

BRINDLEWOOD BAY

Complexity: 7

Presenting the Mystery

The most popular television program in the world, *The Jolly Good Baking Show*, has come to Brindlewood Bay to find the town's very best baker. A number of qualifying rounds have been held, and our Murder Mavens are among the bakers to make it through to the final, televised portion of the show, where they will meet the charming presenters and have their confections judged by the notoriously strict Paul and Jane.

The first scene depicts the opening round of the competition: pies. Go around the table and ask each player to describe what sort of pie their Maven is making. Then, ask the player to their left whether the pie is a *triumph* or *rather disappointing*. If a Maven's cozy activity is baking, their pie is automatically a triumph. Then, the other players and the Keeper should each offer a detail about how the pie was beautifully executed if it was a *triumph*, or a detail about how it was a disaster if it was *rather disappointing*. During this process, the entire cast of Suspects should be introduced, as well as the steely-eyed, silver-haired judge, Paul Riviera. You can do this by having the Suspects interject with commentary or words of support, or have them do something technical related to the television production.

There is a short break in filming after the pie round, during which a Suspect (your choice) will find Paul Riviera dead in his trailer, his face covered with flour and his hands tied behind his back with beautifully-plaited nylon cords. Members of the production team will naturally be quite shocked, but they insist that everyone keep calm and carry on with the show. A local police official, perhaps Sheriff Wyman Dalrymple, will ask the Murder Mavens to help figure out who did it, since they're in the mix and therefore in a position to question people during the filming of the remainder of the competition. If they can solve the crime without causing a stir, all the better.

During the investigation, two more rounds of judging (with breaks in-between) should take place: biscuits and cakes. Do the same procedure for judging the biscuits and cakes as you did for the pies. The winner of the competition is determined by the Keeper.

If the mystery isn't solved by the end of the competition, the investigation can extend over as many hours or days as are needed. The Suspects won't be allowed to leave Brindlewood Bay until the culprit is brought to justice.

Establishing Question: The Jolly Good Baking Show is connected to one of your favorite memories. What is that memory?

Suspects

Sue Mellon, a presenter

Boisterous. Punny. A hugger. Sue had been a very successful comedian in the U.K. She took this presenter job when her comedy career started to flatline. She is secretly jealous of Paul, who is the breakout star of *The Jolly Good Baking Show*.

Quote: *"Bakers! Lattice be a warning to you: only five minutes remaining in the pie round!"*

Timothy Boosh, a presenter

Weirdly large. Broad humor. Goth. Timothy is mostly along for the ride. He doesn't know the first thing about baking, and feels very lucky to have stumbled into this gig.

Quote: *"Bakers! You have thirty minutes remaining in this round!"* Pours a glass of water over his head and then does an awkward cartwheel for some reason.

Jane Leaf, a judge

Sweetly judgmental. Elderly. Posh. Jane is a beloved celebrity in the U.K., having published dozens of cookery books and made hundreds of television appearances over a career spanning nearly sixty years. Like all the other stars of *The Jolly Good Baking Show*, her contract is up for renewal, and she has lately grown frustrated with Paul's hardball negotiation tactics, which threaten to shut down the show entirely.

Quote: *"Don't fret, dear—your pie has a perfectly adequate taste. It just looks a bit... informal."*

Scott Lamb, a contestant

Organized. Fond of bow ties. Twink. Scott was a contestant on *The Jolly Good Baking Show* three years ago. He

The GBBBO

The Great Brindlewood Bay Bake-Off

famously went home after an explosive, on-camera argument with Paul about a pan of over-baked muffins. Many viewers, however, believe there's more to that story, with some suggesting the two were secretly lovers. In a bit of stunt casting, the show's producers have invited Scott to participate in this special episode, going so far as to rent him an apartment in town so he can technically be said to "live" in Brindlewood Bay.

Quote: *"It's very important to blind bake the pie crust so you don't have a soggy bottom, because believe you me: Paul likes a neat, firm, uncomplicated bottom."*

Melanie Blair, a contestant

Seemingly frazzled. Actually intense. Sensibly-dressed. Melanie has lived in Brindlewood Bay all her life, and learned to bake from her parents, who used to own The Sweet Sensations bakery before it went out of business.

Quote: *"Yes, it's true my parents' bakery went out of business when Paul's bakery chain opened a location in Brindlewood Bay, but I won't hold that against him. I love The Jolly Good Baking Show, and I'm just so honored to be here."*

Heath Hendricks, a producer

Stern. Balding. Excessive use of "3... 2... 1" fingers. Heath is overworked and irritable. He is furious that Paul Riviera has been threatening to leave the show if his (ridiculous) contractual demands are not met.

Quote: *"Do I sometimes daydream about him being dead? Absolutely. But did I kill him? No way. Paul Riviera may be a pompous, arrogant ass, but he's our pompous, arrogant ass."*

Buck, a cameraman

Good-humored. Handsome. Poetic. Buck, an American, has only been with *The Jolly Good Baking Show* for a few months, after his secret lover, Donna Riviera, got him the job.

Quote: *"This whole situation is just so unbearably tragic. The Jolly Good Baking Show is one of the few lights we have in this dark, dismal world. Tell me another show that can bring people together like this one can—young and old, rich and poor, black and white. It's something we can all agree on, you know? And now that Paul is gone, it will never be the same. That light is just a little bit dimmer now."*

Donna Riviera, the wife

Bottle blonde. Leopard print. Piles of make-up. Like her husband, Donna Riviera is a celebrity, having starred in the short-lived reality television program, *The Real Scousewives of Liverpool*. She has been having an affair with Buck for the last few months.

Quote: *“I can’t believe someone would kill him, like. Mind you, he was always doing my head in—if anyone had a reason to sack him off, it’s me. But I didn’t do it. And now if you’ll excuse me, I need a bifter and a bevvie to take the edge off, like.”*

Paint the Scene

Jane’s trailer

As you step into the trailer, what do you see that reflects Jane’s very posh femininity?

Sue’s trailer

Sue clearly has a reverence for the great comedians that came before her. What do you see in her trailer that reinforces this idea?

Timothy’s trailer

What do you see in Timothy’s trailer that suggests he is a deeply lonely person?

The judges’ tent

The judges’ tent is normally decorated to look like a quaint cottage somewhere in the English countryside, but has been given an “American” flair for this special episode. What sort of “American” gewgaws do you see?

Clues

- ☐ A baking sheet sprinkled with rat poison.
- ☐ A text message of someone professing their love.
- ☐ A cookbook authored by Jane Leaf and Paul Riviera, but with one of Paul’s recipes torn out.
- ☐ An unreasonable contractual demand.
- ☐ A missing chef’s knife.
- ☐ A pile of receipts suggesting extravagant expenditures.
- ☐ A shattered Britty award.
- ☐ A dangerously-frayed electrical cord.
- ☐ A heated argument about British politics.

- ☐ Buckingham Palace invite to the cast and crew of *The Jolly Good Baking Show*, with one name conspicuously missing.
- ☐ Stacks of love letters from the British Prime Minister.
- ☐ A dressing-down from the head of the BBC.
- ☐ Extremely valuable diamond earrings shaped like tiny loaves of bread.
- ☐ A plea for financial help.
- ☐ A sheet cake with a very hateful message written in blood-red icing on it.
- ☐ A pair of plane tickets to somewhere far, far away.
- ☐ Ball gag, handcuffs, and a riding crop.
- ☐ Outtakes suggesting a very tense, off-camera relationship.
- ☐ A rolling pin flecked with blood.
- ☐ Paul’s body has signs of him being poisoned.

Void Clues

- ☐ A baked good seems to scream when cut into.
- ☐ A swarm of insects where food should be.
- ☐ For a short time, the people of Brindlewood Bay are seen wearing featureless wooden masks.
- ☐ The shadow of something unnatural crawling atop the baking tent.
- ☐ A tray of gingerbread men engaging in obscene acts.
- ☐ A food canister that smells of urine, semen, and sweat.