

TRADUCCIÓN COMPLETA · EPISODIO 11

Las Fallas Explained | How to Listen to a Mascletà - English translation

Recurso de apoyo: traducción completa al inglés para confirmar lo comprendido después de escuchar.

Poco a Poco Podcast

Aprende español con historias reales.

INTRODUCTION (ENGLISH)

Imagine this...
It is two minutes to two... in Valencia.
Thousands of people are standing in the same square.
But nobody is looking at a stage.
Everyone is waiting... for a sound.
Today... we are going to enter that square...
and discover the mascletà...
by listening first... and explaining afterwards.
This is Poco a Poco...
a podcast for learners who want real Spanish... without rushing.
Today's scene is a dramatization... inspired by real first visits to a mascletà.
In our story... I am there with Yuki.
I will tell you what he asks... and what surprises him.
And today... Isabel is here with me...
to help me share the whole experience with you.
After the story... we will explore four useful expressions...
and one simple way to connect intensity... with consequence.
You will also find five free study guides... in the episode description.
We are almost ready.
Let us enter the square.
Let's begin.

MAIN STORY (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH)

Imagine the scene...
It is almost two o'clock.
It is hot... and the square is absolutely packed.
People move very slowly... looking for a small space.
Yuki asks me why everyone has arrived so early.
I give him a quick answer.
Too quick.
I tell him they have come to listen to noise.
Isabel looks at me... and raises an eyebrow.
Juan... do not explain it to him yet.
First... let him listen.

Look around you.
Nobody is looking towards a stage.
People are talking... but they are also waiting.
Listen to how the square changes... just before two.
Isabel is right.
Yuki looks up... as if the show were hidden in the sky.
Yuki... do not look up yet.
Close your eyes... and listen.
Yuki obeys.
At first... he hears conversations.
He hears phones... footsteps... and a siren far away.
Then... he notices something different.
The conversations are shorter.
People check the time.
Some people raise a hand... to signal that there is very little time left.
There are so many people... that we can hardly move.
Yuki asks me whether this many people always come.
I explain that... during Las Fallas...
the municipal mascletà takes place in this square... at two in the afternoon.
From the first to the nineteenth of March... there is one every day.
On the busiest days... some people arrive up to an hour early.
And that wait... is also part of the experience.
Some people look for a place where they can hear well.
Others talk with friends... look at the balcony... or remember the previous day's mascletà.
The square is not silent yet...
but all that conversation... is already pointing towards the same time.
But be careful with the word always.
Every day is different.
And each person experiences the mascletà... in a different way.
Yuki looks at the sky again.
He expects colours... lights... patterns.
It is normal.
When we think of fireworks... we think of the night.
We think about looking.

A mascletà is also a pyrotechnic display...
but here... sound and rhythm are fundamental.
It is daytime.
You do not have to look for a story in the sky.
You have to notice... how the sound changes.
First, separate sounds arrive.
Then they get closer... group together... and build in intensity.
The emotion comes from that progression.
That is why it is not enough to say... that they are explosions.
I try to help.
I tell Yuki to imagine a staircase.
The first step is at the bottom.
Then... each step goes a little higher.
Isabel shakes her head.
Do not turn the mascletà into a maths lesson.
She is right... again.
And then... the first discharge arrives.
The sound breaks the wait.
It reverberates between the buildings... and seems to remain in the square for a moment.
Yuki opens his eyes.
He says nothing.
He just stays still.
I remember that reaction.
The first time... the body understands something before the mind does.
Another sound.
Then... another.
There is still space between them.
Do not try to identify every firecracker.
Listen to the distance between one and the next.
And when a string of firecrackers starts... notice how the continuity changes.
Listen to that space.
It is not an empty silence.
It prepares you for what comes next.
Yuki begins to pay attention.

He is no longer looking up.
He looks at the people.
He watches how some people smile... when they recognise a change.
He asks me how they know what is going to happen.
I am about to answer.
Let him discover it.
So we wait.
The sounds begin to arrive more frequently.
At first... we can separate them.
Then... they form groups.
And little by little... a rhythm appears.
It is not a song.
But it is not shapeless noise either.
Isabel moves one hand... as if she were following the beat.
Now it changes.
Can you feel it?
Yuki nods.
The rhythm is moving so fast... that he can no longer count each sound.
The square is so full... that nobody can make their way through easily.
And the sound is so loud... that we feel the vibration in our chests.
That is where another part of the experience appears.
You do not listen only with your ears.
You feel the ground.
You feel the air.
You feel your clothes... move a little with every impact.
And the smell of gunpowder arrives too.
It is a dry smell... intense... hard to mistake.
Yuki was so surprised... that he stayed completely still.
I ask him if he is all right.
He nods... without taking his attention away from the square.
He is listening.
Now he is.
The rhythm continues to build.
Each part seems to push the next one forward.

The sound fills the space.
For a few seconds... it is deafening.
But Yuki is no longer trying to escape the sensation.
He breathes... and follows the change.
I stop explaining too.
There is nothing useful to add at that moment.
Then... everything becomes concentrated.
The ending arrives like a very fast wave.
The ground vibrates.
The sound reverberates between the façades.
And suddenly...
silence.
For an instant... nobody speaks.
Then... the whole square applauds.
Yuki opens his eyes wide.
He no longer asks me why people want to listen to noise.
He asks me... how everyone knew that was the ending.
The question makes me smile.
He has stopped looking for separate explosions.
He has started listening to the structure.
I say that he now understands the mascletà.
Isabel corrects me... very calmly.
He understands this mascletà better.
That does not mean he understands all of them.
And it does not mean... that he has to like it.
That difference is important.
Recognising a rhythm... is not the same as enjoying it.
Some Valencians wait for this moment with excitement.
Others prefer to keep away from the noise.
And some people change their minds... depending on the day.
A tradition does not turn everyone... into the same person.
And a mascletà in this square... does not represent the whole of Spain.
I can enjoy the rhythm... and still prefer a little distance.
Someone else may move closer... or decide not to come.

All three responses are personal.
Besides... the experience does not end here.
Many local Fallas associations organise mascletaes in different neighbourhoods.
Each place changes the scale... the closeness... and the relationship with the people.
Today... we have only entered one specific scene.
One square.
One wait.
A rhythm that grows.
And a final silence... followed by applause.
As we leave... it is still difficult to make our way through.
The smell of gunpowder remains in the air.
Yuki touches his chest again.
He asks me whether the vibration always feels like that.
I look at Isabel... before answering.
Very good, Juan.
This time... you are not going to generalise.
This time... I tell only the truth about our moment.
It was so loud... that our chests were vibrating.
Yuki smiles.
Perhaps he does not yet know... whether he liked it.
But now he knows... what he was listening to.

CLOSING - VOCABULARY & GRAMMAR

And now... let us unpack what happened in the square.
First... the mascletà.
Fireworks is not a complete translation.
A mascletà is a daytime pyrotechnic display...
built around sound... rhythm... progression... and physical sensation.
Keep the Valencian spelling... with its accented à.
Second... retumbar.
A sound retumba when it resonates powerfully through a space.
The sound reverberates between the buildings.
It is stronger and more physical than simply sonar... to sound.
Third... estar a reventar.
This informal expression means... to be absolutely packed.

The square was absolutely packed.

It describes how full the place is... not necessarily danger.

Fourth... abrirse paso.

It means to make your way through people or obstacles.

It was hard for us to make our way through the crowd.

You can use it in a crowd... a station... or a busy market.

Now... the grammar hidden inside the experience.

Use tan with an adjective or an adverb... and que for the consequence.

The sound was so loud... that the ground vibrated.

The rhythm was moving so fast... that Yuki could not count each sound.

With a noun... use tanto or tanta.

There were so many people... that we could hardly move forward.

Tan describes intensity.

Tanto or tanta describes quantity.

Then que introduces the result.

It was so loud... that my chest was vibrating.

It was so loud... that I could feel it vibrating in my chest.

Now make one sentence about your own city.

The music was so loud... that...

There were so many people... that...

Complete the consequence... and make it yours.

In the episode description... you will find five free study guides.

Transcript... vocabulary... grammar... translation... and phrase by phrase.

Next time... we move from a huge public celebration...

to an ordinary morning... when everything goes wrong.

Thank you for listening... and for learning with us.

Little by little... you go a long way.

See you soon.