



## “The Gingerbread Story”

Text by Piret Veigel

Illustrated by Catherine Zarip

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Age: 4+

Once upon a time, a king and queen lived in a faraway kingdom. When the holidays drew near, they decided to give their people a nice present. Quite many pleasant traditions had been started in previous years, such as every resident of the kingdom being allowed to take whatever book they liked the most from the bookstore at no cost during the month of December. Citizens also had a chance to play hide-and-seek in the shopping center for three whole days. The king and queen reckoned that there can never be too many wonderful things! They thought and thought about what might be a fantastic gift, but were unable to come up with anything. An angel offered its help, suggesting that they bake cookies. Alas, the royal couple were unaware that an evil witch who tended to ruin everything had been keeping an eye on their brainstorming.



## Reading sample

Once upon a time there was a King and a Queen.

One fine day, the King woke up, yawned, and said to the Queen: "Darling, the holidays are coming soon. What do you think: could we give our subjects something nice?"

The Queen agreed happily, but she had no idea what sort of present to give. In their kingdom there were already plenty of nice things for people on the holidays. Everyone could pick a free book from a bookstore, and you could play hide-and-seek in the supermarkets for three whole days. What more could people want?

The Queen, who was very sensible, said: "If we can't think of anything, let's ask the Angel's advice."

The Angel lived on the seventh floor of a tall apartment building. She had three cats and a cuddly toy animal (but exactly what kind of animal, nobody knew. It was a secret.) The Angel was always happy, and she liked to make others happy too. In the evenings she spread her rustling wings and took off from the balcony. She flew over the town, cleaning the dusty stars in the sky so they could shine again.

The Angel welcomed the King and the Queen, offered them a seat, listened to their question, and said: "In my opinion, everyone would like Really good cookies. I just baked some, are sweet and golden yellow. There's only one left: would you like to try it?"

"What a good idea!" said the King and the Queen together. The King broke the cookie in two and gave half to the Queen. They agreed it was, indeed, very good: the best cookie ever.

The Angel gave them the recipe. The King and Queen shared it with their subjects and told them they could bake sweet golden cookies for the holidays. Everybody loved the idea: many people made the dough that same evening, so they would be ready to bake on the holiday morning.

In another apartment building lived an evil witch. She was always in a bad mood, and mean (especially to children). She did not have any cats, let alone a cuddly toy.

The Witch did not like happy people. It was actually her who kept making the stars so dusty they wouldn't shine. In her opinion there was no need for books at all, and hide-and-seek was just a waste of time. Of course she didn't like cookies either.

"Cookies! I'll show them how bad cookies are!" she said nastily. Late in the evening she climbed onto her broom and flew to a little house, where the family had prepared cookie dough for baking in the morning.

The Witch flew down the chimney into the kitchen and looked around. "Here's your sugar!" she squawked, pouring it into the pan and setting it on fire. When the sugar was dark brown and smoking, she dumped it into the dough. Then she grabbed spice tins from the shelf and sprinkled lots of powder from each into the dough. She mixed the dough well, so it was beyond repair. "Let's see how tasty those cookies are now!" she said, satisfied with her evil deeds.

The Witch jumped out the window and hid behind  
wanted to watch  
everyone discover just how bad the Angel's cookies

*Translated by the author  
with editing by Mike Dickison*

