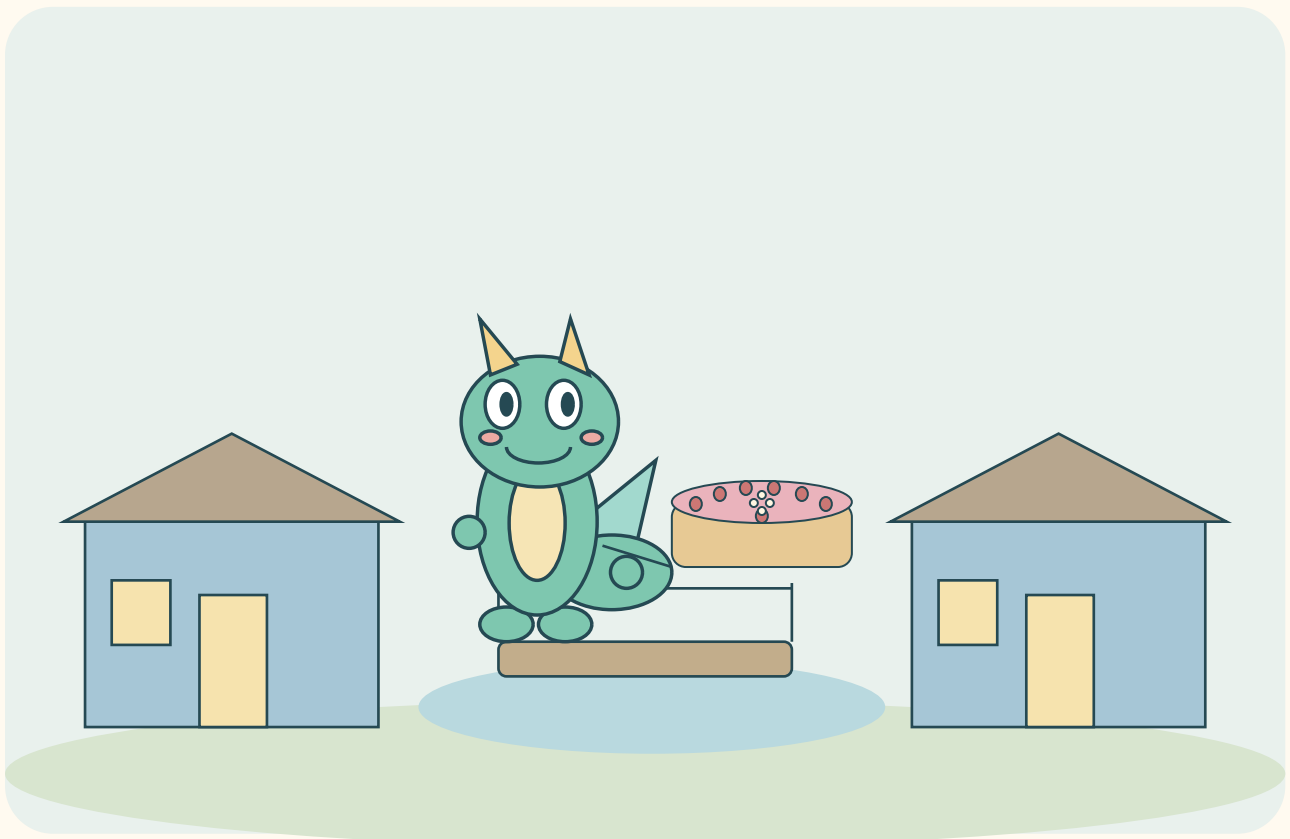


FINN & FRIENDS

The Wrong Birthday Cake



Two blue houses. One birthday cake.
An ordinary day worth sharing.

LITTLE STORY HARBOR

Ages 6–9 • Illustrated read-aloud edition

Original AI-assisted story and vector art, editorially reviewed. Estimated 5–7 minutes; not timed.

Finn had been given a very important job.

Mrs. Crumble, the baker, had asked him to deliver a birthday cake.

"Take it to the little blue house beside the bridge," she said.

"Little blue house," repeated Finn.

"Beside the bridge."

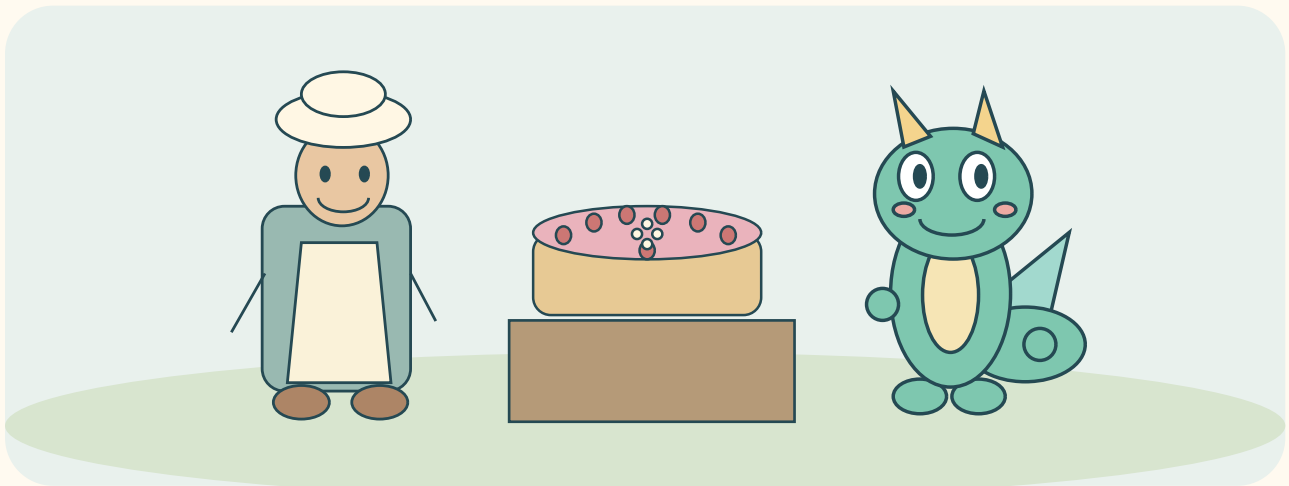
"Beside the bridge."

"And be very careful. It's for someone special."

Finn nodded.

He was excellent at being careful.

At least, he was excellent at trying to be careful.



The cake was beautiful. It had pink icing, seven strawberries, and a little sugar flower on top.

Finn carried it through Willowbrook.

He walked slowly.

He didn't fly.

He didn't sneeze.

He took small, steady steps.

At the bridge, he saw a little blue house.

"Perfect," he whispered.

He knocked.



An old badger opened the door.

"Good morning," said Finn. "Happy birthday!"

The badger blinked.

"My birthday?"

"Yes!"

Finn held out the cake.

The badger looked at it.

Then he looked at Finn.

"Well," he said slowly, "how very unexpected."

Finn smiled.

He liked making people happy.

"Enjoy!"

He hurried back to the bakery.

Mrs. Crumble was waiting.

"All delivered?"

"Yes!"

"Did young Rosie like it?"

Finn stopped.

"Rosie?"

"Yes, Rosie Rabbit. She's seven today."

Finn thought about the badger.

The badger was not seven.

The badger was probably seventy.

He was also not a rabbit.

"Oh," said Finn.

Mrs. Crumble stared.

"Finn?"

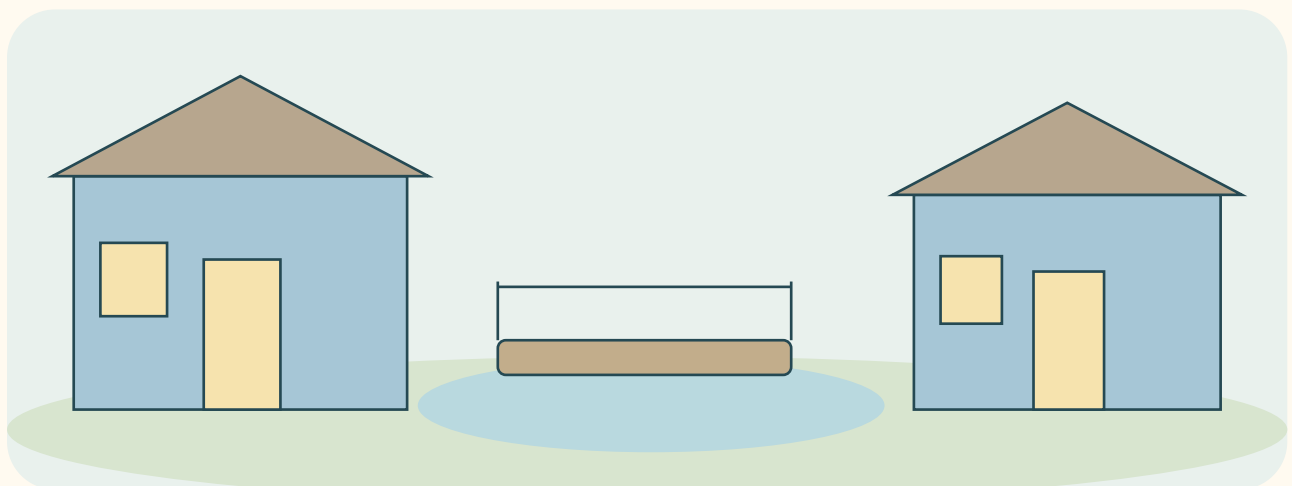
"I may have made a very small mistake."

"How small?"

Finn thought about it.

"Approximately the size of a birthday cake."

They hurried to the bridge.



There were two little blue houses.

One stood just before the bridge.

The other stood just after it.

Finn had visited the wrong one.

At the first house, the old badger was setting the table.

He had found three candles and put them on the cake.

"Oh, hello again!" he said.

Finn's ears drooped.

"I'm terribly sorry. That cake was meant for Rosie Rabbit."

The badger looked at the cake.

Then at the candles.

"Oh."

There was a silence.

"I see," he said.

Finn felt dreadful.

"I can take it back."

The badger nodded.

"Of course."

But he looked a little sad.

Finn noticed.

"Is something wrong?"

"Not at all," said the badger. "It's just that nobody has brought me a birthday cake in a very long time."

Finn's heart squeezed.

Mrs. Crumble looked at the cake.

Then she looked at the badger.

Then she looked at Finn.

"Rosie is expecting her cake this afternoon," she said. "There is still time to bake another."

Finn glanced at the three candles.

"With seven candles this time?"

"For Rosie, yes."

Mrs. Crumble thought for a moment.

Then she smiled.

"I should have written Rosie's name and address on the box. Both houses are blue."

"And I should have asked who the cake was for," said Finn.



"Keep this one, Mr. Badger. It's a gift from the bakery. I'll make Rosie another."

The badger's eyes grew wide.

"Really?"

"Really."

"But it's not my birthday."

Mrs. Crumble shrugged.

"Then we'll call it an ordinary-day cake."

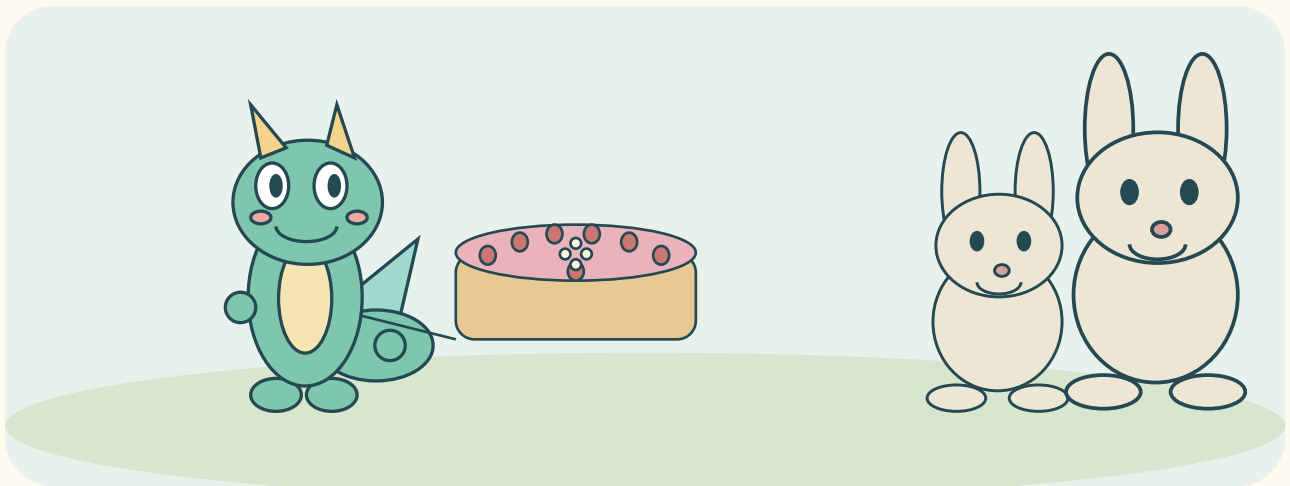
Finn grinned.

He had never heard of an ordinary-day cake.

It sounded wonderful.

That afternoon, Finn delivered a fresh birthday cake to the house after the bridge.

This time, he checked the name on the box and asked for Rosie Rabbit.



Rosie came to the door with her father.

"Seven strawberries!" she cried. "One for every year!"



And Mr. Badger invited Finn, Lily, and Mrs. Crumble to share his.

"How old are you?" Lily asked him.

"Seventy-two."

"Wow," said Finn.

"That's a lot of candles."

Mr. Badger laughed.

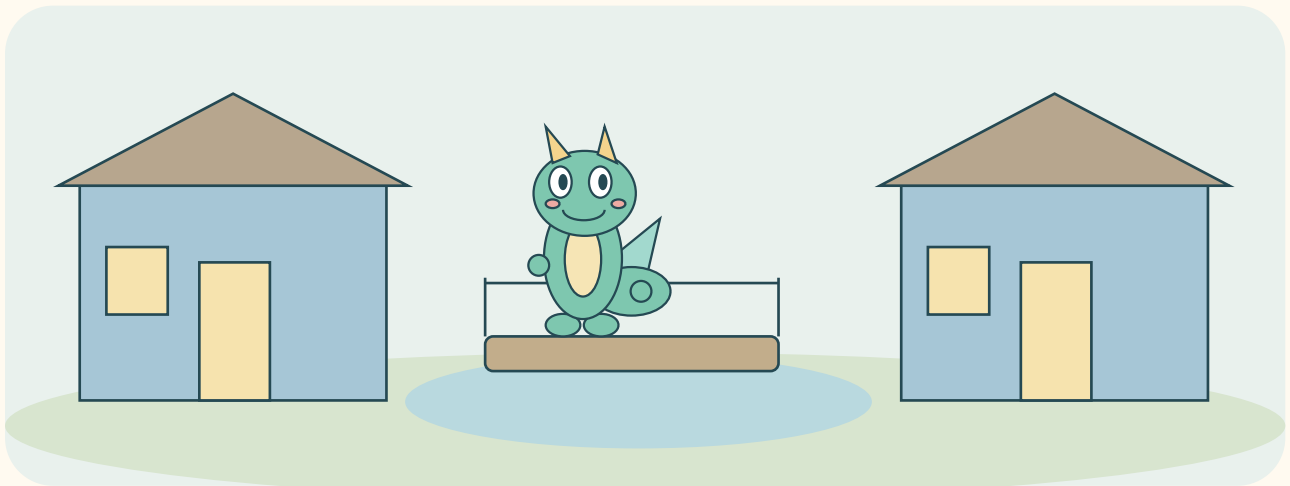
"Not today."

He blew out the three candles.

Then he took a bite.

"This," he declared, "is the best ordinary day I've had in years."

Finn smiled.



And on his way home, Finn passed both little blue houses.

From one came a birthday song.

From the other came Mr. Badger, humming as he washed the plates.

Two blue houses.

Two very good afternoons.

The End.