

### Third Place Nonfiction, Ages 10-13

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#### “Pie, Flour, and the Fourth of July”

“Oo! Me! Me! Pick me!” A sea of red-white-and-blue-clad kids clamor to be chosen. The judge, not truly in the color-coordinated theme, is wearing a white tee. He makes his way around the table, picking out random kids and adults from the hyper crowd.

As he comes to our side of the crowd, my friends Adrienne, Abby Lauren and myself yell louder. I’m desperate to be in the pie-eating contest. I’ve watched in years past but it looks so fun I had to try to get in. As the judge gets closer, his brow wrinkles up. I can almost hear him thinking, “*I might as well pick her-no-that girl there is more enthusiastic.*” However, he looks carefully at us, points to me, my friend’s older sister Taylor and her friend Gayle, and says:

“You’re in. Go sit here!” He laughs a boisterous laugh and moves on. As I sit down at the clean white table, I turn around to see Lauren, Abby and Adrienne looking sad. ‘*I’m sorry*’ I mouth to them. I look down at the table in front of me, ashamed *I* was chosen, not Lauren, who wanted it more than anything.

However, as the judge makes his final picks, Abby and Adrienne join me at the table. The judge puts a blueberry pie in front of each of us. To anyone else, the golden-brown crust and oozy, sapphire-blue berry filling would look tantalizingly. To me, it fills me with dread. I hate blueberry pie. Well, not really *hate*, more like *really-don’t-like*.

Not concerned with my dislike of the pie, the judge and the crowd shouts in unison.

“THREE! TWO! ONE! GOOOOOOOOO!” They yell. Despite the type of pie, I take a deep breath and mush my mouth into the pie. I go for the lattice-work top, just because it looks the best. I find it hard to chew and swallow fast. In the time I got a mouthful down, veteran pie-eater Gayle has half her pie gone...well, not gone. More likely...on her face. I try to grin, but my mouth is too full of pie. I stare down at my pie and concentrate. The crowd is screaming. I hear two of my friends, Marissa and Savannah, hollering at me.

“GET IT ON YOUR FACE! EAT THAT PIE! TEACH IT A *LESSON!*” I hear. I keep working on eating my pie, but I get desperate. Gayle is almost done. Taylor has at least half the pie in her mouth, on her face, in hair, etc. I’m still working on the top. Looking up, I see my mom taking pictures of me with her iPhone. I grin briefly, and then go back to my pie. Surprisingly out of character, my mom hollers

“Don’t eat it, smear it on your face!” Simply out of instinct, I find it hard to want to get the pie on my face. Dismissing instinct, I dive into the pie headfirst. In my vain attempt to make the pie disappear via smearing, I don’t notice Gayle finishing.

“Done!” I hear Gayle shout. The judge comes over, stares at it, laughs and tells her to get the pie chunks she splattered all over the table up. She starts eating pie straight off the plastic-topped table. *Ew. How disgusting!* I think, but soon return to eating my pie.

Before I can even swallow my next bite, the judge announces Gayle the winner, then Taylor, then a man down the table I don’t know. When they finally yell ‘STOP!’, I’m thankful. I’m sick of that pie and I’m glad I don’t have to eat more.

About the get up and leave, I remember the second stage. *Dang it, I think, the flour part.* They come around and give up new pie tins, these ones filled with white baking flour. The judge tops them all of with some from a crumpled flour bag, and gives Gayle the most. I laugh, and then brace myself for the next part.

The white-shirted judge gets the O.K. from his fellow judge, and shouts for us to start. When we begin, one would have thought a small blizzard has started. We are all blowing at our flour-filled tins, trying to reach the bottom and get the coins hidden below. I cough and sputter as I go, getting flour in my throat. Soon enough, though, I learn to turn around to get a breath.

Unlike the pie part, I’m good at this. Half my flour is gone in the time Abby has only a quarter out of her tray. I see glints of metal from the tin and coins, and start blowing harder. I have flour sticking to the pie on my face, and it makes my cheeks feel truly odd. I see that Taylor and Gayle have flour on their shirts, covering their faces and a not-so-delicate powdering on their hair. Knowing that I look like that too, I grin ridiculously. Barely a minute after we start, I’m done. The man down the table is quicker, though. He’s got his coins out and has won, but I finished second. The judge inspects my tin and says I’m good, so I sit back in my folding chair, holding my coins and squinting, enjoying the sight of everyone blowing like crazy.

Eventually, the dust subsides. Everyone’s done, and we’re sent off to join our friends, be congratulated and go get rinsed off. Taylor, Gayle, Abby, Adrienne and I head to the fire truck, where we’re hosed down rather unceremoniously with the fire hose. Lauren comes over, looking sad because she wasn’t chosen, so I run to the still-covered table and throw a handful of flour at her. She looks shocked, and then smiles. We commenced an all-out every-man-for-himself flour-and-pie war, and are joined by about a dozen other kids eager to get in on the fun. When all the pie and flour is on the ground or on us, I go back to the fire hose. I get hosed down *again*, but I know it’s worth it for all the memories I got from that day.