My Most Embarrassing Moment

A Streamlined Pie Procedure

IT WAS the first holiday celebration that my husband and I had joined his family for after we were married, in 1950.

I was very nervous and wanted to make a good impression, so I decided to bake a pumpkin pie, although I'd never learned much about baking pies.

The pie looked great to me. I hadn't mixed the pumpkin with any other ingredients, and I made the filling by dumping the pumpkin straight from the can into the bottom crust.

To make matters worse, I added a top crust.

I thought it was the perfect pie and felt proud of myself.

The meal went well until I placed the pie in front of everyone and laughter filled the room.

The pie was a complete failure, and no one ate it.

While everyone treated the situation as a joke, the disappointment and embarrassment were something I'll never forget.

—Loretta V., New Port Richey, Florida

Hasta la Vista, Teacher

MY FELLOW FIRST GRADER and I were in leotards and galoshes with muffs on our hands in 1964 as we trudged up the hill to school in the snow.

Her mother, who was always enthusiastic about us leaving for the day, waved to us and proclaimed something I'd never heard before: "Good riddance, girls."

My friend then looked back at her mother slyly and giggled.

Her mother stood at the top stair in her apron, winking back at her.

At school, our teacher tried to explain how the art teacher, who was getting married, would return with a different name.

When we were asked if any of us had anything that we wanted to say to the art teacher on her final day before the wedding, I jumped out of my seat, eagerly waving my hand.

When I was recognized, I proudly exclaimed, “Good riddance!”

I can still see the horror and astonishment on the teachers’ faces. I was not allowed in the classroom for the remainder of the farewell festivities and sat in the hall, crying my eyes out.

All along, I thought the phrase was a fun-loving way of saying good-bye.

—Karen E., Bloomfield, New Jersey