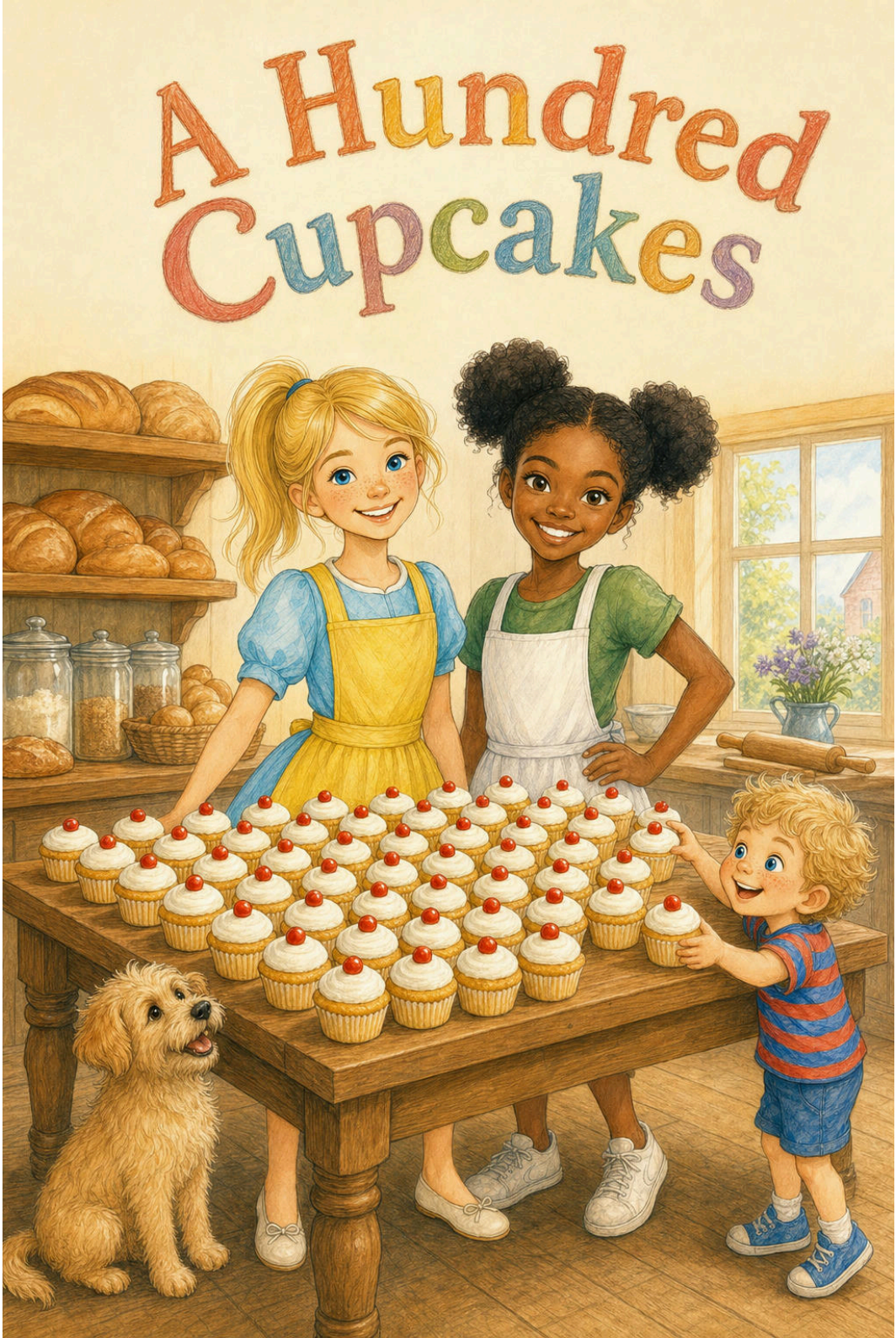

A Hundred Cupcakes

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About This Book

At a Glance

- **Reading level:** English level A1- (CEFR)
- **Age:** 7+
- **Length:** 9 chapters · ±5,900 words

Edition

This is the **first edition** — version 1.3, published September 2026.

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	July 2026	First edition
1.1	August 2026	Language corrections
1.2	September 2026	Reading level relabelled A1- (text unchanged)
1.3	September 2026	Illustration corrections.

About the Story

The Series

Rosie's Bakery sits on Main Street in the little American town of Maple Falls, where Evie and her mom bake fresh bread every morning and cakes to order. Evie loves to bake — and most of all to decorate, with a ring of red cherries on top. In each book she takes on one baking job, from the first mixing bowl to the last cherry, while her little brother Billy tastes everything and Crumble the shop dog waits for a crumb. Warm, gentle stories for children just starting to read English.

This Book

Evie loves Rosie's Bakery. Most of all, she loves to bake.

One morning, Mrs. Green comes in with big news. She and Mr. Green are married — fifty years! The whole family is coming to Maple Falls. She needs one hundred cupcakes — by Saturday.

One hundred is a lot! So Evie has an idea: she will teach her best friend Sara to bake. Apron on! Flour, sugar, eggs, and a hundred red cherries — one for every cupcake.

But a hundred cupcakes is a big job. Not every step goes just right. And little brother Billy loves to taste…

Can Evie and Sara make one hundred perfect cupcakes in time for the party?

Chapter 1: The Big Order



It is morning. The sun is up. Rosie's Bakery is open.

The bread is warm and fresh. It smells so good. Mom is in the kitchen. She bakes the bread. Evie is here too.

"Good morning, Mom," says Evie.

"Good morning, Evie," says Mom.

Evie loves the bakery. She loves the smell of fresh bread. She loves the warm oven. And she loves to bake.

Rosie's Bakery is a happy place. It is on Main Street. The bakery is open all day.

Then the door goes ding. The bell rings. A lady comes in.

"Morning!" says Evie.

It is Mrs. Green. Mrs. Green comes to the bakery a lot.

"Good morning, Mrs. Green," says Mom. "What do you need?"

Mrs. Green smiles big. She is so happy today.

"I have big news," she says.

"Big news?" says Evie. "What is it?"

"On Saturday, we have a party," says Mrs. Green. "A big family party."

"A party!" says Evie. "I love a party."

"Mr. Green and I are married," says Mrs. Green. "Fifty years! Five, zero. Fifty years married."

"Fifty years!" says Mom. "That is a lot of years. What a happy day!"

"Yes," says Mrs. Green. "So all the family comes. They come to Maple Falls. My kids come. And all the little kids too."

"How nice," says Mom.

"So I need a big order," says Mrs. Green. "A very big order."

Mom takes her pen. "What do you need?" says Mom.

Mrs. Green smiles. "I need cupcakes," she says. "One hundred cupcakes!"

Evie stops. "One hundred?" says Evie.

"Yes," says Mrs. Green. "One hundred cupcakes. For the party."

Mom looks at Evie. Evie looks at Mom.

"One hundred cupcakes," says Mom. "That is a lot."

"Can you do it?" says Mrs. Green. "By Saturday?"

Mom thinks. She looks at the kitchen. She looks at the oven. Then she smiles.

"Yes," says Mom. "We can do it. One hundred cupcakes by Saturday."

"Oh, thank you!" says Mrs. Green. "Thank you so much. My family loves cupcakes."

"You are welcome," says Mom. "We start today."

Mrs. Green goes to the door. "See you Saturday!" she says.

Ding. The door shuts.

Now the bakery is quiet.

Mom looks at Evie. Evie looks at Mom. One hundred cupcakes! That is so many.

Evie thinks about the number. One hundred is ten and ten and ten and more. It is a big, big number.

“One hundred cupcakes,” says Mom. “That is a big order, Evie. A very big order.”

“It is a lot,” says Evie. “But I can help! I can help you, Mom.”

“You can help?” says Mom.

“Yes!” says Evie. “I can bake. I baked a cake for Grandpa. Now I can bake cupcakes too.”

Mom smiles. “Good,” says Mom. “I need help. One hundred is a lot for two.”

“I want the party to be nice,” says Evie. “Fifty years! We make the best cupcakes for them.”

“Yes,” says Mom. “We make their day special.”

Evie thinks and thinks. Then she has an idea. Her eyes get big.

“Mom!” says Evie. “I know! Sara can help too!”

“Sara?” says Mom.

“Yes, Sara!” says Evie. “Sara is my best friend. She wants to bake. At the party, she asked me. ‘Can you teach me too?’ And now I can! I can teach Sara!”

Mom laughs. “That is a good idea,” says Mom. “Three bakers. You, me, and Sara.”

“Yes!” says Evie. “I run to Sara now. I ask her right now.”

“Go,” says Mom. “Go and ask Sara.”

Evie runs to the door. Then she stops. She looks back at Mom.

"Mom," says Evie. "One hundred cupcakes. By Saturday. Can we do it?"

Mom looks at Evie. Mom is warm and calm.

"We can," says Mom. "We do it step by step. But we start today."

"One hundred cupcakes," says Evie. "Wow."

Evie opens the door. Ding! And she runs out into the sun.

One hundred cupcakes. By Saturday. Can they do it?

Chapter 2: Sara's First Lesson



Evie runs down Main Street. The sun is warm. She runs fast. She runs to Sara's store.

Sara's family has a store too. They sell food. Apples, carrots, and more. It is a good store.

Evie runs in. "Sara! Sara!" she says.

Sara is by the apples. "Evie! Hi!" she says. "What is it?"

Evie is out of breath. "Big news," she says. "So big!"

"Tell me," says Sara.

"We have an order," says Evie. "A very big order. One hundred cupcakes!"

Sara's eyes get big. "One hundred?" she says.

"Yes!" says Evie. "For Mr. and Mrs. Green. They have a party on Saturday. Fifty years married!"

"Wow," says Sara. "That is a lot of cupcakes."

"It is," says Evie. "And I have an idea. You can help! I can teach you to bake!"

Sara stops. "Me?" she says. "Bake?"

"Yes, you!" says Evie. "At the party, you asked me. 'Can you teach me too?' Now I can! I can teach you!"

Sara is happy. But she is a little scared too.

"I want to bake," says Sara. "But I do not know how. I never bake."

"That is okay," says Evie. "I teach you. You learn. Step by step."

Sara thinks. Then she smiles big.

"Yes!" says Sara. "I want to help. I want to learn!"

Sara runs to her mom. "Mom! Can I go? Evie needs me. We bake cupcakes!"

Sara's mom smiles. "Go," she says. "Have fun. And learn a lot."

The two girls run to the bakery. Ding! goes the door.

"We are here!" says Evie. "Mom, Sara can help!"

Mom smiles. "Good!" she says. "Hi, Sara. Three bakers now. You, me, and Evie."

"Hi, Rosie," says Sara. "I am happy. But I am a little scared."

"That is okay," says Mom. "Evie was scared too, before her first cake. Now she bakes well. You learn, step by step."

Mom gives Sara an apron. It is white and clean.

"Apron on," says Mom. "A baker needs an apron."

Sara puts the apron on. She is a baker now.

"Okay," says Mom. "One hundred cupcakes. We need a plan."

"A plan?" says Sara.

"Yes," says Mom. "One hundred is a big number. But we go step by step."

Mom takes ten pans. She puts them on the table. One, two, three… ten pans.

"Look," says Mom. "Ten pans. And every pan makes ten cupcakes."

"Ten in a pan?" says Sara.

"Yes," says Mom. "Ten in every pan."

Evie counts. "Ten and ten and ten…" she says. "Ten tens!"

"Ten tens make one hundred," says Mom. "See? Ten pans. Ten in every pan. One hundred cupcakes!"

Sara smiles. "Oh!" she says. "Now I see. Ten tens. That is the plan."

"Yes," says Mom. "That is the plan. Not so scary now."

Now they need the food. Mom takes her pen.

"We make a list," says Mom. "What do we need?"

"Flour!" says Evie. "A lot of flour."

"A lot of flour," says Mom. She writes it down.

"Sugar," says Evie. "A lot of sugar too."

"Yes," says Mom. "Cupcakes are sweet. We need a lot of sugar."

"And eggs," says Evie. "We need eggs."

"How many eggs?" says Sara.

Mom thinks. "For one hundred cupcakes? Thirty eggs," she says.

"Thirty eggs!" says Sara. "That is a lot of eggs."

"And butter," says Evie. "And milk."

Mom writes it all down. Flour. Sugar. Thirty eggs. Butter. Milk.

Then Evie has one more thing. Her eyes shine.

"And cherries!" says Evie. "We need cherries. One hundred!"

"One hundred cherries?" says Sara.

"Yes," says Evie. "One cherry on top. Red and sweet. Every cupcake needs one."

Mom smiles. "A cherry on top," she says. "That is Evie's way. She puts a cherry on every cake."

"One hundred cupcakes," says Evie. "And one cherry on every one!"

Sara laughs. "I love it," she says.

Mom looks at the list. It is long. So long!

"Flour, sugar, thirty eggs, butter, milk," says Mom. "And a lot of cherries."

"Wow," says Sara. "That is a lot to buy."

"It is," says Mom. "A very big list."

Evie looks at the list too. So much to buy!

"Come on," says Evie. "To the store!"

Chapter 3: A Lot to Buy



It is a sunny day. Evie and Sara walk to the store. Billy wants to come too.

“I help!” says Billy. “I carry!”

Billy is Evie’s little brother. He is seven. He likes to help. And he likes to taste!

“Okay, Billy,” says Evie. “You can carry. But do not eat.”

Billy laughs. “I will not eat,” he says.

The store is not far. They walk and walk. Then they are there.

Sara’s mom is by the door.

“Hello, girls,” she says. “Hello, Billy.”

“Hi, Mom,” says Sara. “We buy food today. For the cupcakes.”

“Good,” says Sara’s mom. “You know where it all is.”

“I do!” says Sara. “Come. This way.”

Sara knows the store well. She walks fast. Evie and Billy walk with her.

“First, the eggs,” says Sara. “The eggs are here.”

She takes the eggs. “We need thirty eggs,” she says.

“Thirty!” says Billy. “That is a lot.”

“Careful,” says Evie. “Eggs break.”

“I am careful,” says Sara.

“Now the sugar,” says Sara. “The sugar is here.”

Evie takes the sugar. It is a big bag.

“And butter,” says Sara. “And milk. This way.”

Sara takes the butter. She takes the milk.

“I carry too!” says Billy.

“Not yet, Billy,” says Evie. “Wait a little.”

“You know the store well,” says Evie.

Sara smiles. “It is my store,” she says. “I know it all.”

“You are fast,” says Evie. “With you, it is easy.”

“I like it here,” says Sara.

“Now the cherries,” says Evie. “We need one hundred!”

Sara takes a big bag of cherries. The cherries are red. Red and sweet.

Billy looks at the cherries. His eyes get big.

“Cherries!” says Billy. “I like cherries.”

“You can carry them,” says Evie. “But do not eat. Okay?”

“Okay,” says Billy. “I will not eat.”

They say thank you to Sara’s mom.

“Good luck, girls,” she says. “Have fun!”

Then they walk back.

Evie carries the eggs. Sara carries the sugar. Billy carries the cherries.

Billy looks at the cherries. They are red. They are sweet. He wants one. Just one little cherry.

Billy eats one cherry. "Mmm!" he says.

"Billy!" says Evie. "You ate a cherry!"

Billy smiles. "Just one," he says. "It is so good. Sorry, Evie."

Evie laughs. "Oh, Billy," she says. "One is okay. But no more."

"No more," says Billy. And he means it.

They come to the bakery. Ding! goes the door.

Mom is in the kitchen. "You are back!" she says. "What do we have?"

"Eggs, sugar, butter, milk," says Evie. "And cherries!"

"A lot of cherries," says Sara. "But one is in Billy now!"

They all laugh. Billy laughs too.

Mom looks at the food. "Good," she says. "But we need flour. Where is the flour?"

"Flour is not at the store," says Evie. "Flour comes from the mill."

"The mill?" says Sara.

"Yes," says Evie. "Dad works at the mill. The mill makes flour. Dad brings it home."

Just then, the door opens. Ding! It is Dad!

Dad has a big bag. A big bag of flour.

"Flour!" says Dad. "From the mill. For the cupcakes."

Dad puts the bag down. Boom!

Billy pushes the bag. It does not move.

"Wow," says Billy. "So big!"

"Oh!" says Sara. "That bag is big."

"It is," says Dad. "And it is heavy. Flour is heavy."

Sara tries to lift the bag. She cannot move it. "So heavy!" she says.

Evie laughs. "One hundred cupcakes need a lot of flour," she says.

Now it is all on the table. Eggs and sugar. Butter and milk. Flour and cherries.

"Look," says Evie. "We have it all!"

Mom reads the list. "Flour. Sugar. Eggs," she says. "Butter. Milk. Cherries. Yes! We have it all."

Mom smiles. "Good work, bakers," she says. "Now we wait."

"Wait?" says Sara. "Why?"

"Today we buy," says Mom. "And tomorrow we bake."

Sara's eyes shine. "Tomorrow we bake!" she says.

Chapter 4: Mix and Stir



It is morning. The sun is up. It is baking day!

Evie is in the kitchen. Mom is there too. Ding! goes the door. It is Sara.

“Morning, Sara!” says Evie.

“Morning!” says Sara. “Today we bake!”

Sara has her apron. Evie has her apron too. Mom smiles at them both.

It is all on the table. Eggs and flour. Sugar and butter. Milk too. A big bowl waits.

Sara looks at the table. So much food! She is a little scared.

“It is a lot,” says Sara. “Where do we start?”

“Do not be scared,” says Evie. “I will show you. Step by step. It is easy.”

“Step by step,” says Sara. “Okay! I can do that.”

“First, the eggs,” says Evie.

Evie takes an egg. Crack! The egg goes in the bowl.

"Now you," says Evie.

Sara takes an egg. Crack! It goes in the bowl too.

"Good!" says Evie. "You did it!"

They crack the eggs. Crack, crack, crack. One, two, three. More and more. The eggs go in the big bowl.

"You crack eggs well!" says Evie. "No shells!"

Sara laughs. "No shells!" she says.

"Now the flour," says Evie.

Sara pours the flour. The flour is white. It goes in the bowl.

"I did it!" says Sara. She is happy. She is fast.

"Now the butter!" says Sara. "And the milk!"

Sara puts in the butter. She pours the milk. She is quick.

"Wow, Sara!" says Evie. "You learn fast!"

Sara smiles big. "This is fun!" she says.

"Now we stir," says Evie. "We stir and stir."

Evie takes a big spoon. She takes one for Sara too.

"See? I stir," says Evie. She stirs the mix.

Sara stirs. She stirs slow.

"Stir more," says Evie. "Stir and stir."

Sara stirs. Slow at first. Then better. Then better and better.

"You stir well!" says Evie.

"I stir!" says Sara. "Look at me go!"

Evie looks in the bowl. The mix is soft. "Good," she says. "It is ready."

"Now the cups," says Evie.

Evie takes little paper cups. She puts them in the pan. One by one.

"Ten little cups," says Evie. "One pan. Ten cupcakes."

Sara counts the cups. "One, two, three," she says. "…eight, nine, ten! Ten cups!"

"Yes!" says Evie. "Ten cups for ten cupcakes."

"Now we pour," says Evie. "The mix goes in the cups."

Evie pours the mix in a cup. Sara pours too.

Pour, pour, pour. One cup. Two cups. Three cups. All ten cups.

"Not too much," says Evie. "Not too little. Just right."

"Just right!" says Sara.

"All ten cups are full!" says Sara.

"Now the oven," says Evie. "The oven is hot. Be careful."

Mom comes. "I open it," she says. "It is hot."

Mom opens the oven. Evie takes the pan. Careful, careful.

The pan goes in. Mom shuts the oven.

"Well done, girls," says Mom. "Good work."

"The first pan is in!" says Evie.

Sara claps her hands. "The first ten!" she says.

The girls wait. The kitchen is warm. Evie looks at the oven. Sara looks too. They cannot see in. But they can wait.

Then — a smell. A sweet smell.

Sara stops. "Mmm," she says. "What is that?"

"That is the cupcakes," says Evie. "They are baking!"

The bakery smells sweet. So sweet.

Billy runs in. His nose goes up.

"Cupcakes!" he says. "I smell cupcakes! I want to taste!"

"Not yet, Billy," says Evie. "Wait. Ten cupcakes are baking now."

Billy sits by the oven. Crumble sits by him. They wait and wait.

Billy taps his foot. "Is it now?" he says.

"Not yet, Billy," says Evie. "Soon."

"Ten cupcakes," says Sara. "And then?"

Evie smiles. "And then ninety more!" she says.

"Ninety more!" says Sara. Her eyes get big.

The first pan bakes. The bakery smells sweet. And baking day is here!

Chapter 5: No Sugar!



Ding! goes the oven. The cupcakes are done!

“Mom!” says Evie. “The first pan!”

Mom comes. “I take it out,” she says. “It is hot.”

Mom opens the oven. She takes the pan out. Ten little cupcakes! They are warm. They smell good.

“Look!” says Sara. “They look good!”

“They do!” says Evie. “Well done, Sara!”

Sara is so happy. “My first cupcakes!” she says.

Billy jumps up. Crumble jumps up too.

“Cupcakes!” says Billy. “Now can I taste?”

Evie laughs. “Yes, Billy,” she says. “You are the taste tester.”

Billy loves this job. He tastes all the cakes. Every one.

Billy takes a cupcake. It is warm. He takes a big bite.

Then Billy stops. He does not smile.

"Yuck!" says Billy. "Yuck, yuck, yuck!"

"Yuck?" says Evie. "Why yuck?"

"It is not sweet," says Billy. "Not sweet at all!"

"Not sweet?" says Sara. "But cupcakes are sweet!"

Evie takes a bite too. She stops. Oh no. Billy is right. It is not sweet.

"He is right," says Evie. "It is not sweet."

Sara looks down. "Why?" she says. "What is wrong?"

Evie looks at the table. She looks and looks. Then she sees it.

There, on the table: the sugar. The big bag of sugar. It is full. It is not open.

"The sugar!" says Evie. "Look. The sugar!"

Sara looks. "Oh no," she says. "The sugar."

"We forgot the sugar," says Evie. "No sugar in the bowl."

Sara puts her hands over her face. "I forgot it!" she says. "I added the flour. Then the butter. I forgot the sugar!"

Sara is very sad. Her eyes are wet.

"I am sorry," she says. "I am so sorry, Evie. I did it wrong."

Evie comes to Sara. She takes her hand.

"Sara," she says. "Look at me. It is okay."

"But the cupcakes!" says Sara. "They are all wrong!"

"It is okay," says Evie. "You forgot. But me too. I am here. I watched you. I did not see the sugar either. Not just you, Sara."

Sara looks up. "You too?" she says.

"Me too," says Evie. "Me too."

Evie smiles at her.

"Cupcakes are hard," says Evie. "It does not have to be perfect. We fix it. We bake again."

Sara wipes her eyes. "We bake again?" she says.

"Yes," says Evie. "We bake again. Come on."

Mom smiles. "Well done, Evie," she says. "A good baker fixes it."

Evie takes a new bowl. A big one.

"Now, step by step," says Evie. "Eggs first."

Crack, crack. The eggs go in. Then the flour. White and soft.

"And now," says Evie. "The sugar!"

Sara takes the sugar. "The sugar!" she says. "I do not forget it now!"

Sara puts the sugar in the bowl. A lot of sugar. Sweet, white sugar.

"Yes!" says Evie. "Now the butter. Now the milk."

Evie takes a spoon. Sara takes a spoon too. They stir and stir. Round and round. The mix is soft.

"Now the cups," says Evie. They pour it in. Pour, pour, pour. Ten little cups.

"Ten cupcakes," says Sara. "Just right!"

The pan goes in the oven. Mom shuts it.

"Now we wait," says Evie. Billy sits down. Crumble sits too. They wait and wait. Then the sweet smell comes back.

Ding! The cupcakes are done. Mom takes them out.

"Now, Billy," says Evie. "Taste again."

Billy takes a cupcake. He takes a small bite. He waits.

Then Billy smiles big. "Mmm!" he says. "Sweet! So sweet! Yum!"

"Yes!" says Sara. She jumps. "Sweet cupcakes!"

Crumble barks. He is happy too.

"You fixed it!" says Evie. "Good work, Sara!"

Sara laughs. "We fixed it," she says. "We fixed it together!"

Evie looks at the table. Ten good cupcakes. Only ten.

"Ten cupcakes," she says. "And we need a hundred."

Sara looks too. "A hundred!" she says. "So many!"

"We know how now," says Evie. "So we bake. We bake and bake and bake!"

Chapter 6: Ten, Twenty, Thirty...



Now the girls know how. So they bake. They bake all day.

Ten good cupcakes are on the table. Ten! And they need a hundred.

“Come on,” says Evie. “We can do it.”

Pan in. Pan out. Pan in. Pan out. The oven is hot. The bakery smells sweet.

Evie cracks the eggs. Sara adds the flour. Then the sugar! Sara does not forget now.

“The sugar too!” says Sara. “I know now!”

Then the butter and milk. They stir and stir. The mix is soft. Sara pours it in the cups. Ten little cups. The pan goes in.

“Now we wait,” says Evie.

Ding! A pan is done. Mom takes it out. Ten more cupcakes!

Evie puts them on the table. She counts.

“Ten,” she says. “And ten more. That is twenty.”

"Twenty!" says Sara.

Billy jumps up. "Twenty cupcakes!" he says. Billy is very loud.

They bake again. Eggs, flour, sugar, butter, milk. Stir and stir. Pour, pour, pour. The pan goes in.

Ding! Ten more.

"Twenty," says Evie. "And ten more. Thirty!"

"Thirty!" says Billy. So loud!

Crumble sits by the oven. He waits. He wants a cupcake too.

"Not now, Crumble," says Evie. "These are for the party."

Crumble puts his head down. He waits and waits.

Pan in. Pan out. More eggs. More flour. More sugar. The girls work fast.

Ding! Ten more.

"Forty," says Sara. "Look! Forty cupcakes!"

"Forty!" says Billy.

The table gets full. Row after row.

Ding! Ten more.

"Fifty," says Evie. "Fifty cupcakes! Half of a hundred!"

Sara stops. She sits down. "I am tired," she says.

Evie is tired too. Her arms hurt. "Me too," she says.

Mom smiles. "Milk break," she says.

Mom gives them milk. Cold milk in big cups. Billy gets milk too. Crumble gets water.

They drink and rest. The milk is good.

"Fifty more to go," says Evie.

"We can do it," says Sara. "Come on!"

Up they get. Aprons on. Back to work.

Eggs, flour, sugar. Stir and pour. Pan in, pan out. Again and again.

Ding! “Sixty!” says Evie.

Ding! “Seventy!” says Sara.

“Seventy cupcakes!” says Billy. He counts every one. Loud, loud, loud.

The table is so full now. Cupcakes here. Cupcakes there. Cupcakes all over.

Ding! Ten more.

“Eighty,” says Evie.

“Eighty!” says Billy.

Ding! Ten more.

“Ninety,” says Sara. “Ninety cupcakes! Only ten more!”

One pan is left. The last pan. Evie pours it in. Ten little cups.

“The last ten,” she says. “Come on, cupcakes!”

The pan goes in the oven. They wait. They watch. Billy watches too. Crumble watches.

Ding!

“Done!” says Mom.

Mom takes the last pan out. Ten warm cupcakes. Evie puts them on the table.

“Ninety,” she says. “And ten more…”

They all stop. They count together.

“One hundred!” they say. “One hundred cupcakes!”

Billy jumps up and down. “A hundred! A hundred!” he says.

Crumble barks. Sara claps. Evie laughs.

The big table is full. One hundred little cupcakes. Row after row after row.

Now it is evening. The sun is low. It is dark by the window.

Sara sits down. She is so tired. “One hundred,” she says. “We did it, Evie.”

“We did it,” says Evie. “Well done, Sara.”

The girls look at the table. So many cupcakes! They are tired. They are happy.

But Evie sees one thing. The cupcakes are plain. No icing. No cherries.

“Sara,” says Evie. “Look. No icing yet.”

Sara looks. “Oh!” she says. “No cherries either!”

“Tomorrow is Saturday,” says Evie. “We make the icing. And the cherries.”

Sara smiles. “A hundred cherries,” she says.

“A hundred cherries,” says Evie. “One on every cupcake.”

Mom comes. “Bed now, girls,” she says. “Big day tomorrow.”

Evie looks at the table again. One hundred! But not done yet.

Tomorrow: the icing and the cherries.

Chapter 7: A Hundred Cherries



It is morning. It is early. The sun is up. The birds sing. It is quiet on Main Street.

Evie is at the bakery. The door goes ding. Sara runs in.

“Morning!” says Evie.

“Morning!” says Sara. “The party is today!”

“Yes!” says Evie. “First the icing. Then the cherries.”

The cupcakes are still on the table. Row after row. But they are plain. No icing yet.

Mom brings a big bowl. In it are butter and sugar. Evie mixes and mixes. Sara mixes too. The icing gets soft. It gets white.

Billy runs in. “Icing!” he says. “Can I taste?”

“Just a little,” says Evie.

Billy puts a finger in. He tastes it. “Mmm!” he says. “So sweet!”

Evie laughs. “One taste. No more,” she says.

“Look,” says Evie. “Soft and white. Now we spread it.”

Evie takes one cupcake. She takes a spoon of icing. She spreads it slow. Smooth and white.

“See?” she says. “Spread it smooth.”

Now Sara tries. She takes a cupcake. She spreads the icing. But it is not smooth. It is bumpy!

“Oh no,” says Sara. “Mine is bumpy.”

“That is okay,” says Evie. “Try again. Not too much. Just a little.”

Sara tries again. A little better. Her second one is good. Her hand goes slow now. And better. And better.

She does ten. Her first one is bumpy. Her tenth one is smooth. It is perfect!

“Look!” says Sara. “It is smooth now!”

“Perfect!” says Evie. “You did it, Sara!”

Sara is so happy. “I can do it!” she says. “Look at me!”

“Yes, you can,” says Evie. “Now we do them all.”

So they work. Evie spreads. Sara spreads. White icing on every cupcake. One and then the next. Slow and careful. Row after row. The plain ones are white now.

Then Evie stops. “Now the best part,” she says.

“The cherries!” says Sara.

Evie has a big bowl. It is full of red cherries. She puts one on top. Red on white.

“One cherry on top,” says Evie. “One for every cupcake.”

“My turn!” says Sara. She puts one on. “One!” she says.

Evie puts one on. “Two!”

Sara puts one on. “Three!”

“Four. Five. Six,” they say. On and on. Their hands go fast.

Then a cherry here. A cherry there. One red cherry on top. Row after row.

Red on white. So pretty!

Billy comes in. He looks at the table. His eyes are big.

“Wow,” he says. “So many!”

“Do not eat one,” says Evie.

“I will not,” says Billy.

But Billy looks. And looks. He walks around the table. He is very quiet now. He looks at every red cherry. He looks and looks.

Crumble comes too. He sits by the table. He wants one.

“Not now, Crumble,” says Evie. “These are for the party.”

Crumble puts his head down. He waits.

More icing. More red cherries. Evie and Sara work and work. Slow and careful.

At last they stop. Done!

Every cupcake has white icing. Every cupcake has a red cherry. The table is full. Row after row after row.

Mom comes and looks. “So pretty,” she says. “Good work, girls.”

“We did it!” says Sara. “They are so pretty!”

“Yes,” says Evie. “A hundred cupcakes. A hundred cherries.”

Sara claps. Billy claps. Crumble barks.

But Evie wants to be sure. Evie always counts.

“Wait,” she says. “Let me count. One more time.”

Evie looks at the table. She points. She counts slow.

"Ten. Twenty. Thirty," she says.

Billy walks around the table too. He looks and looks.

"Forty. Fifty. Sixty," says Evie.

"Seventy. Eighty. Ninety."

Now the last ten. Evie counts them one by one. She points at each red cherry.

Evie stops. Her smile goes away.

"Wait," she says.

She counts again. One more time…

Chapter 8: Ninety-Nine



Evie counts again. She points at each red cherry. Slow this time.

“Ten. Twenty. Thirty,” she says.

“Forty. Fifty. Sixty.”

“Seventy. Eighty. Ninety.”

Now the last ten. One by one. Her finger stops.

“…Ninety-eight. Ninety-nine.”

Evie looks up. “Ninety-nine!” she says.

“Ninety-nine?” says Sara.

“Yes,” says Evie. “Not a hundred!”

“But we made a hundred,” says Sara. “I counted them too.”

“One is gone,” says Evie. “One cupcake is gone!”

“Oh no!” says Sara. “Where is it?”

So they look. Evie looks under the table. She looks on the shelf. She looks by the door.

Sara looks too. She looks by the oven. She looks on the chair.

“Billy, help us look,” says Evie.

But Billy does not move. He sits very still. He is very quiet.

“Not here,” says Sara.

“Not here,” says Evie. “Where is it?”

Then Sara points. “Look! On the floor!”

On the floor are little crumbs. Small and white. A few here. A few there.

“Crumbs,” says Evie. “Cake crumbs!”

Crumble comes. He puts his nose down. He sniffs. Sniff, sniff, sniff.

“Good dog,” says Evie. “Find it, Crumble.”

Crumble sniffs the crumbs. He goes slow. One step. Two steps. The crumbs go this way.

Evie follows. Sara follows too. They look at the floor.

More crumbs here. More crumbs there. The crumbs go on and on.

The crumbs go to the chair. Then they stop.

Crumble sits. He looks up. Evie looks up too.

There is Billy. He sits very still.

Billy has icing on his cheek. White icing! And a little red too.

Evie looks at his cheek. Then she knows.

“Billy?” says Evie.

Billy’s face goes red.

“I ate one,” says Billy. “The cupcake. It is so good. So sweet.” He looks down. “Sorry, Evie.”

Evie looks at Billy. She is very quiet.

Then Mom comes in. “What is it?” she says.

“Billy ate a cupcake,” says Sara. “Now we have ninety-nine.”

“We need a hundred,” says Evie. “For the party. And now one is gone.”

Billy’s eyes are wet. “I am sorry,” he says. “I did not eat more. I just taste one.”

Mom looks at Billy. But she does not get mad. She smiles.

“Oh, Billy,” she says. “It is okay.”

“But we need a hundred,” says Evie.

Mom smiles more. “A baker always bakes extra,” she says.

“Extra?” says Evie.

“Yes. Come,” says Mom.

Mom goes to the back. They all go too. Even Crumble goes.

In the back is a pan. On it are ten cupcakes. Small and plain. No icing yet!

“Extra!” says Evie. “Ten more!”

“A baker always bakes extra,” says Mom again. “Just in case.”

“Ten extra ones,” says Evie. “One for Billy!”

Everyone laughs. Even Billy.

Evie takes one extra. It has no icing. No cherry.

“We fix it,” she says. “Sara, the icing.”

Sara gets the icing. Evie spreads it. Smooth and white. Then one red cherry on top.

“There,” says Evie. She puts it on the table. “One more!”

Now it looks the same. Red on white.

She counts one more time. Slow and sure. Ten. Twenty. All the way up.

“…ninety-nine. One hundred!” she says. “A hundred cupcakes!”

"A hundred!" says Sara. "We did it!"

Billy claps. Crumble barks. Mom laughs.

Evie looks at Billy. He is still sad.

Evie goes to him. She gives him a big hug.

"It is okay, Billy," she says. "You said sorry. That is good."

Billy smiles. "I love your icing," he says.

"I know," says Evie. She laughs. "No more, okay?"

"No more," says Billy. And he means it.

Mom claps her hands. "Now the party!" she says.

She brings the boxes. Ten big boxes. White and clean.

Evie looks at the table. Then at the boxes.

"A hundred cupcakes," she says. "And ten boxes."

The boxes are ready. Time for the party!

Chapter 9: The Party



The boxes are on the table. Ten big boxes. White and clean.

Evie opens the first box. “Ten cupcakes in a box,” she says.

“Ten boxes,” says Sara. “Ten in every box.”

“Ten tens,” says Evie. “A hundred!”

They fill the boxes. Slow and careful. One cupcake. Two. Three.

Sara sets them in a row. No cupcake falls. Not one.

Box by box, they work. Now all ten boxes are full.

Mom looks in the boxes. “Careful now,” she says. “Very careful.”

Evie thinks of Grandpa’s cake. Her first cake. She holds a box, slow and careful, all the way.

“I know,” says Evie. “Slow and careful.”

Dad comes in. “Ready?” he says. “The car is here. Time to go!”

They carry the boxes out. Box by box. Slow and careful.

Evie holds two boxes. Sara holds two boxes. Billy holds one — a light one.

"Slow, Billy," says Evie. "No running."

"I am slow," says Billy. And he is.

The boxes go in the car. Dad drives. Off they go!

It is not a long drive. Soon the car slows down.

The car stops. "Here we are," says Dad.

It is the Greens' house. Evie looks out. "Wow!" she says.

The big yard is full. So many people! So many children!

The children run and play. They laugh and run some more.

More people come. The yard is full and happy.

Mrs. Green comes to the car. "You are here!" she says. "Come in, come in!"

They carry the boxes in. Slow and careful. Into the big yard.

There is a long table. Evie puts the boxes down.

Box by box, they take them out. Row after row.

A hundred cupcakes on the table! A hundred red cherries on top!

The kids come and look. "So many!" they say. "Yum!"

"Wait," says a woman. "Wait for Mr. and Mrs. Green!"

Then Mr. and Mrs. Green come. They stand by the table.

"Fifty years!" says a man. "Fifty years married!"

They all clap. Clap, clap, clap! The whole family claps.

Evie claps. Sara claps. Billy claps the most.

Mr. Green smiles. Mrs. Green smiles too. "Thank you all," they say.

Then Mrs. Green looks at the table. She looks at the cupcakes.

"Oh my," she says. "So many! And so pretty!"

She looks at Evie. She looks at Sara.

"You two made all these?" she says.

"Yes," says Evie. "Evie and Sara. Together."

Mrs. Green smiles big. "The best cupcakes in Maple Falls," she says.

She gives Evie a hug. She gives Sara a hug too. "Thank you, girls," she says.

Evie is so proud. Her face is warm.

Sara looks at the long table. Then she looks at her hands.

"I can bake now!" says Sara. "Me! A hundred cupcakes!"

"We baked them," says Evie. "We bake together."

The two friends laugh. It is a very good day.

Mr. Green takes a cupcake. He takes a big bite.

"Mmm," he says. "So sweet. So good."

Billy nods. "I know!" he says. "I tasted one too!"

They all laugh. Even Mr. Green.

The kids eat them up. One by one they go.

Soon the boxes are empty. Every cupcake is gone.

"Good work, girls," says Dad. "Now we go home."

"Bye!" says Mrs. Green. "Thank you, Evie. Thank you, Sara."

Evie and Sara wave. Then they walk to the car.

Dad drives home. Evie is tired and happy.

Then she sees something. On Main Street.

"Look!" says Evie. "The empty house!"

A big truck is there. Boxes come out of it.

Boxes and more boxes. A bed. A chair. A little red bike.

"A new family comes to Maple Falls," says Mom.

"A new family?" says Evie. "New children too?"

"Maybe," says Mom. "We will see."

Evie waves at the truck. A big, happy wave.

Maybe a new friend. Maybe soon.

Evie smiles. It is a very good day.

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