

Offed at the Bake-Off

An Audience Participation
Murder Mystery/Comedy

By Matt Steele and Mike Steele

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information. The author's name must appear on all programs and advertising with the notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Company."

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
hiStage.com

© 2014 by *Matt Steele and Mike Steele*

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
<http://www.histage.com/playdetails.asp?PID=2588>

Offed at the Bake-Off

- 2 -

DEDICATION

For our grandparents –
Each influential in our theatrical lives in his or her own way:

Fred DiGiuseppe, Lucy DiGiuseppe, Ray Steele, Liz Steele

SYNOPSIS

Flashback to 1955, the stormy evening before the 33rd annual Knotting Bake-Off, brought to you by J & J Toothpaste. The contestants have gathered at the Knotting Inn down at the Jersey Shore, each hoping that their perfectly crafted baked good will win the coveted blue ribbon. It seems someone's dessert is more deadly than tasty, though, when they discover an entire gaggle of bratty students have been poisoned during a press conference. It is clear that someone at the inn has a sweet tooth for murder. But who could the culprit be? The egotistical bake-off champion? The hard-of-hearing elderly man? The practical jokester nun? The silent fitness model? The clumsy reporter? The amnesiac woman? Or one of the other kooky bake-off contestants roaming around the inn? When a detective (whose name also happens to be Detective) arrives on the scene, he asks the audience to help him figure out whodunit. Flying accusations and flying pies are just a few of the fun ingredients that make this murder mystery a recipe for a hilarious night at the theatre. Full evening.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 10 w, 2 flexible)

DETECTIVE (m): A humorous detective who serves as narrator of the play, 30s.

HELEN HAGERTY (f): A crabby middle school home economics teacher from Eerie Preparatory Academy, 40s.

SCOTTIE / SALLY SCARSDALE (m/f): The enthusiastic CEO of J & J Toothpaste and host of the Knotting Bake-Off, 30s.

CAROLYN CHESTERFIELD (f): The bubbly owner of the Knotting Inn, 50s.

WALLY WALLFORD (m): The Knotting Inn's high school aged lascivious bellhop, 15 to 18.

MARJORIE MARGARINE (f): An egotistical cookbook author, 60s.

BRUTUS BADOUR (m): A quiet fitness model from Europe, 20s.

CLYDE CHESTERFIELD (m): An enthusiastic baker and owner of the Knotting Inn, 50s.

GILBERT / GABBY GOOBER (m/f): A bumbling reporter for the Little Knotting Newsletter, 20s.

THELMA PITTLEFISH (f): A stern judge of the Knotting Bake-Off, 50s.

VELMA PITTLEFISH (f): A stern judge of the Knotting Bake-Off, 50s.

BLANCHE PITTLEFISH (f): A stern judge of the Knotting Bake-Off, 50s.

PAULINE PINGLETON (f): A frustrated new mother, 30s.

PAUL PINGLETON (m): A chauvinistic new father, 30s.

ETHEL EDINBERG (f): A cheerful elderly woman, 90s.

ERNEST EDINBERG (m): A hard of hearing elderly man, 90s.

SISTER MARY MARTHA (f): A jokester nun, 40s.

MYSTERIOUS WOMAN (f): A mysterious woman, 30s.

AUDIENCE INTERACTION

Detective speaks directly to the audience during brief moments throughout the show. Characters onstage appear not to hear what he is saying and continue with appropriate action.

In the middle of Act II, Scene 1, the audience may submit questions to the Detective, who then asks the suspects. The actors onstage then improvise their humorous answers. This improvisation can be a lot of fun, but the director should make sure that the cast is well prepared. The number of questions that Detective gathers is up to the director. This improvisation segment may be removed from the play at the director's discretion. Detective's line "It does seem pretty full." can be followed seamlessly by Thelma's line "So, Detective Detective, you have been examining this case all evening. Have you any idea who murdered the students?"

SETTING

PLACE: The main room of the Knotting Inn at the Knotting Shore in New Jersey

TIME: 1955

Act I

Scene 1: An evening before the annual Knotting Bake-Off

Scene 2: Later the same evening

Act II

Scene 1: Even later the same evening

Scene 2: Much later the same evening

See props list, set design, and additional production notes at end.

ACT I
Scene 1

(SFX: Thunder. LIGHTS up on DETECTIVE. He speaks to audience in a 1950s sitcom narrator style.)

DETECTIVE: *(To AUDIENCE.)* Hello, folks. It's time to turn off your cell phones as we transport you back in time. A time before anyone had cell phones to even turn off. The year is 1955. It's a simpler time. A more wholesome time.

(LIGHTS up on entire stage reveal the main room of the Knotting Inn.)

DETECTIVE: *(Cont'd.)* I present to you, the Knotting Inn. What used to be one of the most sought after destinations in the tiny beach town of Knotting Shore, New Jersey. Yes, we're down at the good old Jersey Shore. Before MTV got their hands on it. It's the evening before the local Boardwalk Fair, which always draws quite a crowd because of its annual Knotting Bake-Off, where bakers from around the country gather to win the big prize: a bright blue ribbon.

(HELEN enters and spies a half-ruined whipped cream pie on CL desk.)

DETECTIVE: *(Cont'd. To AUDIENCE.)* Speaking of contestants, here is one now. Meet the middle school home economics teacher from Eerie Preparatory Academy. She's traveled all the way from Indiana for the bake-off. It looks like some of the students have already nibbled on one of the entries.

HELEN: *(Irritated.)* A big-time reporter from the Little Knotting Newsletter is coming to take our picture during a press conference, and these little brats are already breaking the rules! If the judges catch their grubby little fingers in that pie, our team will be disqualified.

HELEN: *(Cont'd.)* And if our team is disqualified, Eerie Preparatory Academy is going to cut the home economics program from its curriculum. And if Eerie Preparatory Academy cuts the home economics program from its curriculum, no one will be there to teach the brats how to run a proper home. And if the brats don't learn how to run a proper home, they'll resign themselves to lifetimes of serving poorly cooked casseroles and siring bratty children who chew with their mouths open. *(Begins rearranging its contents with her hands to make it appear un-eaten, getting whipped cream on her hands.)*

(SCOTTIE enters UL unnoticed by HELEN.)

SCOTTIE: *(To HELEN.)* Admiring one of the other contestant's entries, I see.

HELEN: *(Startled.)* Oh! You spooked me.

SCOTTIE: I sure hope I haven't caught you in the act of sabotage.

HELEN: Of course not. I teach my students to obey orders and compete fairly and squarely. I believe our bumbleberry pie will win the blue ribbon tomorrow based on merit and merit alone.

SCOTTIE: Terrific. Tampering with the confections tarnishes the name of the thirty-third annual Knotting Bake-Off, brought to you by J & J Toothpaste. Tarnishing the name of the thirty-third annual Knotting Bake-Off, brought to you by J & J Toothpaste, tarnishes the name of J & J Toothpaste. And tarnishing the name of J & J Toothpaste tarnishes the name of my dearly departed grandpappy, the founder of J & J Toothpaste.

HELEN: Are you really the grandson of the founder of J & J Toothpaste?

SCOTTIE: I am. The name's Scottie Scarsdale. I recently took over my grandpappy's corporation. That's why I'm hosting the thirty-third annual Knotting Bake-Off, brought to you by J & J Toothpaste.

HELEN: It's a pleasure to meet such a high-profiled businessman.

(HELEN extends her hand to shake SCOTTIE'S, but realizes her hand is covered in whipped cream and pulls it back. CAROLYN enters UR.)

CAROLYN: Scottie, didn't you say a big-time reporter from the Little Knotting Newsletter would be here by now? It's 7 p.m.

DETECTIVE: *(To AUDIENCE. Indicates CAROLYN.)* Meet Carolyn Chesterfield. She owns this inn with her husband.

CAROLYN: I wonder where that reporter could be.

SCOTTIE: He must be delayed because of the storm. *(Indicates window on CL wall.)* It sure is raining cats and dogs out there.

(SFX: Thunder.)

CAROLYN: Weather like this always gives me the heebie-jeebies.

SCOTTIE: Aren't you used to a rainstorm every now and then? You own an inn down at the Jersey Shore, after all.

CAROLYN: This is no ordinary rainstorm. Something feels different in the air tonight. It was on a night just like this when... But that was long ago. Exactly ten years ago tonight.

SCOTTIE: Now, now, Carolyn. Just unwrinkle that brow of yours, turn that frown upside down, and keep smiling those delightfully brushed pearly whites. I'm sure there's nothing to be worried about.

(SFX: Thunder.)

DETECTIVE: *(To AUDIENCE.)* Carolyn is right about there being something different in the air tonight. Treacherous things can happen in air like this. It was precisely ten years ago on a night just like tonight when the Knotting Shore was struck with a disaster of epic proportions. The innocent civilians of this quiet beach town were viciously attacked by a rabid seagull. It's taken a decade for the town to pick up the pieces and return to normal.

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
<http://www.histage.com/playdetails.asp?PID=2588>

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!