

# Stop That Noodle!

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

Mario and his brothers were cooking dinner as a surprise for their parents. Vincent was stirring the spaghetti as it cooked in a pot of hot water. Joseph was opening the jar of fresh tomato sauce his mother had made from scratch. And Mario was trying to keep little Johnny from eating all the Parmesan cheese that was to be sprinkled on top of the pasta.

"It's almost ready," said Vincent. "One of you needs to get the plates out." He was the oldest, so he was always telling his brothers what to do.

"My hands are full," said Joseph, holding the glass jar of red sauce. "Ask Mario to do it."

"I can't do it," said Mario. "If I do, then Johnny will eat all the cheese." Mario was holding the cheese high above his head so his baby brother couldn't reach it. Boy, did Johnny love cheese!

"Okay, I'll do it," sighed Vincent. "I do everything around here." He went over to the cupboard to take out enough plates for them all.

"No, you don't do everything," replied Joseph. "I'm helping, too."

"So am I," answered Mario. "Unless you don't want to have any cheese left for the spaghetti!" Johnny was jumping up and down, still trying to reach the grated cheese.

As the boys argued, the pasta in the pot started to rise. The noodles rose higher and higher out of the pot. It began to spill over the stove and onto the kitchen floor. Little Johnny stopped jumping, and pointed. "Pasketti! PASKETTI!"

"Yes, Johnny we are having spaghetti. Soon," said Mario. Then he turned and saw what his brother was pointing at. His eyes got bigger. "Whoa! Hey, guys, look!"

Vincent and Joseph stopped arguing and looked. They were astonished to see the spaghetti was unravelling, and one long noodle was sliding across the floor and out of the room. It kept going to the front door of the house. One end of the long noodle reached up and turned the doorknob, opening the door and gliding down the front steps.

"What the heck?" said Joseph. Vincent just shook his head in shock.

"Stop that noodle!" shouted Mario. The four brothers tumbled out the door in hot pursuit. But the very long pasta noodle was faster. As it moved, it continued to uncurl itself and slithered down the front path. It crossed the street and went gliding down the sidewalk.

"There goes dinner," muttered Vincent.

“That’s what you call *fast food!*” laughed Mario, running past his brother.

Sarah and Nicholas were playing nearby in their front yard. They stopped and watched as the very long noodle wiggled its way past them, followed by the four brothers a moment later. Nicholas’s jaw dropped.

Sarah called out. “Hey! That would make an awesome skipping rope for us! Let’s catch it! Stop that noodle!” She and Nicholas hurried to join the brothers racing behind the very long noodle.

Old Mrs. Rossi was taking her wet laundry outside to hang dry when she heard a commotion. The longest noodle she had ever seen was sliding down the sidewalk, and behind it was a crowd of children running and shouting. Shaking her head, she went back to work. She suddenly noticed that the rope she used for her laundry line was broken. Now what would she do? She had an idea. “Stop that noodle!” she shouted, and the little old lady rushed after the children down the street, waving wet clothing in each hand.

After running for quite a while, the children and the old lady were getting tired. They stopped to catch their breath. They watched as the very long noodle twisted around a tree and then extended itself over their heads, attaching the other end to a nearby streetlight post. In no time, a flock of blackbirds flew overhead and settled themselves in a straight line along the noodle.

The children looked at each other, unsure of what to do. “Now what do we do?” asked Joseph. Mario shrugged. Vincent frowned.

Sarah said, “Well, I guess we won’t be skipping rope with it.” She took Nicholas by the hand. “We should probably get back home now. Keep your chin up, guys.”

Mrs. Rossi shook her head. “I guess I won’t be using it to hang my laundry,” she sighed. She gathered her wet clothes and walked off.

Johnny looked at his brothers. He was still hungry. “Pasketti?” he asked.

“I think that dinner is up in the air for now,” answered Vincent. His brothers laughed.

“Yeah. That dinner is for the birds!” cried Mario. “Hey birds, don’t you know that’s a pasta noodle you’re sitting on?” The birds looked down at the boys. One tilted its head sideways, thinking. Then it cawed at the others. All at once, the dozens of birds rose up into the sky, and hovered over the very long noodle. Together, they each used their beaks to take a snip of the noodle for themselves, and flew away to enjoy their meals.

“Great,” said Joseph. “The birds got their dinner, but what are we going to eat? Mom and Dad will be home soon.”

“Pizza?” said little Johnny, hopefully.

“Good idea, little brother!” said Mario, scooping him up and lifting him up on his back. “Let’s stop at

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Georgio's Pizza Place on the way home!"

## Questions

1. What does “made from scratch” mean?
2. What does it mean when Mrs. Rossi heard a “commotion”?
3. When Mario calls the noodle “fast food,” why is it funny?
4. When Vincent says that dinner is “up in the air” what does he mean? Can it have another meaning?
5. Can you identify another idiom in this passage? Explain what it means.