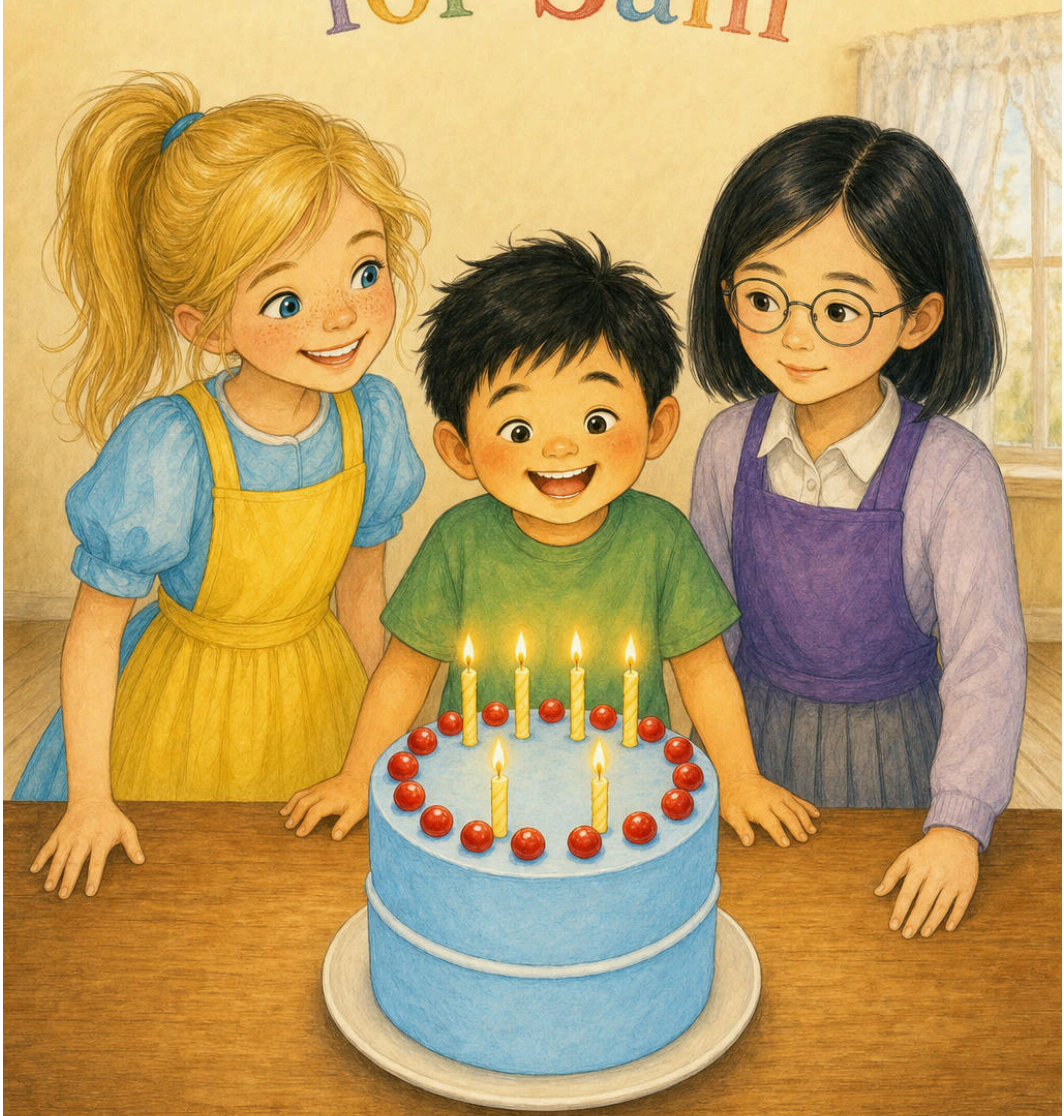
Six Candles for Sam



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About This Book

At a Glance

- **Reading level:** English level A1- (CEFR)
- **Age:** 7+
- **Length:** 8 chapters · ±5,600 words

Edition

This is the **first edition** — version 1.0, published September 2026.

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	September 2026	First edition

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

Sam is six on Friday! He knows just what he wants: a BIG cake. A BLUE cake. With six candles.

Evie says yes right away. She knows all about birthday cakes — she made one for Grandpa, and a hundred cupcakes too. So on Wednesday she starts early, all by herself. Flour, flour, flour. That is fast!

But the first cake comes out hard and dry. Too much flour.

Tess lives across the street. Tess is quiet, and Tess is new. But Tess can count, and Tess can measure. One cup. Two cups. Three. Four. Exactly four.

Five days. One big blue cake. Can Evie and Tess get it right in time for Sam's party?

Chapter 1: A cake for Sam



It is morning at Rosie's Bakery.

The bread is out of the oven. The shop smells good. Mom puts the fresh bread on the counter. Loaf after loaf.

Evie sits by the window. She holds baby June.

June is the baby of the family. She is small and warm. June has no words yet.

"Ba, ba, ba!" says June.

"Morning, June," says Evie.

June grabs Evie's apron. She pulls and pulls. Then she laughs.

Evie laughs too. "That is my apron," she says. "My yellow apron. Not for you."

June pulls it again. She laughs and laughs.

"June likes you," says Mom.

"I like June," says Evie. "She is my baby sister."

Ding! The door opens.

“Morning!” says Evie.

Mrs. Lee comes in. Tess comes too. And Sam.

The Lees live across the street. They are the new family. Mr. Lee, Mrs. Lee, Tess and Sam.

Sam runs in. Sam always runs.

“Hello, Sam,” says Evie. “Hello, Tess.”

Tess stops by the door. She stays there. She just looks.

“We have news,” says Mrs. Lee. “Big news.”

“Tell them, Mom!” says Sam. “Tell them!”

Mrs. Lee smiles. “Sam is six,” she says. “On Friday.”

“Six!” says Sam. “I am six on Friday!”

Billy runs in from the back. Billy hears everything.

“Six?” says Billy.

“Six!” says Sam.

Mrs. Lee looks at Mom. “Can you make a cake?” she says. “A cake for Sam?”

“We make cakes,” says Mom. “Good cakes.”

“The best cakes,” says Evie. “In Maple Falls.”

Sam runs to the counter. He jumps up and down.

“I want a BIG cake!” says Sam.

“A big cake,” says Mom. “Okay.”

“A BLUE cake!” says Sam.

“Blue?” says Billy. “A blue cake?”

“Blue!” says Sam. “Blue is my color. And candles. Six candles!”

Evie counts on her fingers. “One, two, three, four, five, six.”

"Six," says Sam. "One for every year."

Mom looks at Mrs. Lee. "A big blue cake," she says. "With six candles. We can do it."

"Thank you," says Mrs. Lee. "It is his first birthday in Maple Falls."

"Then we have a party," says Mom. "A real party."

Evie stands up. She gives June to Mom.

"I make the cake," says Evie. "I know birthday cakes."

Mom smiles. "You do," she says.

"I made a cake for Grandpa," says Evie. "A whole cake. All by myself."

"And a hundred cupcakes," says Billy.

"Yes," says Evie. "A hundred!"

Tess is still by the door. She is very quiet.

But Tess looks and looks. She looks at the big bowls. She looks at the big oven. She looks at the flour bin.

The bakery is big. Tess is new here.

Evie sees her.

"Tess," says Evie. "You can help. You can help with the cake."

Tess looks at Evie. "Me?" she says.

"Yes. You."

Tess says nothing for a moment.

"Maybe," she says.

"Sam!" says Billy. "Come and see Crumble!"

"The dog!" says Sam. "Crumble the dog!"

Sam and Billy run out the back. Crumble runs too. Crumble likes Sam a lot.

Mrs. Lee laughs. "Sam runs and runs," she says. "Come, Tess. We go home."

Tess goes to the door. Then she stops. She looks back at the big bowls. One more time.

Ding! The door shuts.

Mom looks at the wall. A calendar hangs there.

“Come here, Evie,” she says. “Look at this.”

Evie comes and looks. Mom puts her finger on the calendar.

“Today is Monday,” says Mom. “And here is Friday.”

“Friday is the party,” says Evie.

“Yes. Now count.”

Evie counts the days. “One. Two. Three. Four. Five.”

“Five days,” says Mom.

“Five days,” says Evie.

She looks at the calendar one more time. Monday, today. Then Friday, the party.

A big cake. A blue cake. Six candles. In five days.

Evie looks out the window. Tess walks across the street. She walks slow.

“Mom,” says Evie. “Tess wants to help. I know it.”

“Then ask her again,” says Mom.

Five days. And Tess.

Will Tess come?

Chapter 2: Two cups



It is Tuesday morning.

Evie is in the bakery. The big table is clean. Two big bowls stand on it.

Mom looks at the calendar. Evie looks too.

“Today is Tuesday,” says Mom. “Now count again.”

Evie counts the days. “Four,” she says. “Four days. Then the party.”

“Four days,” says Mom.

Ding! The door opens.

“Morning!” says Sara.

Sara comes in. She has her white apron. Sara bakes here now.

“Morning, Sara,” says Evie. “We make a cake for Sam. A big cake. A blue cake.”

“Blue?” says Sara. “Then we need a list.”

Sara takes paper. She takes a pencil.

"I check the list," she says. "Every time. That is my job."

Ding! The door opens again.

Evie looks up. It is Tess.

Tess stands by the door. She is very quiet.

"Hello, Tess," says Evie. "Come in. Come and see."

Tess does not move. Then she does.

She walks past the counter. She comes to the back. She comes to the big table.

Tess puts her hand on a bowl. The bowl is big and cold.

"Big," says Tess.

"Very big," says Evie. "Tess, this is Sara. Sara bakes here too."

"Hello, Tess," says Sara.

"Hello," says Tess.

"Sam is six on Friday," says Evie. "We make his cake."

"I know," says Tess. "Sam says it all day."

Sara laughs. Tess smiles a little.

Mom comes to the table.

"Now the plan," says Mom. "Sam wants a big cake."

"A BIG cake," says Evie.

"So we make two cakes," says Mom. "One on top of the other."

"Two cakes?" says Sara.

"Two cakes. Two pans."

Mom puts two round pans on the table. Sara writes it down.

"Two pans," says Sara.

"Good," says Mom. "Now the flour."

Mom goes to the shelf. She takes something down. It is a little cup.

"This is a measuring cup," says Mom. "We say: a cup."

Evie knows the cup. Tess looks and looks.

"One cake needs two cups of flour," says Mom. "Two cups. Not more. Not less."

"A baker measures," she says. "We measure the flour. We measure the sugar. Every time."

Then Tess says something. She says it fast.

"Two cakes," says Tess. "Four cups."

They all look at Tess.

"Four cups," says Mom. "That is right."

"Wow," says Sara. "That is fast!"

Tess looks down. But she smiles a little.

"You count well, Tess," says Mom.

Sara reads the list. "Flour. Sugar. Butter. Eggs. Milk."

Mom says how much. Sara writes it down.

"Four cups of flour," says Tess. "Two cups of sugar. Four eggs."

She counts it all. Then she counts it again.

"Two times?" says Sara.

"Two times," says Tess. "Then it is right."

Sara laughs. "I like that," she says.

"And the blue?" says Evie. "Sam wants a blue cake."

"Ah," says Mom. "The blue."

Mom goes to the shelf again. She takes a little bottle. The bottle is small. It is blue inside.

“Blue drops,” says Mom. “For the icing.”

Evie looks at the bottle. “It is so little,” she says.

“We need just a little,” says Mom. “Three drops. Then the icing is blue.”

Billy runs in. Billy hears everything.

“Blue!” says Billy. “I want ten drops!”

“No, Billy,” says Mom. “Three drops.”

“Ten drops!” says Billy.

“Three,” says Tess. “Three is right.”

Billy looks at Tess. Then he laughs. “Okay,” he says. “Three.”

“And six candles,” says Evie.

“Six candles,” says Sara. She writes it down.

Sara checks the list one more time. Flour. Sugar. Butter. Eggs. Milk. Blue drops. Six candles.

“The list is ready,” says Sara.

“Good,” says Mom. “Tomorrow we bake.”

“Tomorrow?” says Evie.

“Tomorrow,” says Mom.

Evie looks at the two pans. She looks at the little cup. Four cups of flour. Two cakes. One big blue cake.

“Can we start now?” says Evie.

Mom laughs. “Not now,” she says. “Tomorrow.”

Tess goes to the door. Then she stops. She looks back at the big table.

“Tess,” says Evie. “Come tomorrow. We need you.”

Tess is quiet for a moment. Then she nods.

Ding! The door shuts.

“She comes,” says Evie.

“She comes,” says Mom.

Four days. And tomorrow they bake.

Evie looks at the little cup one more time.

She wants to start now.

Chapter 3: Too much



It is Wednesday. It is early.

The sun is up. Main Street is quiet. The shop is quiet.

Evie is up early. She comes down the stairs.

She is alone in the bakery.

Evie looks at the calendar on the wall.

“Today is Wednesday,” says Evie.

She counts the days on the calendar.

“Three,” she says. “Three days. Then the party.”

Today they bake the cake. Today is the big day.

Evie takes her apron. Her apron is yellow. She puts it on.

“I know birthday cakes,” says Evie. “I made a cake for Grandpa. I made a hundred cupcakes.”

Mom is in the shop. She puts out the fresh bread.

“Mom!” calls Evie. “I start now!”

“Start,” calls Mom. “I will come soon.”

Crumble comes in. He lies down by the oven.

“Not now, Crumble,” says Evie. “Later you get a cookie.”

Evie puts the big bowl on the table.

Eggs first. One, two, three, four. Crack, crack, crack, crack.

“Four eggs,” says Evie. “Two for every cake.”

Then the sugar. Then the butter. Then the milk.

Now the flour.

The little cup stands on the shelf. It is clean. Evie sees it.

Four cups of flour. One. Two. Three. Four.

But that is slow. And Evie is in a hurry.

Sara comes soon. Tess comes soon. Evie wants to be ready.

Evie takes the big spoon.

“A big cake needs a lot of flour,” she says.

Flour. Flour. Flour.

Spoon after spoon. Big white spoons of flour.

It goes fast. Evie is in a hurry.

Evie does not count. Evie does not measure.

The bowl is full. White flour on the table too.

“There,” says Evie. “A lot of flour. For a big cake.”

The little cup stands on the shelf. It is still clean.

Ding! The door opens.

“Morning!” says Sara.

“Morning,” says Tess.

“Morning!” says Evie. “I am up early. Come and see!”

Sara puts on her white apron. Tess comes to the big table.

“You start early,” says Sara.

“I want to be ready,” says Evie.

Sara takes the list. Sara checks the list. Every time.

“Eggs?” says Sara.

“In,” says Evie.

“Sugar?”

“In.”

“Butter?”

“In.”

“Flour?”

“In,” says Evie. “A lot of flour.”

“Milk?”

“In.”

“All in!” says Sara. “Good. Now we bake.”

The list is right. All of it is in the bowl.

Sara is happy. Evie is happy too.

Tess does not say much. Tess looks.

She looks at the shelf. The little cup stands there.

The cup is clean. No flour on it. No flour in it.

Then Tess looks in the big bowl. So much flour. So much white.

Four cups. That is not four cups.

Tess opens her mouth. She wants to say it.

Then she stops. She keeps it in.

"I am new here," thinks Tess. "Evie bakes every day. I do not bake here. Maybe I am wrong."

So Tess says nothing. She says nothing at all.

Mom comes in from the shop.

"Good morning, girls," says Mom. "Now we mix."

Evie mixes. Stir, stir, stir.

The spoon moves slow.

"It is thick," says Evie.

"Stir well," says Mom.

Sara stirs too. Then Evie stirs again.

Tess watches the bowl. Tess is very quiet.

Mom puts the two round pans on the table.

Evie fills them. One pan. Two pans.

"One cake and one cake," says Sara.

Mom opens the oven. The oven is hot.

The pans go in. Mom shuts the oven.

"Now we wait," says Mom.

They wait. Crumble waits too.

Soon the bakery smells warm and sweet.

"Mmm," says Sara. "It smells good."

"It smells sweet," says Evie. "It is a good smell."

"Three days," says Evie. "Then the party. Sam gets his big blue cake."

"And tomorrow the blue," says Sara. "Three drops."

"Three drops," says Tess.

Sara laughs. Mom smiles.

Evie looks at the oven. She is happy.

But Tess does not look at the oven.

Tess looks at the shelf.

The little cup stands there. It is clean.

Tess looks at it one more time.

Something is not right.

Chapter 4: The hard cake



Ding! goes the oven.

“The cakes!” says Evie.

Mom opens the oven. Warm air comes out.

She takes out the two pans. She puts them on the table.

Evie looks. Sara looks. Tess looks too.

The cakes are brown on top.

But the cakes are low. The cakes are flat.

“Oh,” says Evie. “They are low.”

“A little low,” says Mom.

“A big cake is tall,” says Sara.

“Two cakes make it tall,” says Evie. “One on top of the other.”

Ding! The door opens. Billy runs in.

Billy hears everything.

“Cake!” says Billy. “I taste first!”

“Wait,” says Mom. “They are hot.”

They wait. The cakes are warm now.

Mom cuts a little bit for Billy.

Billy tastes first. That is his job.

Billy bites.

“Ow!” says Billy. “It is hard!”

“Hard?” says Evie.

“Hard,” says Billy. “Very hard.”

Evie takes a little bit. She bites too.

The cake is hard. The cake is dry.

It is not soft. It is not good.

“You are right,” says Evie. “It is hard. And dry.”

“Very dry,” says Billy. “I want milk!”

Mom tastes it. She tastes it slow.

“Too much flour,” says Mom.

“Too much flour?” says Sara.

“Too much flour,” says Mom. “One cake needs two cups. Not more.”

Evie looks at the big bowl. She looks at the big spoon.

She knows it now.

“I did not measure,” says Evie.

Mom looks at her.

“I used the big spoon,” says Evie. “I did not count. I was in a hurry. I was alone.”

Evie is sad. She looks down at her yellow apron.

“Thank you for saying it,” says Mom.

Then a small voice says something.

It is Tess.

“I saw the cup,” says Tess.

Evie and Sara look at Tess.

“I saw the cup on the shelf. It was clean.”

“I did not say it.”

Tess looks down too.

“Why not?” says Sara.

“I am new here,” says Tess. “Maybe I was wrong.”

Mom comes to Tess. Mom is not angry.

“You were not wrong,” says Mom.

“Next time, say it, Tess. We want to hear it.”

Tess nods. “Next time I will say it,” she says.

“Good,” says Mom.

Evie looks at the two flat cakes. She is quiet.

Then she stands up tall.

“It does not have to be perfect,” says Evie. “We fix it. We bake again.”

Mom smiles. “Yes. We bake again.”

“And this time we measure,” says Mom.

“I can measure,” says Tess.

Evie and Sara look at Tess again.

“Four cups,” says Tess. “Not more. Not less.”

“Then you measure,” says Evie. “Please, Tess.”

Tess smiles a little.

“And the hard cakes?” says Sara. “The bad ones?”

“We do not throw them away,” says Mom.

“The birds!” says Billy. “Cake for the birds!”

“Yes,” says Mom. “The birds like it.”

Billy runs to the door. “Sam!” he calls. “Sam! Come and see!”

Sam comes. Sam runs. Sam always runs.

“What is it?” says Sam.

“Cake for the birds!” says Billy.

The two boys carry the hard cakes outside.

They go to the little yard. It is behind the shop. Crumble comes too.

Billy breaks a bit. Sam breaks a bit.

Small bits of cake on the grass.

Then they stand still. They are very quiet.

Then the birds come. One bird. Two birds. Many birds.

“Look!” says Sam. “They like it!”

“They like it a lot,” says Billy.

Crumble looks at the cake on the grass.

“No cake for you, Crumble,” says Billy. “Later you get a cookie.”

Crumble sits down. Crumble waits.

In the bakery Mom washes the two pans and the big bowl.

Tess goes to the shelf. She takes the little cup.

She holds it in her hand.

“One cup,” says Tess. “Two cups. Three. Four.”

“Yes,” says Evie. “Four cups. And this time we do it right.”

Sara takes the list. “Flour,” she says. “We need more flour.”

Evie looks at the calendar on the wall.

It is still Wednesday. It is not too late.

“Three days,” says Evie. “Three days. Then the party.”

“Then we bake now,” says Mom.

Evie puts the big bowl on the table.

This time the little cup does not stay on the shelf.

Chapter 5: Exactly



It is Wednesday afternoon.

The morning is gone. The hard cakes are gone too.

The two pans are clean. The big bowl is clean.

“This afternoon we bake again,” says Mom.

Sara takes her paper. Sara takes her pencil.

“Flour,” says Sara. “We need more flour.”

Evie goes to the flour bin. She opens it. She looks inside.

There is a lot of flour in the bin.

Evie fills a bag. She puts the bag on the table.

“Good,” says Mom. “And now?”

“Now we measure,” says Evie.

Tess has the little cup.

"Four cups," says Tess. "Not more. Not less."

She puts the cup in the flour. She fills it full.

Then she takes a knife.

"A knife?" says Billy. "For flour?"

"Look," says Tess.

She puts the knife on the cup. She moves it across the top.

White flour falls off. Now the top is flat.

"Not more," says Tess. "Not less. One cup."

"Oh!" says Evie. "I see it."

Tess puts the flour in the bowl.

She fills the cup again. The knife again. Flat on top.

"Two cups," says Tess.

"Three cups."

"Four cups."

Then she stops. She looks in the big bowl.

"Exactly four," says Tess.

"Exactly four," says Evie.

Mom smiles. "Exactly is a good word."

Now the sugar. Two cups of sugar.

Tess fills the cup. Tess takes the knife. Flat on top.

"One cup. Two cups. Exactly two."

Sara looks at her list.

"Flour," says Sara. "In. Sugar. In."

"I check the list," says Sara. "Every time."

Then the eggs. Evie takes four eggs.

“Two for every cake,” she says.

Crack, crack, crack, crack.

“Four eggs,” says Sara. “In.”

Then the butter. Then the milk.

“All in,” says Sara. “Now you mix.”

Sara puts her pencil down.

Evie mixes. Evie stirs. She stirs and stirs.

The spoon moves easy. The batter is not thick this time.

“Look,” says Evie. “It is soft. It is right.”

Billy comes to the table. He looks in the bowl.

“Can I taste?” says Billy. “A little?”

“Yes,” says Mom. “A little.”

Billy puts one finger in the batter. He tastes it.

“Mmm!” says Billy. “Sweet!”

“Billy tastes first,” says Evie. “That is his job.”

Two round pans on the table. Evie fills one. Sara fills the other.

Mom opens the oven. In go the two pans.

“Now we wait,” says Mom.

They wait. The bakery smells sweet.

Tess does not sit down. Tess looks at the oven.

Ding! goes the oven.

Mom opens the oven. Warm air comes out.

She takes out the two pans. She puts them on the table.

Evie looks. Sara looks. Tess looks too.

The cakes are golden on top.

And the cakes are high. Not low. Not flat. High.

“Oh!” says Evie. “Look at them!”

Mom cuts a little bit. Billy tastes first.

He bites. His eyes get big.

“Soft!” says Billy. “It is soft!”

Evie tastes too. Soft and sweet and warm.

“It is right,” says Evie. “This time it is right.”

Then Evie looks at Tess.

Tess smiles. Tess smiles big.

It is a big smile. Her first big smile in the bakery.

“You measured,” says Evie. “You measured every cup.”

“That is your job now.”

“My job,” says Tess. She says it two times. “My job.”

Mom stands by the table. She looks at all of them.

“We all have a job,” says Mom.

“I check the list,” says Sara. “Every time.”

“I measure,” says Tess. “Not more. Not less.”

“I taste first!” says Billy.

“And I decorate,” says Evie. “Cherries on top.”

“And I watch the oven,” says Mom.

They laugh.

Crumble sits by the oven. Crumble waits.

“Now, Crumble,” says Billy. “Now you get a cookie.”

Evie looks at her friends.

“This morning I was alone,” she says. “This afternoon I am not alone.”

"No," says Mom. "Not alone."

The two cakes stand on the table. High and soft and golden.

Evie puts her hand near one. It is warm.

"Two good cakes," she says.

"Tomorrow is Thursday," says Tess.

"Tomorrow!" says Billy. "Tomorrow the blue!"

Chapter 6: Blue



It is Thursday morning.

Evie stands at the calendar. She puts her finger on Thursday.

“Two days,” she says. “Today and tomorrow.”

“And Friday is the party!” says Billy.

The two cakes stand on the big table. High and soft and golden.

“Today we make the blue,” says Evie.

Ding! goes the bell.

“Morning!” says Sara.

“Morning,” says Tess. She smiles a little.

Mom puts butter in the big bowl. Then sugar.

“First the icing,” says Mom. “Butter and sugar.”

Evie stirs. She stirs and stirs.

The icing gets soft. The icing gets white.

“Soft and white,” says Evie.

“But Sam wants blue,” says Billy. “Sam wants a blue cake!”

“Yes,” says Evie. “Now the blue.”

Tess goes to the shelf. She takes the little bottle.

“Blue drops,” says Tess. “Three drops. Not more. Not less.”

Mom holds the bowl. Tess holds the bottle over the icing.

“One,” says Tess.

One drop falls in the white icing.

“Two.”

“Three.”

Evie takes the spoon. She stirs.

And the icing turns blue.

“Oh!” says Billy. “It turns blue!”

“Look at it,” says Sara. “It turns blue!”

The icing is light blue. Soft blue.

“Blue is Sam’s color,” says Evie.

Billy looks in the bowl.

“Ten drops,” he says. “Ten drops make it more blue.”

“No, Billy,” says Tess. “Three is right.”

“Three drops make it light,” says Mom. “Ten drops make it dark.”

“And Sam wants light blue,” says Evie.

Billy laughs. “Then three.”

“Now we stack the cakes,” says Mom.

“Stack?” says Billy. “What is stack?”

"One cake on the other," says Mom. "Cake, icing, cake on top."

Evie takes a big plate. She puts one cake on it.

She takes blue icing. She spreads it on top.

Then Sara gives her the second cake. Slow and careful.

Evie stacks the cakes. Cake, icing, cake on top.

"Look!" says Billy. "It is tall!"

"It is a tall cake," says Mom.

"A big cake," says Evie. "A tall cake. Sam wants a big cake."

Then Evie takes the bowl.

"Now I decorate," she says. "That is my job."

She spreads the blue icing on the cake.

Blue on the top. Blue on the sides. Blue all over.

She spreads it smooth. No white. All blue.

Billy looks and looks. His eyes get big.

"It is very blue," he says.

Mom puts six candles on the table.

Tess counts them.

"One, two, three, four, five, six."

"Six," says Tess. "That is right."

"Six," says Evie. "One for every year."

Evie takes a candle. Mom stops her.

"Not now," says Mom. "The cake goes across the street."

"The candles go in on Friday," says Tess.

She puts the six candles in a little box.

"And now the cherries," says Evie.

Sara brings the cherries. Big and red and round.

Evie puts one cherry on the blue icing. Then one more.

The cherries go in a ring. A red ring on top.

Crumble comes to the table. He looks up at Evie.

“No cherries for you, Crumble,” says Billy. “Later you get a cookie.”

Evie puts the last cherry on top. Then she steps back.

“Red on blue,” she says. “Beautiful!”

“Beautiful,” says Tess.

Sara claps her hands. Billy claps too.

Then Mom goes to the shop. She comes back.

She has something in her hands. Something purple.

“For you, Tess,” says Mom.

Tess looks. It is an apron. A purple apron.

“For me?” says Tess.

“A baker needs an apron,” says Mom.

“Evie has a yellow apron,” says Billy. “Sara has a white one. I have a blue one. Mine is small.”

“And now you have a purple one,” says Evie.

Tess takes the apron. She puts it on. Evie helps her.

Tess looks down at the purple apron. Then she smiles.

Tess smiles big.

“Purple,” she says. “Purple is my color.”

They all laugh.

“You are a baker now, Tess,” says Mom.

“I am a baker,” says Tess. “I measure.”

"Not more, not less!" says Billy.

They look at the cake on the big table.

It is tall. It is blue and smooth. A red ring on top.

"It is ready," says Mom. "On Friday it goes across the street."

Evie looks at the calendar one more time.

"Tomorrow is Friday," she says.

"Tomorrow is the party!" says Billy.

Chapter 7: Slow and steady



It is Friday morning.

Evie stands at the calendar. She puts her finger on Friday.

“Friday,” she says. “Sam is six today.”

“Six!” says Billy. “Today is the party!”

The cake stands on the big table. It is tall and blue. A red ring on top.

Mom comes in from the shop.

“Mrs. Lee has a plan,” says Mom.

“What plan?” says Billy.

“Mr. Lee takes Sam for a walk. A long walk. A birthday walk.”

“And we take the cake,” says Evie. “We take it across the street.”

“Yes,” says Mom. “The cake goes on their table. Then Sam comes home.”

“And then?” says Billy.

"And then he sees it," says Mom. "It is a surprise."

Billy's eyes get big. "A surprise!"

"Does Sam know?" he says.

"Sam knows about the cake," says Mom. "But he does not see it. Not yet. Mrs. Lee knows. Mr. Lee knows. And today Sam sees it."

Ding! goes the bell.

"Morning!" says Sara. She has her white apron on.

"Morning," says Tess. She has her purple apron on.

"Today we carry the cake," says Evie.

Mom looks at them all.

"A big cake is heavy," she says. "And we cross a street. So we go slow."

"Slow," says Tess. "And steady."

Evie takes the big plate with two hands. She lifts it up.

"Oh," she says. "It is heavy."

Tess takes the little box. The six candles are in the box.

"I have the candles," says Tess. "The box stays with me."

Sara goes to the door.

"I go first," she says. "I open the doors. That is my job today."

Billy holds Crumble. He holds him tight.

"No running, Crumble," says Billy. "No running today."

"And I will come too," says Mom. "The shop can wait."

Sara opens the door. Ding!

They go out. The sun is warm on Main Street.

Across the street stands the Lee house.

Evie holds the plate with two hands. Tess walks beside her.

"Slow," says Tess. "Steady."

"Slow and steady," says Evie.

They come to the street. Sara stops.

"Stop," she says. "First we look. Then we cross."

They look left. They look right.

A car comes. It comes slow. But it comes.

"Wait," says Sara. "Now we wait."

They wait. The car goes by.

"Now," says Sara. "Now we cross."

They cross the street. Slow and steady.

Then, in the middle of the street, the plate wobbles.

"Oh!" says Evie. "It wobbles!"

The tall cake moves. The cherries move too.

Tess is fast. She puts one hand on the plate.

"I have it," says Tess. "Steady. Steady now."

The plate stops. The cake stands. The cherries stay on top.

Evie does not move. Then she smiles.

"One wobble," she says. "That is all."

"Slow and steady," says Tess.

They walk on. They come to the other side.

Sara knocks on the door. Knock, knock, knock.

Mrs. Lee opens the door.

"Come in!" she says. "Come in, come in! Sam is out. Sam is on his walk."

They go in. Evie looks around.

"Oh!" says Billy. "The boxes are gone!"

"The boxes are gone," says Mrs. Lee. She laughs.

There is a table now. There are chairs at the table. There are plates on the table.

"A table," says Evie. "And chairs!"

"Chairs for all of us," says Mrs. Lee. "And plates for the cake."

Evie walks to the table. Slow and steady. She puts the big plate down.

"In the middle," says Mrs. Lee. "Yes. The cake goes in the middle."

"And now the candles," says Evie.

Tess opens the little box. She takes out one candle.

She puts it in the blue icing. Then one more. Then one more.

"One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six."

"Six," says Tess. "That is right."

"Six," says Evie. "One for every year."

They all look at the table.

The tall blue cake stands in the middle. Six candles on top. A red ring of cherries.

"It is ready," says Mom.

"Now we wait," says Mrs. Lee. "Come. Come to the door."

They go to the door. They stand and wait.

Billy holds Crumble.

"Quiet, Crumble," he says. "It is a surprise."

Crumble sits down. Crumble is quiet.

Nobody says a word.

Then they hear something.

Steps on the path. Little fast steps.

"Sam," says Billy. Very quiet. "Sam is coming."

The door opens.

Chapter 8: Happy birthday, Sam!



Sam comes in. Mr. Lee comes in too.

Sam stops. He looks at the table.

Sam always runs. But now Sam does not run. Sam stands still.

“Oh!” he says. “BLUE! A big blue cake!”

“Happy birthday, Sam!” says Evie.

“Happy birthday!” says Billy.

Sam looks and looks. His eyes get big.

“Blue on top,” he says. “Blue on the sides. Blue all over.”

“Blue is your color,” says Tess.

Sam walks to the table. Slow. Very slow.

“Cherries,” he says. “A red ring.”

“Red on blue,” says Evie. “Beautiful.”

Sam looks at the candles. He counts them.

"One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six."

"Six," says Tess. "That is right."

"Six," says Sam. "I am six today!"

Mr. Lee comes to the table.

"Now the candles," he says.

He lights them. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six.

Six little lights stand on the blue cake.

"Look," says Billy. Very quiet. "Look at that."

"Now we sing," says Mrs. Lee. "Come. We all sing."

They stand around the table. They sing.

"Happy birthday, Sam!"

Crumble sits by Billy. Crumble is quiet.

"Now blow," says Mr. Lee. "Blow out the candles, Sam."

Sam looks at the six lights.

He blows. One big blow.

The lights go out. All six. Every one.

They all clap.

"All six!" says Billy. "In one blow!"

Sam laughs. "I am six. Six candles. One blow!"

Mrs. Lee takes a knife.

"Now we cut," she says. "Plates, please."

Mr. Lee lifts the big plate. He puts it by Mrs. Lee.

"Oh," he says. "It is heavy. A big cake is heavy!"

Mrs. Lee cuts the tall cake. She cuts it slow.

She gives the first piece to Sam. Then one to Billy. Then one to all the others.

Evie looks. Blue on the outside. Golden on the inside.

“Golden,” says Evie. “Look, Tess. It is golden inside.”

“High and soft,” says Tess.

Sam takes a bite. He does not say a word.

Then he says it.

“Soft,” says Sam. “And sweet. It is the best cake in Maple Falls!”

Evie is happy. Mom is happy too.

“Thank you, Evie,” says Sam. “Thank you for my cake.”

“Not just me,” says Evie. “Look. Sara checked the list. Tess measured. Billy tasted.”

“I check the list,” says Sara. “Every time. That is my job.”

Tess has her purple apron on. She stands up tall.

“I measured,” says Tess. “Four cups. Exactly.”

“Not more,” says Billy. “Not less!”

They all laugh. Tess laughs too.

“Thank you, Tess,” says Sam. “Thank you, Sara.”

“Thank you, Billy,” says Evie. “You tasted first.”

“I taste first,” says Billy. “Every time. That is my job.”

“I have a present,” says Billy.

He takes a little bag. The bag is from the bakery.

“Cookies,” says Billy. “For you, Sam.”

Sam looks in the bag. “Cookies! Thank you, Billy.”

“And one for Crumble,” says Billy.

Crumble stands up. Crumble looks at the bag.

"Crumble wants a cookie!" says Sam.

They all laugh. Sam gives Crumble a cookie.

Crumble eats it fast. Then he looks in the bag again.

"No, Crumble," says Billy. "One is one!"

They sit down at the table. There are chairs for all of them.

Mr. Lee looks at the cake on the table.

"A beautiful cake," he says. "Thank you, all of you."

Then he looks at Mrs. Lee.

"Next month is Thanksgiving," says Mr. Lee. "Our family is far away this year."

"Far away," says Mrs. Lee. "Very far away."

"It is a big family day," says Mom. "We all eat together."

"Yes," says Mrs. Lee. "And this year there are just four of us."

Mom smiles.

"Then you come to us," she says. "Come to the bakery. All four of you."

Sam and Billy look at each other.

"Pie!" they say. Both at the same time.

They all laugh.

"Yes," says Mom. "We can do that."

Sam looks at his cake. He looks at the six candles.

Then he looks around the table.

"Six candles," says Sam. "And new friends."

"New friends," says Evie.

Evie looks across the street. She sees the bakery. She sees the window.

Then she looks at the table again. At Sam. At Tess in her purple apron.

"Happy birthday, Sam," she says.

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