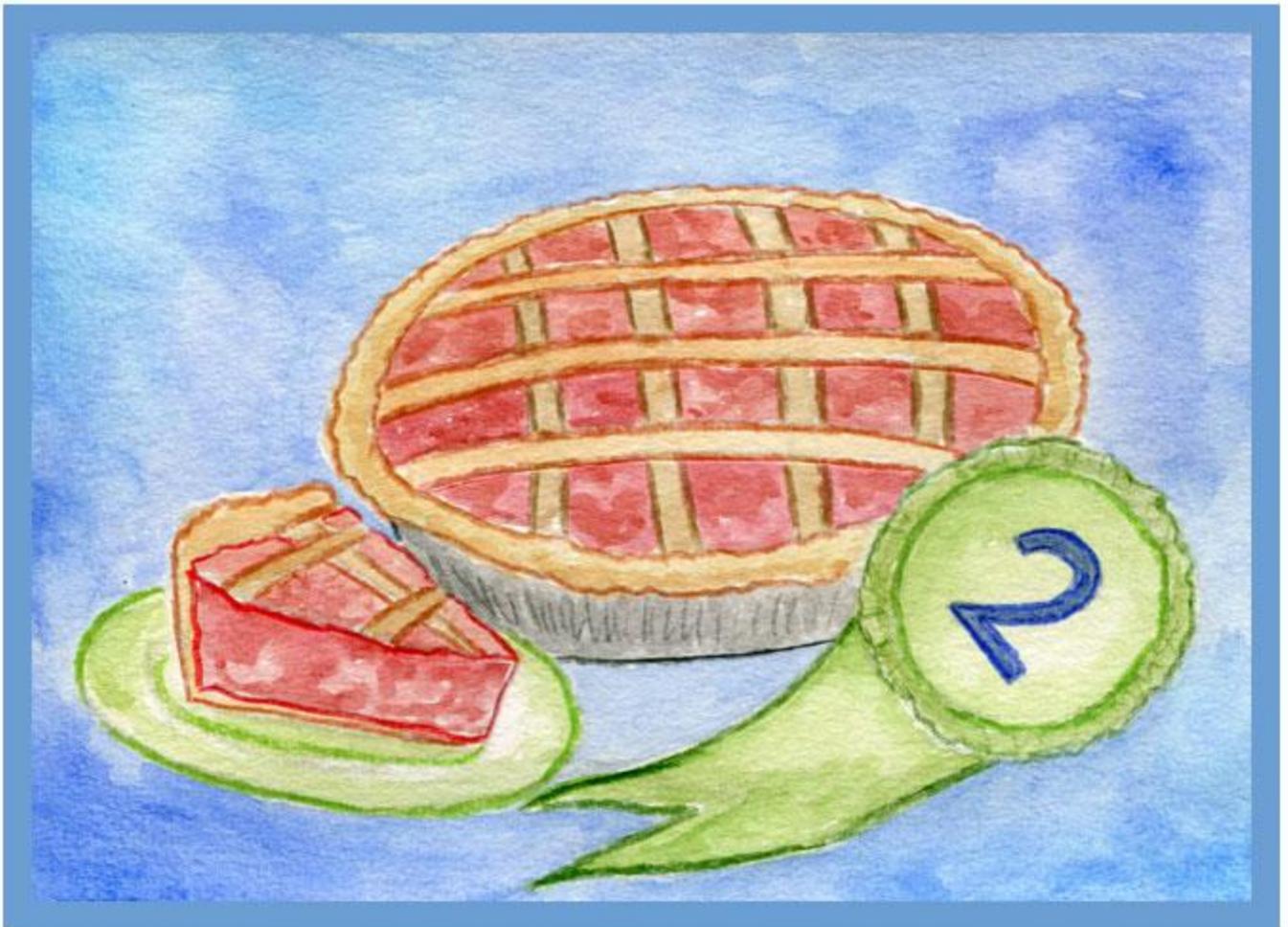


A QUESTION OF PIE



BY ALEXI ALFIERI

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THE SECOND PIE PALOOZA WESTERN
MELODRAMA IN THE TRILOGY
WRITTEN BY ALEXI ALFIERI

CAST

LARGE ROLES

NARRATOR (M/F)	<i>Clever friend to the audience</i>
BESTA PIE (F)	<i>Oldest and grumpiest Pie sister</i>
LOTTA PIE (F)	<i>Middle and sassiest Pie sister</i>
HONEY PIE (F)	<i>Youngest and sweetest Pie sister</i>
SHERIFF ROLLAND DOUGH (M)	<i>Head judge of the Pie Palooza and lovesick for Honey Pie</i>

MEDIUM ROLES

STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB (F)	<i>Bossy President of the Pie Angel Society</i>
MINCEMEAT (M)	<i>Head honcho villain</i>
CRUSTY (M/F)	<i>Enthusiastic and hapless sidekick villain</i>
SWEETIE PIE (F)	<i>Sly Texas cousin to the Pie sisters</i>

SMALL ROLES

PEACH (F)	<i>Sassy member of the Pie Angel Society</i>
CHERRY (F)	<i>Thoughtful member of the Pie Angel Society</i>
CHEESE (M/F)	<i>Melancholy member of the Pie Angel Society</i>

SYNOPSIS

A Question of Pie is an old-fashioned western melodrama which continues the story of the three Pie Sisters and their town's annual pie contest, the Pie Palooza. Besta Pie, Lotta Pie, and Honey Pie are anticipating the event with high enthusiasm this year. However, a cagey new competitor has come to town who happens to be their rather unwelcome cousin: Sweetie Pie. Sheriff Rolland Dough is still quite smitten with Honey Pie but plans to perform his duties as head judge of the Pie Palooza to the best of his ability. The villains (Mincemeat and Crusty) are up to their old, sly tricks in their attempt to win the contest, and the Pie Angels (Strawberry-Rhubarb, Peach, Cherry, and Cheese) try to unravel all the trouble. As the Narrator keeps things rolling, rumors begin to fly, arguments are sparked, and questions arise about that deeply controversial topic: pie crust.

SETTING

An ordinary small town in the wild, wild west

CAST

12 performers, but flexible (see Production Notes)
7 Females, 2 Male, and 3 Female or Male

PLAYING TIME

Approximately 30 minutes without an intermission

Scene 1

NARRATOR, BESTA PIE, LOTTA PIE, AND HONEY PIE

(Narrator enters stage right)

NARRATOR: Well, folks, it's that time of year again in this here ordinary town made up of ordinary people doin' ordinary things. It's time for the annual Pie Palooza!

APPLAUSE sign

NARRATOR: That's right. And if you don't know much about the Pie Palooza, then I'll just begin by introducin' ya to three of the most important characters in this here play, the Pie Sisters. Here they are now: Besta Pie, Lotta Pie, and Honey Pie.

(All three Pie sisters enter stage left, sit on the bench center stage, and begin knitting.)

NARRATOR: Believe it or not, 'til a year ago, the oldest one, Besta, had won the Palooza with her pie for sixty years runnin! *(Turning to Besta)* Besta, introduce yo'self to our lovely audience.

BESTA: *(Looks up and salutes with her knitting needle)* Howdy!

NARRATOR: I should mention that Besta confessed her winnin' streak wasn't without a little help from their mama, who was head judge all those years 'til she passed on to that big kitchen in the sky.

PIE SISTERS: *(Hands in prayer and eyes rolled upward)* Rest in peace, mama!

LOTTA: *(Defensively)* Now, Narrator, why'd ya have to go and tell them that? Besta's pickle pie was still a champion creation, with or without the blue ribbons! Everyone knew that!

NARRATOR: *(To the audience)* That's Lotta Pie. She's nothin' but loyal when it comes to either of her sisters.

LOTTA: *(Calms down)* Well, ya got that right.

NARRATOR: So last year Besta retired from the competition, Sheriff Rolland Dough was the new head judge, and lo and behold, the youngest Pie sister, Honey Pie, won the contest with her extra-ordinary pie. *(Gestures to Honey Pie on the bench)* Give 'em a little wave, Honey. *(Honey gives a shy wave.)* So you might say that winnin' the Pie Palooza runs in the family! And speakin'

of family (*pauses to look over at the Pie Sisters and then speaks in a sing-song stage whisper*) it looks like there's a surprise in store for our dear ol' Pie Sisters this year...

(Besta and Lotta look at each other and then at the Narrator, who exits stage right, whistling.)

BESTA: Lotta, do you know what that Narrator is talkin' about?

LOTTA: Nope. I didn't hear tell of no surprise, Besta.

HONEY: I might know the surprise.

BESTA: What do you know, Honey?

HONEY: That we're expectin' a visitor.

LOTTA: Who's that?

HONEY: Sweetie Pie.

BESTA and LOTTA: *(Surprised)* Sweetie Pie?!

HONEY: That's right. She's arrivin' sometime this evenin'.

BESTA: Sweetie Pie, our third-cousin-through-marriage-twice-removed, is comin' tonight!?

HONEY: That's right.

LOTTA: Well, if that don't beat all. I wonder what brings her to town.

BESTA: *(Grimly)* Oh, I have an inklin'.

LOTTA: What?

BESTA: The Pie Palooza, Lotta. Sweetie Pie's been jealous of me and my winnin' streak for sixty years. I bet she heard I'm not competin' any more, and not knowin' that Honey here is some equally fierce competition, she thinks she can win the Grand Champion ribbon!

LOTTA: Well, she's one pie crust short of a pan if she thinks she can just show up and act like she owns everything.

BESTA: Well, she is from Texas.

LAUGH sign

HONEY: I don't think that's it at all.

BESTA: Oh, Honey, ya always think the best of folks, but I'm tellin' ya, if Sweetie Pie isn't after the Grand Champion ribbon of the Pie Palooza, I'll eat my bonnet!

LOTTA: Now, Besta, don't get your britches in a twist. After all, we both know Honey here has a bona fide prize-winnin' pie recipe. And besides that, the Sheriff is judgin' now, and everyone sittin' on this bench knows he's sweet as chocolate pie on a certain someone. *(Besta and Lotta smirk at Honey who squirms with embarrassment.)* He'll see to it that a Pie Sister wins...if he knows what's good for him, that is. *(Lotta gives a stab in the air with her knitting needle.)*

BESTA: Well, I hope you're right. But I tell ya, I just never liked Sweetie Pie. I don't trust her as far as I could throw her in a field of cow pies.

HONEY: Why not?

BESTA: I don't wanna say.

LOTTA: Besta.

BESTA: It's too awful for words.

HONEY: Tell us. Maybe you're making more out of somethin' than you should.

BESTA: *(Excited and riled up.)* Oh no. What I know for sure about Sweetie Pie strikes at the very heart of what's important to us as Pie Sisters...as a town...as a whole darn nation!

LOTTA and HONEY: *(Slightly shocked)* What's that?

BESTA: *(Leans in)* I've heard... *(glances around)*...and I'm not sayin' from who or when or how...

LOTTA: *(Impatiently)* Besta.

BESTA: I heard that for her pies, Sweetie Pie uses... *(Pauses dramatically and glances around.)*

LOTTA and HONEY: Ya?

BESTA: *(Quick and firm)* A store-bought crust.

(Lotta and Honey both gasp while Besta nods knowingly.)

GASP sign

LOTTA: *(Disgusted)* No!

HONEY: *(Skeptical)* Oh, I don't believe that for one minute!

BESTA: It's true. If it's not, I'll eat my stockin's.

LOTTA: But everyone knows to make a truly good pie, ya make your own crust from scratch!

BESTA: Well, ya know that because our Mama taught us right.

PIE SISTERS: *(Hands in prayer and eyes rolled upward.)* Rest in peace, mama!

HONEY: Besta, how do you know this for sure?

BESTA: Honey, if you can't trust an honest-to-goodness rumor, what can you trust?

LOTTA: Well, I can spot a phony crust from a mile away. If Sweetie Pie shows up with one of those, I'm tellin' the sheriff. He can put her in the clink for that kind of crime.

HONEY: Maybe Sheriff Rolland isn't gonna care. As the head judge, he's probably just concerned about how the pie tastes.

BESTA: Well, what is the world of pie comin' to then? *(Stands up and addresses the audience.)* Doesn't pie crust from scratch count for anything anymore?!

LOTTA: *(Stands up in support of Besta)* Ya!

BESTA: *(Gets louder and more upset as she talks)* Why any yea-hoo can pick up a pre-made pie crust from the Piggly-Wiggly, dump in pudding from the box, and...and...

LOTTA: Spray it with whip cream from the can!

BESTA: *(With a dark look)* Oh, Lotta. Don't get me started on whip cream from the can!
(Stands up and begins to exit stage left with Lotta following.)

HONEY: *(Stands up and follows Besta and Lotta exiting stage left)* Now Besta, Lotta, I think you're makin' too much of this...

APPLAUSE sign

Scene 2

NARRATOR, MINCEMEAT, AND CRUSTY

(Narrator enters stage right.)

NARRATOR: Well, now. It looks like there's a real question of pie that's come up. But before you folks in the audience get into any fist fights over store-bought crust versus scratch, let's see what our villains are up to.

BOO and HISS signs

NARRATOR: That's right. Mincemeat's the head honcho, and he's usually got his two sidekicks with him, Crusty and Creamy. But unfortunately, Creamy's home with a belly-ache at the moment and can't show up for the play, so Crusty will have to pick up the slack. And Mincemeat's always up to something sneaky when it comes to winnin' the Pie Palooza. You'll see the two of them stroll onto stage in just a moment.

(Mincemeat and Crusty enter stage left, strolling confidently.)

MINCEMEAT: Alright, Crusty. I got a real good plan for the Pie Palooza this year.

CRUSTY: What's that, Mince?

MINCEMEAT: It's a sure winner.

CRUSTY: *(Rubs his hands together in excitement.)* Oh ya? Well c'mon, Mince, what is it?

MINCEMEAT: Well, that's just it. You tell me, Crusty.

HUH? sign

CRUSTY: *(Scratches head.)* Uh. I don't get it.

MINCEMEAT: Oh, you'll get it. That's the point.

HUH? sign

CRUSTY: Uh, Mince, I really dunno what you mean.

MINCEMEAT: What I mean is this year you're gonna be the one comin' up with ideas. You're the one that's gonna figure out how we're gonna win that pie contest and all the dough that comes with it. It's time I started delegatin' around here instead of doin' all the work.

CRUSTY: Aw, Mince, I dunno if it's such a good idea for me to be messin' around with fruits and fillin's. I've always been more of a "cupcake guy."

GROAN sign

MINCEMEAT: Well, put away your muffin tin, Crusty, 'cuz it's time to work on pie. I wanna see creativity and innovative thinkin' on your part. I wanna see ambition and an eye for successful marketing. I wanna see...

CRUSTY: Uh, Mince?

MINCEMEAT: Ya?

CRUSTY: Should I be takin' notes?

MINCEMEAT: Naw, you dummy. Just head down to the Piggly Wiggly and see what's on sale.

CRUSTY: *(Looks relieved)* Aw, that's easy! *(Looks suddenly inspired and takes off his hat and looks inside of it.)* And hey, I might just have some double-discount coupons in here!

MINCEMEAT: Great. And when you're done, report back here.

CRUSTY: Will do, Mince. Hey, this is gonna be fun!

MINCEMEAT: *(Warning tone)* Hey now. This ain't supposed to be fun. This is a hard job, Crusty—being the villains. Now hitch up your get-a-long and get to work!

(Crusty exits stage left.)

MINCEMEAT: *(Proudly and to the audience)* How's that for delegatin'?

(Mincemeat exits stage left.)

APPLAUSE sign

To Be Continued...this is a 10-page sample of the playscript