

IN A PICKLE AT THE PIE PALOOZA



BY ALEXI ALFIERI

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THE FIRST 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

MINCEMEAT (M)	<i>Head honcho villain</i>
CRUSTY (M/F)	<i>Enthusiastic and hapless sidekick villain</i>
CREAMY (M/F)	<i>Reluctant and hapless sidekick villain</i>
STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB (F)	<i>Bossy President of the Pie Angel Society</i>

SMALL ROLES

PEACH (F)	<i>Sassy member of the Pie Angel Society</i>
BLUEBERRY (F)	<i>Wistful member of the Pie Angel Society</i>
CHERRY (F)	<i>Thoughtful member of the Pie Angel Society</i>
APPLE (F)	<i>Friendly member of the Pie Angel Society</i>
CHEESE (M/F)	<i>Newest member of the Pie Angel Society</i>

SYNOPSIS

In a Pickle at the Pie Palooza is an old-fashioned western melodrama which tells the story of the three Pie Sisters and their town's annual pie contest, the Pie Palooza. Besta Pie has been mysteriously winning first prize for over sixty years and no one but her sisters, Lotta Pie and Honey Pie, seem to know the real secret to her success. This year, the town villains (Mincemeat, Crusty, and Creamy) are intent on stealing Besta's winning pie recipe and claiming the prize "dough" for themselves. Finding themselves in the middle of the conflict are the Pie Palooza's Head Judge (Sheriff Rolland Dough) and six all-knowing Pie Angels (Strawberry-Rhubarb, Peach, Blueberry, Cherry, Apple, and Cheese). Guided along by the clever Narrator, more than one character gets into a pickle during the play, but in the end, Besta's winning secret is revealed and the sweet taste of justice prevails.

SETTING

An ordinary small town in the wild, wild west

CAST

14 performers, but flexible (see Production Notes)
8 Females, 2 Male, and 4 Female or Male

PLAYING TIME

Approximately 30 minutes without an intermission

SCENE 1

NARRATOR, BESTA PIE, LOTTA PIE, HONEY PIE, and SHERIFF ROLLAND DOUGH

(Narrator enters stage right.)

NARRATOR: Once upon a time, in the wild, wild west, there was an ordinary town with ordinary citizens who did very ordinary things. They fed their chickens and rode their horses, they went to town meetin's and parades, they knitted and they pearled. But most of all, they looked forward to an extra special, extra tasty, extra-ordinary event called the Pie Palooza. Now the town and its citizens might've been ordinary, but the Pie Palooza was not. It was the one night out of 365 when great pie-makers from far and wide gathered together in the hopes that their pie would be chosen as the most extra-ordinary pie of the year. And let me tell ya, pie may seem like all fluff and cream to some of you folks, but those pie-makers took their work very seriously. They knew that every year they were up against some pretty stiff competition...especially when it came to the meringues. *(Slaps leg and laughs heartily at own joke and then looks at audience expectantly.)*

LAUGH sign

NARRATOR: Now speakin' of the ordinary citizens of this ordinary town, I should introduce ya to three of the sweetest lil' old ladies ya ever did care to meet: the Pie Sisters. On most days of the year, you'll find them sittin' together on a park bench, knittin' away.

(Besta Pie, Lotta Pie, and Honey Pie enter stage left, sit on bench placed center stage, and begin knitting without looking at the audience.)

NARRATOR: Well, there they are. *(Gestures to each Pie Sister in turn)* Besta Pie, Lotta Pie, and Honey Pie. *(Narrator begins to exit stage right, but then stops just before stepping off stage, and turns to audience.)* They'll begin their lines in just a moment. *(Narrator exits stage right.)*

APPLAUSE sign

BESTA: *(Stops knitting and nudges Lotta playfully in the arm)* Lotta, rumor has it Otis took ya out on a date last night.

LOTTA: *(Giggles)* Well, Besta, I guess rumor got that one right.

HONEY: If you don't mind me askin', where'd the two of ya go?

LOTTA: Well, Honey, I told Otis I wanted to go somewhere real 'xpensive.

HONEY AND LOTTA: *(Lean in expectantly)* And?

LOTTA: He took me to the gas station.

LAUGH sign

(Sheriff enters stage right and tacks up a large poster advertisement for the Pie Palooza Contest on one of the storefronts in the background. He stands back to admire it. Then he turns and walks over to the Pie Sisters.)

SHERIFF: Afternoon, Pie Sisters. *(Tips his hat to each in greeting)* Miss Besta, Miss Lotta, and...*(dropping voice low and saying extra sweetly)*...Miss Honey.

(Sheriff continues to gaze at Honey for a long moment as she looks up, blushes, and turns away. Besta and Lotta continue to knit, nudging each other and smirking.)

SHERIFF: *(Turns and speaks to audience)* Y'all should know that whenever I lay eyes on Miss Honey, it just brings a song straight to my heart. *(Croons in a high, lovesick voice)* "Cuz I only have pies for you..."

(Honey squirms in embarrassment. Besta and Lotta appear to be working hard at keeping straight faces.)

SIGH sign

BESTA: Afternoon to ya, Sheriff Rolland Dough. Rumor has it you've been selected as head judge for this year's Pie Palooza. *(Continues knitting but sneaks a few peeks at the Sheriff's face.)*

SHERIFF: Well, I guess rumor got that one right, Miss Besta.

LOTTA: I don't know why they even waste time judgin' the Pie Palooza every year. Everyone knows that Besta's secret recipe is unbeatable.

HONEY: Besta, tell the audience your story.

BESTA: *(Stands up from bench, walks toward the audience, and begins to speak slowly)* Well, four score and seven years ago...minus three...times two...divided by 4... *(Gets lost in figuring on her fingers.)*

GROAN sign

(Narrator enters stage right.)

NARRATOR: What Besta's tryin' to say is she was born seventy some years ago, at which time her mother decided she'd be the one to start the tradition of winnin' the Pie Palooza with the Pie Family's secret recipe. Therefore, she was blessed with the rather vain name of "Besta" so that history would look upon her favorably and prove her to be the "besta" pie maker in the entire country...or at least in three counties.

(Narrator exits stage right.)

BESTA: Well now, I couldn't have said it any better than that. *(Crosses back to bench and sits down.)*

LOTTA: *(Proudly)* That's right! Our Besta's been winnin' that Pie Palooza for sixty years runnin'!

HONEY: It just made our mama so proud!

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

BESTA: *(Stage whisper to the audience)* Well, I may have had a slight advantage, seein' as how Mama was the head judge for all those years.

SHERIFF: *(Clears throat nervously)* Uh, well now.... *(Pie Sisters look up at the sheriff as he begins to stutter.)* I should mention...now that your Mama's passed and all...well...what I'm trying to say is...well...things are bound to be different now! *(Smiles anxiously.)*

PIE SISTERS: Huh?

HUH? Sign

SHERIFF: Well, sixty years is an awful long time...

PIE SISTERS: Huh?

HUH? Sign

SHERIFF: It may just be time for a change is all...somethin' out of the ordinary.

(Besta and Lotta mumble to each other and shift uncomfortably on the bench. Honey continues to knit. Then Besta narrows her eyes in suspicion at the Sheriff.)

BESTA: *(Stands up from the bench)* Now, Sheriff, you're not sayin' what I think you're sayin'.

GASP sign

LOTTA: *(Stands up from the bench)* And I'm not hearin' what I think I'm hearin'...

GASP sign

SHERIFF: Now, now ladies. Keep your crust in your pie pan. I'm just sayin' that some people are doin' some grumblin' and think it may be time for another pie maker to take the honors.

(Besta and Lotta gasp together. Honey stays seated and quiet on the bench.)

GASP sign

SHERIFF: *(Backs up nervously as Besta and Lotta stare him down.)* Well, you know...maybe just for a year or two to keep the interest goin' with everyone.

HONEY: Well, I think the Sheriff's right. Without Mama, things are sure to be different.

(Besta and Lotta glare at the Sheriff while he smiles sheepishly.)

BESTA: Well, if that don't beat all. *(Puts hands on hips.)* Sheriff, here all this time I respected ya as the law of this town, and now I come to find out you're nothing but a real live anarchist! Someone who's got no respect for rules or tradition! Someone who'd like nothing better than to unleash chaos by changin' everything that's ordinary for complete unpredictability! Come on, girls! Our knittin' is done!

(Honey stands up as Besta and Lotta stomp out stage left.)

HONEY: *(Shyly)* Ya know, Sheriff. I've been tempted to enter my own special pie in the contest every year, but with Besta and her winnin' streak and all... *(trails off nervously)*

SHERIFF: Well now, Miss Honey, as the new head judge of the Pie Palooza, I can't tell ya what to do. *(Leans over to her with a loud stage whisper)* But if I could, I'd say get to bakin'!

(Honey smiles shyly and strolls out stage left.)

SHERIFF: *(To the audience)* Well, now this might get right interestin'... *(Exits stage right.)*

APPLAUSE sign

SCENE 2

NARRATOR, MINCEMEAT, CRUSTY, and CREAMY

(Narrator enters stage right.)

NARRATOR: Well, Sheriff Rolland Dough's right. This is gettin' interestin'. I never 'xpected Honey Pie to have a special pie recipe up her flowered sleeve all these years. Talk about a well-kept secret. Well, now, it's time for ya to meet a few more characters in our humble pie play here. They're our villains.

BOO and HISS signs

NARRATOR: That's right. They deserve that. The leader's name is Mincemeat, and he's got his two sidekicks, Crusty and Creamy. Since they're villains, they're gonna sneak on stage in just a moment.

(Narrator exits stage right. Mincemeat sneaks on stage left but finds himself alone and then waves in Crusty and Creamy from side stage with a frustrated gesture. Crusty and Creamy enter a moment later stage left.)

MINCEMEAT: *(Nose in air, sniffing)* Well now, my sneaky sidekicks, I do believe that's the smell of opportunity.

(Crusty and Creamy both sniff the air as well, and then Crusty smells his armpit and grimaces.)

CRUSTY: I dunno, Mince. Could be I just forgot to take my bath this month...

GROAN sign

MINCEMEAT: Naw, Crusty, ya knucklehead. I'm talkin' about the smell of fame and fortune. I'm talkin' 'bout strawberry fields forever, peaches and cream, and a cherry on top. I'm talkin' pie.

CREAMY: I love pie.

CRUSTY: You ain't talkin' 'bout the Pie Palooza contest are ya, Mince? Don't ya remember the last pie ya entered? That Baked Bean Pie was a bomb. A stink bomb, that is.

LAUGH sign

MINCEMEAT: Gang, that's over and done. I plan on winnin' that pie contest this year and all the dough that goes with it.

CREAMY: I love dough.

CRUSTY: But Mince, how do ya reckon you're gonna do that? Ya know ol' Besta has won the Pie Palooza every year for the past sixty years with her secret recipe.

MINCEMEAT: Exactly. And secrets were meant to be stolen.

BOO and HISS signs

CREAMY: Aw, but Mince, Besta's just a sweet lil' ol' lady.

MINCEMEAT: Creamy, my ma seemed like a sweet lil' ol' lady, but I tell ya what, underneath that corset of hers was the sting of a rattlesnake. Never judge a pie by its crust.

CREAMY: Well, my ma taught me that stealin' was wrong. It shows a lack of respect for others and for yourself. And besides that, I love lil' ol' ladies.

MINCEMEAT: *(Speaking to the audience)* Someone help me out here. Did the narrator get this guy's role mixed up with someone else? I mean, what kind of villain is he? *(Now speaking in a pleading voice to Creamy)* Come on, Creamy, ya can't turn soft and mushy on me now. Ya know Crusty—he just falls apart at the first sign of trouble. *(Crusty frowns.)* And if that happens, then you're the one that makes us look all sweet and innocent.

CREAMY: Aw, alright, Mince. I'll stick with ya. But I ain't doin' no stealin'.

MINCEMEAT: No stealin'. Just borrowin'. We're gonna go over to the Pie Sisters' place, ring the doorbell, and while I'm sweet talkin' ol' Miss Besta, one of ya is gonna find her prize winnin' pie recipe and write it down on a lil' recipe card thingie.

CRUSTY: I'll give it a go, Mince, but I can't read real good.

CREAMY: I love those lil' recipe card thingies.

MINCEMEAT: Oh, boy. *(Shakes his head and turns to audience.)* I may be the head honcho here, but with sidekicks like these, ya can see why they say, "It's lonely at the top."

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