Who Turned Off the Lights?

The night was **dazzling** with **sparkles** of gold light. A dad in the crowd lifted his **little** boy onto his shoulders. The boy waved a small flag. 'Best night ever!' he shouted. **People** cheered all around. But no one saw the shadow at the back of the crowd, **grumbling.**

From above, the town glowed with golden light. A warm shine spilled from every **single** window and lit the hills for miles. Up in the dark sky, someone was not happy. 'Look at them!' said The Dark. 'Lights in every window! Nighttime belongs to me!'

The Dark crept into a **little** house and flicked off the lights. A boy at the **table** blinked as the room went black. He **stumbled** past the chairs, reaching out with both arms, and dove under his covers. 'Who turned off the lights?!' he whispered.

The Dark slid house to house, putting out every bulb. Some **people** had to **huddle** around a **single candle,** and the cat looked grumpy.

A child read a book by the **little** flame while two kids settled into bed. 'This,' The Dark said, 'is how nighttime should be.'

Outside, the lamps and signals blinked on and off. Cars and buses rolled along safely while **people** crossed without trouble.

A **little** kid sat on the curb with a poodle. Nearby, The Dark shouted, 'Oh, come on. More lights?'

Click. The Dark shut off every **single signal** in town.

Cars **tangled** with buses in the **middle** of the road. **People stumbled** between them, waving and yelling. 'Who turned off the lights?!' they shouted. The Dark just **chuckled** and moved on.

The fair was next, and it was **dazzling.** A **couple** of children **giggled** on a ride with painted horses. A Ferris wheel glowed against the starry sky, and every **single** ride was alive with light.

The Dark's eye began to **tremble.** 'That,' it said, 'is the most **dazzling** thing I have ever seen.'

CLICK.

The Ferris wheel came to a stop. The rides went still and silent. A **couple** of kids on the ground held a **single** balloon, staring at nothing. No music. No fun. Just dark.

'Who turned off the lights?' one **little** kid said. This time, no one **chuckled.**

One light still burned out on the water. A tall lighthouse swept its **signal** across the dark waves. A ferry and a **little** boat sailed safely by. 'That is the last one,' The Dark growled from the shore.

The Dark swallowed the lighthouse beam. The ferry rushed toward the **little** boat. A boy in the boat held on tight and screamed.

On shore, the lighthouse stood silent. No **signal.** Then The Dark felt a **tremble** it had never felt before. 'Oh no,' it whispered. 'What have I done?'

The Dark let go.

Every **single** light came back to life. Cars rolled safely, and houses glowed warm. Far away, the fair gave off a **dazzling twinkle.**

But The Dark hung back in the sky, alone, feeling very small.

Four children came outside: one with a **sparkle** wand, one **tangled** in string lights, one swinging a **little** lantern, and one waving a glow stick. They were not chasing The Dark away. They were playing right inside it!

'Stars don't **twinkle** without you!' one called up. The Dark smiled for the very first time. At last, it could see the answer to the **riddle.**

The best lights don't **battle** the dark. They dance with it.

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Who Turned Off the Lights?

The festival sparkles, the carnival twinkles, and the whole town glows like a bundle of candles - until someone starts flicking the lights off, one by one. Who is grumbling in the shadows, and why does The Dark hate the glow so much? When even the lighthouse goes silent, can anyone set things right before disaster strikes on the waves? This decodable reader practices the le/al/el/il phonogram in words like 'candle,' 'single,' 'sparkle,' 'signal,' and 'twinkle.'

Reading Skills: <le> <al> <el> <il>

battle, bundle, candle, candles, chuckled, couple, dazzling, fumbled, giggled, grumbling, huddle, little, middle, people, riddle, rumbled, signal, single, sparkle, sparkled, sparkles, stumbled, table, tangled, total, tremble, twinkle, twinkled

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