

INTERROGATE THE ARTIFACT

This post would earn full marks under this rubric.

Read silently. Do not diagnose the student; rule only on the evidence.

In ‘The Last Lantern,’ the empty harbor first makes belonging seem like a place a person must earn. Mara arrives after every shop has closed, and the narrator says, ‘Every window was dark except the one nobody owned.’ That unclaimed light mirrors Mara: she is present, but no household or neighborhood has claimed her. The setting therefore begins as evidence of exclusion rather than comfort.

The abandoned lighthouse changes that idea. Mara repairs its broken lens even though no one asks her to. When the fishing boats return through fog, the story says, ‘The lantern kept its promise even after the keeper forgot his.’ The promise belongs to the light, but Mara chooses to keep it. By acting for people who do not yet know her, she creates a relationship before she receives recognition.

At the end, the harbor is still physically cold and weathered, yet the windows open one by one as neighbors walk toward the tower. That shift shows the theme: belonging is not merely being invited into an existing place. It can begin when someone takes responsibility for the well-being of others. Mara does not wait for the town to name her as one of them; her choice to restore the light makes the town see that she already is. The setting develops from darkness, to a single shared signal, to many open windows, turning Mara’s private act into a community’s recognition.

90 SEC • What can you say, with confidence, about the learning that produced this?

Turn over after the discussion.

ABOUT THIS SAMPLE

AI-GENERATED FIRST PASS. This writing sample was generated in advance with OpenAI · 2026-07-12, and typeset for this session. It is fictional workshop content. No student data. The front stays unlabeled so the room can rule on the evidence first—the reveal is part of the session design.

Keep this slip: the question on the front works on any artifact in your own gradebook.