHH!

(Silence.)

REGGIE. ...the school play. Ever since then, Marcus has created this ridiculous rivalry between us.

*(***JENNA** *and* **MEG** *enter with platters of baked goods. Because of* **MARCUS** *and* **REGGIE**, *the girls go unnoticed.)*

It's not even a big role!

MARCUS. "There are no small parts, only small actors."

REGGIE. Whatever.

MARCUS. You don't even care! That's what kills me; you don't even care!

REGGIE. I care! I like plays and I like getting involved in things.

MARCUS. You think you care more about that role than I do?

REGGIE. Why does it matter? I got the part and I'm doing a good job. I'm having fun.

MARCUS. That's right. It's all just fun and games to you!

REGGIE. Oh, that's rich coming from the guy at the baking contest who's never shown an interest in baking.

MARCUS. Well played, opponent. Well played.

REGGIE. I'm not your opponent!

MARCUS. We're both in this contest, aren't we?

REGGIE. You can't be serious! The rest of us are actually interested in a baking club. Please go away.

MARCUS. Perhaps I will... Perhaps I will... What say you to a little challenge, Reginald? Suppose we each deliver the lines of the role you sequestered. The assembled shall choose the best delivery. If I win, I stay and compete in the baking contest. If you win, I will take my leave immediately.

POSY. I think "take my leave" means he'll go away and not enter the baking contest.

REGGIE. Deal!

MARCUS. You first.

(As the group shuffles around creating an open space and **REGGIE** *steps into it:)*

JENNA. *(Quietly, to* **MEG**.*)* So, they're having a contest within a contest?

MEG. *(Quietly, to* **JENNA**.*)* I think it's a contest to enter the contest.

MARCUS. *(Re his supposed advantage.)* There is NO CONTEST!

(To **REGGIE**.*)* Begin, sir.

REGGIE. *(Confident, clear, sensible choices. He faces out, as if at an audition.)*
I do beseech you, sir, have patience.
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

(The group politely applauds as **REGGIE** *leaves the open space and* **MARCUS** *"takes stage.")*

MARCUS. *(Facing out, as if at an audition.) Romeo and Juliet*. Act Five, Scene One. The role of Balthasar.

REGGIE. *(Realizing he omitted this info.)* Uh, same.

MARCUS. *(A deep understanding of speaking and acting Shakespeare. Not overdone. Something truthful and genuine and connected. He's very, very good at this.)*

Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
And presently took post to tell it you.
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

(A beat of silence and then the group applauds enthusiastically. **MARCUS** *takes a low bow.)*

REGGIE. Okay, so now what?

MARCUS. We could take a vote…or employ Ye Olde Applause-O-Meter.

REGGIE. For real?

OLIVIA. *(Noticing the newcomers. Happy for a change of subject.)* Jenna! Meg! You're here!

JENNA. You sound surprised…

OLIVIA. No, I just meant –

MARCUS. Silence!

MEG. *(Hushed. Re* **MARCUS**.*)* Who is this guy?

DUFFY. *(Hushed.)* It's a play within a play. I mean, a contest within a contest. About a play.

MARCUS. Onlookers! What say you?

(No one knows how to respond.)

People of Jonesville High, LET YOUR VOICES BE HEARD!

MEG. I don't know what this is all about, but that second guy was really good.

(General agreement that **MARCUS** *is a good actor.)*

REGGIE. Yeah, okay! You win, Marcus. You can stay. Just be cool, alright?

MARCUS. *(Evil villain victory laugh.)* AH-HAHAHAHAHA! AH-HAHAHAHAHA!

(As **MARCUS** *retreats:)*

REGGIE. So far from cool. So, so far.

OLIVIA. Okay. Moving on.

(To **JENNA** *and* **MEG**.*)* Welcome!

JENNA. Olivia, why are you, like, hosting? Like this is your event?

OLIVIA. Not just mine. It's for everyone.

JENNA. But only one president of the first-ever Jonesville High School Baking Club.

OLIVIA. Well, yeah, whoever wins…

JENNA. Yeah, but Olivia, you're already president of everything.

OLIVIA. Not everything…

JENNA. Just Student Council…

OLIVIA. "Vice" president. Evie is president…and really should be here by now.

DUFFY. And you're editor of the paper…

OLIVIA. That's different than "president"…

JENNA. And captain of the volleyball team, right?

MEG. And –

OLIVIA. Okay, okay. I like leadership roles.

JENNA. So do colleges.

OLIVIA. Sure. Yeah, I guess.

JENNA. But it's not like you're going to culinary school, are you?

OLIVIA. Oh, no. Is there even a degree in that?

JENNA. Yes. If a person wanted to go that route.

OLIVIA. Oh. Well, may the best baker prevail!

MARCUS. *(Louder than necessary.)* Huzzah!

OLIVIA. So, Jenna, what did you bring?

JENNA. Why do you want to know?

OLIVIA. So, I can write it on a display card. Like all of the others.

JENNA. I'll write it myself.

OLIVIA. I think the handwriting should be uniform, don't you?

JENNA. I don't think anyone gives a sugar cookie about uniform handwriting at a bake-off.

OLIVIA. They do.

JENNA. They don't.

OLIVIA. They do.

JENNA. They don't.

MEG. You can make me a display card. I made Bumble Bread.

POSY. Ooh, what's Bumble Bread?

MEG. Um, you know, like, um, flour, eggs, cinnamon…

DUFFY. I love all those things.

MEG. And zucchini.

REGGIE. Oh, I think my mom makes something like that.

MEG. With shredded cabbage…

DUFFY. *(Less enthusiastic.)* Oh.

MEG. And ham.

REGGIE. Ham? Did you say ham? Did she say ham?

MEG. Yeah. Yep. Ham.

POSY. Oh, so it's a savory thing?

MEG. Mm-hmm. Except for the chocolate-covered olives.

(Beat.)

POSY. And where does it get its name?

REGGIE. From somebody bumblin' round the kitchen?

MEG. Oh, I don't know. That's just what came to mind.

REGGIE. Meg, you can't win a baking contest with a food that pairs chocolate and ham.

DUFFY. *(Not altogether turned off by this chocolate-ham notion.)* I don't know...

REGGIE. I know. It's a really weird choice.

MEG. Yeah, I guess.

JENNA. She's a really good friend.

OLIVIA. What's that supposed to mean?

JENNA. Meg knew we needed one more entry to reach ten. But she wouldn't sabotage me. She wants me to win because she supports my interest in culinary school.

OLIVIA. So she's throwing the competition?

(To **MEG**.*)* You're throwing it?

MEG. I haven't thrown anything. What?

POSY. "Throwing" is intentionally giving up. Because you don't care. Athletes do it sometimes. "Throw" a game.

MARCUS. Or an actor can "throw" a performance.

POSY. ...Because they're proving a point.

MARCUS. *(Pointed.)* Or they don't care.

MEG. Oh, no, no. I care.

OLIVIA. About Bumble Bread?

MEG. Yeah. Yes! It's good.

REGGIE. That can't be true.

*(***MEG** *shrugs.)*

OLIVIA. Jenna, can you give me the name of your treat again, please?

JENNA. No, because I didn't give it to you a first time.

POSY. You know Jenna, she really does have great handwriting.

MEG. Yeah, she does.

REGGIE. You really do. It's like a font.

(Standoff between **OLIVIA** *and* **JENNA**.*)*

OLIVIA. So, what are they called, Jenna?

JENNA. *(Intentionally creating a name too long for the display cards.)* Vanilla Sugar-Coated, Toasted –

OLIVIA. *(Writing carefully.)* Slow down, slow down...

JENNA. ...Marshmallow Blondie Bars with a Hazelnut Ribbon Glaze.

OLIVIA. That's not gonna / fit.

JENNA. And Chocolate Sprinkles.

OLIVIA. *(Understanding* **JENNA***'s ploy.)* Seriously?

JENNA. À la Mode.

REGGIE. You brought ice cream?

JENNA. No. Darn it. You can cross off that last part.

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