

## THE LIGHTHOUSE CLOCK

They say the lighthouse at Punta Penumbra has been dark for over a hundred years. Still, every so often, someone claims they see a light.

Marina was nine the first time she snuck out to the beach at night. She brought a broken flashlight, a backpack with cookies and a sketchbook. She wanted to find ghosts. The grown-ups said the lighthouse was cursed. But she thought that if a place had stories, it deserved a visit.

She didn't see ghosts that night, but she did find a clock.

A small pocket watch, old and heavy, with something engraved on the lid: *"Time is a lighthouse."*

She opened it. The hands moved backwards. She didn't stop to wonder why—just tucked it into her coat.

From then on, whenever she opened it, she remembered things she'd never lived: A man in uniform reading a letter. A woman running through the rain, shouting a name that wasn't hers. A boy skipping stones into the sea—his face identical to hers.

Marina grew up. She went to high school. Left the village. Forgot the ghosts, the lighthouse, the clock.

Twenty years later, she returned. Her mother had died, and she had to empty the old house. In a shoebox, she found the clock again. The hands were still spinning backward. Something pushed her toward the lighthouse.

Its door was ajar. She climbed the steps. Dust. Salt. Silence. At the top, the rusty mechanism stood still—until the clock in her hand began to hum. She placed it into a gap in the machinery.

Everything trembled.

And then, the light came on.

For five full minutes, the sea lit up with an impossible glow. In the distance, a ship changed its course. At the harbor, an old man looked up and wept. A child on the shore felt something shift inside him—and let go of his fear.

When the light faded, the clock was gone.

Marina walked down without looking back.

Since then, every year on April 14th, at the same hour, the lighthouse lights up for five minutes.

Some say certain things must be lost so others can find their way. And that sometimes, moving forward means letting time run the other way.