

# THE LANTERN THAT FORGOT ITS FLAME

**\$LANTN**

*Screenplay generated by bMovies*

**FADE IN.**

**INT. ELARA'S COTTAGE - NIGHT**

Rain taps the copper lantern frames hanging from the rafters. ELARA (11) sits on a wooden stool, knees drawn up, staring at the black lantern in her lap. Its glass is cold, no flame inside. Her mother, LIRA (late 30s), folds a sky-sail in the corner.

**ELARA**

I'm not scared.

**LIRA**

Then come sit with me until the wind changes.

Elara doesn't move. She turns the lantern over. A single drop of rainwater slides down the inside of the glass and pools at the bottom like ink.

**EXT. VESPERA DOCK - NIGHT**

Dozens of children hold glowing lanterns. Their lights bob and drift on the wind. Elara steps onto the dock last. Her black lantern draws stares. KAEL, a small fox-shaped shadow, watches from the roof of a nearby shed, tail flicking.

Elara sets her lantern on the water. It sinks. The other lanterns rise and sail toward the horizon. Elara watches hers disappear beneath the black surface.

**INT. ELARA'S COTTAGE - NIGHT**

Elara sits alone in her room, the black lantern beside her bed. She pulls the patched gray coat tighter.

**ELARA**

(whisper)

I have to leave.

**EXT. WHISPERWOOD - NIGHT**

Elara steps onto the sky-bridge. KAEL darts ahead, playful. THORNE stands at the far end, compass spinning.

**KAEL**

Come on, little dark one. The wind won't wait.

**THORNE**

Where was I going again?

Elara crosses.

**EXT. FLOATING ISLANDS - SERIES OF SHOTS**

The trio sails on wind currents between islands. Kael steals tiny threads of light from passing lanterns, laughing. Moths the size of hands swarm; Thorne's broken compass summons gusts that scatter them. Elara watches, silent.

**INT. VEILED PINES FOREST - NIGHT**

Trees whisper forgotten ambitions. The group is trapped by wrong winds.

**THORNE**

I knew the path once. Names slip. Winds stay.

**KAEL**

Names are boring. Light is better.

Elara tries to steal a thread the way Kael showed her. A small spark flickers inside her lantern.

The spark reveals a vision: Lira alone, crying over an empty cradle of light.

**ELARA**

(soft)

Mother...

NYRA glides from the mist, veils shifting. Lantern glass in her palms drinks the spark. Thorne clutches his head.

**THORNE**

I... I don't remember why we're here.

Kael's flame-thread is torn away. He collapses into mist.

**KAEL**

(distant)

Elara...

**EXT. ASHFORGE RUINS - NIGHT**

Elara enters alone. A single ember glows in the central pit. NYRA waits.

**NYRA**

Your darkness calls me. Offer it.

Elara remembers the lullaby. She steps forward and opens the lantern completely.

**ELARA**

Take the empty part. It's all I have.

The ember flares. Nyra dissolves into ash. Kael reforms from the mist, whole. Thorne's compass stops spinning on true north.

**EXT. VESPERA DOCK - DUSK**

Elara stands on the same dock. Her lantern casts a steady, quiet glow. Other lanterns drift toward it. Children gather close. Kael sits at her feet. Thorne smiles, remembering.

**ELARA**

(soft)

It was waiting.

**FADE OUT.**