

The Decline of Christmas Rituals and the Neapolitan Presepe

Team Ergomind – 5/11/25

Summary

Background

Research

Persona

Scenario

Design Requirments

Market

Background

On December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Christmas preparations begin.
The city lights up with decorations
and bagpipers play through the streets



The art of the bagpipe (zampogna) is passed down from father to son

Players, often farmers, bring Christmas melodies from the countryside to the city

The art of bagpipe: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=R3rV63bb8l4&feature=shared>



Fish is bought late at night between December 23rd and 24th

Christmas markets stand as vibrant hubs where generations meet, traditions thrive and local craft, food and fellowship preserve the beating heart of the season.



The heart of Christmas in Naples is family

Homes fill with relatives and friends — sometimes 50 people!

A celebration of joy, unity, and tradition.



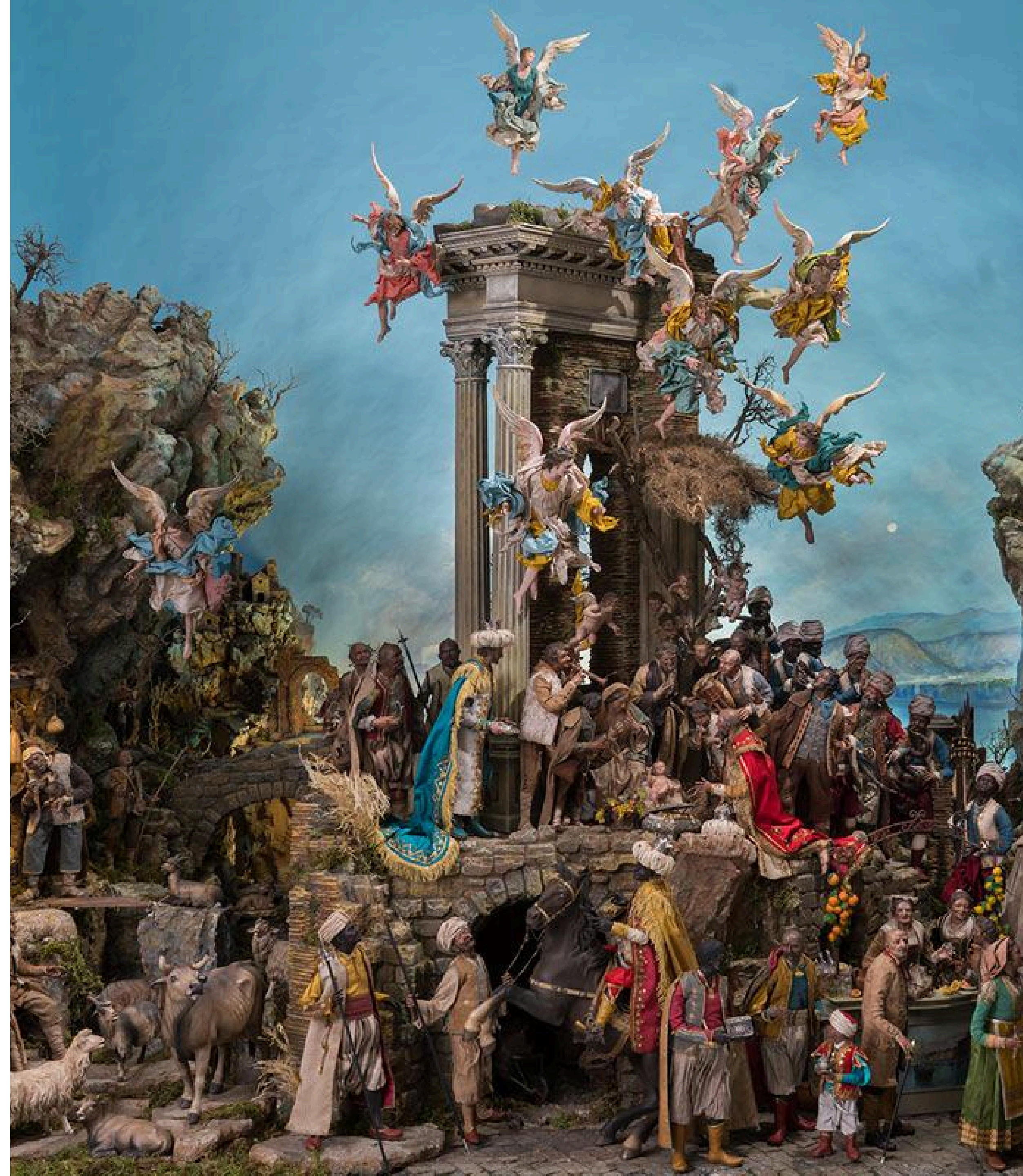
Neapolitan Christmas cuisine unites families, celebrating identity and the joy of sharing timeless recipes.

Traditional dishes include codfish, eel, spaghetti with clams, "reinforcement" salad, and classic Neapolitan desserts like struffoli, rococò, and pastiera.



The most important Christmas tradition in Naples: the Presepe Napoletano

Depicts the birth of Jesus, blending sacred and everyday life to symbolize the union between the divine and the human.



Research

The Presepe, is a powerful
symbol of identity and a
form of narrative identity,
linking personal life stories
with family and cultural
heritage.

The Neapolitan Nativity Scene, or “Presepe Napoletano”, is a traditional artistic representation of the birth of Jesus, set in 18th-century Naples.

It combines sacred and everyday life, featuring not only the Holy Family but also artisans, merchants, and common people, symbolizing the union between the divine and the human.



The main task in old age is achieving ego integrity seeing one's life as coherent and meaningful.

The Presepe, rebuilt each year, provides this stable ritual, reinforcing autobiographical memory and a sense of belonging.

For many, it is not just a decoration but a keeper of their life story.



In recent years, the Neapolitan presepe has been modernized with famous figures added to attract younger generations. However, this attempt has not succeeded, often diverting attention from its cultural and spiritual meaning.



The decline of the presepe
is not just a matter of
changing tastes among the
young for the elderly, it
means losing a shared
emotional language.
In the past, building the
Presepe scene was a family
ritual.

Globalization and Local Traditions

One of the most significant is the spread of globalized culture. While globalization can sometimes help preserve cultural practices through international interest, the commercialization of certain rituals has often led to a progressive loss of meaning.

Preserving Cultural Practices

Research suggests that the best way to protect cultural rituals is through active community involvement. By organizing and participating in traditional events, communities can embed these practices in collective memory.

The Complexity of Naples

Naples is a city with a long and layered cultural history, shaped by Greeks, Romans, Spanish, and French dominations. Despite its rich heritage, the city is experiencing a gradual erosion of traditional values, particularly due to the pressures of tourism and cultural commercialization.

Overtourism and Commercialization

Today, the presepe is widely known thanks to tourism, especially at the San Gregorio Armeno Market. Yet, growing commercialism has overshadowed its original values of craftsmanship and community. Despite this, with over 300,000 visitors last year, San Gregorio Armeno remains a vibrant symbol of Neapolitan culture.

A te t' piace 'o presepe? (Do you like the Presepe?)

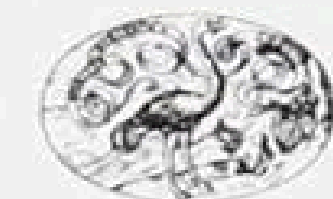
This line is from the famous Neapolitan film and play "Natale in Casa Cupiello" by Eduardo De Filippo, highlighting the cultural and emotional importance of the presepe in Neapolitan families.

Scene from the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J81A2-1MgZU>



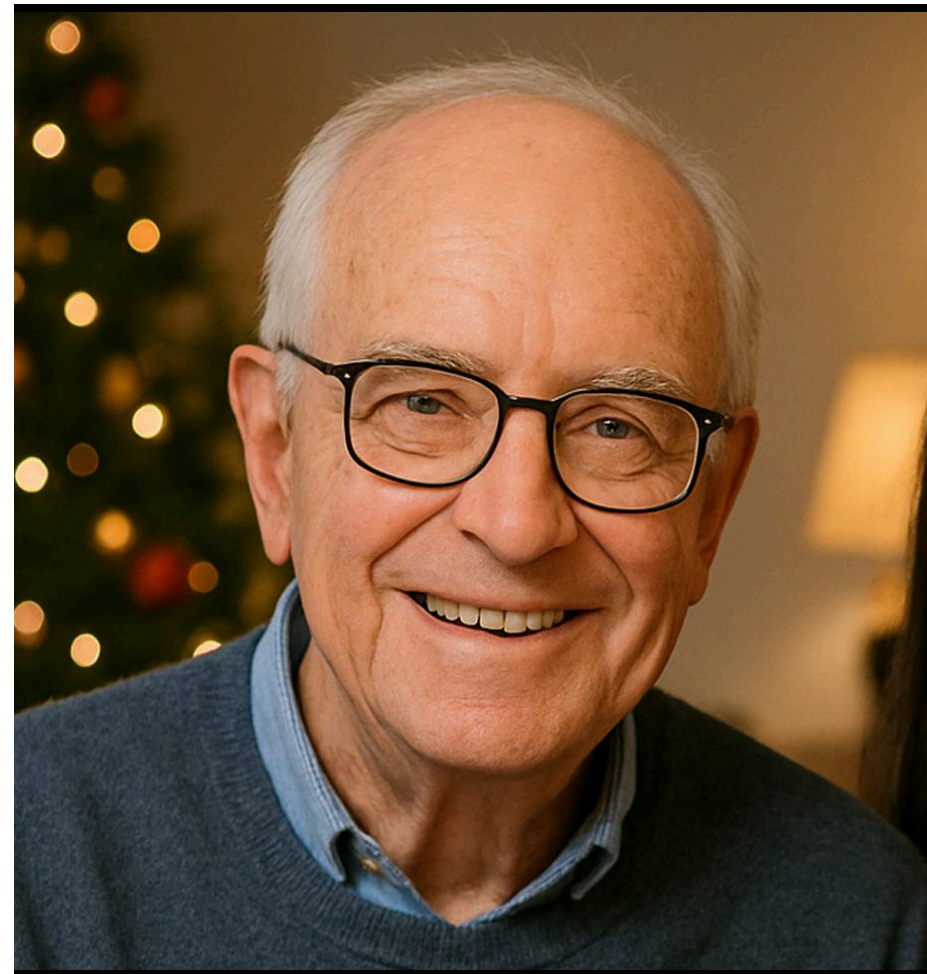
EDUARDO DE FILIPPO

NATALE IN CASA CUPIELLO



Persona

Ciro Esposito



Age: 80 years old

Role: Grandpa

Work: Artisan, carpenter

Location: Naples, Italy

Core values: Tradition, family, memory, craftsmanship.

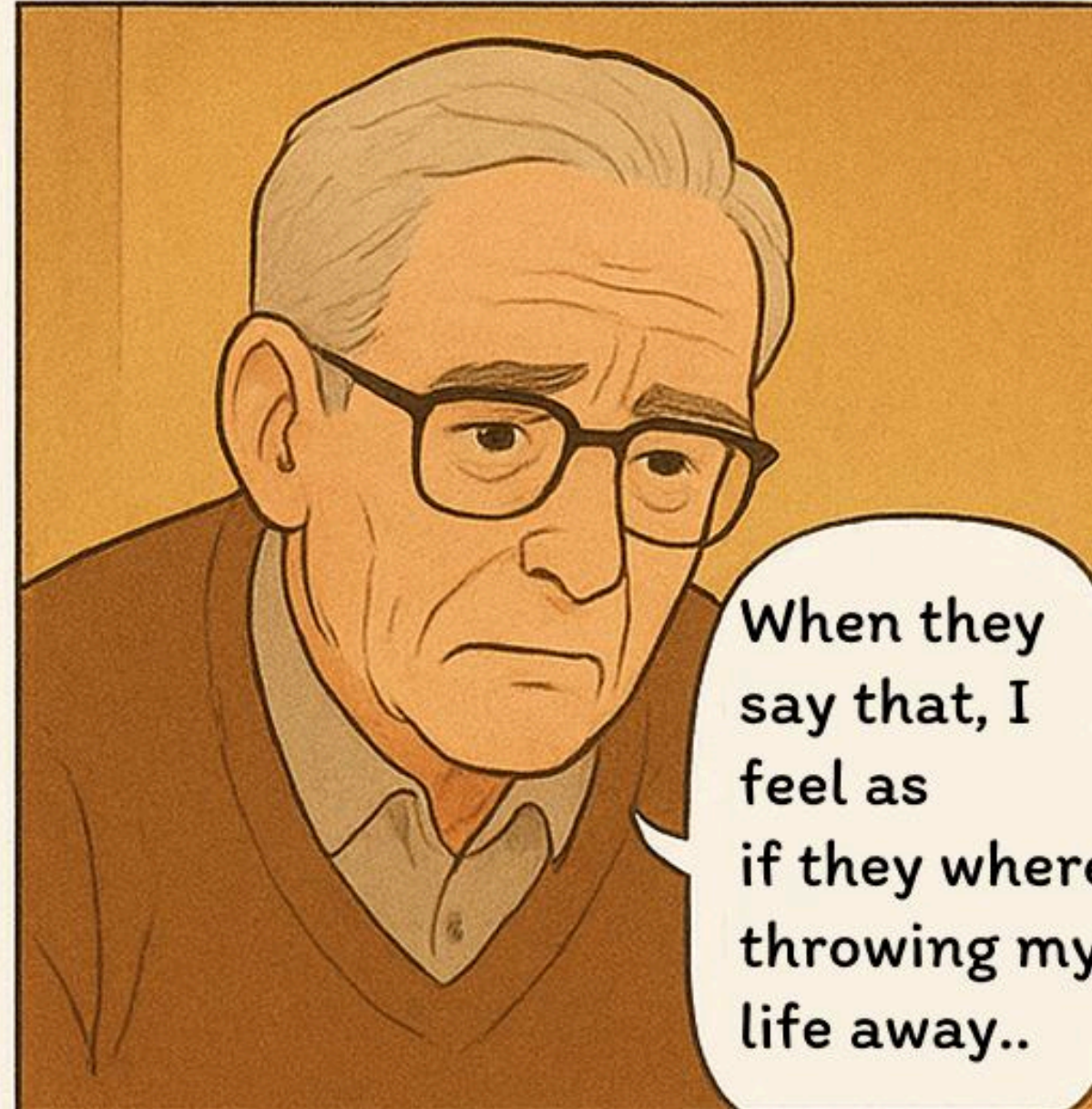
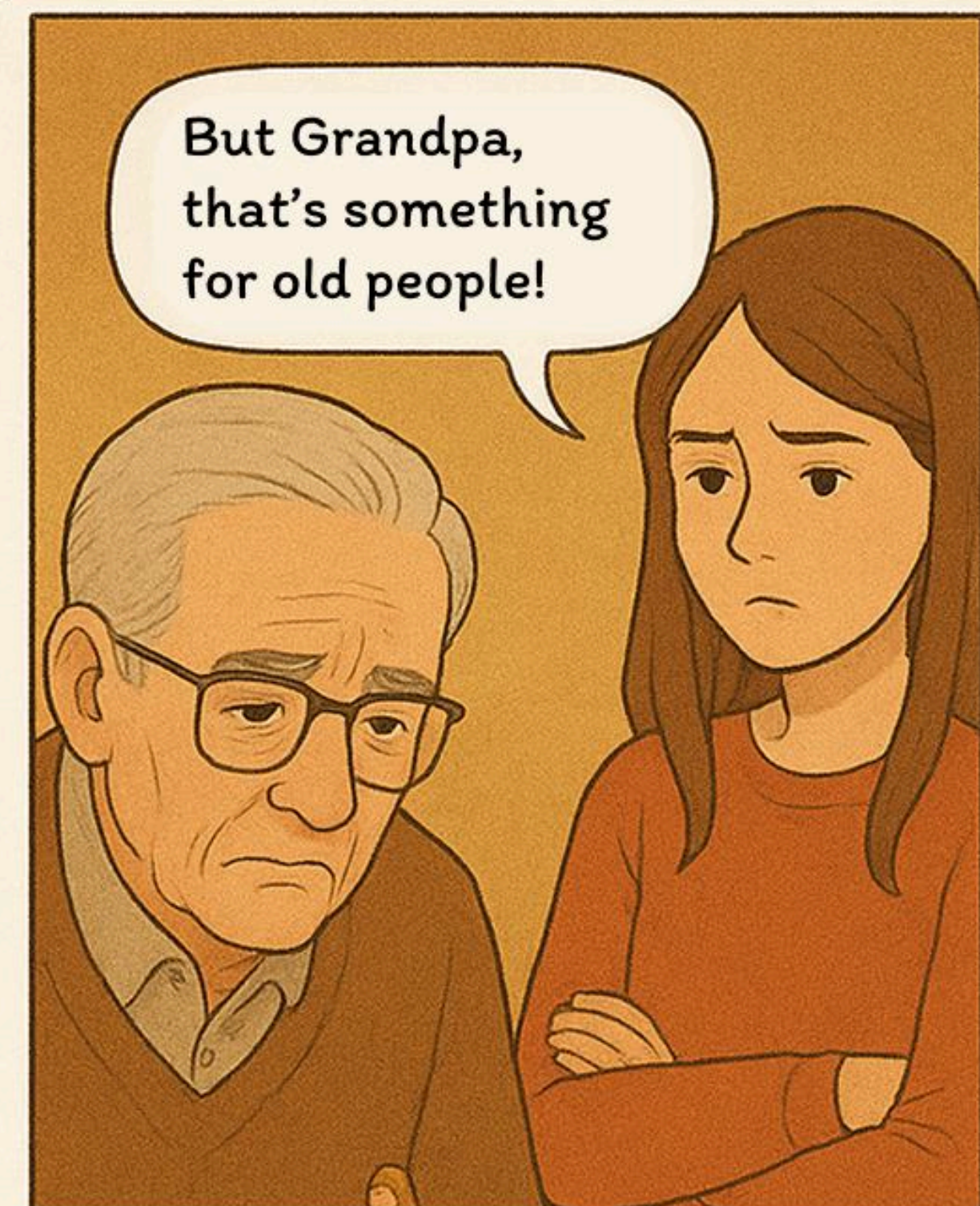
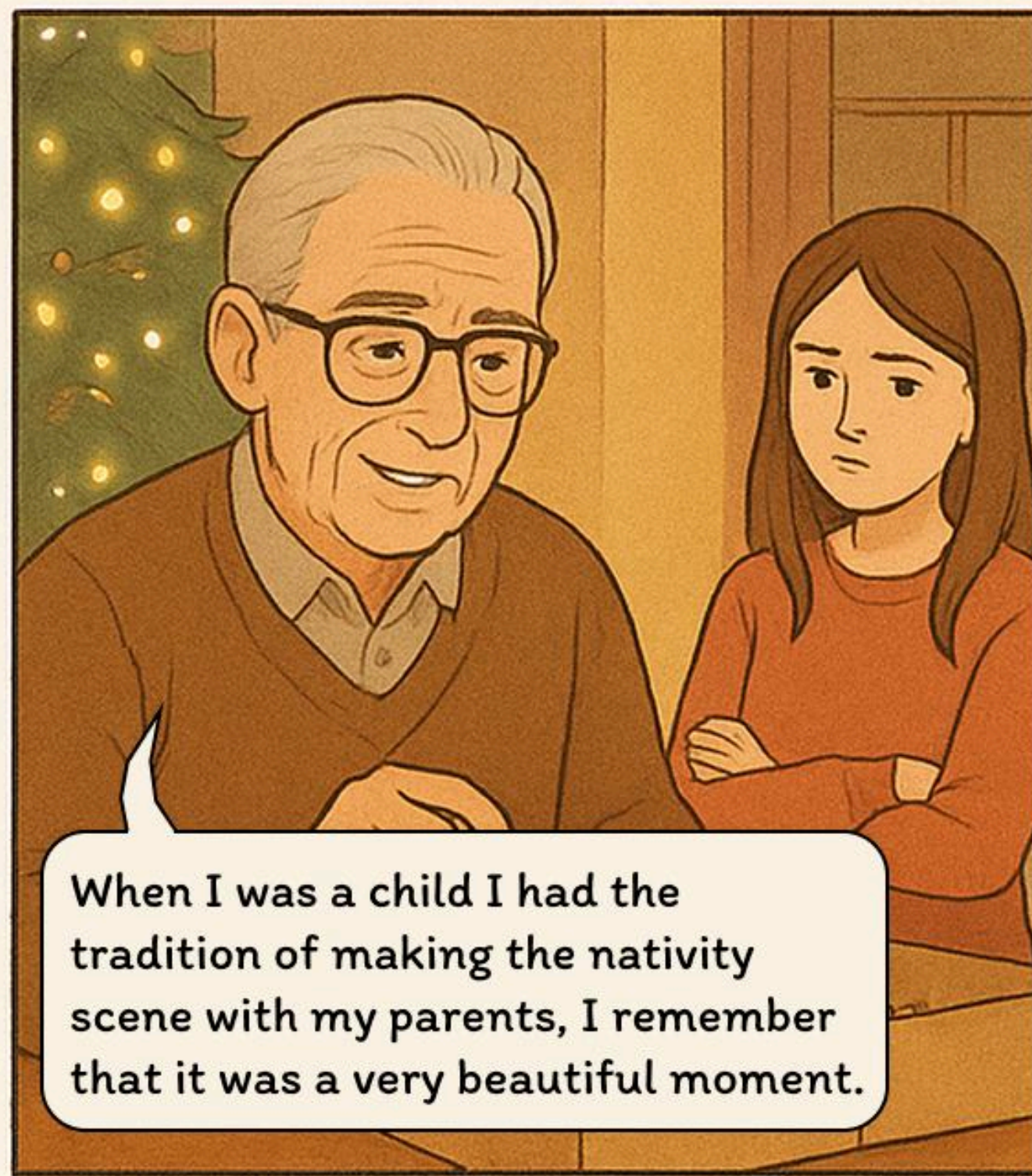
Needs

- To keep family traditions alive, especially during Christmas.
- To pass on to the grandchildren values of patience, respect, and love for craftsmanship.
- To feel still useful and recognized as the guardian of family memories.

Fears

- Being considered “old” or irrelevant.
- Seeing the meaning of what he has built fade away, such as the tradition of the Christmas nativity scene.
- Losing family unity during the holidays.
- Being forgotten by the new generation or failing to pass on his traditions.

Scenario



Design Requirements

The aim is to conserve and preserve tradition through a digital and physical object that grandparents can use to pass it on to younger generations, creating a moment of sharing and togetherness.

- **The object should be simple and inclusive**
- **It should incorporate elements of Neapolitan culture**
- **It should be sustainable in both materials and processes**
- **It should be easy to use for people of all ages**
- **It should be immediate in interaction and understanding**

Market

Target: Grandparents (70+)

Budget: < 350€

Thanks!

ERGOMIND TEAM