

The Last Cookie



Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN

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In the village of Sweetbriar, the yearly baking contest filled the square with the smell of warm sugar and bubbling jam. Baker Boris, with his bushy white moustache and floppy hat, proudly lined up pies, cakes, and tarts on long wooden tables. Children ran between the stalls, pointing at treats. Annie, a small girl in a yellow polka-dot dress, watched with wide hazel eyes. She loved contest day more than anything.



When the judges finished tasting, only one treat remained: a single golden-brown cookie on a tiny paper doily. It was round and plump, and honey-coloured cracks glowed softly on its surface. Sparkling sugar crystals twinkled like tiny stars, and a wisp of shimmering steam curled around it. Annie thought it was the most beautiful cookie she had ever seen.



Baker Boris leaned close and sniffed. His blue eyes went wide. "That cookie smells more delicious than anything I ever baked!" he boomed. The crowd pushed forward, curious. The cookie wiggled. Its two tiny eyes blinked, and its crumbly smile grew. It smelled like cinnamon, honey, and warm butter all at once. Everyone wanted a bite. Everyone wanted it for themselves.



Baker Boris reached out first. "Just a little taste," he said. But the moment his fingers touched the doily, the cookie leaped high into the air. It bounced off a jam jar, spun like a top, and landed on the rim of a flour sack. Baker Boris lunged and slipped on a spilled spoonful of icing. He tumbled backward into a basket of buns with a soft, funny thump.



The crowd gasped, then laughed. The cookie hopped off the flour sack and skipped across the table. It dodged a rolling pin, zoomed under a pie, and parked beside a bowl of whipped cream. Pip the pigeon, wearing his tiny red neckerchief, swooped down to peek. The cookie flicked a sprinkle at him. Pip flapped in surprise and landed beak-first in the whipped cream. Splat!



The cookie zigzagged through the crowd, leaving a trail of giggles. It bounced off a lady's hat, rolled under a bench, and sprang over a sleeping cat. People ran after it, bumping into each other and waving their arms. Somebody stepped in a puddle of jam. Somebody else got tangled in a string of sausages. It was the funniest chase the village had ever seen.



Annie did not chase. She stood quietly by the table, watching the cookie bounce and giggle. She noticed how it always looked back, as if waiting for something. When a boy tried to grab it, the cookie hopped onto a teapot and blew a raspberry. When a lady tried to catch it in her scarf, it slipped through a loop and skittered away.



Pip flew up and tried to snatch the cookie in his orange beak. The cookie spun in midair, and Pip got tangled in a clothesline. He dangled upside down, flapping, while the cookie balanced on a flowerpot and laughed a crumbly laugh. Annie hurried over and gently untangled the pigeon. "It doesn't want to be grabbed," she whispered. Pip tilted his head and cooed softly.



Baker Boris finally cornered the cookie near the fountain. He tiptoed closer, flour handprints smeared on his cheeks. The cookie waited until he was very close, then sprang onto his floppy hat. It danced a little jig on the brim. Baker Boris spun around, trying to see it, and tripped over his own wooden spoon. He landed in the fountain with a great splash!



The villagers were tired and sticky and out of breath. The cookie sat on the fountain's edge, gleaming in the sun. "Why won't it let us eat it?" someone grumbled. "It smells so good!" Annie stepped forward. She looked at the cookie kindly. "Maybe it's not about taking," she said softly. "Maybe it's about sharing." The crowd grew quiet.



Annie opened her small satchel and pulled out a clean handkerchief. She held it out to the cookie like a little picnic blanket. "Would you like to share with us?" she asked. "Everyone is hungry, and we would all be so happy to taste even a crumb." The cookie's tiny eyes sparkled. It hopped onto the handkerchief and gave a happy little bounce.



A soft golden light shimmered around the cookie. Then, with a gentle pop, it split into two. Pop! Pop! Pop! It divided again and again, until dozens of tiny golden cookies tumbled onto the handkerchief. Each one looked just as delicious as the first, with glowing cracks and sparkling sugar. The villagers gasped. Pip flapped his wings and cooed with delight.



Annie handed the cookies out one by one. She gave the biggest piece to Baker Boris and a tiny crumb to Pip. Everyone got a taste. The cookies were warm and sweet, and they melted in the mouth like honey. "This is the best thing I've ever eaten," Baker Boris said, his moustache covered in crumbs. "And I baked it! Well, sort of." Everyone laughed.



As the villagers munched, the cookies did not disappear. For every piece taken, another appeared in its place. The more they shared, the more there were. Annie smiled her gap-toothed smile. "See?" she said. "Sharing makes it sweeter." Pip perched on her shoulder and nibbled a crumb. The cookie's tiny eyes twinkled, and its crumbly smile grew wider.



Baker Boris declared Annie the winner of the contest, but she didn't want a trophy. "Let's have a picnic every year," she said. "And everyone brings something to share." The whole village cheered. That evening, they sat together under the lanterns, eating cookies and telling stories. The magical cookie bounced happily among them, wearing its doily cape like a tiny hero.



Annie learned that the sweetest reward isn't keeping everything for yourself. It's sharing what you have, even when it's small. The magical cookie had plenty for everyone, but only when someone offered kindly. And in Sweetbriar, from that day on, the village contest ended with a great big picnic—and not a single cookie was ever chased again.