

Letters to the Sea

by Isadora Finch

Emily hadn't planned to stay.

The cottage smelled of salt and time, its windows rattling softly in the breeze. She stood in the center of the empty living room, the floorboards creaking beneath her feet. The place had been her grandmother's sanctuary—now it was hers.

The box was hidden beneath a loose board in the bedroom closet, tucked away as though it were never meant to be found. Dust clung to its edges, but inside, the letters were perfectly preserved.

Emily unfolded the first one carefully.

My Dearest,

The sea carries my words to you, though I fear you will never read them. I wait for you at the edge of the world, where the tides rise and fall, but you are nowhere to be found.

The signature was smudged, unreadable.

Emily leaned back against the wall, her pulse quickening. She read through the rest—love letters, confessions, and promises that seemed to dissolve like the ink on the pages.

But there was one letter, written last, that made her heart stop.

I cannot wait any longer. If you still love me, meet me by the lighthouse before the tide comes in. If you do not, I will go, and you will never see me again.

Emily swallowed hard. She didn't know how the story ended.

That night, the waves crashed louder than before. Emily sat by the window, staring out at the lighthouse in the distance. She wondered if they'd ever met—if love had won or been washed away by the tide.

In the morning, she found herself walking along the shore. She wasn't sure why, only that the words in the letters wouldn't leave her.

The tide was coming in.

She didn't notice him at first—the man standing near the water, hands in his pockets. But when he turned, their eyes met, and something shifted.

“Good morning,” he said.

“Morning.”

Emily felt the letter tucked in her pocket, its edges worn from her fingers tracing it over and over. She didn't know what had drawn her here—or him—but she stayed.

And for the first time in a long while, she let herself hope.