

The Gingerbread Man

Retold by Bonnie Dobkin

The Gingerbread Man is a mean little fellow who taunts everyone he meets. Is anyone fast enough to catch this wily bakery escapee? Find out how fate finally catches up with him in this tale of smarts versus speed.

1 First Read-Aloud

Before Reading

Introduce characters and the problem.

“This book is called *The Gingerbread Man*. In this story, a little old man and woman who own a bakery decide to bake a gingerbread man. They are surprised when the Gingerbread Man comes to life, hops out of the oven, and runs away. The man, the woman, and others try to catch him, but he’s too fast. Can he get away from the fox? Let’s find out.”

While Reading

Expand vocabulary by pointing to pictures, using gestures to dramatize, and describing:

aroma, floated, clattering, flung, dashed, insult, mangy, yanked, grunted, ruined

Comment on main characters’ thoughts and actions.

- “It looks like the Gingerbread Man likes to tease people and animals. Maybe he thinks it’s fun, but the people and animals don’t seem to think so. I wonder why he does that.”
- “I don’t think the Gingerbread Man should trust the fox, even though the fox says he doesn’t like cookies.”
- “Poor Gingerbread Man! He thought he could get away, but the fox was too smart for him.”
- “The Gingerbread Man doesn’t want to stay with the old man and the old woman. He doesn’t want to be stuck in the bakery window.”

After Reading

Invite explanations, wonder aloud, and ask follow-up questions.

- “Why do you think the Gingerbread Man ran away from the little old man and woman and teased the people and animals as he was being chased?”
- “Why do you think the Gingerbread Man believed that the fox wouldn’t eat him? Would you have believed the fox if you were the Gingerbread Man?”

2 Second Read-Aloud

Before Reading

Recall the characters and the problem.

“We’re going to read *The Gingerbread Man* again. You may remember that a little old man and woman decide to make a gingerbread man. The Gingerbread Man comes to life as he’s being baked in the oven. When the oven door opens, he hops out and runs away. Who chases him? What does he do and say as he’s being chased? How does the fox catch him?”

While Reading

Expand vocabulary using more verbal explanations:

aroma, yanked, grunted

Reinforce some previously introduced words by pointing to pictures and dramatizing:

insult, ruined

Comment on and ask follow-up questions about the other characters.

- “How do you think the little old man and woman felt when the Gingerbread Man ran away from them and wouldn’t come back when they called to him?”
- “I wonder if the policeman, dog, horse, and cow are chasing the Gingerbread Man because they don’t like being teased, or because they’re hungry. Maybe they’re chasing him for both reasons!”
- “I think that this is a very smart fox. He seems to know just what to say to make the Gingerbread Man believe that he’ll be safe and not be eaten. How do you think he knows what to say?”

After Reading

Invite explanations, wonder aloud, and ask follow-up questions.

- “The little old man and woman and the others chased the Gingerbread Man but couldn’t catch him. What would you have done to catch the Gingerbread Man?”
- “Do you think the fox should have eaten the Gingerbread Man? Why or why not?”

Support children’s understanding of social–emotional development by asking the following questions:

“The Gingerbread Man teased the little old man and woman and the others. What did the Gingerbread Man do that made everyone so angry? How do you think the man, the woman, and the others felt about being teased? Why is it not nice to tease someone? How would you feel if someone teased you?”

“The fox pretended to be the Gingerbread Man’s friend so that the Gingerbread Man would trust him. Was that a good way to make a friend? If not, what are better ways to become someone’s friend?”

3 Third Read-Aloud

Before Reading

Encourage children to recall the problem and solution.

“We’re going to read a book we’ve read two times before. Can someone tell us the name of this book? What does the Gingerbread Man do? How does he keep from being caught? What finally happens when he meets the fox?”

While Reading

Expand vocabulary:

dashed, yanked, ruined, clever

Guide children to reconstruct the story as you turn the pages.

Read a few pages and allow the children to reconstruct parts of the story. Occasionally ask questions such as “What is happening here?” or “What happens next?” that help children recall the events of the story. Encourage children to explain what characters are thinking and feeling.

After Reading

Wonder aloud and ask follow-up questions.

- “I wonder what would have happened if the Gingerbread Man hadn’t been tricked by the fox. Where do you think he might have gone? What would he have done?”
- “How do you think the little old man and woman and the others would feel if they discovered that the fox ate the Gingerbread Man?”
- “I wonder what would have happened to the Gingerbread Man if he had been kind to the people and animals he met. Do you still think he would have been eaten?”
- “What do you think the people and animals would have done if they all caught up to the Gingerbread Man at the same time?”

Objective 18 Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
a. Interacts during reading experiences, book conversations, and text reflections

Related Objectives: 1a, 2d, 9a, 15a, 32

Vocabulary

aroma

a good smell

floated

moved slowly through the air

clattering

a loud, rattling sound made by hitting something

flung

threw something hard

dashed

ran very fast

insult

to talk or act in a way that hurts someone's feelings or makes someone angry

mangy

(*point to illustration*) having dirty fur and smelling

yanked

(*demonstrate motion*) pulled very hard

grunted

(*use voice to demonstrate*) talked in a throaty voice

ruined

messed up

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Retold by **Bonnie Dobkin**
Illustrated by **Paula Pertile**

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Once upon a time, a little old man and a little old woman owned a little old bakery. They baked cakes and pies and breads and muffins, and popovers so light they almost floated!

But what they loved to make most were gingerbread cookies. They made...





*Gingerbread boys and gingerbread girls,
Gingerbread rabbits and gingerbread squirrels,
Gingerbread cats and gingerbread dogs,
Gingerbread homes made from gingerbread logs.*



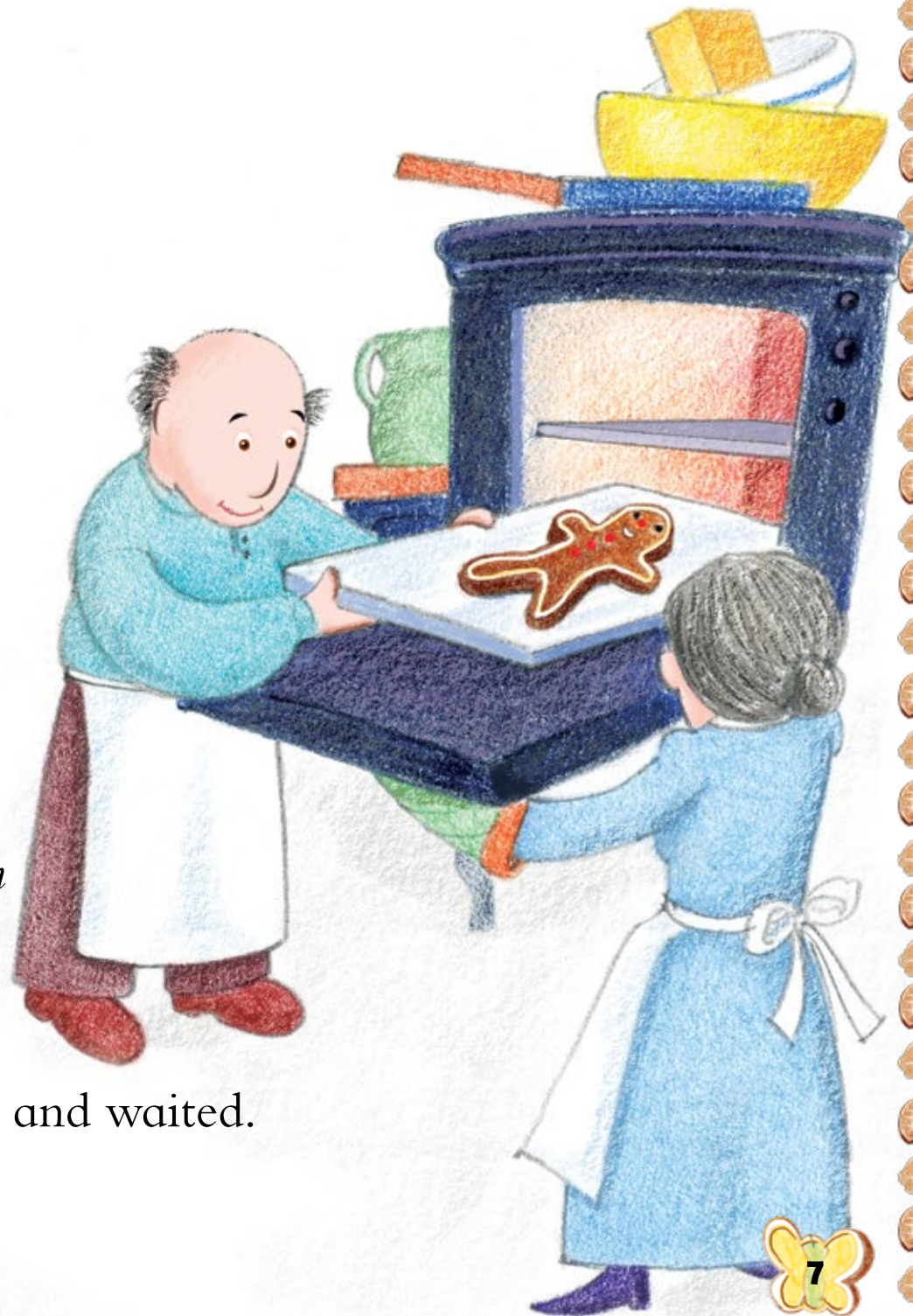
“I know,” said the little old woman one day.
“Let’s make a big Gingerbread Man to put
in our bakery window!”

“That’s a wonderful idea!” said the little old man.



*They mixed up some flour and butter and eggs,
enough for a body, two arms, and two legs.
They rolled the dough flat with an old rolling pin
and laid out the shapes on a big baking tin.*

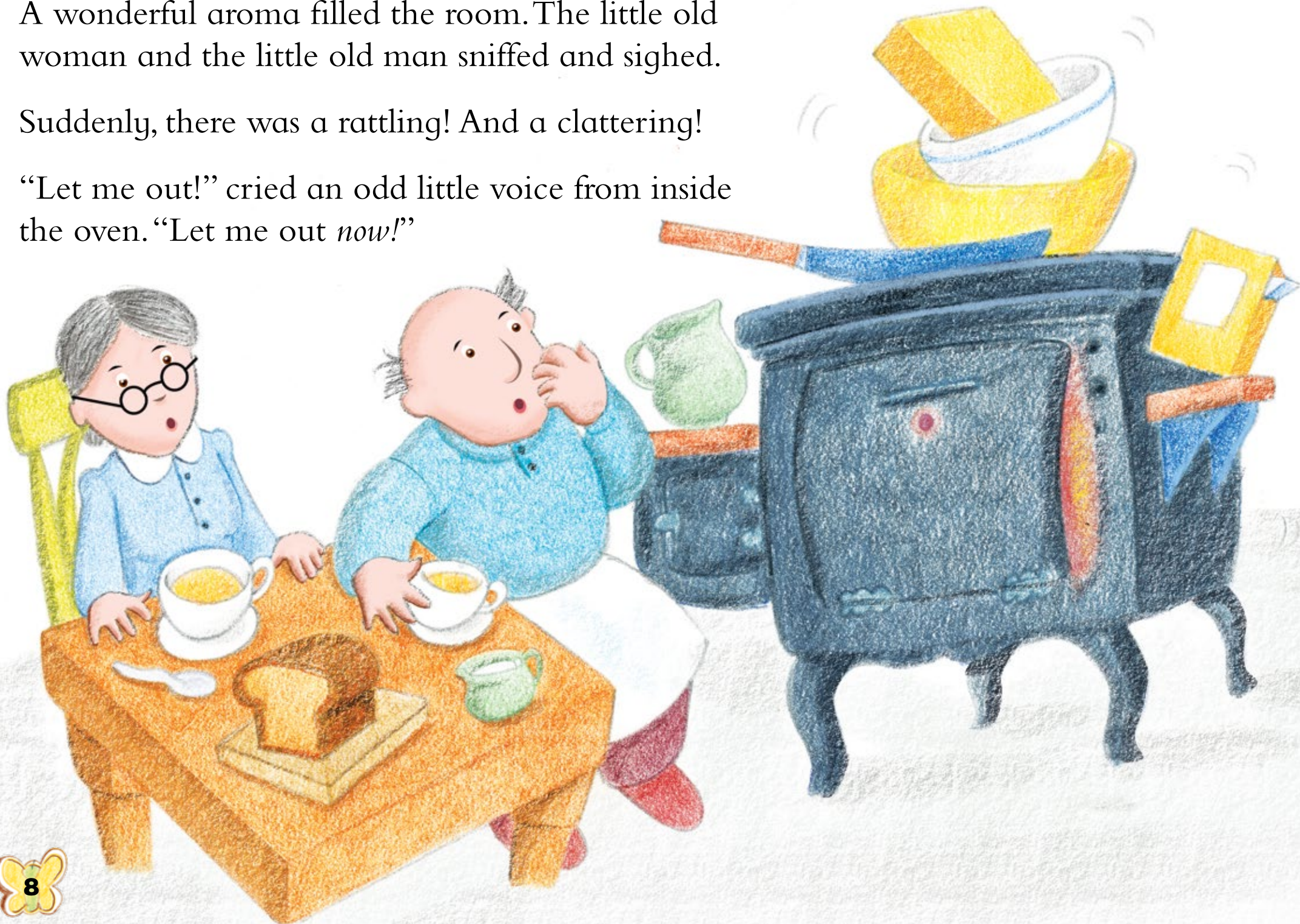
Then they popped the cookie into the oven and waited.



A wonderful aroma filled the room. The little old woman and the little old man sniffed and sighed.

Suddenly, there was a rattling! And a clattering!

“Let me out!” cried an odd little voice from inside the oven. “Let me out *now!*”





The little old woman flung open the door.
Out popped the Gingerbread Man.

“You’re alive?” said the little old man.

“You can talk?” said the little old woman.

“Yes,” said the Gingerbread Man. “And I can run away
from you. Good-bye!” He dashed out the door.



The little old woman and the little old man chased after him. “Wait! Come back! We baked you to put in our window!”

But the Gingerbread Man just laughed.





*Run, run, as fast as you can.
You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!*

“And just watch me prove it!” he yelled.



The Gingerbread Man dashed down the middle of the street. He ran by a policeman and stuck out his tongue.

“Hey!” said the policeman, waving his nightstick.

“You can’t insult an officer of the law!”

Then he smelled the wonderful gingerbread smell.

“But you would make a wonderful snack!”

The Gingerbread man just laughed and said. . .

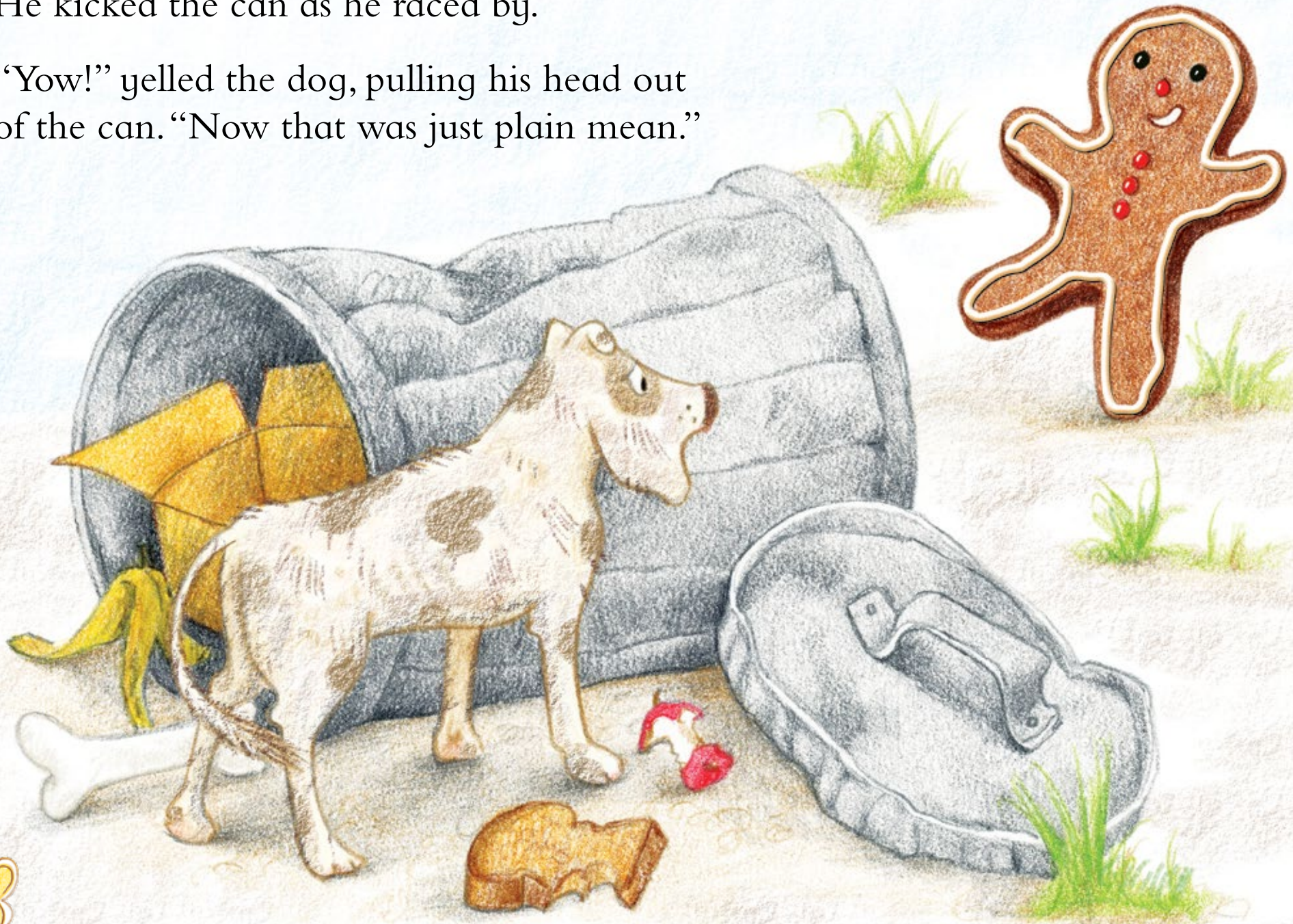
*Run, run, as fast as you can.
You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!*



*I ran away from the little old woman.
I ran away from the little old man.
And I can run away from you, too.
Oh yes, I can, I can!*

On the very edge of town, the Gingerbread Man passed a mangy dog eating out of a garbage can. He kicked the can as he raced by.

“Yow!” yelled the dog, pulling his head out of the can. “Now that was just plain mean.”





Then he sniffed the wonderful gingerbread smell.

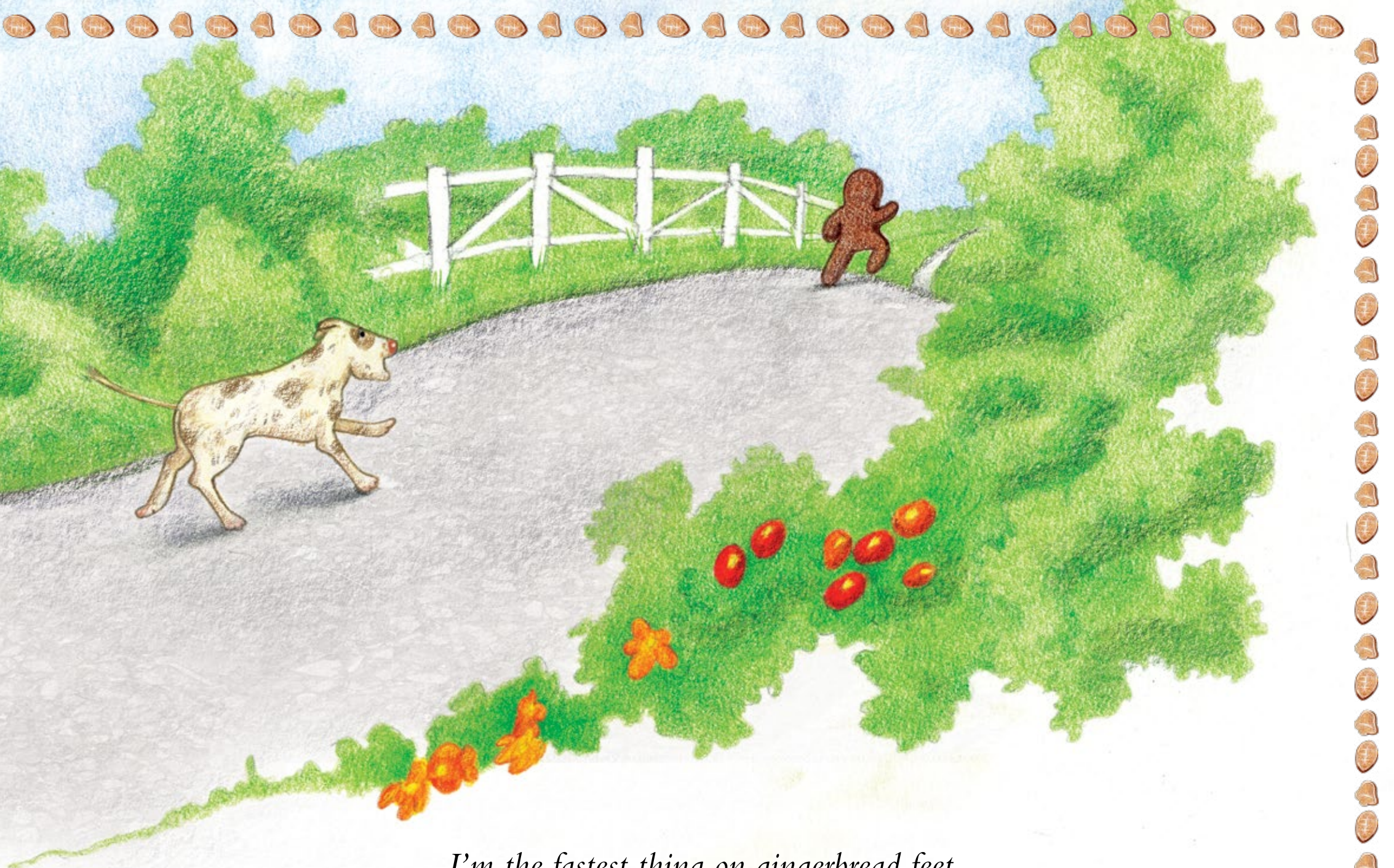
“Wait!” said the dog. “You’d taste a lot better than garbage!”

The Gingerbread Man just laughed, and said. . .



*Run, run, as fast as you can.
You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!*

*I ran away from a little old woman.
I ran away from a little old man.
I ran away from a man of the law
With a big stick in his hand!*

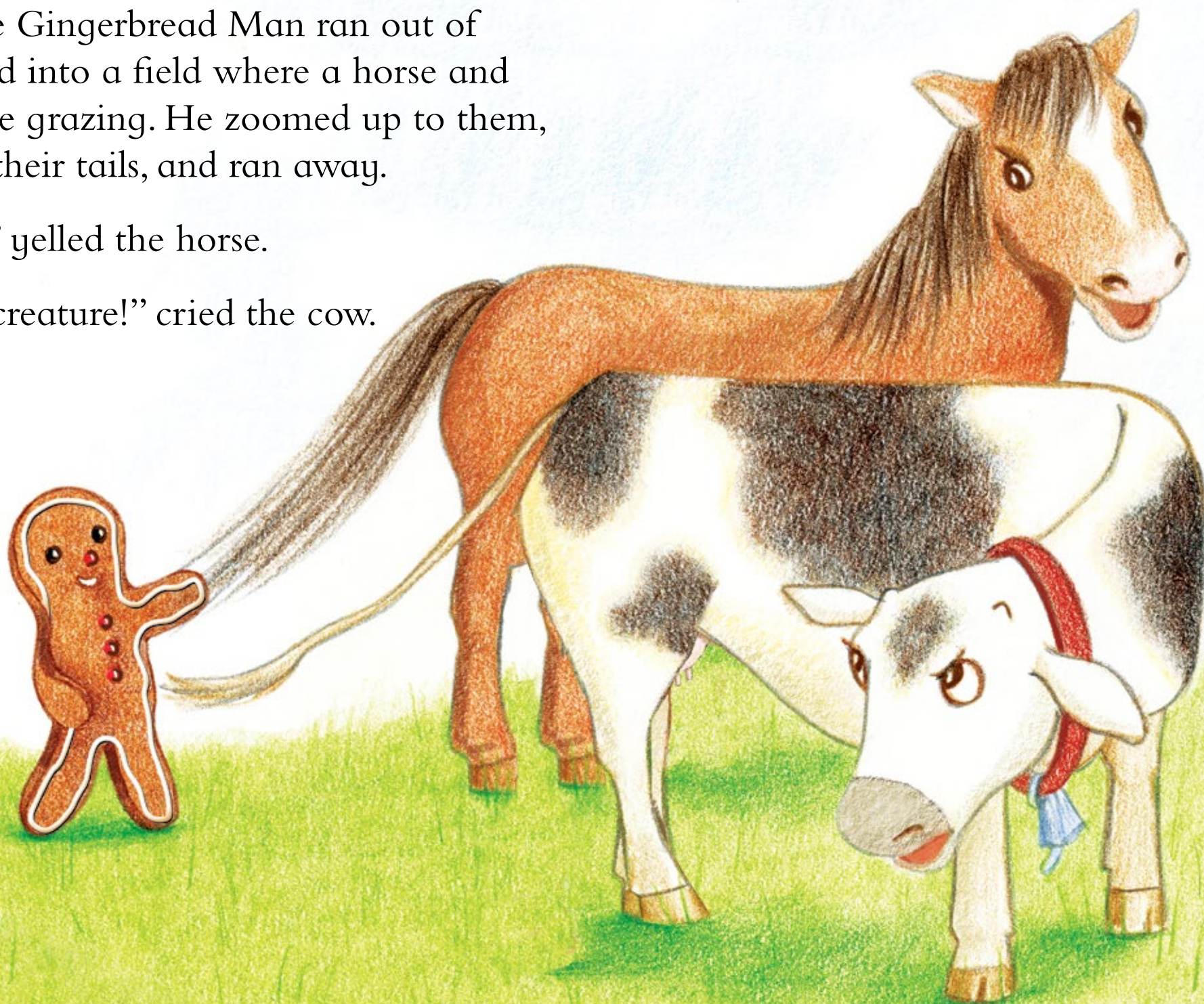


*I'm the fastest thing on gingerbread feet.
And the next part of my plan
Is to run, run, run far away from you, too.
Oh yes, I can, I can!*

Now the Gingerbread Man ran out of town and into a field where a horse and cow were grazing. He zoomed up to them, yanked their tails, and ran away.

“Ouch!” yelled the horse.

“Nasty creature!” cried the cow.





Then they sniffed the wonderful gingerbread smell.
“No, wait! Come back! You’d be much tastier than grass!”
But the Gingerbread Man just laughed and said. . .



*Run, run, as fast as you can.
You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!*

*I ran away from the little old woman.
I ran away from the little old man.
I ran away from a man of the law
And a dog in a garbage can.*





*I'm the fastest thing on gingerbread feet.
And the next part of my plan
Is to run, run, run far away from you, too.
Oh yes, I can, I can!*

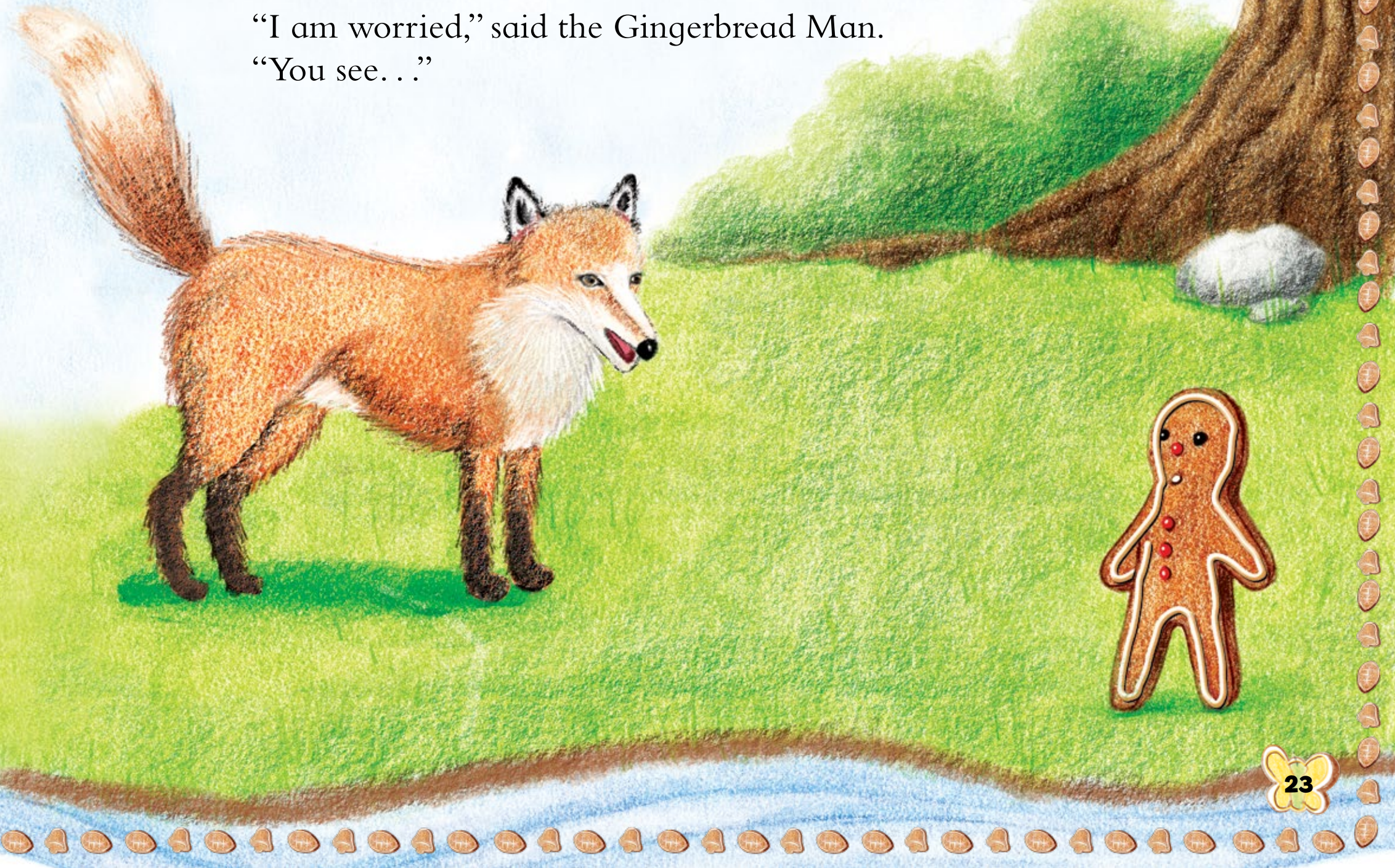


Suddenly the Gingerbread Man came to a wide river.
He stopped. He knew water and cookies don't mix.

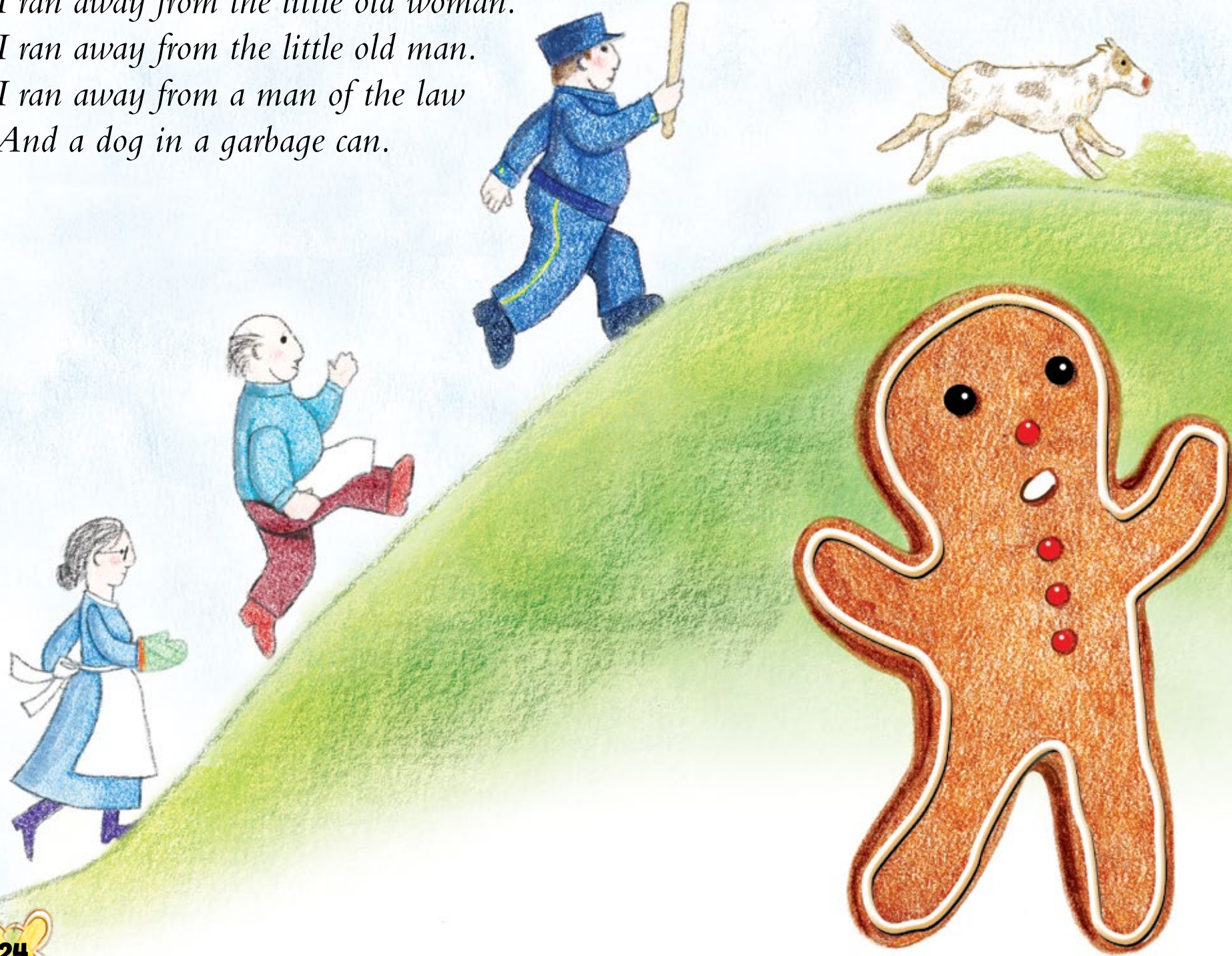
“You look worried,” said a voice.

The Gingerbread Man looked up.
A fox stood smiling at him.

“I am worried,” said the Gingerbread Man.
“You see. . .”

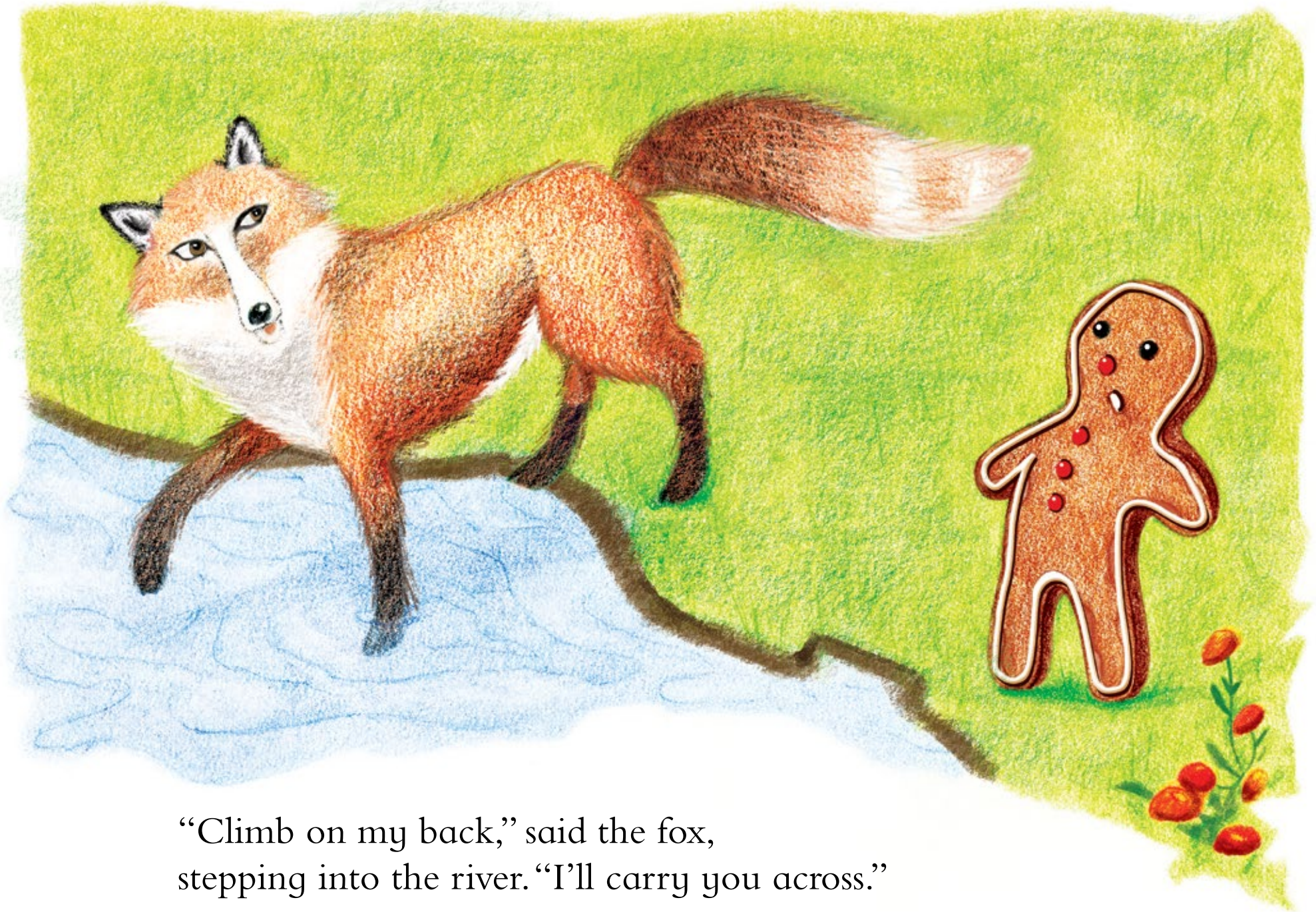


*I ran away from the little old woman.
I ran away from the little old man.
I ran away from a man of the law
And a dog in a garbage can.*





*I ran away from a very mad horse,
And I ran from a silly old cow.
I've run too far and I've run too fast
To let them catch me now.*



“Climb on my back,” said the fox,
stepping into the river. “I’ll carry you across.”

“Oh no, you don’t!” said the Gingerbread Man,
jumping back. “You just want to eat me, too!”

“I don’t even like cookies,” said the fox. “Just climb on my tail. It’s as far away from my mouth as you can get.”

“All right,” said the Gingerbread Man. “That seems safe.” And he hopped on the fox’s tail.





The fox moved into the river. After a time, he grunted. “You know, my tail is getting very tired. Would you mind moving to my back?”

“No problem,” said the Gingerbread Man.

Halfway across the river, the water got deeper.

“You know,” said the fox, “I think you’d be much safer on my shoulders.”

“You may be right,” said the Gingerbread Man, and he moved again.



Now they were at the deepest part of the river.

“Even my shoulders may not be high enough,” said the fox.

“Then I’ll get on your head,” said the Gingerbread Man, and he climbed between the fox’s ears.






Finally they reached the far side of the river.

“Ha!” said the Gingerbread Man. “I told them all they’d never catch me! Thank you, Mr. F—”

Flip! The fox tossed back his head.

Snap! He caught the Gingerbread Man in his jaws.

Crunch! That was the end of the Gingerbread Man.

A fox with orange fur and a white chest is sitting under a large, textured tree trunk. The fox has its eyes closed and is licking a red crumb from its lips. The fox's tail is long and bushy, resting on the grass. The background is a bright green field with several colorful flowers in shades of yellow, orange, red, and pink. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border of small, round, brown objects, possibly gingerbread men or cookies.

The fox sat under a tree, licking
the crumbs from his lips.

He was the fastest thing on gingerbread feet.

It's a shame I ruined his plan.

*But that, I'm afraid, is what happens to
every tasty Gingerbread Man!*