

The Baker's Dozen

by Stephen Fellowes

Cast: (in order of appearance)

Narrator	-
Gossip 1	-
Tom, the baker	-
Gossip 2	-
St. Nicholas	-
Gossip 3	-

Direction

Act I, Scene I – The Baker's Shop

The stage is empty as the NARRATOR enters STAGE LEFT.

Narrator:

From CENTRE STAGE

Once again we meet today,
to share with you our little play.
A tale of avarice and greed
that turns into a kindly deed.

TOM enters STAGE RIGHT and starts to set up his shop

In a village, far away
There was a little shop so neat,
Where a baker worked all day
To serve the folks, and make ends meet.

Tom was a decent sort of chap
But very careful with his store.
You got precisely what you asked
Nothing less, and nothing more.

EXIT to PULPIT

Gossip 1:

GOSSIP 1 enters STAGE RIGHT

A dozen rolls, if you please.

Aside

I hope they're fresh enough to freeze?

Tom:

A dozen rolls? Sure straight away.
Anything else for you today?

GOSSIP 1 shakes head

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
Eight, nine, ten, this one's eleven
I have some more up on the shelves,
There you go, now that makes twelve.

Gossip 1:

Thank you Tom
What do I owe?

Tom:

Just two shillings,

Gets Change

There you go

I love December,
with winter breaking
A lot more customers
And a lot more takings.

Rubbing hands
together

Narrator:

As up to the 6th days swiftly sped
Tom turned to making gingerbread.
Topped with icing, smooth as glass
In the shape of old St. Nicholas.

Tom:

The best gingerbread I've ever done
Crunchy, tasty, every one
Three pence each will be the price -

Pausing

Now, a flood of buyers would be nice.

Gossip 2:

A dozen 'Nicks',
That's just the job
Three pence each?
Then that's three bob.

TOM takes the
money and waves
goodbye as Gossip 2
exits STAGE RIGHT.

Narrator:

At Tom's bakery
Business was booming
Until one day -
When trouble came looming

An old man in a long grey cloak enters the shop. He looks
around the produce and then sees the gingerbread.

St. Nicholas:

I see you have my favourite.
St. Nicholas decorated gingerbread.
I think that 6 would be just right.
Wait, I'll take a dozen 'Nicks instead.

Tom:

A dozen 'Nicks'? Sure, straight away.
Anything else for you today?

ST. NICHOLAS
shakes his head

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
Eight, nine, ten, this one's eleven
I have some more up on the shelves,
There you go, now that makes twelve.

St. Nicholas:

Have you got a carrier bag for me?

Tom:

If you want a bag, it'll be 5p

St. Nicholas:

I say, my man, you've served me short.
There's not the dozen that I bought
There's only twelve, just wait, I'll look
There should be thirteen by my book.

ST. NICHOLAS
looks into the bag

Tom:

Twelve IS a dozen you daft old brush
Now on your way, I'm in a rush

St. Nicholas:

Well, in that case you can keep the 'breads
feed them to the birds instead!

ST. NICHOLAS puts
the bag back on the
counter and storms
out STAGE RIGHT

Scene II – In the Street

Narrator:

Day after Day the old man came
Each time the outcome was the same.
News of the man began to spread,
And through the town the gossip sped.

NARRATOR comes
down to mingle with
the crowd

Gossip 1:

Did you hear the news from yesterday?
Tom's short-changing customers, they say.
Fiddling folk both left and right,
I heard it just the other night.

GOSSIP 1 beckons to
GOSSIP 2

Gossip 2:

Short changing customers? Old Tom?
Are you sure you haven't got that wrong?

All on stage gasp

Gossip 1:

Jane overheard it in the street
And you know that she would never lie.
She only mentioned it to Liz
Just as she was passing by.

Well, Liz told Ann and she told Kate
And Kate told Doreen at her garden gate.
Doreen told Beth and Beth told me
So it's clearly true as you can see.

Gossip 3:

She's right you know
I heard it too.
The question is
What shall we do?

GOSSIP 3 overhears
and joins in

Gossip 2:

Well, it's no more bread for me from Tom.
I'm off to Lidl from now on!

With hands on waist
in defiance

GOSSIP 1 & 2 EXIT
STAGE RIGHT.

Narrator:

Word spread like a forest fire.
Poor Tom, his business now was dire.

NARRATOR back to
PULPIT

Scene III – In the Baker's Shop

Tom:

I don't understand it
What's gone wrong?
Not a single customer
All day long.

I might as well give up the fight.
Shut up shop, get an early night.

TOM enters STAGE
RIGHT

Narrator:

Tom went to his room above the shop
And in his favourite chair did flop.
Soon he fell right off to sleep
Not even time for counting sheep!

TOM slumps into a
chair and goes to
sleep

A strange dream came into his head
With the weird old man, all dressed in red.

St. Nicholas:

I learn't a long long time ago
That wealth was not the only show.
To a simpler life, I raise a toast
And give to those who need it most.

Here's a gift for you, and you
There are a lot, I'll be bound
But never fear my dearest friends
For I have plenty to go 'round.

And Tom, now what shall I give him?
I know, I have here just the thing!

ST. NICHOLAS
enters STAGE
RIGHT

Handing out the gifts
to people in the
church

Tom:

A gift? For me?
Why that's very fine.

Why, a gingerbread!
Like one of mine

TOM unwraps the
paper

Narrator:

It was all too soon that dawn did break
And Tom was suddenly awake.

TOM wakes and
stretches

Tom: I'll make some special cakes today
Go out and give them all away!

Tom goes DOWN STAGE to meet people in the street.
The 3 Gossips enter STAGE RIGHT

Tom: Have a gingerbread St. Nick
They're free today, so take one quick.

To GOSSIP 2

Gossip 2: You don't usually give your wares away
Without the need for folks to pay.

Gossip 3: I'll have one too
If I may?

Gossip 1: Are you quite sure
You're well today?

Narrator: When Tom went back into his shop
There was a sight to make him stop
For there was the old man, drab and grey.

TOM goes back
UPSTAGE to shop

Tom: I'm happy that you came my way

TOM shakes the hand
of ST. NICHOLAS

St. Nicholas: I'm not too late to buy a few.
I hope what people said was true

Aside

I'll have a dozen if I may
Well, I guess that's twelve, or so they say.

To TOM

Tom: It WAS twelve, but those days are gone.
It's always *thirteen* from now on!

St. Nicholas: I'm pleased to see your change of heart.
Look forward to a brand new start,
For my work here is at an end.
A merry Christmas to you, friend.

ST. NICHOLAS
starts to smile

Narrator: And as the old man turned to go
A flash of brilliant red did show.

ST. NICHOLAS flips
back his grey cape as
he turns to go. EXIT
STAGE LEFT.

People flocked to the baker's door
And Tom had customers galore.

The 3 GOSSIPS
noisily enter.

The NARRATOR
comes to CENTRE
DOWN STAGE

Narrator: So be gracious to everyone you see
Gossip 1: And always go that extra mile
Gossip 2: For you never know whom they may be
Gossip 3: And it cost nothing to raise a friendly smile.

Tom: And not just at Christmas, can you give good cheer
St. Nicholas: But every day throughout the year.

ALL: Merry Christmas

CURTAIN CALL

Fine

ALL: St. Nicholas and rest of cast hand out the gift bags as the music plays.