

The Lantern That Forgot Its Flame

\$LANTN

Eleven-year-old Elara, whose lantern holds no dreams, journeys across floating islands with fox spirit Kael and wind magician Thorne to reignite her flame before permanent darkness swallows her future.

Act 1: On the drifting island of Vespera, Elara lives in a cramped lantern-lit cottage with her mother. At the annual Dreamkindling, her lantern remains black while every other child's glows with future visions. Ashamed, she flees into the melancholy Whisperwood where she meets Kael, a fox spirit who steals glowing threads from lanterns for fun, and Thorne, a wind magician who once guarded the winds but now forgets names and directions. They agree to help her reach the extinct Ashforge, the only place lost dreams can be reignited. Act 2: The trio crosses the chain of floating islands. Kael's pranks cause them to lose their sky-sail and crash onto the sorrowful island of Veiled Pines. Thorne's faulty memory summons the wrong winds, trapping them in a forest where trees whisper forgotten ambitions. At the midpoint, Elara briefly ignites a small spark using a stolen thread, but it reveals her mother's hidden grief at having raised a child without dreams. The shadow weaver Nyra closes in, drawn to the spark, and steals Thorne's last clear memory. Elara's lantern stays dark. In the darkest moment, Kael's own flame-thread is torn away, leaving him formless. Elara must decide whether to abandon the quest. Act 3: Elara enters the Ashforge alone. She confronts Nyra by offering her own emptiness as bait, forcing the weaver to reveal the flame's location inside the last living ember. Elara reignites her lantern with a single, honest memory of her mother's lullaby. The islands realign. Kael regains shape and Thorne remembers his true name. On the final island, Elara returns home at dusk, her lantern now emitting a steady, quiet light that draws the other children closer rather than away.

CHARACTERS



Elara

PROTAGONIST



Kael

DEUTERAGONIST



Thorne

SUPPORTING



Nyra

ANTAGONIST

LOCATIONS

Vespera Dock

EXT.

Wooden planks worn smooth by wind, copper mooring rings, hundreds of empty lantern hooks. Moss grows between boards. The water below is black and still.

Quiet anticipation under bruised purple twilight with faint gold reflections from distant lanterns.

Whisperwood

EXT.

Dense trees whose leaves are translucent and carry faint voices. Fallen leaves form soft gray carpets. Thin white threads hang between branches like abandoned spider silk.

Melancholy hush broken only by distant wind chimes made of old lantern glass.

Ashforge Ruins

INT.

Black stone arches half-buried in ash, a single glowing ember in the center pit. Cracked lantern molds line the walls. Cold drafts move the ash in slow spirals.

Still and heavy, lit only by the single ember casting long, sharp shadows.

-tone & style

palette

deep indigo nights, dull brass lantern casings, ashen gray foliage, faint ember orange, bone-white mist

references

Lighting like Pan's Labyrinth (del Toro) - practical sources only, deep pockets of shadow. Pacing like The Lighthouse (Eggers) - slow, deliberate silences. Composition like Coraline (Selick) - tight frames, foreground clutter, distant glowing points.

tone

Gentle melancholy undercut by sudden mischief. The film moves at the speed of a child walking through an unfamiliar forest: curious, careful, occasionally startled into wonder. Silence is used as punctuation rather than absence.

sound design

Score built from wind recorded through hollow reeds and distant glass chimes. No orchestral swell. Foley focuses on cloth movement, lantern metal, and leaf texture. Long stretches without music where only breath and wind remain.

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