

Christmas without pasta shells

At the Serra family’s house, Christmas always followed the same traditions. Grandpa arranged the nativity scene with its little lame mule, Grandma made homemade nougat, and Mum cooked the best galets soup in the world. Galets were the large pasta shells they loved in their traditional Catalan Christmas broth.

But that year… something went wrong.

On the morning of 24 December, Mum opened the cupboard and cried:

“Oh no! We’ve run out of pasta shells!”

Grandpa, who was putting the star above the nativity scene, nearly fell off his stool.

“Christmas without pasta shells? Impossible!” he exclaimed.

Mum hurried to the local shop. The shopkeeper explained that everyone had bought the shells that week. All she had left were thin noodles. Noodles! For Christmas!

“No, no… This won’t do,” Mum muttered as she walked home, her head full of worries and her shopping bag half empty.

When she arrived, Nil and Mariona noticed her worried face and asked what was wrong.

“We don’t have any shells for the soup,” she sighed.

Mariona, who was very practical, said:

“Then let’s make soup with stars! It’s Christmas, isn’t it?”

Nil added:

“Or we could make brand-new shapes! We can cut pasta with biscuit cutters!”

Grandpa, who had been listening nearby, smiled.

“Now that would be a different sort of Christmas.”

So they set to work. Among laughter and clouds of flour, they cut pasta into hearts, stars, fish and even a little Tió Christmas log. Grandma happily helped them cook it. Mum, still slightly doubtful, made the broth with all the love in the world.

When they sat down to eat, the soup smelled delicious. And when they tasted it… it was the best soup they had ever eaten!

“They may not be pasta shells,” Mum said with a smile, “but the flavour is just the same.”

“No, it’s better!” Mariona declared. “It tastes of family!”

Everyone laughed, and Grandpa raised his glass.

“May we never run out of pasta shells! But if we do, may we never run out of imagination!”

Ever since that year, the Serra family’s Christmas soup has come in all sorts of shapes. The shape of the pasta is no longer what matters most. It is what they put into it: love, happiness and a little family silliness.