

**THE GREAT PASTRY KERFUFFLE OF
WILLOWBROOK**

A one-act play in five scenes

by

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Cast of Characters

- OLD TULLY **Man, 70s-80s.** A respected Willowbrook local and the story's narrator. Warm, wry, theatrical without knowing it. Speaks as though inviting the audience for a yarn. Has witnessed every disagreement, disaster, and domestic drama in town – but nothing quite like the pastry incident he now recounts.
- JUDGE TULLY **Man, 40s** (the younger version of Old Tully) Pastry Judge; character within Old Tully's memories. Young Tully is earnest, proper, and slightly overwhelmed by the ferocity of the Willowbrook Baking Circle. He tries to be authoritative but is regularly bulldozed by the women's personalities. His attempts at professionalism only heighten the comedy.
- BEV **Woman, 60s.** Self-appointed leader of the Baking Circle. Bev is organised, immaculately presented, and rules the kitchen with the calm tyranny of someone who believes she's always right. She is proud, competitive, and unforgiving of chaos—except when caused by herself. She wields a clipboard like a sword and has a talent for weaponised politeness.
- DOT **Woman, 60s.** Enthusiastic baker; chaos in an apron. Dot is warm, excitable, and incapable of subtlety. She knows everyone's business, carries more alcohol in her handbag than most pubs stock, and believes every dessert should have "spirit"—literally. Her good nature disarms people right up until she accidentally detonates a situation.
- MAVIS **Woman, 70s.** The town's reigning critic and classical baker. Tall, elegant, and effortlessly intimidating, Mavis considers herself the guardian of culinary standards. She speaks with the gravity of an opera critic and carries herself like she's permanently evaluating everything, especially people. Sharp-eyed and sharp-tongued, she is incapable of letting a moment pass without commentary.
- SHARON **Woman, 40s.** Recently moved to town; eager, nervous, trying too hard. Sharon wants desperately to fit in. She brings modern baking gadgets and city habits that clash with Willowbrook tradition. She is well-meaning, anxious, and unintentionally provocative. Her presence is the spark that lights the powder keg.

Synopsis

The Great Pastry Kerfuffle of Willowbrook is a whimsical, gently comedic tale told through the warm, retrospective voice of OLD TULLY – a local who has lived long enough to witness every minor squabble and major scandal the town has to offer. But nothing, he insists, compares to the flour-laden calamity that befell the Willowbrook Country Fair's Pastry Competition all those years ago.

As TULLY guides the audience back in time, he steps in and out of the action, narrating, embellishing, and occasionally correcting his own memory as the story unfolds. Through his eyes, Willowbrook becomes a cosy yet chaotic village where pride is measured in pastry, rivalries simmer hotter than a country oven, and even the smallest disagreement can take on legendary proportions.

The drama centres on the fierce baking rivalry between DOT – passionate, explosive, and perpetually dusted in flour – and MAVIS, the reigning nine-year champion with a moral code as rigid as her shortcrust. When a mysterious culinary mishap threatens the integrity of the competition, accusations fly, secrets surface, and the town spirals into what will forever be known (at least by TULLY) as "The Great Pastry Kerfuffle".

Blending narration, memory, and playful exaggeration, the play offers performers opportunities for broad character work, quick-paced comedic timing, and warm ensemble chemistry. It celebrates small towns, big personalities, and the way ordinary events become extraordinary in the retelling.

Overall Ensemble Dynamic

These characters operate like a tight, competitive, co-dependent family. Their humour, clashes, and loyalties are heightened but recognisable. The play's heart lies in the truth that none of them are villains; only people who care a little too much.

Scene

The cosy confines of the Willowbrook Community Hall.

Time

"Many years ago" – not so long that it has been forgotten, but long enough for its edges to have softened into legend.

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Author's Note

The Great Pastry Kerfuffle of Willowbrook is, at its heart, a story remembered rather than recorded. I wanted to capture the feeling of being gathered beside a crackling fire – or perhaps around a country kitchen table – as an older relative recounts a tale that has grown slightly taller with each retelling. Not quite a Christmas story, but certainly told in that same spirit: warm, playful, nostalgic, and touched by the magic of memory.

To support this, the play is shaped using a five-movement structure, echoing the classic rhythmic rise of Freytag's Pyramid. But unlike a strict dramatic form, each movement here is filtered through the voice of our narrator, OLD TULLY. He guides the audience from moment to moment with the gentle confidence of someone who has told this story many times and still enjoys every second of embellishing it. His memories are reliable... in the way memories often are: emotionally truthful, but gloriously fuzzy around the edges.

This interplay between structure and storytelling gives the piece its tone. The five movements create a clear dramatic arc, but TULLY'S voice softens the transitions, allowing exaggeration, whimsy, and absurdity to seep naturally into the world. The audience understands that what they see onstage is the event – and also the legend of the event. A baking competition becomes a battleground. A small misunderstanding swells into a "scandal of flour-drenched chaos." People's quirks sharpen into archetypes. And all of it remains believable, because the teller himself delights in the telling.

In Willowbrook, memory is not a perfect record – it's a cosy, communal hearth where everyone stirs the pot just a little. And if that pot occasionally bubbles over into comedy, spectacle, or outright nonsense... well, that's half the joy.

I invite directors, actors, and audiences alike to embrace the elasticity of this world: perform the truth, but allow TULLY'S nostalgia to stretch it. Enjoy the charm of small-town earnestness colliding with larger-than-life personalities. And most of all, remember that in Willowbrook, even the simplest incident can become a legend – especially when told by someone who loves the story as much as the people in it.

Scene 1 - The Day It All Began

SETTING: The Willowbrook Community Hall – an aged but lovingly maintained timber building with polished floorboards, crocheted bunting, and a faint, permanent scent of sponge cake. A long table dominates the centre of the space, laden with mixing bowls, recipe books, and an assortment of baking paraphernalia. A noticeboard of community updates hangs crookedly to one side. It's the morning of the day before the annual Willowbrook Country Fair.

AT RISE: A warm, amber glow. Perhaps the colour of old timber and fading memories. A soft rumble of wind. The faint tinkling of teaspoons. From the shadows steps OLD TULLY.

OLD TULLY

(Steps into a warm amber spotlight, hat in hand. He addresses the audience with a mischievous twinkle)

Ah... Willowbrook. A town so small that arguments echo longer than the main street.

Oh, we have our dramas – lost chooks, missing knitting needles, the annual controversy over who overwatered the hydrangeas – but real excitement? Rare indeed.

But once... once... we had an event here so bewildering, so baffling, so gloriously muddled that folks still whisper about it when the air turns cool and the ovens warm up.

(Leans forward conspiratorially)

It happened one fateful year at the Willowbrook Country Fair... Oh, many years ago now. Long enough for tempers to cool, but not long enough for anyone to forget. Not truly.

You see, around here we call the whole affair "The Great Pastry Kerfuffle."

(Pause - eyebrows lift)

A kerfuffle it truly was my friends, let me assure you: A muddle. A fracas. A situation in which perfectly respectable people behaved in ways they later became rather embarrassed about – but only mildly, mind you.

It wasn't a scandal... just a very enthusiastic misunderstanding.

But oh, what a kerfuffle it was. Cakes toppled. Flour flew. Accusations were launched with the velocity of over-whipped meringue. Respectable women used language unsuitable for a church raffle – creatively, mind you. And a cat... Well. We'll get to the cat.

But I suppose I should begin at the beginning. After all, a tale like this deserves to be told properly.

So gather close, and allow me to take you back to the day when the ovens of Willowbrook ran hot... and the tempers ran hotter.

(He taps his hat, steps aside. A second pool of light illuminates The Willowbrook Community Hall interior)

OLD TULLY

(Aside)

Now, the ladies of the Willowbrook Baking Circle were not – how shall I put this? Quiet personalities.

Each year they crafted their entries for the Willowbrook Country Fair with the kind of competitive spirit one normally reserves for state politics or marital arguments.

(Enter BEV – broad smile, immaculate apron, a woman who moves like she owns not only the room but the entire suburb)

OLD TULLY

Bev... The General. Leader, organiser, and wielder of the clipboard of destiny.

BEV

Right, ladies, gather round – we've got a busy day ahead and I want no repeat of last year's... situation.

OLD TULLY

(Peeked eyebrow)

The "situation," I should clarify, involved a trifle that was so alcoholic it was declared a fire hazard.

(Enter DOT – tiny, bright-eyed, holding a suspiciously heavy handbag)

OLD TULLY

Dot. Sweet as sponge, but twice as volatile. Do not be fooled. She carries at least three varieties of liqueur at all times.

DOT

For the record, it was not a fire hazard, Bev. It was an aesthetic choice.

(Enter MAVIS – tall, elegant, and always slightly disappointed in everyone)

OLD TULLY

Ah, Mavis. If judgement were an Olympic sport, she'd have won gold since 1974.

MAVIS

Some of us take baking seriously, Dorothy. We do not believe everything benefits from being... fortified.

DOT

Well, some of us believe a pudding should have spirit – and by spirit, I mean rum.

(Enter SHARON – the newcomer. Nervous, enthusiastic, carrying a modern baking gadget she clearly doesn't understand)

OLD TULLY

And here's Sharon. New to town, eager to fit in, armed with more silicone baking moulds than sense. The others viewed her the way cats view a new vacuum cleaner.

SHARON

Hi everyone! Look! I brought my own thermomixer! It's imported – from Sydney!

(SHARON places the heavy device square in the middle of the table. The others stare in horrified silence)

BEV

Right... Well... Let's hope it's house-trained.

OLD TULLY

(Delighted)

Ahhh, I'd forgotten that line. Bev had a way of delivering subtlety with all the gentleness of a thrown brick.

(Moment of magical-retelling: Lights dim slightly. OLD TULLY steps forward, the action freezes like a tableau)

OLD TULLY

Now, up to this moment, the day was progressing as any normal day might – the standard mix of friendly hostility, competitive smiling, and Mavis silently asserting dominance with her eyebrows.

But what none of them knew **(He taps the notebook mysteriously)** was that destiny had already placed its spoon in the mixing bowl.

You see. The Willowbrook Country Fair was tomorrow. Tensions were rising. Egos were simmering. And before long... well... Let's just say the flour would hit the fan.

(Action resumes)

BEV

Now, as you all know, this year's Fair features a brand new category – The Pastry of Distinction Award.

(The women react: inhaling sharply, straightening, eyes narrowing)

OLD TULLY

(Dramatic hush)

And there it was – the spark. The first crackle of thunder before the storm.

BEV

Each of us will prepare something worthy of Willowbrook Baking Circle's good name. And we shall behave gracefully, respectfully, and maturely throughout the process.

DOT

Says the woman who once declared war on a sponge.

MAVIS

It was a cheating sponge and you know it.

SHARON

(Helpful)

How exactly does a sponge cheat?

(Silence. Three heads turn and stare at her)

OLD TULLY

(Aside)

Good question. Terrible timing.

BEV

Right then – aprons on, ovens preheating, and no one – I repeat, NO ONE – touches my measuring cups.

OLD TULLY

If only they'd listened to themselves. If only they'd shown restraint. If only Sharon hadn't brought that blasted thermomixer.

And as that spark flickered, the winds began to stir... carrying with them the first hints of the kerfuffle yet to come.

Scene 2 - The Rising Tension

AT RISE: A change of lighting. A dappled gold light – the colour of late morning. A soft hum of country quiet; birds, distance, the faint metallic click of an oven heating. OLD TULLY remains forward. There is a sense of time moving. The action in the room rises.

OLD TULLY

(Narrator)

Now, this is where the story – like Dot's pavlova – begins to wobble.

This marks the moment things started to go wrong. Not fully wrong – no, no, that comes later. But wrong enough that if you'd been watching closely, you might have whispered to yourself: Ah. There it is. Trouble. Of course, you'd have been right.

(Lights brighten. The women are now in mid-bake – bowls, trays, flour, the works. OLD TULLY moves aside but remains visible at the stage's edge)

BEV

(Measuring flour with military precision)

Accuracy, ladies, accuracy! Baking is not chaos – it is chemistry!

OLD TULLY

(Lower, reflective)

She says this every year. And yet somehow chaos always triumphs.

(Leans in)

Of course, it doesn't help when the person meant to keep order... **(Beat)** is standing right in the middle of it.

OLD TULLY

(Continues quietly)

For I was the Pastry Judge at the Willowbrook Country Fair.

(He steps back, breathes in, and the room shifts)

And on that morning... my part in the kerfuffle truly began.

(He places the hat on – differently now, younger, straighter, with a touch more confidence. He steps forward into a brighter pool of light. He becomes his younger self – JUDGE TULLY)

JUDGE TULLY

(Brisk, official, clearing his throat)

Good morning, ladies. Just popping by for the preliminary... evaluations.

BEV

Excellent. You may observe – from a safe distance.

DOT

(Shoving a bowl under his nose)

Taste this cream, Tully. Go on. Tell me it isn't the fluffiest in the district.

JUDGE TULLY

Well- I-

DOT

(She practically force-feeds him a spoonful)

There! Proof. Heaven on a teaspoon.

JUDGE TULLY

I should formally decline **(Already tasting)** and yet here we are.

MAVIS

(Holding a pastry like it's a sacred relic)

Some of us do not need premature judgement. Perfection must not be hurried.

SHARON

(Struggling with her thermomixer)

Does anyone know why it keeps beeping? It only said "error" twice... well, three times... four-

(The machine emits a worrying sound - a cross between a kettle, an alarm, and a small dying robot)

JUDGE TULLY

Ah yes. The Thermomixer of Doom. If ever an appliance was destined to bring ruin upon a town, it is that one.

BEV

(Turning sharply)

Sharon! Technology is no substitute for intuition!

SHARON

But the manual said-

MAVIS

Did the manual say "drive the entire district to madness"?

(The argument continues, but quietens as OLD TULLY returns as narrator)

OLD TULLY

Mavis had a flair for drama. She could turn a minor inconvenience into Greek tragedy.

(Lights dim slightly. Action slows. OLD TULLY steps between the women, freezing the scene with a raised hand)

OLD TULLY

Now... Here is a moment worth noting. The room – if you look closely – is divided into three factions:

Bev: Order incarnate. Dot: Chaos in lipstick. Mavis: Judgement given human form. And Sharon? She is the spark in the powder keg.

In a few minutes, something very small and very silly will occur... something none of them would ever forget.

(He gestures; lights restore to normal)

Let's witness it.

(The action resumes)

SHARON

Okay... I think I've fixed it—

(She presses a button. The thermomixer whirrs violently, then spits a cloud of flour into the air)

DOT

Duck and cover!

BEV

My apron! My clean, pristine apron!

MAVIS

This is an act of sabotage.

SHARON

I'm so sorry! It wasn't supposed to—

(The machine sputters again, sending a second puff straight at MAVIS)

MAVIS

SABOTAGE, I SAY!

JUDGE TULLY

Everyone please! Remain calm!

(He is, of course, ignored completely)

OLD TULLY

(Chuckling)

Ahh, yes. The Flour Burst. Some say this moment started the kerfuffle. Others insist it was what happened later with Dot's secret brandy supply. But we're not there yet. It's all about the rising pressure. Like dough in a warm bowl.

(BEV brushes flour from her face with stiff dignity. DOT tries not to laugh. MAVIS stands frozen, covered head to toe like a ghost at a bakery séance. SHARON is apologising to everyone, everything, maybe even the furniture)

BEV

Right. That's enough chaos for one morning. Ladies — break for tea. We reconvene in fifteen minutes, and Sharon... leave the machine OFF.

SHARON

(Tiny voice)

Yes, Bev.

MAVIS

If that contraption so much as breathes, I'm calling the fire brigade.

OLD TULLY

(Stepping forward)

And so they paused – floured, frazzled, and furious – completely unaware that the real trouble hadn't even begun yet. But oh... it was coming.

Scene 3 - The First Accusation

AT RISE: The lighting has shifted to a slightly cooler, late-afternoon hue. The break is over. Teacups remain on the table, half-finished. A kettle clicks off somewhere. A sense of tension hangs like dust motes after a pillow fight.

BEV

(Returning with clipboard)

Alright, ladies – reset yourselves. Let's rebuild some dignity. We still have pastries to prepare, and reputations to uphold.

DOT

(Sipping tea from an oversized floral cup)

I'm dignified. I'm always dignified. Some people get flustered by a little airborne flour.

MAVIS

(Still dusted with flour; clipped, icy)

Airborne? It was launched with intent.

SHARON

I swear I didn't– I didn't mean for the machine to–

BEV

Yes, yes. We're all aware.

(Squints at SHARON's thermomixer, as if it might attack)

OLD TULLY

(Aside, over the action)

Bev treated that contraption the way farmers treat a snake in the chook shed – with respect, suspicion, and the readiness to whack it with a broom.

(The women resume baking. A beat passes. A kind of brittle silence)

DOT

(Opening her handbag, rooting around)

Now where on earth...?

(BEV, MAVIS, and SHARON all tense – DOT's handbag contains unspeakable liquids)

Ah-ha!

(She pulls out a tiny glass bottle, triumphant)

My vanilla essence!

MAVIS

(Narrowing eyes)

That is not vanilla essence.

DOT

(Offended)

Mavis, I am insulted! **(Beat)** This is my private blend. Vanilla. With... heat.

BEV

Dot, for the love of all that is baked – do not add brandy to your pastry during the judging week.

DOT

Fine. I'll wait until after judging. Like a responsible adult.

(She sets the bottle down. It clinks much louder than anything labelled "vanilla" should. Suddenly - A Shriek)

SHARON

(Distressed)

Someone's taken my pastry shells!

BEV

(Snaps around)

What?

SHARON

They were right here - cooling on this tray - and now they're gone!

OLD TULLY

(Leaning in)

Ahh yes. The Disappearing Pastry Incident. The first true spark of suspicion. Every great kerfuffle needs a mystery - and this was ours.

MAVIS

(Folding arms with operatic gravity. Savouring it)

Sabotage.

DOT

Oh, here we go.

MAVIS

(Points at Sharon)

First, you weaponise your machine. Now, conveniently, your pastry disappears. You're trying to make us look guilty.

SHARON

What? No! Why would I sabotage myself?

BEV

(To MAVIS)

Mavis, honestly—

MAVIS

Bev, please. I have watched enough crime dramas to recognise a diversion when I see one.

DOT

It was probably your cat.

MAVIS

(Sharply)

My cat is at home.

DOT

Your cat has escaped from home before. I've seen it down the shops, terrorising the butcher.

MAVIS

That was one time and it was after hours!

OLD TULLY

(Aside)

The cat was indeed relevant to the kerfuffle – but not yet. At this point, it was simply a topic of insult.

BEV

Ladies, please, we are not going to devolve into baseless accusations.

(Beat)

Where are the pastry shells?

(A moment. They all look around. Under towels. Behind cookbooks. Even in DOT's handbag – DOT slaps it shut defensively)

SHARON

I know I put them right here. Bev saw me!

BEV

I did. They were decent, too. A touch rustic – but respectable.

MAVIS

Hmm.

(MAVIS eyes SHARON's thermomixer)

MAVIS

Perhaps your machine...

SHARON

It didn't eat them, Mavis!

(The thermomixer beeps once, ominously, as if in disagreement)

OLD TULLY

(Laughing softly)

And that was when the first accusation, the very first, rose from the floury chaos.

MAVIS

(Steely)

Sharon. Did you misplace them... or did someone remove them?

(A silence falls. The tension tightens like cling wrap)

SHARON

(Quietly, wounded)

I would never sabotage anyone. I just want to fit in.

(The women soften – except MAVIS, who softens only internally)

DOT

(Kindly, surprising everyone)

We know, love. Perhaps they're just... somewhere silly. Everything ends up somewhere silly in this hall.

(At that exact moment - A faint meow. The women freeze)

MAVIS

(Deadly calm)

That was... my cat.

BEV

Why is it here?

MAVIS

(Grave)

Why indeed?

OLD TULLY

(Grinning at the audience)

And there it was – the moment destiny scratched at the door. Literally.

For behind that meow... behind that innocent sound... lurks the truth of those missing pastry shells. But we'll get to that.

BEV

Right. Ladies, no one move.

(The women stand, rigid, absurdly heroic)

BEV

We are going to locate that cat and Sharon's pastry.

MAVIS

(Hissing)

If my Basil has eaten her entry, there will be consequences.

OLD TULLY

(Stepping forward, arms wide)

And thus the next stage began. Not with flour, nor brandy, nor machinery...

But with a cat. And a mystery. And five women ready to turn a baking session into a full-blown investigation.

Little did they know... the kerfuffle had only just begun.

(Blackout)

Scene 4 - When Things Truly Went Sideways

AT RISE: The Willowbrook Community Hall - late afternoon sliding toward evening. The light slants golden through the windows, catching flour dust in the air like suspended snow. Tension hums beneath the domestic calm. The women stand frozen where we left them.

(A MEOW echoes again)

OLD TULLY

(Stepping forward, almost reverent)

Ah yes. This was the precise moment when dignity packed its bags and quietly slipped out the back door.

BEV

(Grim, authoritative)

Mavis. Control your cat.

MAVIS

(Bridling)

My Basil does not take orders. He merely... interprets circumstances.

(A ginger cat appears from beneath the trestle table, dragging something)

SHARON

(Gasping)

My pastry shells!

(The cat drops the tray proudly. Several shells are... licked)

DOT

Well. That explains the mystery.

MAVIS

(Cold fury)

Basil.

(The cat sits. Unrepentant)

OLD TULLY

(Aside, delighted)

And there it was. The great revelation. Stolen not by rival hands... but by whiskers and entitlement.

SHARON

(Almost crying, relieved and horrified)

Oh thank goodness... **(Then, realising)** Oh no.

BEV

(Inspecting damage)

Some are salvageable. Some are... spiritually compromised.

MAVIS

They are ruined.

DOT

Nonsense. A little heat will fix that. Everything tastes better once baked twice.

(Mavis scoops up BASIL)

MAVIS

You will wait in the car.

(The cat meows in protest. As MAVIS exits briefly, DOT's handbag tips. A bottle rolls out. It clinks unmistakably - A beat)

BEV

Dot.

DOT

...Yes?

BEV

Why is there brandy on the floor.

DOT

Because gravity is cruel.

OLD TULLY

(Hands clasped)

Ahhh. And now we arrive at the real accelerant.

SHARON

I thought you said that was vanilla essence?

DOT

It started as vanilla essence.

BEV

Dot. You are not permitted to "fortify" anything before judging.

DOT

I wasn't going to! **(Beat)** I was just... preparing options.

(MAVIS re-enters)

MAVIS

What smells like poor decisions?

DOT

Tradition.

(The thermomixer suddenly beeps)

SHARON

I didn't touch it!

(The machine whirs. A towel flaps. A bowl tips. Brandy splashes, just slightly, into a tray of pastries)

MAVIS

(Stunned)

Did that machine just drink?

BEV

Sharon...!

SHARON

I swear, it has a mind of its own!

OLD TULLY

(Calling out, but not stopping them)

Now listen carefully, because history often turns not on grand gestures... but on tiny spills.

This... *(Indicating the spill)* was the moment.

(Action resumes)

BEV

(Realising)

Those pastries... Dot, what was in that bottle?

DOT

Brandy. Premium. Aged. Gifted.

MAVIS

Then they're disqualified.

DOT

They're enhanced.

BEV

They are ineligible!

SHARON

I can remake them! Quickly!

MAVIS

There is no time.

(Judge Tully steps forward, caught between them)

JUDGE TULLY

Ladies, please... This is becoming very unofficial.

DOT

Taste them.

JUDGE TULLY

I really shouldn't...

DOT

Just a nibble.

(He hesitates. Tastes. A beat)

JUDGE TULLY

...Oh dear.

BEV

Oh dear what?

JUDGE TULLY

They're... excellent.

(Silence)

MAVIS

(Stunned)

That's impossible.

DOT

(Smug)

Spirit, ladies.

(Chaos erupts. Overlapping dialogue, movement, accusations)

OLD TULLY

(Calling above it, delighted)

And there it was. The point of no return. Rules bent. Egos bruised. Brandy acknowledged. **(Delighted)** The kerfuffle had achieved full bloom.

(The women argue. Basil meows from outside. Lights fade)

Scene 5 - The Judging

AT RISE: The Willowbrook Community Hall. Evening. The chaos of the Fair has passed. Chairs are misaligned. The trestle table bears crumbs, napkins, and quiet surrender. JUDGE TULLY stands alone at the table, clipboard in hand.

JUDGE TULLY

Good evening, ladies. **(A beat, gentler than before)** Thank you for waiting.

(The women sit. This is no longer a contest posture, it's a listening one)

JUDGE TULLY

(Continuing)

I've done this a long time. Judged cakes, preserves, quilts, scarecrows. I've handed out ribbons and sent people home disappointed.

(He looks around)

But Willowbrook... you always make it difficult.

(A few smiles. He sets the clipboard down deliberately)

Because this isn't really about who baked best. It's about who showed up.

(A quiet lands)

BEV

So... what's the result?

(JUDGE TULLY lifts a ribbon)

JUDGE TULLY

There's no overall winner this year.

(A beat. MAVIS opens her mouth – then closes it. She considers. Says nothing)

JUDGE TULLY

(Continuing)

Instead...

(He turns to SHARON)

Sharon. For persistence.

(He hands her the ribbon then turns to MAVIS)

Mavis. For tradition, and refusing to let it disappear.

(MAVIS accepts, composed. TULLY turns to DOT)

Dot. For creativity... and bravery.

(DOT grins. JUDGE TULLY places the final ribbon at the centre of the table)

JUDGE TULLY

And this one belongs to the hall.

(A pause)

BEV

(The smallest smile)

Well. I suppose I'd better put the kettle on.

(SHARON instinctively reaches for the plates. She arranges them evenly, neatly, efficiently. Without being asked. A beat. BEV notices. Says nothing. Uses them)

(JUDGE TULLY lingers. He looks at the women – really looks. Then, quietly to himself)

JUDGE TULLY

Good people. Difficult... but good.

(He removes his coat or hat and becomes OLD TULLY)

OLD TULLY

Every town has a place like this. A room that remembers more than the people inside it.

(The women continue quietly in the background)

OLD TULLY

(Continuing)

They come for competitions. They stay for each other.

(A distant meow)

MAVIS

That'll be Basil.

(A smile)

OLD TULLY

Tomorrow, there'd be opinions. Next year, another argument dressed up as a tradition. **(Beat)** But tonight... **(He looks at the women)** Tonight was enough.

(Lights warm. Steam rises from mugs. The hall breathes.)

BLACKOUT)