

During the domination of the Moors in Sicily, a beautiful and sweet maiden "*Fanciulla*" lived a simple life tending to the plants and flowers on her balcony. One day a passing Moor merchant "*Moro*" noticed her and, immediately captivated by her rare beauty, declared his eternal love to her.

The *Fanciulla*, flattered by this promise of love, returned the sentiment to her suitor and so started their love affair.

As time passed, the *Fanciulla* learned that the *Moro* concealed a secret – he had a wife and children in the East, waiting for his imminent return home.

Heartbroken by this betrayal, the *Fanciulla* took revenge and killed the *Moro* after he had fallen into a deep sleep. In her desire to keep the *Moro* forever by her side, the *Fanciulla* cut off his head and turned it into a vase in which she planted basil seeds, the symbol of passion and royalty.

Every day the *Fanciulla* tended to this plant on her beloved balcony, her tears watering the basil, which grew strong and lush and captured the attention of passersby.

Her neighbours, envious of this lush basil plant, began creating their own colourful pots resembling the *Moro's* head in the hope that they too would cultivate beautiful plants of their own.

The tradition of the *Teste di Moro* continues in Sicily to this day and you will see these ceramics in various forms dotted throughout Sicilian homes, on balconies and establishments in celebration of this tragic love story.

