

Monday, October 5, 2026

' 2026 Morning Update • Story Time • Tue, 06 Oct 2026 02:29:29 GMT • 4:28

Rosa: Three days before the Festival of Tides, the workroom was missing twelve lanterns.

Tomas: Twelve! I counted them myself at sunset. A hundred paper lanterns, every one of them folded and ready, and this morning there are eighty eight.

Ines: We cannot hold a Festival of Tides with eighty eight lanterns, Tomas. People travel from three towns to see the hundred.

Tomas: Then tell me who took them, Ines. The door was locked. The window was latched. Nobody walks through walls.

Felix: I can keep watch tonight. I am twelve years old, and I have never once fallen asleep on watch.

Rosa: You have fallen asleep on watch twice, Felix. I counted.

Felix: That was the sardine festival and the kite festival. This is different. This is a mystery.

Nadia: I will stay with him. I am charting the harbor for my maps, and a night watch gives me an excellent reason to be awake.

Tomas: Fine. But if the thief comes, you shout, and you do not chase. Whoever is stealing lanterns is stealing them for a reason, and reasons can be dangerous.

((wooden door creaking open slowly - door_creak_01.wav @ center))

Felix: That is the door. Somebody is opening the workroom door.

Nadia: Stay behind the crates, Felix. Let me look. It is Rosa. It is Rosa, and she is carrying lanterns down to the harbor.

Felix: Rosa is the thief? But she IS the festival. She taught me to fold the paper when I was six.

Rosa: You were both supposed to be asleep. And you were supposed to be charting, young lady.

Nadia: I chart what I see, Rosa. And I see you stealing your own festival.

Rosa: Not stealing. Borrowing. There is a difference, and the difference is grief.

Tomas: Rosa? It is three in the morning. What are you doing with my lanterns?

Rosa: One a night, Tomas. Only one a night, for eleven nights. I take one lantern before dawn, I carry it out to the point, and I set it on the water for Esteban.

Ines: Esteban has been gone since January, Rosa. The whole town mourned him.

Rosa: The whole town mourned him at noon, Ines, with speeches. I have mourned him at dawn, alone, with paper and fire. He built this festival with his own hands thirty years ago. He deserved more than speeches.

((soft water lapping against a wooden boat - water_lap_01.wav @ left))

Samuel: She is telling the truth. I row past the point before sunrise, and eleven mornings now I have seen a single lantern burning on the water. I thought I was dreaming. I am seventy four years old, and I thought the sea had started dreaming for me.

Tomas: Then we will turn eighty nine back into a hundred. I can fold eleven lanterns in two days if my fingers do not fall off, and Felix can help.

Felix: My fingers are excellent at folding. Rosa taught me when I was six.

Rosa: I am sorry I frightened everyone. I only wanted one goodbye that belonged to me.

Ines: Then let us give you a better one. This year the festival begins at dawn. One lantern, released by you, Rosa, for everyone this town is missing. Then a hundred at dusk, as always.

Samuel: I will row you out to the point myself. My boat is old and slow, but she has never once missed a dawn.

((festival bell, one deep ring - bell_01.wav @ center))

Nadia: Listen. That is the first bell. The festival has begun.

Rosa: Then let us begin it properly. Esteban, this one is yours. And after yours, a hundred more, because you taught us that light is the one thing that multiplies when you give it away.

Tomas: One hundred and one lanterns. Ines, I hope you are happy. My fingers are going to fall off.

Ines: Your fingers will survive, Tomas. And Puerto Alba will remember this year as the year the festival learned to begin at dawn.

Felix: Next year I am keeping watch all night again. Somebody has to guard the lanterns.

Rosa: Next year, Felix, you can carry one out to the point with me. Grief is lighter when somebody walks beside you.