

Pie Surprise

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Although a crowd waited eagerly for Alice and Gert to declare that the pie table was open for business, pie placement cannot be rushed. These two friends had taken charge of the pie table back in 1978 when the village August-fest first began. Back then as young women eager to show off their flare for pies, they had baked for days. After more than three decades of baking and displaying their pies (and regularly selling everything they baked within the first hour), they had learned that a proper display, like the pies themselves, could not be hurried. Little could they know that today, the pie display and sale would not go according to plan.

As soon as Gert set the hastily-scrawled "Open!" sign (somehow they could never remember to prepare one ahead of time) at the edge of the table, the crowd surged forward. Long-time customers knew precisely which pies they favored, and snatched them eagerly. Soon the popular butterscotch cream pies and apple pies were gone. People began to grumble that Alice and Gert hadn't planned well and that maybe it was even time for someone else to take over the pie table.

Suddenly, out of the crowd emerged a person no one had ever seen before. With his dapper outfit and carefully-tended handlebar mustache, he looked distinctly out of place among village residents. "Excuse me," he said in a voice with just a trace of an accent. "Would you be the distinguished bakers named Alice and Gert?"

Both women blushed at the same time and stammered, "yes." "Ah," he said, "I've come a long way in my search for the most wonderful pie in all the world. I've heard your names uttered far and wide and now at least, my search is over." With that, he held out an odd-looking gold coin that had a bluish glow surrounding it.

A crowd began to gather as the man stood quietly, his hand extended with the strange coin, which now appeared to be pulsing with light from within, resting on his outstretched palm. Neither Gert nor Alice moved to accept the coin. Finally Alice managed to ask, "what kind of pie would you like? I'm afraid that the peach is already gone."

"No peach?" he cried. "Well, then, I'll take this coconut custard one." With that he flung the coin on the table, grabbed the pie, and disappeared in a flash of blue light. Instantly, the table and the lawn all around it were filled with pies, more pies than anyone at the Autumn-fest had every seen. The crowd gasped and cheered and then they bought pies, so many in fact that Alice and Gert were able to retire from pie-making and set up a surfing shop in Malibu where they lived happily ever after.