

The Day Words Froze

Many years ago, in the town of Calaf, winters were so cold that even your nose made a tickling sound when you breathed.

One January morning, the cold was so intense that the trees looked like frozen sugar and the smoke from the chimneys rose straight up to the sky, motionless.

That day was market day.

In the square, there were stalls selling fruit, sacks of potatoes, round cheeses, and thick scarves. People talked, laughed, and shouted prices as usual.

“Sweet apples!”

“Who wants fresh bread?”

“Be careful, it’s slippery!”

But something very strange happened.

When the words left people’s mouths… they didn’t fall to the ground or fly away.

They remained still in the air.

And, little by little… they turned into tiny words of ice!

The word “apples” floated on, shining like crystal. “Hot bread” froze right in front of the baker. Even a laugh hung like a frozen bell.

People didn’t notice at first, because it was so cold that everyone had their heads down and their hands in their pockets.

But a boy named Martí looked up… and his eyes widened.

“Mom… words are flying!”

His mother tried to answer, but her “What are you saying?” also froze mid-sentence.

In a short while, the square was filled with frozen words: whole sentences, shouts, questions, and even the occasional frozen sneeze.

Everything was silent.

Only the wind could be heard.

People moved their lips… but nothing could be heard. The words were trapped in the air, transformed into tiny transparent sculptures.

Martí walked among those icy words as if he were in a magical forest. He touched one with his finger… and it was frozen solid!

“Oh!” he thought (and his “oh” also lingered in the air).

The morning passed like this, in a strange and amusing silence. The vendors tried to gesture. The shoppers pointed. Some laughed silently.

But around noon, the sun began to warm things up a little.

First, there was a “clack.”

Then a “clap.”

And suddenly…

ALL the words thawed at once!

“APPLES!”

“FRESH BREAD!”

“WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!”

“WATCH OUT!”

“HOW MUCH IS IT?”

“GOOD MORNING!”

Everything suddenly exploded, mixed up and chaotic. The phrases mingled together as if playing tag. The laughter, the shouts, and the questions all came out at once.

Nobody understood a thing.

It sounded like a hundred people were talking at once inside the same hat!

Martí covered his ears and started laughing.

“That’s a mess!” he said.

And this time, the words didn’t freeze.

That day, in the town of Calaf, they learned something very important: sometimes, you have to speak one at a time… and listen carefully.

And ever since, when everyone is talking at once somewhere and you can’t understand a thing, people say with a smile:

“That sounds like the Calaf market!”

And perhaps, if it’s a very, very cold winter… you can still see a small, bright word floating in the square.