

Grandma’s Panellets

It was the eve of All Saints’ Day. Nine-year-old Arnau and his little sister Laia, who was five, were very excited: Grandma had invited them to celebrate the Catalan autumn festival of the Castanyada and make panellets, small almond sweets.

The house smelled of roasted chestnuts and sweet potatoes. Almonds, pine nuts and sugar were waiting on the table. “Grandma, why do we eat chestnuts and panellets?” Laia asked.

“It is a way of remembering our ancestors with the food the earth gives us in autumn,” Grandma explained. “The Castanyada brings us together and helps us feel close to those who came before us.”

As they shaped the panellets, Grandma told stories about her childhood and about cooking with her own mother. Arnau and Laia imagined that every sweet linked one generation to the next.

When the panellets were ready, they sat around the table. Grandma lit a candle. “This light reminds us that the people we love remain close, even when we can no longer see them.”

Later, they visited the village cemetery. They walked hand in hand among flowers and lights, left a small bouquet on a relative’s grave

and shared a quiet moment.

On the way home, Laia whispered, “I think Grandma’s grandma held my hand.” Arnau smiled.

That night, the house seemed fuller than ever. The children fell asleep with warmth in their hearts and the scent of panellets still floating through the air.