

A Competition to Die For

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INT. MASTER BAKER KITCHEN- DAY

At the front of the kitchen, Judge CORBIN GRAVES (Gordon Ramsay impersonator) stands in front of contestants.

He takes a bite of an idyllic forest cake with fondant forest animals on it, which is in front of APRIL SWEET (25, ambitious, unfazed).

CORBIN

I'm pleased to tell you that birds
would delight in eating this cake.
However, I am not a bird.

He moves on to contestant MAGGIE ROMERO (28, Latina, total showboat), whose cake is a whimsical forest with colored trees and mythical animals. There is also a branching path that crosses the cake.

CORBIN

It's fitting that you chose a
mythical theme, Maggie. Like the
animals you've created here, it
tastes like something a person
with a terrible imagination would
dream up.

In front of JULIA CHANG (34, Chinese-American, a Debby Downer) is a simple forest cake with a stream that crosses the cake. Corbin takes a bite and immediately spits it out.

CORBIN

I asked for a cake not a bowl of
soup.

Corbin examines the three cakes with a resigned look on his face. He takes a deep breath.

CORBIN (CONT'D)

The person who will *not* be moving
on to the finale is...

Corbin starts to clutch his throat and stagger about. Maggie and Julia exchange worried glances. April remains calm and composed.

Corbin's movements begin to become more exaggerated. He is having a hard time breathing. His eyes start to water, and he crashes to the floor, knocking into the table as he does so and sending all the cakes flying. He lies motionless on the floor with open, unblinking eyes, obviously dead.

April reaches down to feel Corbin's pulse.

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APRIL
I think he's dead.

Maggie lets out a scream and Julia faints.

APRIL (CONT'D)
(disappointed)
Does this mean the competition's
over?

Maggie stares at her in shock and horror.

MAGGIE
That's what you're worried about?
The *competition*?!

April shrugs.

APRIL
I didn't give up two months of my
life for *nothing*. I'm here to win!

Executive Producer LEIGHTON HARTMAN (40s, typical network suit)
rushes out with a clipboard and headset.

LEIGHTON
Oh, god.

Leighton pulls out her phone and dials **911**.

LEIGHTON (CONT'D)
Hi, I need an ambulance sent to
Master Baker Kitchen. Corbin
Graves isn't breathing...yes, *that*
Corbin Graves...Oh my god, he's
dead! He can't yell at you! Uh
huh...10 minutes. Thank you.

APRIL
So what does this mean for the
competition? Is it over?

LEIGHTON
This just became bigger than a
baking competition!

She turns to the side.

LEIGHTON (CONT'D)
Will! Come out here!

Producer WILLA BURKE (late 20s/early 30s, attention seeker)
emerges from the wings with her camera.

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LEIGHTON

Quick! I want on-camera interviews with the contestants now! We always get the best footage when emotions are running high.

CUT TO:

WILLA

(to APRIL)

April, did you have any grudges against Corbin?

APRIL

What is this, a murder investigation?

WILLA

Well, Corbin didn't poison himself.

APRIL

Look, I didn't have anything against him. He just wanted me to succeed.

Willa looks surprised.

WILLA

What gave you that impression?

APRIL

Well, he would compliment me sometimes.

Willa looks stunned.

WILLA

Like when?

FLASHBACK

Corbin takes a bite of April's Rapunzel cake.

CORBIN

This cake is adequate.

END FLASHBACK

WILLA

Well, it's more praise than I ever got.

APRIL

Wait, you were a contestant?

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WILLA
 (slightly bitter)
 Five years ago. Not that Corbin remembered. He sent me home the very first week because he didn't think kumquats belonged in a tarte tatin.

CUT TO:

WILLA
 (to MAGGIE)
 Maggie, did Corbin's criticism ever really piss you off?

MAGGIE
 Sure. I frequently used a lot of unorthodox flavors that he didn't approve of.

FLASHBACK

Corbin takes a bite of Maggie's rainbow pie and immediately spits it out.

CORBIN
 The only people moronic enough to use horse radish and marshmallow fluff are stoned college kids looking to satisfy their munchies.

END FLASHBACK

WILLA
 Did that make you angry? Angry enough to kill?

MAGGIE
 Of course not! Sure, he could be harsh, but I saw it as an opportunity to improve.

CUT TO:

WILLA
 (to JULIA)
 Julia, Corbin criticized you a lot.

JULIA
 For good reason. Most of my bakes were unsuccessful.

WILLA
 But you made it this far.

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JULIA
Because most people didn't even
finish their bakes. And some were
literally inedible.

WILLA
What was the most critical thing
Corbin said to you?

FLASHBACK

Corbin takes a bite of Julia's Under the Sea cake and
immediately downs his glass of water.

CORBIN
I once went on a trip to the
Sahara Desert. My camel got lost
and I ran out of water. I had to
trudge across the sand dunes for a
day to the nearest oasis. When I
got there, my mouth was less dry
than when I tasted your cake.

END FLASHBACK

WILLA
And you were totally fine with
that?

Julia shrugs.

JULIA
He was right. It was dry.

CUT TO:

LEIGHTON
(To WILLA)
This situation is a complete
disaster!

Willa looks confused.

WILLA
Wait, I thought this was what you
wanted. Something to boost the
ratings!

FLASHBACK

Leighton is on the phone. Willa, nearby, listens in.

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LEIGHTON

I understand that the ratings are low, Flanagan!...*What?* You want Corbin to be even *harsher*? He's already caused *eleven* of the competitors to burst into tears. Three quit on the spot! It's hard to keep the ratings up when this is the *twentieth* season of Master Baker...Oh, that's an idea. A tragedy *could* help the ratings. But what would be dramatic enough to do that?

END FLASHBACK

LEIGHTON

Willa, Corbin's death will *kill* the ratings. This was *his* show. Who's going to watch it now?

WILLA

Leighton, calm down. All we need is a different celebrity baker to judge it. Like Paul Hollywood.

LEIGHTON

If we don't get canceled! This was *not* an option, Willa. Corbin was never supposed to *die*.

WILLA

But don't you think he had it coming? He was so mean to all the contestants.

START INSULT MONTAGE

Corbin tries a cream puff.

CORBIN

The dough is totally raw and way too thick. I would rather eat a pillow than take another bite of this garbage.

Corbin tries a mermaid cake.

CORBIN

I've been to dozens of beaches in my life, and I've seen seagulls eat everything from pizza to literal garbage, but not even a seagull would eat this cake.

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Corbin tries a cannoli.

CORBIN

There are no words to describe how revolting this cannoli is.

Corbin tries a fruit tart.

CORBIN

The farmers who grew the fruit that went into this would be devastated to learn its fate. You should've auditioned for *Worst Bakers in America*.

Corbin tries chocolate cake.

CORBIN

If there was a museum for the worst food creations in history, this would be the main exhibit.

Corbin tries a soufflé.

CORBIN

This isn't a soufflé. It's a crater. You know where craters belong? On the moon.

Corbin tosses the soufflé towards the sky, and it crashes down and shatters.

END MONTAGE

LEIGHTON

That's precisely why everyone was tuning in! They *liked* that he was critical.

WILLA

(under her breath)
Not everyone did.

LEIGHTON

Everyone's going to blame me for this! I'm the Executive Producer! I'm supposed to make sure everything runs smoothly! This is the opposite of that!

WILLA

This competition is now a *murder investigation*, Leighton. You're welcome.

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Leighton stares at her in shock.

LEIGHTON
Willa. What did you *do*?

Willa just smiles.

The screen turns black.

THE END

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