

Waiting for You

There was nothing particularly remarkable about the house at the end of Holloway Street—old, weather-beaten, with ivy creeping up its stone walls. The shutters were crooked, the fence half-collapsed, and the roof sagged slightly, like an old man burdened with age. And yet, it was beloved, not for its architecture or garden, but for the lamp that glowed at its window every night.

A small brass lamp with a chipped base and a yellowed shade. It flickered on at exactly 8:00 p.m., casting a soft, golden glow through the lace curtains. The light became a neighborhood landmark, a quiet tradition. Children waved to it. Teenagers nodded toward it. Couples held hands a little tighter when they saw it. For reasons no one could quite explain, that light brought comfort. Stability. Warmth.

Inside the house lived Mrs. Elara Finch, 91 years old. She had lived there for nearly seventy years, though now, her steps were slow, and her hands trembled. Her eyesight had dimmed to shadows, and she rarely left the house since winter had taken a toll on her. The town remembered her as the woman with the long gray braid, the one who used to read poetry at the library on Sundays. But now, people only saw the silhouette of her hunched figure behind the curtain, sitting in her armchair, a blanket over her knees, facing the lamp.

Elara lived alone. Her husband, Thomas Finch, had died in 1952, just two months before their son, Benjamin turned six. A military letter had arrived on a rainy Monday morning, and that was the last she heard of Thomas. She never remarried. "Once is enough," she would say, with a sad smile. "The kind of love I had doesn't need a sequel."

Benjamin had been her reason to keep going—a curious, thoughtful boy with dark eyes and ink-stained fingers. She raised him on bedtime stories, warmth, and love, even when there was little else. But life hadn't been kind to him either. He had struggled with things Elara didn't know how to fix. Addiction. Anger. Silence. He had left without warning, leaving behind an empty room and a note that read only: *I'm sorry. I love you. I don't know how to be here anymore.*

Elara never heard from him again.

But still, every night, at exactly 8:00 p.m., she turned on the lamp. It wasn't habit. It was hope. What if one day, he returned—older, weary, lost? What if he stood at the edge of the street, unsure where to go? What if he saw the light, and though—home?

So, Elara lit the lamp, even when her hands shook too much to hold a book. Even when her knees hurt too much to stand. Even when she had no voice left to call out into the night.

Then, one bitter winter evening, the light didn't come on.

At first, no one noticed. The street was quiet under the snow. But the next morning, a man mentioned it at the bakery. "The Finch lamp didn't shine last night," he said, like a star had gone out. A little girl asked her mother why the house looked "empty."

That evening, the lamp still didn't shine.

On the third day, the police were called for a welfare check. They found Elara in her armchair, the blanket still across her knees, her gray braid resting softly on her shoulder. The plug to the lamp lay just inches from the socket.

She held an old photo of Benjamin, and a note that read:

*If you ever come back, my darling boy, I want you to know—
I never stopped waiting for you.
And I never stopped loving you.
The light was for you. Always for you.*

Only six people attended her funeral: a nurse, the man from the bakery, a former librarian, a postman, the little girl, and her mother. No family. No Benjamin.

The house was sold a month later.

But on a quiet spring evening, as dusk settled, a warm light appeared in the window once more. The same brass lamp. The same golden glow, flickering on at 8:00 p.m.

No one saw who placed it there. Some say it was a neighbor, others whisper that Benjamin had finally come back.

Or perhaps, it was love refusing to be forgotten.

Either way, the light is still there—a flicker behind the old lace curtains, shining softly into the night.

Waiting.

Always waiting.