

The bandits’ robbery

Long ago, in a little village called Benimassot, something happened that grandparents still tell their grandchildren about. The village stood in a beautiful district surrounded by mountains and green fields. One winter Sunday, while everyone was listening to Mass in the church, something unexpected occurred.

Suddenly, the doors flew open and thirty-four bandits entered. They wore large hats and scarves across their faces. The villagers were frightened: these men were known for stealing and causing trouble. They demanded everyone’s jewellery and money. Afraid, the people obeyed, for the bandits said they wanted valuables rather than to hurt anyone.

The bandits collected rings, necklaces and gold coins. Anything that glittered made their eyes grow wider! But they did not leave straight away. They were hungry and demanded food. The villagers prepared a meal of bread, cheese and whatever they had at home. The bandits ate, laughing and telling stories as if they were at a party.

Afterwards they left the village, but did not go far. They headed for a secluded ravine where no one could see them. There they piled up their stolen treasure and began dividing it.

“This is for you, and this is for me!” they said, making equal shares and taking care that none of their group missed out on the stolen goods.

Once they had divided the treasure, each bandit chose a different route away. Travelling together would make them easier to recognise and catch. Separately, they would be harder to find. They said goodbye, some heading for the mountains and others for the woods.

But the story does not end there. According to this tale, some powerful local men had also helped the bandits hide where the stolen objects came from. They pretended that the jewellery and money had always belonged to them. When anyone asked, they answered:

“Oh, these are family possessions. We’ve had them for years!”

That was how they tried to conceal the treasure’s true origin.

The story became well known throughout the district, where bandit robberies had once been common, especially around the Marina and the Comtat. In the tale, this was the bandits’ last visit to Benimassot: afterwards, the villagers decided to stay alert in case they returned.

And so ends the tale of the day the bandits came to the village. Today, children can imagine those adventures from its peaceful streets. The story is still told to remind us that difficult experiences can teach us something, and that sharing stolen treasure among thieves does not make a robbery fair.