

AGES 9 – 14

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CHAPTER 07 · ALWAYS IN YOUR CORNER

The Light Under the Door

A story about love that watches

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It was Clara's first time away from home.

The school trip was three days in the mountains — hiking, campfires, the kind of adventure that everyone seemed to find easy except Clara, who had spent the first night in her sleeping bag wondering if she'd made a mistake.

She had a good time, in the end. She didn't get lost on the hike. She made friends with a girl from the other class. She ate things she would have refused at home and found them fine.

On the third night, around the campfire, someone asked what she missed most about home.

"My mum's light," she said, without thinking.

The other kids looked at her.

"What do you mean?" asked the girl from the other class.

Clara thought about how to explain it. "My mum stays up late," she said. "She reads, or works, or I'm not sure what she does. But there's always a light under her door when I go to bed. Even at midnight. Even at two in the morning."

"And you like that?"

"I never thought about it," Clara said. "I just always knew it was there."

She realised, saying it, that she had never once told her mum she noticed. It had just been a fact of her life, like the colour of the walls or the smell of the kitchen. Something she couldn't imagine not existing.

On the bus home, she thought about all the small things like that — things her mum did without making a thing of them. The lunch packed before Clara was even awake. The extra blanket put at the foot of her bed in autumn. The way her mum would come to the door and just stand there, not saying anything, when Clara was having a hard day.

When they arrived back at the school and she saw her mum waiting in the car park, Clara walked faster than she meant to.

"How was it?" her mum said.

"Good," said Clara. She hugged her longer than usual. "Do you know there's a light under your door? At night?"

Her mum pulled back slightly to look at her. "Yes," she said. "I know."

"I like it," Clara said. "I just wanted you to know that I like it."

Her mum's face did something complicated and kind, and she pulled Clara back into the hug.

*Love often shows itself in the small things — the ones we only
notice when they're not there.*

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A companion to “Always in Your Corner”

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