

AGES 9 – 14

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CHAPTER 12 · LEAVE A LIGHT ON

The Window

A story about a silent promise

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Every night when Tomás came home, the window was lit.

It didn't matter how late — eleven, midnight, once at half past one when a birthday party ran longer than expected. His mother was always up. The light in the kitchen was always on. The house was never dark when he came home.

He never thought about it. It was just how things were.

Then one winter, his mother had to travel for work — her own mother was ill, far away, and she had to go quickly and be gone for two weeks. The house would be Tomás and his father, who worked early shifts and was almost always asleep by nine.

The first night Tomás came home late and found the house dark.

He stood at the gate for a moment, his key already out.

The house was exactly the same. Same garden, same door, same windows. But without that light in the kitchen, it looked different. Not frightening — just less itself. Like a face with the warmth turned off.

He let himself in and went to bed.

He thought about his mother's light for the two weeks she was gone. He'd never realised it had a meaning before — he'd thought it was just what

happened when people stayed up late. But now that it was absent, he understood that it had been a message, sent every night, received without ever being read consciously.

I'm here. You can come home. Someone is awake and waiting.

When she came back, he told her.

She looked embarrassed, then pleased, then sad all at once. "I didn't know you noticed," she said.

"I didn't," he said. "Not until it wasn't there."

She put her hand briefly on his arm. "I'll try not to go away again," she said.

"No," said Tomás. "You should go if you need to. I just wanted you to know."

He paused. "It matters. The light. I just wanted you to know that it matters."

*The small things we do for love are never wasted, even when they
go unnoticed — because the moment they stop, the world feels it.*

N O I R A C I E L

A companion to “Leave a Light On”

Contributions help fund The Invisible Roots Scholarship —
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