One day Mrs Brown the farmer’s wife thought… ‘Today I will make a gingerbread man.’

She mixed up all the ingredients then rolled a ball of gingerbread between her hands and squashed it flat. That was to be his head. Then Mrs Brown made another ball, a much bigger one this time. That was to be his body. Then she made two thin rolls for his arms and two long thin rolls for his legs. And then she made two hands and two feet.

‘Hmmm… What next,’ she thought. ‘I know! My gingerbread man needs two currants for his eyes and a currant for his mouth.’ When she had made the finishing touches Mrs Brown laid her gingerbread man carefully on a baking tray and popped him into the oven to cook.

Then she put the kettle on and settled down for a nice cup of tea.

After a little while there was a faint tap, tap tapping… Then the tapping got louder… Until it became a knock, knock knocking!

‘What is that noise,’ thought Mrs Brown. ‘It’s coming from the oven!’

Mrs Brown went over to the oven and listened… “Let me out, Let me out” a small shrill voice was calling.

She carefully opened the oven door just a little and peeped in. And to her surprise… There standing up on the baking tray was the gingerbread man!

Before Mrs Brown realised what was happening the gingerbread man had pushed open the door, jumped on to the kitchen floor, run under the kitchen table, down the passage way and out onto the street!

Mrs Brown called after him “Stop! Stop!” She cried!

But the gingerbread man ran off. And as he ran he called:

“Run, run as fast as you can  
You can’t catch me,  
I’m the gingerbread man.”

Mrs Brown ran after the gingerbread man but soon she was huffing and puffing and out of breath.

“Stop that gingerbread man,” she called to her friend who was standing in the doorway. “Don’t let him get away.” Mrs Brown’s friend tried to stop the gingerbread man but she couldn’t bend down quickly enough and the gingerbread man ran between her legs. As he ran through the lady’s legs he called:

“Run, run as fast as you can  
You can’t catch me,  
I’m the gingerbread man”.

The blacksmith in his forge looked up and saw the gingerbread man running down the street followed by Mrs Brown the farmer’s wife and her friend.

So he left his forge and still carrying his long hammer he rushed after them. But he wasn’t fast enough to catch the gingerbread man so he called to some children coming home from school… “Run after that gingerbread man! Mrs Brown the farmer’s wife wants him back!”

The school children all joined in the chase shouting: “We’ll catch him Mr Blacksmith! Don’t worry Mrs Brown we’ll catch him for you!”

But the gingerbread man just looked over his shoulder at everyone chasing him and laughed. As he ran away faster and faster he called:

“Run, run as fast as you can  
You can’t catch me,  
I’m the gingerbread man”.

There had never been such a noise and commotion in the quiet streets! Even the dogs started to bark as they joined in the chase and ran after the gingerbread man.

The miller in his mill heard the noise and ran out covered from head to foot in flour. He couldn’t really see who everyone was chasing because he was covered in flour but he didn’t want to miss the fun so he joined in anyway.

In fact… Everyone wanted to join in the chase. The postman joined in, the fisherman joined in, the lord mayor with his chains and medals joined in, the policeman joined in, the fireman joined in, the doctor joined in and all the hungry cats, dogs, pigs, cows and mice in the neighbourhood joined in. In fact everyone in the whole town joined in and they all chased the gingerbread man!

But when the gingerbread man looked back and saw how many people were chasing after him, he only called louder:

“Run, run as fast as you can  
You can’t catch me,  
I’m the gingerbread man”

More and more people joined in the chase. They ran out of their houses, they ran out of shops. They ran and ran but NO ONE could catch up with the ginger bread man.

 BUT… Lurking near the river was a hungry fox. He saw the gingerbread man running towards him with everyone chasing him and licked his lips.

‘I wonder what the gingerbread man will do when he reaches this river,’ the fox thought. And then he licked his lips again.

When the gingerbread man got to the river he realised there was no bridge! Oh dear… The gingerbread man had to stop. He couldn’t get across.

So the hungry fox came out from behind the tree and said: “Good morning gingerbread man. Are you going to swim across the river?”

“Oh I can’t swim,” said the gingerbread man.

“Oh dear what a pity,” said the hungry fox. “Why don’t you let me help you cross the river? Jump on my back and I will swim you across.”

“You won’t eat me will you?” said the gingerbread man.

“Of course not,” said the fox licking his lips. “I only want to help.”

So the gingerbread man climbed on to the fox’s back and they began to swim across the river.

Soon the gingerbread man began to get wet on the fox’s back.

“Why don’t you jump on to my head?” said the fox.

So the ginger bread man climbed onto the fox’s head.

But as the river got deeper the gingerbread man began to get wet on the fox’s head.

“Why don’t you jump on to my nose?” Said the fox.

So the gingerbread man climbed on to the fox’s nose.

“That’s better,” said the hungry fox. “You won’t get wet now… No one likes a soggy dinner…”

**SNAP** went the fox’s jaws! And the gingerbread man was gone! The hungry fox had gobbled him right up!

The fox climbed out of the river licking his lips.

When Mrs Brown, her friend, the blacksmith, the school children, the miller, the postman and everyone else that had been chasing the gingerbread man reached the river… There was no one to be seen.