

## ***Mini #7 - The Lighthouse That Refused to Die***

*When the storm hit, the lighthouse should have gone dark.*

*The power lines snapped first, crackling like angry snakes over the cliff. Waves hammered the rocks, tearing at the foundation as rain swept sideways across the glass lantern room.*

*But the light never stopped turning.*

*Jonah climbed the iron staircase with a lantern and shaking hands, convinced he'd find wires sparking or machinery struggling. Instead, he found the old Fresnel lens glowing softly — steady, warm, impossible.*

*The lighthouse had been automated for twenty years. There wasn't a generator. There wasn't even a working bulb.*

*Still, the beam cut through the black water.*

*Jonah pressed his palm to the glass. It felt like a heartbeat.*

*"Dad?" he whispered.*

*He hadn't stepped inside the lighthouse since his father's accident — the night the old keeper had slipped, fallen, and vanished into the sea while trying to guide a trawler home.*

*That same trawler had made it to harbor. Everyone said it was miracle.*

*Thunder rattled the tower. A boat horn cried out in the distance — lost, panicked.*

*The beam brightened.*

*Jonah choked on a laugh and on a sob all at once.*

*"I'm here," he breathed. "I'll take it from here."*

*The glow dimmed — not fading — resting.*

*The storm passed by dawn. The boat survived.*

*And though the lighthouse now stands quiet most nights, every time the fog drifts too thick or waves rise too high, that impossible light flickers back to life —*

*like a promise still being kept.*

## ***Mini #8 - The Forest That Listened Back***

Lena had talked to trees since she was little.

Not in a strange way — just soft words whispered while she climbed branches or lay in summer grass, listening to leaves answer with wind.

After her mother died, she stopped speaking entirely.

One afternoon, grief heavy as winter, she wandered deep into the woods behind their house. She found the old oak — the one she used to read under — its bark scarred and wide like tired hands.

She pressed her forehead against it.

“I don’t know how to do this,” she whispered.

The forest went still — birds pausing mid-song, breeze calming like a held breath.

Then the branches rustled gently, as though forming words not meant for voices.

You don’t have to know.

Just stay.

Lena blinked, tears spilling.

Leaves brushed her cheeks, not touching — *comforting*.

She cried until the world felt lighter. The forest listened the way no person had managed to — without fixing, without hurrying, without fear.

Over the next weeks she returned often. She talked about school. About guilt. About how sometimes laughing felt like betrayal.

The trees never answered outright.

They simply made space.

One day, Lena arrived with a book — her mother’s favorite — and read aloud under the oak. Wind joined in softly, turning pages as if eager to hear more.

Lena smiled.

Grief didn't vanish.

But it finally had somewhere to rest.

And every time she left, the path home opened a little clearer — as though the forest, in its quiet way, was walking her back.