

The Secret Ingredient is Love
by David Bander

SCENE 1

Lights up. Early 2000s. There is a kitchen set R, the front door UR, a dining table C, stairs leading UL, and a door to the garage L. Mommo is pulling brownies out of the oven.

MOMMO

Dayvid? Where's Dayvid?

Mary Sue enters from the stairs.

MARY SUE

Mom, I don't know. I'm not David.

MOMMO

I know you're not Dayvid. Dayvid!

David enters from the stairs.

DAVID

What is it Mommo?

MOMMO

Come try some of my brownies, sugar.

Derek enters through the front door. Almost reminiscent of Kramer from Seinfeld.

DAVID

Hey.

DEREK

Sup.

MOMMO

Hi, Darryl!

DAVID

It's Derek, Mommo...

MOMMO

Dayvid, you and Darryl come try some of my brownies.

DAVID

Are they magic brownies, Mommo?

MOMMO

Honey, ALL my brownies are magic.

David and Derek snicker.

MARY SUE

Mom, I'll help you clean up.

DAVID

How's it goin', man?

DEREK

Eh, not too bad, can't complain. You?

DAVID

Well, we had a vocab quiz in English but Ms. Thompson left the room for half the period so we all just copied from each other and the key that was conveniently left on her desk. She really is a boob.

Pause.

DAVID

Did you hear about when she went to Italy last year with the Lit Club?

DEREK

...No...

DAVID

On the way back, they flew through Toronto. The kids got home fine but she got detained. I think she had SARS.

DEREK

Fuck, dude. Fuck.

MARY SUE

Derek!

DEREK

Sorry, Mary.

Pause. Mommo giggles. They all look at Mommo.

MOMMO

What?

Liz enters from the front door, wearing a puffy vest with some sort of fake fur around the collar and arm holes.

DEREK

(Flirting, accentuating
the 'L' sound)

Hey, Liz.

LIZ

Fuck you.
(Laughs)

MARY SUE

Liz!

LIZ

Sorry, mom.

The sound of a garage door opening, a car driving in, and the garage door closing is heard off stage left. Jeff opens the door to the garage and comes in. He is an older, classier, and slightly more bald version of David.

JEFF

Hey kids! Hey Mom!

Jeff and Mary Sue kiss.

JEFF

Hi Mommo!

MOMMO

Well, when did you get home?

JEFF

Hi Derek.

DAVID

Dad, can Derek have dinner with us?

JEFF

(Thinks for a VERY brief
moment)

No.

Jeff exits upstairs.

DAVID
Mom, can Derek have dinner with us?

MARY SUE
Ask your father.

David sighs.

DEREK
It's alright, I think we're having
hamburgers anyway. I'll call you
after dinner.

DAVID
Peace.

Derek exits through the front door.

MARY SUE
Ok, everyone wash up.
(shouts upstairs)
Jeff, dinner's ready!

Jeff reenters without his tie and jacket.

JEFF
Mmmm, smells great. What are we
having?

MARY SUE
Mommo made fried chicken, and we have
green beans and mashed potatoes.

LIZ
Mommo, does everyone from the South
love fri' chick'n?

DAVID
Ya know Mommo, this is kind of a
(whispered)
black
(normal)
dinner.

MARY SUE

David!

DAVID

Just 'cuz it's racist doesn't mean it
isn't true!

MOMMO

Well, I think mah fam'ly got it from
the negroes.

(laughs)

DAVID

(laughing)

Mommo!

LIZ

(laughing)

Oh my gosh!

MARY SUE

(trying not to laugh)

Mom!

All breathe and resume eating.

LIZ

So my friend Alice has gotten really
into her biology class and they were
talking about animal behavior and she
said that to show dominance, males
will bear their teeth at each other
and now she does it all the time and
it is so funny.

David bears his teeth at Liz, who bears her teeth back at David.
Both laugh and resume eating.

MARY SUE

How was work today hon?

JEFF

Well... the market was down.

DAVID

Bummer.

JEFF

Actually this is something that I need to bring up. The past year and a half the market has been slipping a little bit, and unfortunately we're going to have to make some cutbacks at home.

LIZ

No! Does this mean I won't be able to get a car?

JEFF

Liz, this isn't a laughing matter. Unfortunately, this means your mom and I will only be able to afford to send one of you to college.

David and Liz's eyes grow large. They bear their teeth at each other as the lights fade.

SCENE 2

Lights up on the living room, L. There is a couch and a chair. David sits in the chair. Liz sits with her feet up on the couch closest to David. Mommo sits on the other side of the couch. We hear the middle of an episode of Planet Earth, something about oceans. This goes on for 30 seconds with the actors just listening.

LIZ

David, how many things do you think are in the ocean?

DAVID

I don't know. Sand. Fish.

LIZ

Sharks.

DAVID

Seaweed.

LIZ

The Titanic wreckage.

DAVID
How many is that? Five?

LIZ
Crabs.

DAVID
Wait, are we talking about things on
your body?

LIZ
Fuck you.

MARY SUE
(offstage)
Liz!

LIZ
(shouting)
Sorry, Mom!

DAVID
Starfish.

LIZ
Lobster.

DAVID
Octopuses. So that makes... nine. I
would say with good confidence there
are nine things in the ocean.

Pause while they watch.

DAVID
How many colors do you think there
are? The obvious ones are black and
white.

LIZ
Purple.

DAVID
Green. Blue.

MOMMO
Brown like a Mexican.
(laughs)

DAVID
Mommo! Ooh! Orange!

LIZ
Red like a Navajo!
(laughs)

MOMMO
(laughs)

DAVID
Pink? Uhhhh..... ok. Nine. I have
just concluded using science that
there are as many colors as there are
things in the ocean.

The TV starts making empty static noise. David sighs and changes
the channel. We hear static.

DAVID
Flip That House or local news?

LIZ
Flip That House. Def.

David changes the channel. We hear the same static noise. He
mutters something incoherent under his breath and starts
flipping channels. On each, we hear the static.

DAVID
Well damn. Damn damn damn.

He continues changing channels until we hear the middle of the
local news.

DAVID
Aw man. We is poor. Cable got cut off.

Audio cuts to commercial break. Derek enters and sits between
Liz and Mommo, forcing Liz to move her legs. Mommo doesn't seem
to notice he has entered.

DAVID
Sup nigga?

DEREK
Holla.

MOMMO

Well! Darren! When did you get here?

DEREK

Derek, Mommo.

MOMMO

(laughs)

DEREK

Oh hey. Shhhhh... I love this segment.

TV VOICEOVER

...we take the eggs, beat them until they are nice and frothy. Add sugar, nutmeg, vanilla, and continue beating. Slowly add in the whipping cream and milk. Finally add the rum and brandy and... mmm... make sure you keep it in the fridge to keep it nice and cool. Also, don't forget, if you want to register for the 17th annual KOMO TV-4 Bake Off for a \$15,000 College Scholarship get online at komotv.com.

David turns the TV off and looks excitedly to Liz.

DAVID

Did you hear that?

LIZ

Yeah, we could make a bitchin' eggnog.

DAVID

No dipshit, the Bake Off. That's how you can go to college!

LIZ

We can't do that. Neither of us can bake and we would need another person on our team.

Both look at Mommo, who has fallen asleep. David sighs.

DEREK

Ummm dude. Hello? I'm totally money.

DAVID

Arrright... but we still need a recipe.

MOMMO

(in her sleep)

All my brownies are magic!

SCENE 3

This scene is set in on the apron, in front of the main curtains. There are two tables, each a little off center. On the stage left table we have an empty mixing bowl, knives, beaters, a carton of eggs, bags of flower, chocolate, sugar, etc. There is an 'oven' underneath the table. The stage right table has no back so the other side of the table can be seen. Derek, David, and Liz stand at the right table, wearing T-shirts that say "Mommo's Disciples" and plain white aprons. David holds a half sheet of paper with the recipe on it.

TV VOICEOVER

Our final team, is lead by David Bander. His teammates are his sister, Liz and best friend Derek. They call themselves Mommo's Disciples and will be baking "Mommomo's Magic Brownies." Alright, let's put 60 minutes on the clock. And... go!

DAVID

Liz, it says here to finely chop the chocolate chips.

(Liz goes to grab the bag of chocolate chips)

Derek, you work on the brownie itself. I'll work on the frosting.

By this time, Liz is back with the bag of chocolate chips and is having trouble opening them. David sees that she is having trouble opening the package and tries to grab them from her hands. They both end up grabbing one edge of the bag and splitting it in half, sending chocolate chips everywhere. Derek, David and Liz all look in disbelief at the chocolate chips.

LIZ

Fuck!

MARY SUE

(in the audience)

Elizabeth Nicole Bander! You are on
LIVE TV!

LIZ

Sorry Mom. Sorry Live TV.

Derek, David and Liz all drop to their hands and knees and begin picking up chocolate chips. While kneeling down, David and Liz bump heads. David curses under his breath. Derek collects about half of them and puts the other half in his mouth. Liz puts them all in her mouth. After the collection, the trio stands up. David has two handfuls of chocolate chips, Derek has one and a full mouth, and Liz has collected no chips but her mouth is bursting at the seams.

DAVID

Guys! 'the heck?

LIZ

(with her mouth full
still, spitting out
chocolate chips as she
speaks)

They were on the floor! We can't use
them!

DAVID

Well not now, you boob!

While David is busy yelling at Liz, Derek spits the chocolate chips into his hands, now having two handfuls of chocolate chips. They all place their chocolate chips on the table in front of Liz to cut. During the following, Liz is trying to chop chocolate chips, most of them are being chopped in half and flying in opposite directions. Derek gets the necessary ingredients gathered in front of him. He pours the flour and sugar with no problem. The eggs will not crack for him. He ends up smashing the eggs in his fist and letting the egg goop drip from his hands into the bowl. David begins preparing his frosting.

DEREK

This recipe calls for two tablespoons
of vanilla.

DAVID
Ok, then do it.

DEREK
We only have a teaspoon.

DAVID
Hmmm.. I think there are 4 teaspoons
in a tablespoon.

DEREK
Ok, eight teaspoons? Sounds good.

DAVID
Hey, I need one cup of butter. But I
have this quart of buttery flavored
spray. Think it's the same?

DEREK
Yeah but there are two cups in a quart
so only use half of it.

DAVID
Sounds good to me.

MARY SUE
(in the audience)
Oh, Jesus Christ...

LIZ
Mom!

MARY SUE
Well, this will be interesting.

DEREK
Liz. What're you doing?

LIZ
I'm chopping chips. Poorly.

Derek reaches in his back pocket and pulls out a Magic Bullet.

DEREK
Good thing I always keep this on me.

Derek hands the Magic Bullet to Liz. Both Liz and David look at him in awe.

DAVID
You keep a Magic Bullet in your
pocket?

LIZ
(simultaneously)
You didn't give me this to begin with?

DEREK
(shrugs)
Whatever.

TV VOICEOVER
Let's join David and his team. How's
everything going David?

DAVID
Oh ya know how these things go... we'll
see.

TV VOICEOVER
Haha. Well we'll take a short break
and see you back for the results.

Liz takes all the remaining chocolate chips and Bullets them. She takes the result and pours them half into Derek's bowl and half into David's. Derek grabs the handheld mixer from the table and mixes the batter. After it is mixed, he 'pours' the extremely thick batter in a 9x12 pan. It ends up looking like a light brown mountain, not spreading in the pan at all. He places the mound in the oven. David takes the mixer and mixes the frosting. When he is finished he lifts the mixer out of the bowl and sprays the trio with frosting. He turns the mixer off and the other two look less than pleased at him.

DAVID
Sorry.

Lights change as the trio walk to stage right, where Mommo and Mary Sue have entered, each wearing Mommo's Disciples t-shirts.

MOMMO
Donatello! Are you kids having fun?

DEREK

Its Derek, Mommo.

(Mommo laughs)

And yes... I don't know how well it is turning out though.

DAVID

Mommo, no matter how well we do, they will NEVER compare to yours though.

MARY SUE

I'm sure they'll turn out... fine. As long as you are having fun that's all that matters.

LIZ

It should be done by now. Let's get it out.

The trio leave the adult women and cross back to the set. Mary Sue and Mommo remain on stage in their own little light. Liz pulls out the finished brownie. It is still a mountain, but a little overcooked.

DAVID

Time to frost it.

David pours the frosting, which has the consistency of brown water over the top of the mountain.

DAVID

I dunno. It doesn't look right.

TV VOICEOVER

Alright contestants, time is up. Our tasting judge will be around to each table shortly. Remember, this is for the big \$15,000 college scholarship.

Jeff enters smiling left, wiping his face with a napkin.

JEFF

Well hey kiddos! I didn't expect to see you here!

DAVID

Dad? What are you doing here?

JEFF

I volunteer at this event every year as the tasting judge. Hey, did you kids know that the winner gets a \$15,000 college scholarship?

LIZ

(in mock amazement)

No shit. Really? We should enter!

JEFF

Well, let's see how this is.

Jeff puts his fork in the brownie mountain but cannot get it back out. He grabs a serrated knife from his belt of trickery and cuts off the peak of the mountain. He puts it in his mouth as the trio eagerly await. Jeff refrains from throwing up.

JEFF

(with a full mouth)

It's so... good. Mmmmm... Yummy...

Jeff exits stage left. We hear vomiting that goes on for comically too long. Jeff re-enters and crosses to the kids.

JEFF

That was something! I think that MAY have been the best thing I've had all night.

(Jeff smiles weakly. He grabs his stomach queasily)

TV VOICEOVER

Judge, have you made your decision?

JEFF

Sure have. MMMmmMMMmmMMM. There were a lot of good entries this year, but I think I'm going to have to give it to... Mommo's Disciples!

The trio screams in excitement. David steps forward and looks at Jeff. Jeff winks at David as they share a father-son moment. Mommo crosses to the table. She grabs a small bite of the brownie.

MOMMO

Well, this ain't half bad!

(laughs as the lights fade)

THE END