

The Christmas log that wanted to eat alone

Once upon a time, near a village in the Pyrenees, a Christmas Tió lived in a snowy wood. The Tió was a special log from a Catalan Christmas tradition. Its bark shone like freshly polished wood, and its bright red nose looked like a cherry.

Every December, the village children went into the wood to find their log. They tucked it beneath a blanket and fed it so it would be strong and happy for Christmas. But this year the Tió did not want to be found.

“Why should I share my chestnuts and mandarins?” it grumbled, hiding beneath a pile of dry leaves. “This year I’ll eat them all myself!”

And that was exactly what it did. It secretly ate everything it found: crumbs brought by birds, fallen apples and even a piece of crisp wafer blown into the wood from the village. Yet the more it ate alone, the sadder it felt.

One moonlit night, a little squirrel approached, shivering with cold.

“Mr Tió, may I get warm under your blanket?” she asked softly.

The log, whose tummy was round from eating so much, grumbled a little. But at last it made room. They slept together beneath the blanket, and the Tió felt a different sort of warmth. It did not come from a fire. It came from the heart.

The next day, more animals arrived: an owl, a rabbit and even a little hedgehog. They were all cold and hungry. For the first time, the Tió decided to share its supplies. They made a feast of nuts, apple pieces and broken wafers. As they laughed and told stories, the log discovered that food seemed to taste better.

That morning the children arrived. The Tió was no longer hiding. It was smiling happily among the animals. The children picked it up, wrapped it carefully and took it home.

On Christmas Eve, following the tradition, the magical log left more gifts than ever beneath its blanket: sweets, toys and even a little blanket for each child.

The villagers said that this year the Tió had been especially magical. But the log knew its secret. The magic did not come from the presents. It came from what it had learned in the wood: sharing makes happiness grow, and Christmas is also about giving our time, our company and our love.

Ever since that year, the Tió has kept a small space beneath its blanket every Christmas for anyone who needs a little warmth.