



# The Runaway Rice Cake

*Ying Chang Compestine , Tungwai Chau (Illustrator)*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# The Runaway Rice Cake

*Ying Chang Compestine , Tungwai Chau (Illustrator)*

**The Runaway Rice Cake** Ying Chang Compestine , Tungwai Chau (Illustrator)

It's the Chinese New Year, and the Chang Family has only enough rice flour to make one nián-gāo, a special New Year's rice cake, for the entire family to eat. But this delicious little nián-gāo has other ideas. "Ai yo! I don't think so!" it cries, coming to life and escaping.

Ming, Cong, little Da and their parents chase the nián-gāo all over the village until it runs into a hungry, old woman and sends her tumbling to the ground. Though Da is a small boy, his heart is big enough to share the treat with her, even though that leaves Da's family with nothing to eat for their own celebration. But the Changs' generosity doesn't go unnoticed. When they return home, they find the Kitchen God has left a wonderful surprise for them.

Ying Chang Compestine's heartwarming story conveys an important and poignant message about sharing and compassion. Tungwai Chau's soft and evocative illustrations complete this tender holiday story.

## The Runaway Rice Cake Details

Date : Published January 1st 2001 by Simon Schuster Books for Young Readers

ISBN : 9780689829727

Author : Ying Chang Compestine , Tungwai Chau (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 40 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Cultural, China, Asia, Family, Food and Drink, Food, Holiday, Folk Tales, Fiction

 [Download The Runaway Rice Cake ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Runaway Rice Cake ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Runaway Rice Cake Ying Chang Compestine , Tungwai Chau (Illustrator)**

---

## **From Reader Review The Runaway Rice Cake for online ebook**

### **Trevor Harcrow says**

This story was reminiscent of the Gingerbread man for me. We find ourselves in a Chinese family's home, where they are getting ready to celebrate the New Year. They are seen paying homage to the emperor, where the children ask him for a huge feast. The parents remind the children that it is not nice to ask things of the emperor, and they go in the kitchen to cook a rice cake. After completion of cooking, they go to cut it up, and the rice cake comes alive! It runs out of the house proclaiming that everyone is too slow to catch him. He runs throughout town making his proclamation to everyone he passes, until he collides with an elderly woman, where the family finally catches him. They share the rice cake with the woman, even though they are hungry too, and through this act of compassion, the events of the rest of the story unfold.

Again, we see an opening that alerts the listener that a story is being told. It is not typical speech used in everyday conversations, and this clues us to be more attentive. The closing also signals us in a non-typical way of speaking that we have reached the end. The characters of this book are overtly good, sharing with the elderly lady their food, even though they do not have much, and are hungry themselves. The message of this is that we need to have compassion for others, and treat them with respect. Sharing with the less fortunate, even if we do not have wild wealth, but just a little more than other. In doing so, we will be rewarded, and everyone will benefit.

---

### **Sonya says**

The Runaway Rice Cake kind of reminded me of The Ginger Bread Man at first then as read more into the story. The story didn't sound so much like The Ginger Bread man. I never thought the rice cake would do what he did at the end I though maybe he was destined to run forever. There is a moral to this story and it is a good one. I think that children will love reading this.

---

### **Matthew Ciccarone says**

The Runaway Rice Cake opens on a family, the Cheng's, giving thanks to the kitchen god. The harvest had not been well, and there was only powder enough for one rice cake to be shared between the hungry family. Once cooked, the rice cake sprung to life and led them on an epic chase, before crashing into an old woman. Despite their hunger, the Cheng's generosity shines through, and that generosity is rewarded.

The story begins by saying, it all happened, which does not provide us with a sense of the time period it took place. The story takes the family through their village in the chase of a speedy rice cake. The rice cake makes me think of the gingerbread man. The theme is that people are rewarded for the good they do, and the Cheng's generosity brings them great rewards. The story ended in a somewhat happily ever after sense, but in this case it was the happiest new years ever.

---

## **Weston Broome says**

Holidays are meant to be spent with family. The Chang family finds this when celebrating the Chinese New Year together in the book *The Runaway Rice Cake* by Ying Chang. After a rough drought the year the rice crops produced very little for the family and the rest of the villagers. The family is left with only enough rice flour to make one nián-gāo, a sweet Chinese dessert cake, to split between the five of them. Grateful for even this small dessert the family prepares to devour the little cake. Suddenly, the rice cake springs to life and makes a run for it. The family chases the sprightly rice cake all over the village until it hits an old woman in the road. After a very generous offer from the youngest of the three boys, the rice cake concedes to be eaten. What happens next, none of the family members expect.

Ming, Cong, and Da are introduced in the beginning of the story helping their parents make an offering to the Chinese Kitchen God. This God is assumed to be the unseen helper of the family during the runaway rice cake debacle. Da is immediately projected as the purely good character with the most faith and kindness of the three boys. He is the one that helps feed some in need at the cost of his own hunger using the motif object, the rice cake. The young boy is later rewarded for his kind and generous heart. His kindness touches those around him and helps them grow as characters as well. This is the underlying theme of *The Runaway Rice Cake*. Helping others can be a rewarding experience. This is a powerful message for children, especially those who struggle with the idea of “sharing”.

---

## **Tina says**

This story is the tale of three little children with their parents who lived in China a long time ago and did not have much food due to lack of crops from the past year but were celebrating the New Year. Because of this, they could not make much of a feast to celebrate but their mother is able to make one rice cake for them to share and she puts all her love for her family into this one bun. Once the bun has been steamed, it comes to life magically and runs away from the family causing them to chase it throughout the town till it runs into an elderly woman where it is caught and the family shares their bun with the elderly woman where she accidentally eats the entire bun and leaves the family apologizing for her misdeed. Upon hearing this, the town's people gather what little food they each have and bring it to the family for their generosity to the elderly woman where they all receive a special surprise.

This story is a great tale for why it is best to be kind and generous as oppose to being greedy and selfish. The writer, Ying Chang, writes the characters so well. She has the children showing different personalities where the youngest tells the other two not to think of themselves when praying to their ancestors, for it is for the ancestors to decide who gets blessed. This shows that the youngest is like the hero for he is the one that shows the entire family how to be so kind when the others are not as willing to. It also has a sense of magic with the rice cake coming alive and running away from the family, and it's repeated catchphrase that only changes slightly really give children something to laugh at in this story.

---

## **Danielle says**

One Chinese New Year's eve, the Chang family, consisting of three sons, Ming, Kong, and Dao, were getting ready to celebrate the Chinese New Year's. Although the family did not have much, they had just enough rice to make a rice cake or nián-gāo to feed on for that night. The mother of the Chang family made the nián-gāo for their family to share because they were very hungry. However, when she opened the rice cooker, the nián-gāo ran away. The rice cake ran all over the city and had the Chang family chasing it all over the place. A rice cake on the loose and a hungry family chasing it, the nián-gāo finally gets captured in their rice bowl. In the end, however, generosity and humbleness towards others prevail. The Chang family realizes what true selflessness grants them in the end of their rice cake chasing journey. This humbling tale written by Ying Chang Compestine shows the exciting tale of how tradition, family, and friends all come together to celebrate the New Year while showing praise to their higher power.

As for the traditional literary elements within this story, the opening starts out with, and "it all happened one Chinese new year..." which shows that there will be a story to follow along too. The story shows a wonderful plot as it portrays a beginning, middle, and end to their exciting story. The setting is obviously set in an Asian culture, as stated in the book as Chinese New Year which proves their religious traditions throughout their culture. The characters are each of their own as mother and father Chang show honesty and integrity within their selves. Their sons, however, all show different personalities coming into play. The oldest son Ming portrays a boy that is selfish and only wants everything for himself. The middle son Kong goes along with Ming's attitude but cares more about what he does not have. However, their youngest son, Dao, shows the real meaning of compassion and love towards others as his personality shines out the most for me within this story. The theme, as I briefly mentioned above, seems to be the aspect of generosity and humbleness always prevailing in the end. The story ends with a happy prelude as it states, "The Changs never had such a wonderful new year's eve". This story not only shows the traditional elements of a quality children's book, but it creates an understanding of different cultures through the eyes of the Chang family too.

---

## **Emily says**

The Runaway Rice Cake is a fun story that teaches the importance of sharing, generosity, and community. Somewhat reminiscent of The Gingerbread Man, it's set during the Chinese New Year. A poor family makes a special meal for their celebration, but the meal comes to life and runs away. This sets the family on a long chase, full of the unexpected. The illustrations are vivid and colorful and really bring the characters to life.

This story does incorporate some elements of traditional literature. The closing line "It was the happiest New Year's Eve the Changs had ever celebrated," is reminiscent of the ritual closing "And they lived happily ever after." The story is set in the Chang families home or "cottage," which is common setting for peasants in traditional stories. The story eventually heads out to "the road" and then back home again. The characters are introduced with little backstory, and the plot focuses more on the theme.

---

## **Jessica Aguilar says**

The Runaway Rice Cake is a story that takes place during Chinese New Year and concentrates on a Chinese family, the Chang family. The Chang family find themselves in a rather tight spot when it comes to money and must share only one rice cake because that is all they have enough for. As the mother, father, and three children sit down to eat the rice cake; the rice cake makes an unexpected escape. The rice cake comes to life and runs away, taunting everyone as it runs along people's ways.

The story itself has all the traditional elements of literature. The Plot having all the different part from an exposition to a resolution and the reoccurring plot being more geared towards an initiation story. The conflict of the story was a simple conflict between a character. The characters of the story were all round characters ,for the most part, the author having described the characters very well. The theme of the story was conveyed as an explicit theme, the theme not being revealed until the ending when you read the entire story. The setting of the story was more portrayed through the pictures rather than in the words of the story and gives the obvious of being centered in China on Chinese New Year far from modern times. The point of view of the story was in third person and the mood being fun and playful. Each of these pointing towards Asian Traditional Literature or a Folk Tale with its theme being geared towards moral.

---

## **Ciara says**

Written by Ying Compestine and illustrated by Tungwai Chau, The Runaway Rice Cake was a story about a giving family and their faith. The family in the story did not have a lot of food as they didn't have the rations. The children relied on their faith for a big feast to come their way. This story represents the unity of community and family.

The story took place in the small town and the family's kitchen on the Chinese New Year. When the story started off, the family was inside the kitchen and praying to the emperor of Heaven. This showed that they were a spiritual family. The characters in the story were the three children, the mother and father, the old woman, the rice cake, the vegetable shop owner, and the other members of the community. The plot of the story was for the family to have dinner for the new year. The theme of this book seems to be sharing and giving to those less fortunate than you. The motif was preparation for the feast.

---

## **Sarah Jane says**

Summary: This humorous yet insightful story tells the tale of the Chang family's magical New Years Eve celebration. While preparing what little food they have left for the celebration, the Chang family's rice cake magically comes to life and runs away. As the family chases after the rice cake they come across an elderly woman who is frail and hungry. This meeting and what follows teaches the Chang family an important lesson about generosity and sharing with those in need.

"It all happened one Chinese New Year's Eve". The opening of this story introduces the Chang family along with giving the reader some insight about Chinese traditions. The illustrations show the unique dress, décor, and backdrop of a small Chinese village. The jovial sons help create a positive tone while the cartoonish style and actions of the rice cake man add humor to the story. While the plot consists of a runaway cake man,

there is a deeper theme behind the story which reveals itself when the cake man runs into a fragile old lady. The Chang boys learn a valuable lesson about sharing with those in need. Their generosity is then reciprocated by the villagers in town, along with a little magic! You can see the excitement of the children, movement of the dragon, and the pop of firecrackers in the closing of the story, “the happiest New Year’s Eve the Chang’s had ever celebrated.”

---

### **Melissa says**

It is Chinese New Year, and the Chang Family has a family tradition to make nián-gāo, a special New Year's rice cake. However, they only enough rice flour to make one for the entire family to eat. However, as this delicious treat is baking, something special happens and it comes to life and escapes the family. The family chases the runaway rice cake all over the village until it runs into a hungry, old woman. The Woman is very hungry and has nothing to offer, the youngest member of the family makes the executive decision to share the treat with her, even if meant leaving his family with nothing for the New Year. The family’s compassion and generosity did not go unnoticed, their neighbors in the village were bringing food for them. Before long, the entire village had brought something and the bowls magically started to become larger and bowl and baskets filled the table with delicious food. The Chang family invited everyone to feast. A very important message that stood out to me was their kind act of generosity and how they didn’t expect anything in return, though they received it, they were very thankful and kind. I enjoyed this book very much, especially with the culture imbedded though out the book.

---

### **Karlie Jamieson says**

The Runaway Rice Cake is a lighthearted story with some very deep meaning behind it. The main characters are the Chang family who do not have very much money and struggle for food. During Chinese New Year they find that they have enough ingredients to make a rice cake that the children are extremely excited for. When the rice cake is done baking and the children are ready to enjoy it, the rice cake comes to life and sprints away from them leading the family into a chase all over the village. The runaway rice cake leads the family in a frenzy until they run into an important character that teaches them about sharing. Eventually the family will find themselves having learned many things about sharing, good karma, and giving. The mother and father showed strength and positivity even though they were struggling with poverty, and the children demonstrated the yearning that a child really would feel when they are that close to getting the treat they have been imagining.

The plot of this books was intriguing even as a young adult. The story was very original and captivating in the sense that I was not expecting the rice cake that this family so desperately wanted to run away and make them really work hard and show good character to get what they wanted. The characters were somewhat interesting, but there was not one that stood out in particular, except for the rice cake who had a very sassy personality. I think that what was most vital to this story was the theme which was that we must do nice things for others in order to get what we deserve at times. We must put others first and be good people. The visuals of this story were great and really helped me feel present by seeing the pictures of the rice cake actually running away.

---

## **Jessica Orrett says**

"The Runaway Rice Cake" is a delightful book for children that teaches the importance of sharing, selflessness, and community. The Chang family is celebrating the Chinese New Year, but due to the drought, they only have enough rice flour to make one special Nian Gao, or rice cake. But just as they're about to dig in, the rice cake springs to life, and runs away. The hungry family chases the cake throughout the village, until it finally bumps into an old woman. The family catches the cake, but the youngest, Da, decides that he wants to share the treat with her. The old woman gobbles it all up, and it looks like the family will have nothing to eat for their celebration. However, their neighbors and the Kitchen God have different plans in store for them...

In the story, the author gets into the plot's "conflict" almost immediately. The family is faced with conflict when their New Year's treat comes to life and runs away. There is plenty of suspense in the events leading up to the capture of the rice cake, as readers are unsure if the family will ever catch it, and the crisis occurs when the old lady eats up the entire rice cake. However, though it seems like the family will not have anything to eat for the holiday, that is not the case, as revealed in the ending (denouement). The point of view is a third-person narrator, who is not a character in the story. The setting of the story is in a village in China, during the Chinese New Year. The protagonists are the Chang family, as the story revolves around them, and the antagonist would be the rice cake, as it opposes the family's need to eat it.

---

## **Emmaline says**

Compestine, Y. C., & Chau, T. (2001). *The runaway rice cake*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Pub. Division.

This book is a fun and exciting children's book that takes children on a wild goose chase. The book starts off by introducing the Chang family as the main characters. The family consists of three boys Ming, Cong, and little Da and their mother and father. It is the eve of the Chinese New Year and the Chang family is celebrating by making a traditional Chinese rice cake. However, the Chang family only has enough for one rice cake for the whole family to share. When the rice cake is done cooking, it hops out of the pan and starts running. The family chases it around town until finally their grandmother stumbles over it. The Chang family realizes how hungry the grandmother is and gives it to her to share with the rest of the family. However, the grandmother ends up eating the whole rice cake by accident. The boys are now tired, and hungry and head home in disappointment. When they arrive home, there is a pleasant surprise waiting for them. They realize that their generosity was heard through the village and so therefore, others blessed them.

The story starts off in the Chang's small home and then eventually takes place in different parts of the Chinese village. The story is written in third person, which allows the reader to feel like a story is being told. The story makes the reader feel a series of emotions. The reader first feels a sense of sadness in the beginning because the family has little food. However, the story quickly gets exciting through the chasing scenes and then tapers off leaving the reader feeling happy. The story has an implicit theme of even when one has little to give even a bit of generosity can have a huge impact on others.

---



## **Melissa Overland-mckay says**

It's Chinese New Year and the Chang family has only enough rice to make one rice cake (Gao). But when it is all ready something terrible happens and the rice cake comes alive and tries to run away. Running all over the city, the rice cake disrupts the town, the whole time getting away with a sly goodbye until it collides with an old woman who expresses her weakness and the rice cake forfeits and is shared by the Chang family. But soon the old lady devours the rice cake, and she disappears from embarrassment. That is when the sad, hungry Chang family heads home and is greeted by their fellow towns people offering them food and in the spirit the Chang family they offer to share their meal. Then something magical happens and the food brought to the table grows at leaps and the family and friends share a wonderful meal together and celebrate the most magical Chinese New year yet.

Ying Chang Compestine the author of the book is able to take a well-known cultural holiday and turn it into a fun, new exciting story. Ying's use of relatable characters and setting makes the story that much more real for the reader, and although many readers may not celebrate the holiday and or know some of the Chinese terms with the easy follow along storyline the readers are able to learn about the Chinese culture and appreciate the message. Ying's use of culture awareness and clear descriptions of how the characters are feeling really shows her illustrative qualities. Each page of the book is filled with terrific imagery and fun memorable words. This book is a cultural folktale and shares a message everyone can learn from.

---