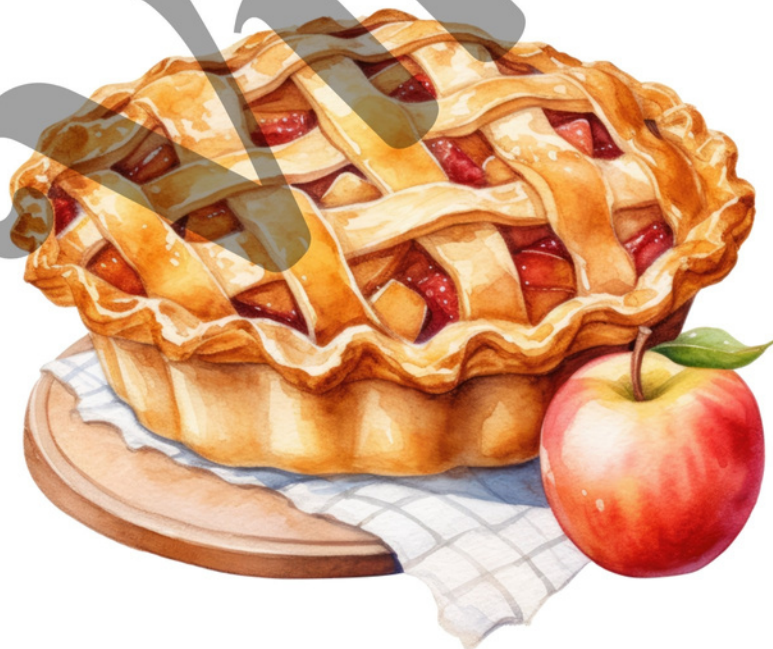




Readers Theater:

The Case of the Missing Apple Pie



Characters:

- Narrator
- Maya (curious and determined, natural leader)
- Leo (easygoing and quick-witted, loves jokes)
- Mrs. Crisp (cheerful orchard owner, a tiny bit forgetful)
- Farmer Green (helpful neighbor farmer)
- Janelle (apple-juggler extraordinaire, energetic)
- Detective Pippin (dramatic, confident, loves “big reveals”)
- Tommy (young orchard helper, eager but shy)

Optional Props:

- Red-and-white checkered cloth for the missing pie
- Small pie tin and serving utensil
- “Entry #7” sign or label for contest table
- Magnifying glass for Detective Pippin
- Apron for Mrs. Crisp
- Straw hat for Farmer Green
- Baskets or crates of apples
- Three apples for juggling (real or fake)
- Oven mitts for Detective Pippin during the baking scene

Narrator:

It was the first Saturday of September, and Crisp's Apple Orchard hummed like a happy beehive. Red, gold, and green apples winked from the trees, scarecrows posed for selfies, and the warm smell of cinnamon and butter drifted toward the hayride line. Today was the Harvest Festival—and nothing drew a bigger crowd than the Great Apple Pie Contest.

Maya:

(Scanning the banners) I read last year's write-up: "A single bite of Mrs. Crisp's pie tastes like autumn decided to sing." No pressure, right?

Leo:

(Grinning) I'll volunteer to confirm that with multiple scientific bites.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Playfully fanning the pie tin lid) Oh, you two! This year I've perfected it—tart apples, flaky crust, a ribbon of caramel, and my secret ingredient.

Maya:

(Leaning in) Tell us the secret?

Mrs. Crisp:

(Tapping her nose) Not until the judges swoon.

Farmer Green:

(Carrying crates, walking by)

A pie so fine, a crust divine,
may luck and flavor sweetly shine!

Leo:

Farmer Green rhymes all the time. It's his thing.

Janelle:

(Practicing with three apples) Want a preview, how
before judging? I'm jiggling Honeycrisps, Galas, and a
mystery apple!

Tommy:

(Approaching with labels) Mrs. Crisp, here's the "Entry #7" card
for your pie like you asked.

Detective Pippin:

(Sweeping in with magnifying glass and flair) Citizens!
Be at ease. If any mysteries dares to appear, Detective
Pippin shall peep it... like an apple.

Leo:

(Aside) Does he also core it?

Maya:

Okay, team: place the pie, check the table, and nobody touch anything sticky.

Narrator:

Under the big oak, polished pie stands formed a tempting parade. Butter glistened. Crisps crisscrossed. Mrs. Crisp's pie, golden and gleaming, sat proudly at center.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Straightening the ribbon) There. Entry #7. Don't let you wobble off, sweetheart.

Maya:

I'll guard the table while you meet customers, Mrs. Crisp.

Lee:

And I'm scientifically sniffing nearby for quality control.

Janelle:

(Calling) Hey! In five minutes! I'll entertain the line and hand out apple ice cream.

Tommy:

I'll be at the cider press if anyone needs me.

Detective Pippin:

I, meanwhile, shall patrol!

Narrator:

Festival music struck up. Children painted tiny pumpkins. A gust of wind rattled the leaves... and for a moment, the display table stood unwatched.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Returning with a bag of sugar) All right, time to -
(Gasping) Where's Entry #7?

Maya:

(Spinning) It was here. I literally just went to the restroom for a couple of minutes...

Leo:

(Checking both sides of the stage) The pie didn't grow legs.

Detective Pippin:

(Thunderous) Halt, everyone! We have a pie-napping.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Hand to heart) That pie was for the judges! Without it, I can't compete.

Maya:

We'll find it. Step one: secure the scene. Step two: gather clues.

Narrator:

They studied the table. A pie server lay dusted with cinnamon sugar. A faint crease of fabric ballstened on the cloth. And, just beyond the grass, a tiny, glittering trail of sugar crystals.

Maya:

Point of entry: here. Point of exit: this sugar trail.

Leo:

(Whispering) One very sparkly snail.

Detective Capin:

Observe the expressions: some ph... Flat tread, small... Our thief moved quickly.

Tommy:

(Approaching) I... heard rustling near the picnic tables a few minutes ago. And here's a basket with a red-and-white cloth heading toward the old cider barn.

Mrs. Crisp:

That's my pie cloth!

Janelle:

(Flipping her apples into a bag) I'm coming. No apple left behind!

Narrator:

Inside the cool, shadowy barn, afternoon light spilled through the boards in thin, golden strips. On a hay bale: an empty pie tin. Stuck to the tin: a sticky note smudged with cinnamon.

Maya:

(Reading) "Sorry! Needed this for my booth." Who needs?

Leo:

Rude and unhelpful. Classic villain move.

Detective Robin:

(Examining) The handwriting's airtight. Quick writer. Cinnamon smudge suggests hurried slicing.

Tommy:

Booths are along the boardwalk lane. Caramel apples, kettle corn, preserves, fruit painting...

Janelle:

And my juggling stage, which does not sell pie, thank you very much.

Maya:

All right, split up. We'll check each booth, regroup at the scarecrow contest in fifteen minutes. Pippin, you're with me. Leo with Janelle. Mrs. Crisp with Tommy. Farmer Green, ask vendors if anyone saw a red-and-white cloth.

Detective Pippin:

(Flourish) Operation Crust-cracker commences!

Narrator:

Maya and Detective Pippin marched to the preserves booth, where Mrs. Appleton sliced a pie beneath a gingham awning.

Maya:

(Direct) Ma'am, have you served any apple pie in the last twenty minutes?

Mrs. Appleton:

(Kindly) Only peach. Want a slice?

Detective Pippin:

(Grave) Tempting... but no. Any vendors carrying a red-and-white cloth?

Mrs. Appleton:

I saw someone jogging by with one, headed toward the corn maze.

Maya:

Thank you!

Narrator:

Meanwhile, Leo and Janelle investigated the popcorn stand. The vendor held up buttery hands.

Vendor:

No pies here, just kernels.

Leo:

Any suspicious pie-shaped activity?

Vendor:

A group of kids ran past shouting "She cut!" and holding something red-and-white.

Janelle:

We cut again! To the corn maze!

Narrator:

Mrs. Crisp and her crew checked the face-painting tent. Glitter sparkled everywhere.

Face Painter:

Haven't seen any pie, but someone left caramel fingerprints on my table. Eww.

Tommy:

(Spotting) There's a sugar crystal stuck to this brush!

Mrs. Crisp:

(Determined) We're close.

Narrator:

They all converged at the entrance. Stalks rustled. Laughter echoed. As they read, "Left for LADDER, right for LOOKOUT."

Maya:

We'll sweep the maze in pairs. Keep eyes open for the cloth, caramel drops, or crumbs.

Detective P...

(Hand to ear) I hear... chewing.

Leo:

That's... Sorry.

Janelle:

(Grinning) Whoever spots the next clue gets first bite of the finished pie.

Narrator:

Turn after turn, they found... nothing. No cloth. No crumbs. At the lookout platform, Maya paused, scanning the fair below.

Maya:

If the thief promised “for my booth,” they need to sell fast. A maze detour wastes time. I think the cloth runner was a false lead, maybe a different person entirely.

Detective Pippin:

(Approving) Sound deduction. Back to the line!

Narrator:

They burst from the maze and followed the sweet, unmistakable aroma of cinnamon sugar wafting stronger now. The line at one booth stretched long.

Leo:

(Shielding eyes) Is that... pie being served?

Alle:

And that... Crisp’s strawberry on top? At Farmer Green’s booth?!

Maya:

Everyone, move.

Narrator:

They reached the booth. Behind the counter stood... Farmer Green, knife in hand, placing generous slices on paper plates.

Mrs. Crisp:

Farmer Green! That's my contest pie!

Farmer Green:

(Startled, then mortified)

I, I thought it was extra stock to share
Folks wanted pie; I tried to care.

Leo:

Dude. It was the contest to try.

Farmer Green:

(Hands trembling, rhyming faster)

I saw the cloth, I saw the tin,
The barn gets hot, it's sneak in.
I feared it'd slip, sitting there
So to my booth I brought it... I care.

Tommy:

You left a note that said "needed this for my booth."

Farmer Green:

(Winces) A note I wrote a rushed excuse, But still, no
right to take on me.

Detective Pippin:

(Softening) Motive: misguided helpfulness. Means:
opportunity and a very fast walk. Verdict: guilty of poor
judgment.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Exhales) I know you meant well, Green. But the judges start in an hour. Without a pie, I can't compete.

Farmer Green:

(Resolute)

Then let me fix the harm I've done:

We'll bake another, everyone.

Maya:

Yes. Team bake. We can do this.

Janelle:

I'll wash up and prep a clean station.

Leo:

I'm on apples peeling, speed peeling mode.

Tommy:

I'll fetch flour, sugar, and oh, no, litter.

Detective Pip:

I shall coordinate things like a metronome of justice.

Mrs. Crisp:

And I'll handle the crust and the, (winks), secret ingredient.

Narrator:

They moved like a well-oiled kitchen orchestra at the demo table near the oven shed.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Teaching) Cold butter, cold hands. Tommy, sprinkle the ice water slowly and listen for the dough to sigh.

Tommy:

(Concentrating) Like this

Mrs. Crisp:

Perfect. Fold, turn, chill.

Maya:

(Measuring) Flour: six cups. Cinnamon: two teaspoons. Nutmeg: a whisper. Sugar: just enough to make the
one word.

Leo:

(Shaving peels into ribbons) I'm timing myself. New personal record: one apple in eight seconds. Someone call the Olympics.

Janelle:

(Slicing) Thin and even, like juggling, but with knives I don't throw.

Farmer Green:

(Beating an egg wash)

A brush of gold, a shine of pride,
We'll bake a beauty none can hide.

Detective Pippin:

(Oven mitts poised) Preheat achieved. Will stand sentry
to ensure no second pie-napping.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Whispering to Maya and Lee) Secret ingredient: fresh
apple cider reduced to syrup. It deepens the flavor.

Maya:

(Grinning) Mystery solved!

Lee:

Permission to taste the excellence?

Mrs. Crisp:

Granted.

Narrator:

They assembled the pie: bottom crust, layered apples,
ribbons of cider syrup, a lattice top, and sugared edges.
Into the oven it went with a hopeful squeak of the door.

Tommy:

Timer set for forty minutes!

Narrator:

The timer dinged. Detective Pippin opened the oven with operatic care. A golden lattice gleamed. Bubbles of syrup winked along the seams.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Brushing with cider glaze) Shine little pie. The judges are almost here.

Leo:

(Placing the entry card) “Entry #7—Rebaked with Teamwork.”

Farmer Green:

(Quiet pride)
A second chance sweeter way,
To end what started as a fray.

Narrator:

The judges approached, clipboards poised. They sampled crusts, murmured over fillings, and finally reached Entry #7.

Judge 1:

(Delighted) Flaky layers.

Judge 2:

Warm apple flavor—depth from... reduced cider?

Judge 3:

Balanced spice. Comforting. Confident.

Narrator:

They tallied. The crowd hushed. A blue ribbon waited on a velvet pillow.

Head Judge:

By a unanimous vote, the winner is... entry #7 - Mrs. Crisp and Team!

Mrs. Crisp:

(Glowing) We did it!

Detective Pippin:

Justice served in a mode.

Father Greasy:

(Snooping)

I'm grateful, friends, for pardon sweet.

Next time, I'll ask before I eat.

Mrs. Crisp:

(Placing a mini ribbon in his hand) And next time, you'll bake with us from the start.

Narrator:

The sun slid lower, gilding the orchard rows. Music swirled; laughter rose. And somewhere between apology and cinnamon, the festival found its favorite flavor: teamwork.

Maya:

(Softly) Best day ever.

Leo:

(Chewing) Best pie ever.

Detective Pippin:

Case closed.

Everyone:

(Laughing, enjoying pie)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Who actually took the pie and why?

How did the group work together to solve the problem?

What was Mrs. Crisp's secret ingredient?

Maya



Leo



Mrs. Crisp



Janelle



Farmer Green



Detective Pippin



Narrator



Maya



Leo



Mrs. Crisp



Janelle



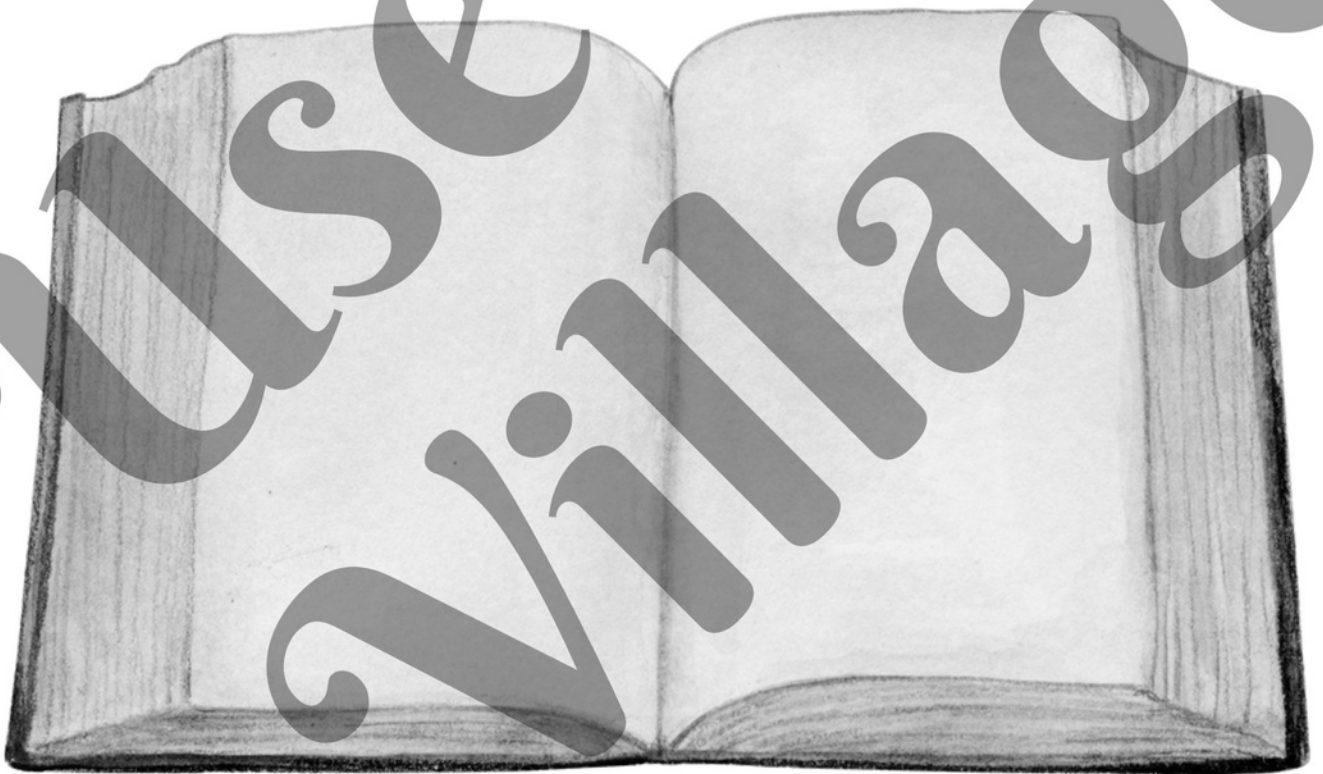
Farmer Green



Detective Pippin



Narrator



Teacher Suggestions:

Assigning Roles: Consider your students' reading levels and confidence when assigning roles. Encourage students to practice their parts at home or during independent reading time.

Practicing Fluency: Have students practice their parts multiple times to build fluency and expression.

Props & Costumes: Use the optional props list to create simple, engaging props.

Character Labels: Students can also use the provided character names to either cut out to hang around their neck to help identify characters to the audience or alternatively draw and illustrate what they imagine their character to look like.

Performance: Arrange a space in the classroom where students can perform. Invite other students to watch the final performance to boost students' confidence and make it more special.

Reader Response Questions: Use the provided questions to facilitate a post-performance discussion. This will help assess comprehension and encourage students to think critically about the play.

Extension Activities

- Pie Poster: Design a poster advertising entry #7 in the contest.
- Apple Science: Research different apple varieties and taste-test them.
- Write a New Ending: Have students create an alternative ending to the story. What if someone different had stolen the pie? What was their motive?
- Harvest Festival Map: Have students draw a map of Crisp Apple County, including all the places mentioned in the play (pie table, cider bar, corn maze, booths, etc.). Label each place where clues were found.
- Recipe Writing: Have students create their own apple pie recipe, complete with a list of ingredients, step-by-step instructions, and a “secret ingredient” that makes it special.

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