

## The Gingerbread Man

*Traditional English*  
*Clara Willmott-Basset*

Once upon a time, there lived an old couple who had no children, and they were very sad. One day the little old lady had a good idea, and she went into the kitchen and there she made a little boy out of gingerbread. She used raisins to give him eyes and a nose and a mouth, and to make buttons for his shirt. Then she popped him into the oven to bake. When he was ready, she took him out of the oven and put him on the window sill to cool. Then she went to call her husband to come and look at the little boy she had made. But when the old couple hobbled into the kitchen they were just in time to see the gingerbread boy peeling himself off the baking tray and escaping through the window! The little old lady and the little old man rushed to the window but they were too late. The gingerbread boy was running away through the garden and as he ran he cried, "Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!" The old couple immediately took off in pursuit.

As the gingerbread boy ran down the lane he came across a pig.

"Hold on!" said the pig. "You look like a tasty treat, gingerbread boy. I would like to eat you."

But the gingerbread boy sped past the pig, and as he ran, he sang, "Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!"

The gingerbread boy still looked so tasty that the pig decided to chase him. On ran the gingerbread boy, followed by the pig, and the little old lady and the little old man, until, in the field, the gingerbread boy met a cow.

"Not so fast!" said the cow. "You look like a tasty treat, gingerbread boy. I would like to eat you."

The gingerbread boy didn't even pause. He ran on, and as he ran, he shouted, "Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!"

But the gingerbread boy still looked so delicious that the cow decided to chase him. On ran the gingerbread boy, followed by the cow, and the pig, and the little old lady and the little old man, until, in the meadow, the gingerbread boy came across a horse.

"Whoa there, young man!" said the horse. "You look a tasty treat, gingerbread boy. I would like to eat you."

The gingerbread boy pretended he hadn't even heard. He ran on, and as he ran, he yelled "Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!"

The gingerbread boy still looked so tempting that the horse decided to chase him. On ran the gingerbread boy, followed by the horse and the cow and the pig and the little old lady and the little old man, until, in the alleyway, he almost fell over a dog.

"Stop!" barked the dog. "You look like a tasty treat, gingerbread boy. I would like to eat you!"

The gingerbread boy ran even faster. As he ran, he bellowed, "Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!"

Still, the gingerbread boy looked so good that the dog decided to chase him. On ran the gingerbread boy, followed by the dog and the horse and the cow and the pig and the little old lady and the little old man, until he came to a river.

And there the gingerbread boy stopped.

What was he to do? There was no bridge, and he could not swim. How was he to cross the river?

As he was thinking this, along came a fox, a sneaky, clever fox.

"What's the problem, gingerbread boy?" asked the fox.

"I want to cross the river, but I can't think how," said the gingerbread boy. "And if I don't cross the river I am going to be all eaten up. Do you want to eat me?"

"Not I!" said the fox. "I prefer chickens!" But I'll tell you what. I'll take you across the river on my back."

The gingerbread boy looked over his shoulder, to where the dog and the horse and the cow and the pig and the little old lady and the little old man were getting closer and closer, and he had no choice to agree. So he hopped onto the fox's back and the fox started to swim across the river. Half way across the fox said, "Gingerbread man gingerbread man, the water is getting higher and higher. I think you have to climb onto my shoulder." The gingerbread boy agreed, and climbed onto the fox's shoulder. But a little later on, the fox said, "Gingerbread man, gingerbread man, the water is getting higher. I think you have to climb onto my head." So the gingerbread boy climbed onto his head. Just a moment later, the fox said, "Gingerbread man, gingerbread man, the water is getting higher. I think you have to climb onto my muzzle." So the gingerbread boy climbed onto the fox's muzzle. And snap! The fox tossed the gingerbread boy into the air and he came down into the fox's mouth, and the fox gobbled him up. And that was the end of the gingerbread boy.

The End