



The Thirteenth Cookie

by Mary Barile

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Approximate running time: 20 minutes

CHARACTERS

BOOMTY the BAKER, middle-aged man
SLINK the CAT
SAINT NICHOLAS/OLD WOMAN

SETTING

A bakery in New Amsterdam (New York) in 1655, Christmas Eve: There is a table for the counter. There are no scene changes.

COSTUMES

BOOMTY, the BAKER: Black or brown pants or pantaloons, a white or tan shirt, dark shoes, bib apron, and baker's hat
SLINK, the CAT: Black tights and leotards or long shirt with cat tail; cat ears on headband
OLD WOMAN: Ragged dark clothing, with long white hair; she walks with a cane
ST. NICHOLAS: Red and gold robe with bishop's hat

PROPS

Cookies on trays
Paper sacks
Three silver coins
Mousetrap with sign that reads, "We'll be back!"
Brick wrapped to look like a loaf of bread
Helium-filled balloons, white or yellow, with "Very Heavy Pound Cake" written on them

MUSIC

Old fashioned holiday music for pre-show.

NOTE

This play is simple to stage: the fun comes in the broad acting of Boomty and Slink. Actors can do pratfalls, get more and more frantic, and just have fun.

The Thirteenth Cookie

(Scene opens in bakery with BOOMTY in the shop with SLINK. BOOMTY is calling out to a customer who has just left.)

BOOMTY

Happy holidays! Another wonderful day! We have sold all our cakes and breads and almost all our cookies. The most buttery cookies! Bread that floats on the air! The heaviest and richest cakes in New Amsterdam! Saint Nicholas has been very good to us. He must like our work! I am very pleased with myself and my success!

SLINK the CAT

As long as you do not sell all the cream!

BOOMTY

Look at you! You are so lazy, you let the mice nibble the cookies.

SLINK

I am a cat. I purr. *(Purrs.)* I stretch. *(Does an enormous stretch).* And I sleep. *(Falls down, asleep.)*

BOOMTY

Get up! You lazy, lazy cat. We must bake the heaviest and richest cakes in New Amsterdam! The most buttery cookies! Bread that floats on the air! Ah, good evening!
(OLD WOMAN enters, hobbling on a cane.)
How may I help you?

OLD WOMAN

It is Christmas Eve. I am old and I am poor. But I want cookies for my supper. A baker's dozen. *(Sees SLINK, and prods him with her cane.)* What a lazy cat! *(SLINK bats away the cane, and rolls over, and snores.)*

BOOMTY

Certainly, madam. We have the finest cookies in the city. *(Counts out cookies into a sack.)* One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven...and twelve! There you are.

OLD WOMAN

I said a baker's dozen. You gave me twelve.

BOOMTY

Yes, madam. Yes, indeed. *(Counts out cookies into a sack.)* One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven...and twelve! There you are.

OLD WOMAN

(Shouting.) A baker's dozen. That's thirteen cookies, not twelve!

BOOMTY

Madam, a dozen is a dozen. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven...and twelve!

OLD WOMAN

I want thirteen! That's a baker's dozen! I am poor, and old! In my country, we give thirteen to the dozen! We do not argue about cost! We are generous!!

BOOMTY

You are loud! You have asked for a dozen cookies. I have counted out twelve cookies. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven... twelve. If you want more, you may go somewhere else for them! *(SLINK sits up, and then comes to watch the argument.)*

OLD WOMAN

I want thirteen cookies!

BOOMTY

I don't care!

OLD WOMAN

I am old and cold and hungry. It is Christmas Eve!

BOOMTY

Don't shout. *(OLD WOMAN beats him with her cane.)* Stop that! Stop that!

OLD WOMAN

A baker's dozen!

BOOMTY

Just take your twelve cookies – one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve – not a crumb more, not a crumb less.

OLD WOMAN

Where can I go?

BOOMTY

You can go to the devil for all I care! Now, leave! *(Lights dim and come up.)*

OLD WOMAN

Well, well, my good man. If that is what you want. *(Counts out three silver coins and takes sack.)*
You are a selfish man. And that those coins will never do you any good. *(Exits; lights dim for a second and come up.)*

SLINK

Uh, oh.

BOOMTY

What do you mean?

SLINK

I think she was angry.

BOOMTY

I am angry. Why should she be angry? I gave her what she asked for. Not a crumb more, not a crumb less. I give money to the church. I pay my taxes. I buy you cream! Why should I give to every poor person who walks in the door? Come, we go to sleep. It is Christmas Eve, and we have a busy day tomorrow. We will have many customers and much silver to count!

SLINK

(Crashing sound from next room.)
What was that? Go look!

BOOMTY

You are the cat. You look!

SLINK

(Tiptoes to side and looks offstage.) Oh, oh, oh! Oh, oh, ohhhhh....

BOOMTY

What is it? Robbers? Thieves! Scoundrels!

SLINK

Mice!!! The biggest mice you ever saw!! They are taking all your butter!

BOOMTY

Well, go get them!

SLINK

Not for all the cream in the world!!! There, they have gone! But look... *(Exits, and returns with a mousetrap and a sign that says, "We'll be back!")* Oh, this is not good!

BOOMTY

I will give you a stick and you can beat them when they return.

SLINK

You can beat them yourself! They have big teeth! And there were three of them!!

BOOMTY

The butter is all gone! How are we going to make the most buttery cookies! For Christmas! Oh, woe, and bad weather!

SLINK

(Crashing sound. SLINK jumps into BOOMTY's arms.) The mice!!! They are back!

BOOMTY

(Runs and looks offstage.) No, it's not mice. The table has broken! *(Exits, and returns with brick wrapped like a cake.)* My bread! The lightest bread in New Amsterdam. Look! *(Drops the brick.)* It's terrible. It's supposed to float, it is so light! *(Drops brick again!)* Stand back! The floor is giving way!

SLINK

You could sell them for doorstops! Or bookends!

BOOMTY

No.

SLINK

We could drop them on the mice!

BOOMTY

NO! Oh, what are we to do!! We have customers in the morning, and I promised them cookies and cakes and we will be ruined! They will all go to Drosselmeyer, that terrible baker. And he will be more famous than I! Oh, my, oh, woe.

(They look up to see a white balloon floating in from offstage. It has "Very Heavy Pound Cake" written on it.)

What? My cakes!! My pound cakes! They shouldn't float!!! *(SLINK starts to bat and chase the balloons happily.)* Stop that. Oh, what will we do?? Ouch! *(Jumps.)* Ouch, ouch, ouch! *(Rubbing his backside.)* Stop that.

SLINK

Stop what?

BOOMTY

Stop pinching and scratching me! Oh, ouch, ouch, ouch! *(BOOMTY is pinched and pulled by invisible hands. He dances around the stage, as he is attacked.)*

SLINK

I know. Ask Saint Nicholas for help. He watches over sailors, children, and bakers. St. Nicholas! St. Nicholas! Help!!! Help!!!

BOOMTY

He will not listen to us. Ah, Slink. We are doomed. Saint Nicholas is angry with me. I have been filled with pride. I have been selfish. I have been.... (*OLD WOMAN enters.*) You! Back for more cookies.

OLD WOMAN

You called for Saint Nicholas. He is busy tonight. He has toys to deliver. He will not help you. But I want my cookies. A baker's dozen.

BOOMTY

Here. Take them. Take what I have left. Take it all. I should have given them to you before. You are poor. And it is Christmas. Forgive me.

Here: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve....

SLINK

and thirteen!

OLD WOMAN

The spell is broken!

(Lights go up and down. The OLD WOMAN removes her hat and cloak, and stands up straight and puts on a bishop's cap. She is really SAINT NICHOLAS in disguise.)

SAINT NICHOLAS

Baker Boomty, you have shown yourself to be a good man with a good cat. (*Slink preens.*) But you must always remember to give to others less fortunate than yourself, no matter who they appear to be. From now on, your cookies will be buttery, your bread light and your cakes heavy and rich. And when someone asks for twelve, you will give thirteen.

BOOMTY

I will, good Saint. A baker's dozen will always be...(*Counts with audience.*) One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve....THIRTEEN!

(If possible, lights out, and then bows. If no special lighting is available, music up, cast dances, and bows offstage.)

THE END