

T H E L I G H T H O U S E

by

Robert Eggers

Max Eggers

NOVEMBER 26, 2017
FIRST DRAFT

PLAYERS:

OLD, a crusty lighthouse keeper.

YOUNG, his new assistant. Old enough to have a past.

SETTING:

Somewhere far off the coast of Maine. Around 1890.

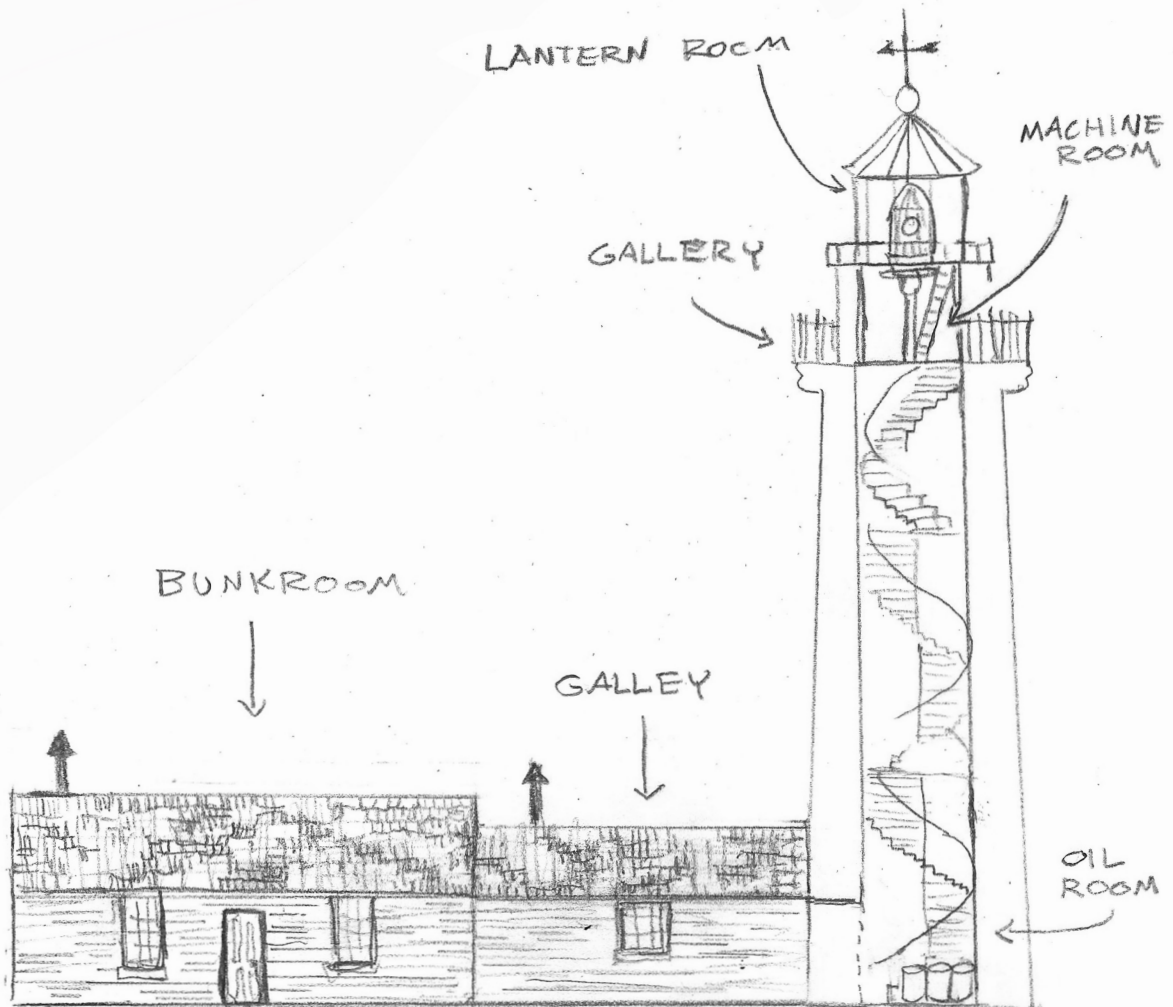
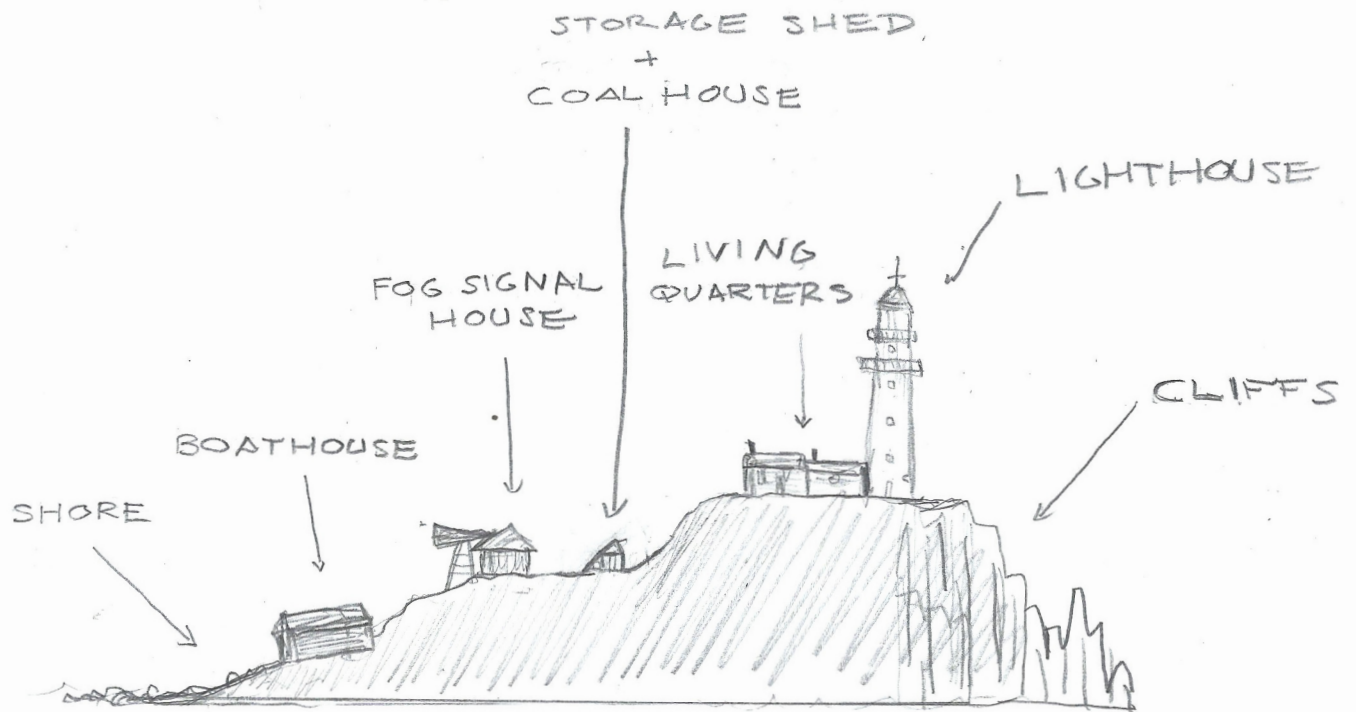
NOTE:

This film *must* be photographed on black and white 35mm negative.

Aspect ratio: 1.19:1

Audio mix: Mono

PILOT ROCK



BLACK.

The rumble of a lonely FOGHORN. Low. Faint.

TITLE: T H E L I G H T H O U S E

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

EXTREMELY WIDE SHOT: Fog. Nothing else in sight. Slowly, a SMALL STEAM BOAT emerges: A LIGHTHOUSE TENDER. It chugs along, a tiny blip in a vast ocean. Black smoke billows from its crooked chimney. Its old engine sputters softly.

Hold.

The FOGHORN again, louder now. Closer.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TENDER. HULL - LATER

CLOSE ON: The rotten, rusty hull carves through the waves. The third-rate engine rumbles.

Hold.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TENDER. DECK - SUNSET

WIDE: SHADOWS stand on the bow of the old boat (back to CAMERA). They might be men, but they could just as easily be ghosts.

THE FOGHORN BLASTS. It's close enough to feel.

A FLASH OF LIGHT breaks through the fog, revealing...

The silhouette of a bleak stone island, no bigger than an acre: PILOT ROCK. A few ramshackle outbuildings cling to the surface like barnacles. On the highest point of the island stands a crumbling LIGHTHOUSE. An ominous flock of SEAGULLS screech and caw around it.

THE FOGHORN and LIGHT bellow and flash again.

THE ISLAND itself seems to draw the boat and the men closer.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. SHORE - SUNSET

It's dark in the fog, even with the flashing light above.

THE TWO MEN FROM THE TENDER come in and out of view, carrying supplies from the shore.

One lags behind, carrying the heavier load.

They walk past a small, dilapidated BOATHOUSE with no door. A poorly mended DORY -- THE LIFE BOAT -- is tied up inside, sitting on twisted runners that stretch out into the lapping waves.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. NEAR THE LIVING QUARTERS - SUNSET

TWO OTHER MEN (late 60s) exit the one-story CLAPBOARD SHACK that adjoins THE LIGHTHOUSE. They are the departing LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS -- "WICKIES," as they refer to themselves. They lug gunny sacks over their shoulders, and drag their rope-handled ditty boxes by their sides, keeping their heads down. Their bearded faces are craggy and leaden. They reek of tobacco, must, and salt. They shuffle toward their relief: THE MEN FROM THE TENDER, carrying their supplies.

The four almost exchange glances. But they don't bother.

THE FOGHORN bellows.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. NEAR THE LIVING QUARTERS - LATER

The new wickies stand utterly still, next to each other, their gazes fixed on the same distant spot.

One man is OLD (Haggard 60? Spry 80?). He's weathered, bearded, and hunched, with hands like vises. His eyes shine like jewels. An old Pan. A Satyr.

The other is YOUNG (30s/40s), athletic, with dark eyes and a barrel chest. His expression is severe. A small moustache shows his vanity.

They watch THE TENDER depart the island, ever-so-slowly disappearing -- swallowed up again by the fog.

THE FOGHORN bellows louder than ever, penetrating deep through the bodies of the two men. It shakes the YOUNG man a little, but not the OLD one.

OLD puts the stump of an unlit clay PIPE in his mouth (upside down). He lumbers out of frame, limping a bit.

YOUNG stays standing, staring out.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - EVENING

YOUNG throws down his heavy supplies.

They thud against the warped, mildewed floorboards.

He walks through the kitchen and takes a look around...

It's run-down and spare: A coal range, a farmhouse sink with a water pump by the sole window, a small cabinet, a table and two chairs.

The wind blows. It's depressing.

He keeps walking.

He hears the sound of dribbling water...

The sound grows louder as he enters the sleeping quarters...

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's also dismal. Not much more than two sagging cast-iron single beds. A CLOCK ticks monotonously.

OLD stands near his bed, PISSING INTO HIS CHAMBER POT.

Pause. YOUNG absorbs the scene.

YOUNG walks to the unoccupied bed and sits down. As soon as he does, OLD FARTS about three feet away from YOUNG'S face.

Pause.

OLD finishes relieving himself. He shakes his member. He buttons up, and kicks the pot under his bed. The piss nearly sloshes out. Mercifully, it doesn't.

OLD limps away whistling (the song "Tis Brasswork").

He pauses briefly...

Farts again.

He leaves frame, his UNEVEN GATE disappearing: *Walk-drag, walk-drag, walk-drag...*

YOUNG sits on his bed. Still. He's not pleased. But he'll keep that to himself.

Just then, YOUNG feels something strange under him...

He feels around...

He discovers a hole in the mattress. Something is poking out...

He digs his finger into the hole...

He removes some horsehair stuffing...

He pulls out a small trinket, about six inches long... It's a MERMAID carved from ivory, with scrimshawed scales on her tail. A primitive but pretty effigy. *Strange.*

YOUNG looks at it with curiosity...

He rubs his thumb over her body... her breasts...

He feels a bit guilty.

HOLD.

INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: The hulking steam-powered foghorn engine. A piston pumps, gears grind, a huge flywheel spins and spins.

CAMERA BOOMS DOWN TO: THE MOUTH ON THE HUNGRY FURNACE GLOWING WITH FIRE.

A SHOVEL FULL OF COAL enters frame and feeds the flames.

Another shovel full.

And another.

THE FOG SIGNAL BLOWS EXCRUCIATINGLY LOUDLY.

CLOSE, REVERSE: YOUNG shovels coal into the furnace, dripping with sweat, wincing from the intense heat.

He shovels again and again.

THE FOG SIGNAL BLOWS: LOUD. CLOSE. PAINFUL.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY. BEHIND THE RANGE - NIGHT

OLD's knobby HAND grasps blindly for a crate. When his fingers meet it, it clinks from something glass inside.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

OLD blows the dust off the crate. He smiles with relief, pulling out a sea glass LIQUOR BOTTLE.

- LATER

It's dark.

The two men sit in the cramped galley. A kerosene lamp flickers on the table between them, it is bent to one side, but still works fine. Lukewarm scrod and potatoes wait on battered mess plates. YOUNG rolls a cigarette on the table. His coal-blackened hands stain the paper.

OLD sets down two cups. Tin. Chipped china.

OLD

Should pale death with treble dread
make the ocean caves our bed,
God who hear'st the surges roll,
deign to save the suppliant soul.

He pours a strange, thick liquid into the cups. *Homemade hooch?*

He holds his up for a toast.

OLD (CONT'D)

To four weeks.

YOUNG pauses. He hesitates as if he thinks he is being tested.

He decides to stay focused on the cigarette.

YOUNG

Thank you, no, sir.

OLD

Bad luck to leave a toast
unfinished, lad.

YOUNG tucks his cigarette behind his ear.

YOUNG

No disrespect meant, sir.

OLD

A man what don't drink, best have
his reasons.

YOUNG

Ain't it--

YOUNG stops himself to rephrase, more respectfully.

I understood it's against
regulations, sir.

OLD
Did you?

YOUNG
Yes, sir.

OLD won't budge. His cup is still raised.

YOUNG (CONT'D)
From the manual.

OLD
Didn't picture you was a reading
man.

YOUNG
Not trying for trouble--

OLD
Then you do as I say. That's in yer
book, too.

Long pause.

YOUNG smiles. His expression seems to say: "This old guy is a
piece of work"

YOUNG takes his cup very deliberately.

He stands up.

Pause.

He walks to the farmhouse sink and pours out the booze.

He pumps some water into his cup.

He sits back down.

He holds up his cup to toast.

YOUNG
To four weeks.

OLD smiles -- a little too wide. They click cups.

They drink...

But just as soon as they do: YOUNG RETCHES! A terrible taste.

OLD revels in the mishap.

OLD

Aye. The cistern needs a-lookin' to. One of yer duties, lad. Or didn't ye read yerself about it? Polishing, swabbing. Swabbing, polishing. You'll clean the brass and the clockwork. You can tidy the quarters after, and there's well-more to be mended outside.

YOUNG nods yes, his dry heaving subsiding.

OLD (CONT'D)

D'you hear me, lad?

YOUNG

Yessir--

OLD

(correcting him)

"Aye, sir!"

YOUNG

Aye, sir.

OLD starts eating his supper. His habits are a bit uncouth.

OLD

When the fog clears, you'll take the dog watch--

YOUNG

Dogging it already?

OLD

It's the mid watch that's to dread lad, night to morning. My watch. I tend the light! Some junior man I'm fixed with -- Ye act like ye never been to sea a'fore.

YOUNG

I...

YOUNG hesitates, he hasn't been at sea before -- clearly. *But not worth the trouble getting into it now.*

Aye, sir.

OLD

Now, see to your duties. The light's mine.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM. THE MIRROR - NIGHT

MEDIUM SHOT: OLD, no longer in his civilian clothes, is dressing himself with the same ceremony as a cleric might. Each item of clothing has a purpose. To wear it wrong would be blasphemy.

The collar of his jacket is marked "K" for head keeper. Buttons are labeled "USLHE:" U.S. Lighthouse Establishment. His uniform is far from new, but it's well cared for. Darned, patched, and tidy. As few wrinkles as possible. Boots are shined. Tie is straight.

The CLOCK ticks monotonously.

EXT. PILOT ROCK - NIGHT

EXTREME WIDE SHOT: THE LIGHTHOUSE flashes. THE FOGHORN blasts.

INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

YOUNG shovels more coal into the furnace.

He looks to the BOOK that rests on a chair by the hot, whirring machinery: ***"Instructions to Light-Keepers, July, 1881."***

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. TOWER STAIRS - NIGHT

THE CAMERA BOOMS UP THROUGH: The clinking and clanking gears of the light's clockwork...

A heavy lead weight on a chain slowly rises up through the center of the tower's cast-iron spiral stairs...

Wondrous patterns of swirling light move through the ironwork.

The patterns shift rhythmically -- hypnotically.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. LANTERN ROOM - NIGHT

OLD sits in a sweat, mesmerized by the LIGHT. The machinery whirs. THE HEAT from the enormous SECOND-ORDER FRESNEL LENS is immense. He is haloed in his pipe smoke.

His jacket is off...

Not cool enough.

He opens his union suit...

-LATER

Now he's bare chested. His big, hard gut and strong arms shine with sweat. There's a faded three-masted ship tattooed on his chest, and several crooked stick-and-pokes elsewhere -- all glistening.

And... he has a BRASS KEY around his neck on a chain.

He pours grog into his tin cup. He toasts the light. Drinks.

His eyes are heavy.

He's not drunk yet. But he wants to be.

He pours another drink.

Toasts.

EXT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

YOUNG stares up at the magical light. It truly is a wonder.

He's outside the signal shed. It's an odd looking building with its huge protruding trumpet, held up by rickety struts.

YOUNG tries to light his cigarette. The wind and dampness of the foggy air makes it impossible.

His match won't light.

THE FOGHORN BLASTS.

YOUNG strikes the match again. The match is lit... the wind blows it out. *Damn!*

He strikes the match again...

THE FOGHORN BLASTS.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. SHORE - NIGHT

YOUNG is finally smoking his cigarette. He slowly walks toward the shore...

HE IS DRAWN TO THE LIGHT from the lighthouse reflecting on the water.

He pauses, the waves lapping against the rocks.

He starts walking into the tide...

He walks further, he doesn't stop... hypnotized by the water...

THE LIGHT...

Further...

Further...

Seaweed, moss, and slime surround his knees.

Further...

Then, slowly, A HUGE LOG, forty feet long and still sheathed in bark, floats toward him...

Another log...

Another!

He looks ahead and THE SEA IS FULL OF LOGS: A RIVER LOG DRIVE. He wants to run, but he can't... he keeps wading deeper into the ocean of logs...

He is almost up to his neck in water... Suddenly, he sees: THE BODY OF A MAN floating face down in the logs: HE WEARS A WOOL MACKINAW COAT AND LEATHER BOOTS WITH THICK HOBNAILED SOLES.

Nearby is some kind of tool floating: A WOODEN POLE WITH A MENACING IRON HOOK at the end of it (a "CANT HOOK" for moving logs in a log drive).

THE LOGS BEGIN TO JAM...

THE BODY FLOATS TOWARD YOUNG!

YOUNG wants to scream. He is almost totally submerged now... WATER RISES ABOVE HIS MOUTH, HIS SCREAMS TURNS TO SALT WATER GURGLES!

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - MORNING

Water drips on YOUNG'S FACE

Drip. Drip. Drip.

He opens his eyes. He sits up in his bed.

OLD is disrobing in the mirror. As reverential as before, only even more careful -- he's drunk.

OLD
Shingles.

YOUNG looks up. Water gets into his eye.

OLD waddles to his bed, his pants around his ankles.

OLD (CONT'D)
Tend to 'em after the cistern. And
the lamp, she needs oil.

He flops down on the sagging mattress. Asleep instantly.

YOUNG
Aye, sir.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. PATHWAY - DAY

YOUNG lugs a heavy BAG OF CHLORINE up the incline of the island.

It's hard work.

The wind blows like hell.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. CISTERN - DAY

YOUNG, cigarette in his mouth, opens the hatch of a brick water tank: It lets out a putrid stench that knocks YOUNG'S face back a few inches.

He tosses away the cigarette and covers his mouth and nose with the handkerchief around his neck.

He looks inside: It's full of mold and frothy sludge. *It's what he's been drinking.*

He pours in the chlorine. It slowly sinks.

YOUNG drops in the mixing stick and swirls the water around. It looks sort of beautiful.

EXT. LIVING QUARTERS. ROOF - DAY

YOUNG hammers shake shingles. He holds nails in his teeth.

Hammer. Hammer. Hammer.

He balances precariously on a rickety rung ladder. The wind blows hard, nearly knocking him off. It's monotonous work, but he takes it seriously.

He looks up to the lighthouse: Curtains drawn in the lamp room.

He rips out several rotted shingles... The roof boards below are ravaged with rot, too. *Yep, here's that leaky hole.*

He leans in...

HE CAN SEE THROUGH A HOLE IN THE ROOF:

OLD is asleep. But he's moving...

YOUNG leans in closer...

OLD is softly HUMPING his sweaty mattress, just gently thrusting his hips. It's subtle. A reflexive motion.

YOUNG watches.

Hold.

EXT. SUPPLY SHED - DAY

YOUNG opens a wooden door that almost falls off its hinges:

The shack is full of sacks of potatoes, barrels of dried fish, shelves of canned meats and vegetables and fruits.

Paper-wrapped parcels, wooden crates, casks, rope.

EXT. COAL HOUSE - DAY

YOUNG opens the door: Coal. Heaps of it.

EXT. COAL HOUSE - LATER

He loads up a wheelbarrow overfull with coal.

He pushes the wheelbarrow down the rock. (Needless to say, the wheel squeaks.)

EXT. PILOT ROCK. PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

He keeps pushing. One wrong step could cause the whole pile to tumble off of the wheelbarrow and down the island....

EXT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He makes his way to the door with the wheelbarrow...

A SEAGULL stands in front of the old door, guarding it.

YOUNG flaps his hand, trying to scare it.

THE GULL SQUAWKS. It turns its head, revealing: A MISSING EYE. The empty socket is gruesome and twisted. A war wound.

YOUNG is motionless, staring at the strange deformity...

SUDDENLY, THE GULL YEOWS, LUNGING at him, clicking its beak.

Instinctively, YOUNG HURLS a lump of coal at it...

He misses...

THE GULL mews this time, looks with its single eye, and flies away.

YOUNG watches the bird's path...

It flies past the lighthouse...

The OLD man is looking down at him from the gallery, puffing his pipe. Watching.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. OIL ROOM - DAY

The oil room is at the bottom of the staircase. YOUNG looks up...

That is one tall staircase.

The chains of the light's clockwork weights look sinister as they dangle down the center of the iron spiral steps and their shadows creep across the stone wall. They clink and clank, echoing ominously...

YOUNG looks at the OIL DRUMS hiding beneath the stairs. They are much larger and more imposing than the heavy chlorine bag.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. TOWER STAIRS - DAY

Clunk. YOUNG lugs an immense OIL DRUM up the steps.

...

...

Clunk.

...

...

Clunk.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. MACHINE ROOM - DAY

Finally, YOUNG reaches the top of the stairs. The oil drum SLAMS down. His muscles tremor, sweat drips.

He looks at the hatch to the LANTERN ROOM above...

He is drawn to it...

Slowly, he reaches toward the handle...

He pushes...

It's closed. Stuck. *Locked?*

 OLD (O.S.)
 You don't go in there!

OLD startles YOUNG. *Where did he come from?*

OLD emerges from the shadows: walk-drag, walk-drag, walk-drag.

 YOUNG
 Oil, sir.

Says YOUNG, feeling somehow caught.

He steps away from the drum, showing it to the old man, trying to hide an ounce of pride. He wipes the sweat from his brow, panting.

OLD limps around him, smoking his pipe, stopping short of blowing the smoke in YOUNG'S face.

 OLD
 Tired?

 YOUNG
 No, sir.

Says YOUNG, still panting.

OLD throws a small, empty, ONE-GALLON BRASS OIL CANISTER at him.

YOUNG CATCHES it awkwardly.

OLD
Use this next time. Save you a
helluva lotta trouble.

YOUNG
--

OLD
Catch yer breath, lad.

Pause.

Then bring that drum back down the
ladderwell where ye found it. 'Less
yer fixin' to burn the whole light
down.

OLD climbs the ladder to the LANTERN ROOM.

YOUNG
Aye, sir.

OLD slams the door.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

Scrod and potatoes again.

OLD pours himself a dram. YOUNG has his water.

OLD
Should pale death with treble dread
make the ocean caves our bed, God
who hear'st the surges roll, deign
to save the suppliant soul.

They drink. YOUNG winces a little. OLD is satisfied and
starts eating.

OLD (CONT'D)
(between chewing)
Still tastes o'the heads?

YOUNG won't nod yes.

They eat in silence.

OLD looks up at YOUNG... YOUNG ignores him.

OLD (CONT'D)
Ah, find some chirk in ye, lad. Now
is the time for gab and chatter. Ye
best be enjoying it.
(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

Come a fortnight, the doldrums set
in and the brace of us'll be
wantin' to be ever silent as the
tomb. Even to clap eyes on each
other... It'll make ye hotter than
hell!

YOUNG

I ain't much fer talking.

OLD MAN

Reckon yer the first?

YOUNG

No, sir. I don't.

OLD

You ain't. You ain't. Aye, the
Chicopee, a fine-un, she was. Clean-
built and trig-lookin'! None more
fleet in '64 than she. We were on
the breaks of a mutiny, we was...
and why, ask ye? Why? What's the
terrible part of a sailor's life,
ask ye, lad? T'isn't the hard
workin', nay, no, 'tis when the
workin' stops that yer twixt wind
and water. Doldrums. Doldrums.
Eviler than the Devil. Boredom
makes men to villains... And the
water goes so quick, lad...
vanished. And what's the answer?
What be the cure? The only med'cine
is drink. Drink, lad! Keeps them
sailors happy, keeps 'em agreeable,
keeps 'em calm, keeps em--

YOUNG

Stupid.

Pause. The two men stare at each other for a moment.

OLD ERUPTS INTO A FIT OF LAUGHTER. He laughs so hard that he
runs through every conceivable sound. *Is he drunk already?*

YOUNG smiles, it's hard not to at the unique laughter.

OLD pours another and toasts.

OLD

I know'd there were an old
tar spirit somewheres in ye, lad.

YOUNG starts to say something... but he stops himself.

Pause.

OLD (CONT'D)
Out with it, lad.

YOUNG
What... Why'd yer last keeper
leave?

OLD
Him? My second?

YOUNG nods yes, eating.

OLD (CONT'D)
A fine sea farin' man, he were.

Pause.

Died.

YOUNG
--?

OLD
Aye, went mad, he did. First a
strangeness. A quietude. Then wild
fancies struck him. Ravin' 'bout
sirens, merfolk, bad omens and the
like. No more sense left in him
than a hen's tooth. In the end, he
believed there were some
enchantment in the light.

YOUNG
--?

OLD
He notioned St. Elmo did cast his
very fire into it. Salvation, said
he.

YOUNG laughs.

YOUNG
Tall tales.

He rolls a cigarette.

OLD takes another drink. Slowly, his mood becomes somber.

OLD
I saw ye sparrin' with a gull.

YOUNG licks the paper.

OLD (CONT'D)
Best ye leave 'em be. Bad luck to
kill a sea bird.

YOUNG laughs.

YOUNG
(laughs)
More tall tales?

As YOUNG starts to put the cigarette to his lips... OLD GETS
UP AND SLAPS HIM HARD IN THE FACE, out of nowhere!

YOUNG stands in shock, knocking back his chair to the
floor... He looks at OLD, stunned:

OLD IS ANGRY. DEAD SERIOUS.

OLD
Bad luck to kill a sea bird.

Pause.

OLD breathes. He calms down a bit. He realizes how strange
that was.

OLD (CONT'D)
Pay me no mind, lad. None. Fix us
up some coffee. Long night ahead.
Drop o'coffee'll do us good.

OLD doesn't need to say he's drunk.

YOUNG
Aye, sir.

OLD now looks shaken. Terrified. A shell of himself.
More frightening than his outburst of anger was.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - NIGHT

YOUNG lies in bed, smoking a cigarette. Reading the manual.
Can't get comfortable. Restless. He holds the CARVED MERMAID
in his hand, not really thinking about it.

The CLOCK ticks monotonously.

Hold.

OUT OF FOCUS IN THE BACK GROUND: A SEAGULL lands on the
window.

Pause.

THE GULL starts tapping on the window.

Tap. Tap.

YOUNG hears it.

Tap.

He turns... Just as he turns, CAMERA racks focus, THE SEAGULL has already flown away.

YOUNG feels uneasy.

INT. STORAGE SHED - NIGHT

YOUNG'S head moves up and down, shaking slightly. He is hiding in the shadows of the shed. The sound of rustling cloth and a clinking belt buckle are heard. CAMERA BOOMS DOWN...

He's masturbating.

EXT. LIVING QUARTERS - A BIT LATER THAT NIGHT

YOUNG smokes a cigarette, leaning against the clapboard wall. Relieved. Calm.

He's only visible when the LIGHT hits the quarters, otherwise, the soft glow of his cigarette indicates YOUNG'S location in the dark.

YOUNG looks at the little cigarette ember illuminating his hand. It's very weak.

He looks up to the LIGHT:

INT/EXT. LANTERN ROOM/LIGHTHOUSE GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

FLASH: OLD is up against the lens.

BLACK.

FLASH: OLD's arms are outstretched.

BLACK.

FLASH: *Is he hugging the lens?*

BLACK.

FLASH: He's gone.

BLACK.

FLASH: OLD is on the GALLERY. Surveying. He pulls his suspenders over his shoulders, as if getting dressed after a night with a woman. He looks below.

EXT. LIVING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

YOUNG is hiding, skulking below the eaves of the roof, wary of the man above. He puts out his cigarette.

EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAY

EXTREMELY WIDE SHOT: It rains. The wind is something awful. THE LIGHTHOUSE flashes.

YOUNG pushes the wheelbarrow through the storm, an oilcloth tarp over the coal. He struggles through the mud...

Hold.

INT. MACHINE ROOM - LATER

OLD watches YOUNG polishing the brass. It pours outside.

OLD

(almost singing)

*Oh what be the bane of a
lightkeeper's life?
What cause him to worry, to
struggle and strife,
What make him use cuss words, and
beat at his wife?
'Tis Brasswork.*

*What make him look ghastly
consumptive and thin?
What rob him of health, of his
vigor and vim?
And cause him despair and drives
him to sin.'
'Tis Brasswork.*

OLD giggles at himself. Stops. Writes in his LOGBOOK.

YOUNG sees that out of the corner of his eye. He keeps polishing... harder.

OLD (CONT'D)

*The oil containers I polish until,
My poor back is broken, aching; and
still...*

EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAY

YOUNG pushes the wheelbarrow through the storm (now in the other direction). It's more difficult than before...

He's struggling... The wheelbarrow falls...

Coal scatters all over the place. YOUNG stands still.

He wants to scream.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

OLD and YOUNG eat their scrod and potatoes in silence.

A STORM RAGES JUST OUTSIDE THEIR FLIMSY WALLS.

Tension.

Hold.

Thunder claps.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TOWER - DAY

ANGLE ON: OLD is looking down from the gallery of the light, he smokes his pipe. The sun shines behind him.

CAMERA BOOMS DOWN TO: YOUNG, sitting on a KITCHEN CHAIR HELD UP BY THREE LONG ROPES, whitewashing the tower, some 50 feet above the ground. His bucket of whitewash dangles on another rope.

OLD
Keep 'em still, lad.

YOUNG can't. As usual, the wind blows wildly.

YOUNG
Aye, sir.

His "paintbrush," a stick with a horsehair brush at the end, shakes in his hands.

OLD
Whitewash must be even, lad.
Bright! Shinin'! Like a silver
whorehouse token. Give 'em sailors
a proper daymark.

OLD lets the rope slip a bit. It truly scares YOUNG.

Whitewash drips onto YOUNG'S face and clothes. He yells:

YOUNG
They're not going to see it in a
Goddamn storm!

OLD laughs.

OLD
They will after! And'll be glad to
see it! Keep your temper now, lad.
It's fine work. Yer makin' high
marks in me logbook. Them's gospel!

"Logbook?" thinks YOUNG. He stares at Old... for too long.

OLD (CONT'D)
I'll drop ye down a few feet.

He unties the rope on one end... YOUNG slips quickly.

YOUNG
Easy.

OLD
Never been in better hands.

Another shift: HARD.

OLD ties the rope. Goes to another side.

Unties. SHIFT! Further than the last one. THE WHITEWASH
SPLASHES.

YOUNG
Easy!

YOUNG thrashes in the wind. The rope around the plank
loosens...

OLD
Quit yer flailing, lad.

YOUNG
I ain't!

OLD
Y'are!

The ropes start to unravel...

OLD (CONT'D)
Keep still!

YOUNG
I am--

YOUNG falls to the ground!

BLACK.

EXT. FOOT OF THE LIGHT TOWER - LATER

YOUNG comes to...

He's covered in whitewash.

How long was he out? He looks around... THE KITCHEN CHAIR is shattered -- no more than kindling... OLD is nowhere to be seen...

But THE SEAGULL with the missing eye is there. It's pecking at his legs, scavenging at fresh meat.

YOUNG

Shoo.

It pecks. TAP. TAP. TAP. On his leg.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

You! Get!

It persists. Pecking. Biting. Slicing with its sharp beak. TAP. TAP. TAP. Damn! It hurts!

YOUNG KICKS IT HARD!

THE GULL falls to the ground for a moment.

Pause.

Is it dead?

YOUNG creeps to it...

Suddenly, THE GULL flies away, mocking him with keks and yeows.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - ANOTHER NIGHT

OLD sits on the same chair he's been sitting in for the past weeks. YOUNG sits on an UPTURNED SOAPBOX.

YOUNG pours OLD a drink. Passes it to him.

OLD

Thankee, lad.

YOUNG

Winslow.

OLD

--?

YOUNG

Ephraim Winslow. These last two weeks, I'd... well, I'd like it, sir, if you'd call me by my name.

OLD

Listen to ye, giving orders, lad.

YOUNG

Winslow.

OLD

Alright, alright... suits me just as fine, Ephraim Winslow. So, what brung such a one as you to this damnèd rock?

YOUNG

Such as what?

OLD

Pretty as a picture.

YOUNG

--

OLD laughs heartily.

OLD

Only joshing, lad, only josh--

YOUNG

Winslow.

OLD

Winslow -- What brings you to this rock, Ephraim Winslow? What was yer work afore?

YOUNG

Timber.

OLD

Timber...

YOUNG

Big timber. Up north. Canada ways.

OLD

Hudson Bay outfit?

YOUNG

The same.

OLD
True what they say? "Forest far as
the eye can see."

YOUNG
Yessir. Spruce, tamarack... white
pine. "Bush," them folk up there
call it.

OLD
Had enough of trees, that it, then?

YOUNG
Yessir.

OLD
Can't say I blame ye. I hearn tell
about that life. Hard going.
Workin' one man harder than two
horses, they say. No thankee. The
sea, she's the only situation
wantin' fer me.

YOUNG
Miss it?

OLD
Miss it? I ain't never know'd
anything but it.

YOUNG
Sailing.

OLD
Ah... Aye. Aye.

OLD sees the sea life clearly in his eyes. The stories he
must have.

OLD (CONT'D)
Ain't nothing what can touch it.

He snaps himself out of it:

OLD (CONT'D)
But can't be draggin' me old stump
about...

(Referring to his limp)

Nay... not worth the trouble... now
I'm a wickie and a wickie I is.

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

I'm damn-well wedded to this here light, and she's been a finer, truer, quieter wife than any a live-blooded woman.

YOUNG

Ever married?

OLD

Thirteen Christmases at sea... little 'uns at home. She never forgave it.

Pause.

'Tis fer the better.

Pause.

It's clear that OLD has regrets. But rather than dwell on a painful past, he changes the subject.

OLD (CONT'D)

Since we're getting too friendly, Ephraim Winslow, tell me, what's a timber man want with being a wickie? Not enough quiet for ye up north? Sawdust itching yer nethers? Foreman found ye too high-tempered for carrying an axe?

That last comment rubs YOUNG the wrong way, but he doesn't give in to the feeling.

YOUNG

Like you say, just had enough of trees, I guess.

YOUNG focuses on his cigarette.

Pause.

Lights. Draws. OLD looks him over suspiciously, as he lights his pipe.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Nothin' wrong with a man startin' fresh, lookin' to earn a living--

OLD

No...

YOUNG

...like any man, tryin' to settle
down quiet-like with some
earnings...

(pause)

I read a man could earn six hundred
and thirty -- I read *one thousand*
dollars a year if he's willing to
tend a light far off shore... the
further away, the more he earns. I
read that, and hell, I said,
yessir. Work. Save my earnings.
Soon enough, I'll raise my own
roof, somewheres up country, with
no one to tell me "what for"...
That's all.

YOUNG smiles. He thinks he is doing a pretty good job
covering up his fear that OLD may sense more than he lets on.
The cigarette helps.

OLD

Same ol' borin' story, eh?

YOUNG

You asked.

Pause.

YOUNG takes another drag.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Say, why's it bad luck to kill a
gull?

OLD puffs his pipe gravely.

OLD

In 'em's the souls o' sailors what
met their maker.

YOUNG tries not to scoff again. OLD senses it.

OLD (CONT'D)

You a praying man, Winslow?

YOUNG

Not as often as I might. But I'm
God fearin' -- if that's what yer
askin'.

YOUNG tries to take a drag of his cigarette. He can't.
It's gone out... *but he just lit it...*

OLD

Russian Tar once told me: yer
cigarette cinder goes out, there be
someone somewhere's a-thinkin' bad
thoughts of ye.

YOUNG looks at OLD.

OLD (CONT'D)

They be a-cursing yer name.

YOUNG re-lights the cigarette and takes a drag, not knowing
what to make of that.

OLD (CONT'D)

A toast to Ephraim Winslow, the God
fearin' man. Let 'im settle down
with none to tell 'em "what for,"
that his cinders always stay
burnin', and let fear never abandon
'im.

OLD toasts and drinks.

YOUNG

Amen.

YOUNG feels uneasy.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. VARIOUS - DAY

- YOUNG sweeps the stairs.
- YOUNG removes the weight from the clockwork chain.
- YOUNG winds the clockwork mechanism.
- YOUNG cleans the clockwork. Leaning in a strange position,
his TOBACCO POUCH falls to the ground.
- OLD writes in his LOGBOOK.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - NIGHT

YOUNG is tossing and turning in bed. Restless. Hot. Sweaty.

The sound of the waves crashing on shore is relentless.

The CLOCK ticks monotonously.

He tries to find a cool spot on the bed.

He turns his pillow over... kicks off the linens...

It doesn't work. He sits up. He puts his hand behind his ear... no cigarette.

He goes to his shirt pocket hanging on the foot of the bed rail...

The TOBACCO POUCH isn't there.

YOUNG

Shit.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

The POUCH rests on top of the spinning clockwork. YOUNG grabs it and quickly starts to head down stairs, but...

Something stops him.

A feeling. A question.

The clockwork spins, the light hums on its brass track, the sea and wind sing their lilting song.

He looks up at the LIGHT swirling magically, dancing through the cast iron grates. It is beautiful. Hypnotic. THE LIGHT DRAWS HIM IN...

But there's something else... *another noise...*

Whispering.

Above.

In the LANTERN ROOM.

YOUNG tries to look through the iron grates: the bright LIGHT of the lamp makes it hard to see... he needs to get closer...

He grabs a chair from the shadows and stands on it.

He listens.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. METAL GRATES - CONTINUOUS

The whispering is more audible, though hard to define. He listens, trying to block out the white noise of the light:

It's OLD alright, but YOUNG can only hear bits of whispers.

OLD
 (whispered)
 The light... seed...

There's another noise, now that his ear is more focused.
 It's a sticky, sweaty, slapping of flesh. Constant...

It's familiar, but he can't quite place it.

He puts his face closer to the metal grates and through
 glimpses of the light and shadow above, he sees:

PIECES OF OLD, IN AND OUT OF SHADOW. HIS HAIRY, BARREL-SHAPED
 TORSO IS VIBRATING. HIS RIGHT ARM IS MOVING. VIGOROUSLY. UP.
 DOWN. UP. DOWN.

Is he...?

JUST THEN, WHITE, VISCOUS FLUID DRIPS FROM THE GRATES...

YOUNG QUICKLY AVOIDS IT IN DISGUST.

HE LOOKS UP AGAIN...

A HUGE, SLIMY, TRANSLUCENT SQUID'S TENTACLE SLITHERS ACROSS
 THE IRONWORK...

...IT DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARKNESS.

OLD (CONT'D)
 (louder)
 Veritas...

YOUNG's eyes widen.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - DAY

YOUNG pumps water into a cup in the sink.

He drinks. Pumps again. Drinks. Goes to pump again, but
 something stops him...

At the bottom of the cup is a dark film.

He sweeps it up with a finger and looks: *strange*.

YOUNG pumps the water once again... it makes a strange
 gurgling sound... the water is more and more tainted, almost
 black.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. CISTERN - DAY

THE CISTERN'S HATCH IS OPEN! SEAGULLS clamor around it.

YOUNG

Get! Get!

He shoos them away, but as he gets closer to the cistern, he hears flapping wings inside. He looks in:

A SEAGULL is trying to escape -- pathetically, desperately. It looks like the other wing is broken, it just hangs there. Many DEAD GULLS float in the bloody cistern around it.

Just then, THE ONE-EYED gull swoops in and starts attacking the gull in the cistern.

YOUNG tries to intervene...

ONE EYE attacks YOUNG'S face!

YOUNG tears it away in wild rage...

He mercilessly beats THE GULL to the ground...

Over and over and over...

Until it is just a bloody pulp of feathers...

THE ONE-EYED GULL is dead.

YOUNG breathes heavily. Guilty.

Hold.

The wind blows.

CAMERA BOOMS UP THE LIGHTHOUSE TOWER, past the gallery, past the lamp, past the conical roof to...

THE WEATHERVANE: THE NEEDLE POINTS WEST...

Suddenly, the wind blows... THE NEEDLE starts to jiggle a bit...

The wind picks up... THE NEEDLE spins around, and around, and around...

It settles. Jiggling slightly in the wind, THE NEEDLE POINTS HARD: EAST.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - LATER

YOUNG stands in the open doorway of the bunkroom, wiping his face with a handkerchief.

YOUNG
Cistern was open, sir and...

He sees OLD sobbing into his pillow and blankets. *Is he asleep?* It's a strangely vulnerable sight.

YOUNG doesn't know what to do.

Hold.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. MACHINE ROOM - DAY

YOUNG'S face is reflected in the shining brasswork. His expression is still affected by the previous two scenes. He spits on the brass and keeps polishing.

OLD watches YOUNG work, writing in his logbook.

OLD
Wind's changed.

YOUNG
Good riddance.

OLD
Don't be so darn foolish. It's the calm afore the storm, Winslow. She were a gentle westerly wind yer cursing. Only feels roughly 'cause you don't know nothin' bout nothin' and there ain't no trees on this here rock like your Hudson Bay bush. Nor'Easterly wind'll come soon a-blowin' like Gabriel's horn. Best board up them windows.

YOUNG
Aye, sir.

OLD
'Twill keep steady afore the tender comes in the morn, I 'spect... but there's dirty weather knocking about.

YOUNG won't look OLD in the eye.

OLD (CONT'D)
Somethin' stirring in ye?

Yer gettin' off this island tomorry
Winslow, don't start grudgen me
now.

YOUNG
No, sir.

OLD
Keeping secrets, are ye?

YOUNG
No, sir.

Pause.

I could use a hand with them boards
is all.

EXT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

YOUNG boards up the windows. OLD helps.

OLD (O.S.)
Now then, I've a surprise.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. SHORE - DAY

YOUNG stands precariously on a rock, pulling a ROPE that
leads out into the water. OLD watches him.

OLD
Pull, pull, me good lad. Pull,
Winslow!

YOUNG pulls a wooden LOBSTER POT out of the water.

YOUNG SMILES. So does OLD.

OLD (CONT'D)
Look at 'em! Better than fin
fishin'!

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

Mutilated LOBSTER SHELLS are piled up on the plates. By the
look on YOUNG & OLD'S faces, it was a satisfying meal.

OLD pours two cups of his grog. Passes one to YOUNG.

OLD
 'Tis no crime to take a snort now.
 A clear night. And being our last
 afore relief, I never know'd an
 inspector what wouldn't turn no
 blind eye, and I won't take "no"
 for an answer.

YOUNG gives in. He takes the cup.

YOUNG
 Should pale death and treble dread
 make the... uh...

Pause. He can't remember the rest.

Ah hell -- to relief!

They clink.

OLD
 And how!

They drink.

OLD pours another round.

They drink.

OLD pours another round.

They drink.

-LATER

YOUNG AND OLD are singing and pounding on the table.

OLD AND YOUNG
 (singing)
*Hurrah, we're homeward bound,
 Hurrah, we're homeward bound!*

OLD
 (singing)
*When we're arrived on Bedford docks
 Them bloomers all comin'round in
 flocks
 Them pretty girls, we hear 'em say
 "Here comes Jack with his nine-
 month pay"*

OLD AND YOUNG

(singing)

*Hurrah, we're homeward bound,
Hurrah, we're homeward bound!*

-LATER

They keep drinking.

OLD smokes a cigarette. YOUNG smokes OLD'S pipe.

OLD

...and a pretty lass, she were,
takin' off her bonnet... but as I
says, I'd broke me leg, and banged
myself all up. It was to a nuns'
hospital... All of them nuns were
Catholics, I tell ye...

They laugh.

OLD (CONT'D)

Aye, but I never went to Salem
since without hoping that I should
see her, for beddin' down wer'nt
the same since. I don't know but if
I was a-going to begin my life over
again... well, womenfolk are apt to
be dreadful ashamed of it, anyhow.

YOUNG

You feel shame when you lie with a
woman?

OLD

I ain't shamed of nothing.

Pause. They laugh.

OLD (CONT'D)

Well, I'll say it... I might even
miss ye, Ephraim Winslow, yer
fastly a true blue wickie in the
making, you is. Thought one night
you was bound to split me skull in
twain, but yer a good-un. Why
you'll be workin' the lamp in no
time -

YOUNG

Why haven't I?

Pause.

OLD
What?

 YOUNG
The light?

 OLD
I'm the keeper, lad.

 YOUNG
The... I ain't... the manual says--

 OLD
My log is the only book on this
rock--

 YOUNG OLD (CONT'D)
I mean, I'm a wickie, you 'Tis Gospel!
says, but I ain't trimmed one
wick once--

 OLD (CONT'D)
I'm the keeper of the light, lad,
the keeper of the light--

 YOUNG OLD (CONT'D)
I ain't -- the book says we I keep the light, don't
alternate-- concern yerslef with the
 light! Mine, lad!

OLD pours himself another drink.

YOUNG laughs. The tension goes away.

 YOUNG
Have it your way... uh... Say, I
never... I don't know yer name.

 OLD
Thomas Wake.

YOUNG looks odd, troubled.

 YOUNG
Thomas?

 OLD
Thomas Wake, aye.

YOUNG seems a little disturbed.

 OLD (CONT'D)
Call me Tom.

OLD pours them another round.

YOUNG

To my friend Tom, and to getting
off this goddamned rock!

They drink, spilling a bit of the liquor down their chins.
YOUNG snaps out of whatever seemed to be bothering him.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - NIGHT

YOUNG stumbles around, undressing as he makes his way to the bed.

He leaves clothes here and there.

He struggles to get his boots off. He can't. Too drunk.

He sits and breathes.

He tries again. He gets one off.

He tries the other... no use... He pulls harder, it comes loose, but the force is so great, YOUNG hits his head on a lamp, mounted on the wall...

He and the lamp crash to the floor. He passes out with his pants around his ankles. His hair absorbs the kerosene of the broken lamp.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - MORNING

YOUNG wakes up.

He is so hung over. He wants to die.

He needs water...

The pitcher... the basin... both empty. He knocked them over the night before. *When did that happen?*

He looks down the corridor. OLD is asleep on the kitchen table.

He goes to his chamber pot: it's full of piss and shit.

He goes to Old's: piss and shit.

EXT. PILOT ROCK - LATER THAT MORNING

YOUNG wears his oilskins, smokes a cigarette, and carries the full piss pots. THE WIND FIGHTS HIM. So does the hangover.

THE GALE HAS ARRIVED. IT'S STRONG. RELENTLESS. IT ALMOST KNOCKS HIM TO THE GROUND.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. CLIFFS - LATER

YOUNG stands over the cliffside. Fog is creeping in.

He tosses the contents of the CHAMBER POTS off the cliffs...

IT ALL SPLASHES BACK IN HIS FACE.

YOUNG

Fuck!

He drops the chamber pots... they tumble to the rocks.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

FUCK!!

It starts to rain, of course.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. PATHWAY - LATER THAT MORNING

YOUNG hauls coal through the rain.

INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

YOUNG stokes the fire. The signal is up and running.

He shovels more coal.

EXT. PILOT ROCK - LATER THAT MORNING

YOUNG stumbles around the slippery rocks, pushing an empty wheelbarrow. Rain pissing on him. The hangover beating down upon his head.

THE FOGHORN blasts relentlessly.

As he rounds a corner, he sees something WHITE in the black rocks of the shore... He walks a few more paces...

It is a BODY, lying still.

He gasps... He drops the wheelbarrow and runs toward it!

THE FOGHORN blasts.

As he gets closer, it appears to be a WOMAN... A NUDE WOMAN washed up on the rocks. White legs and arms splayed out.

He calls for Old, but he can't hear him.

He runs closer.

THE FOGHORN blasts again.

THE WOMAN appears to be DEAD, entangled in seaweed.

YOUNG has to save her if he can.

YOUNG goes to his knees...

Wipes seaweed away from her face...

SHE IS BEAUTIFUL. The most beautiful woman he has ever seen.

The blood rushes to his head. His heart throbs. He looks her over. He wants to touch her. He hesitates... but he does.

He checks her pulse...

Puts his head to her chest: Dead.

Slowly, he touches her cheek, then her mouth...

He moves his hand down her body, in the horror and grief of her death, but also fascinated by her beauty, her perfect feminine shape... He makes his way past her breasts, to her ribs...

Her ribs seem to have wounds -- deep slices. They aren't bloody. They look almost like... GILLS.

He moves his hand past her waist, toward her genitals, then he sees:

SHE HAS A FISH'S TAIL! SHE IS A MERMAID!!

He is frozen in terror. Then he looks back at her face...

She opens her eyes and smiles at him.

She raises her arms, wanting his embrace...

YOUNG opens his mouth to scream in horror...

THE FOGHORN blasts!

YOUNG runs away, fast as he can, flailing, stumbling over himself. He has almost no control over his body as he hurls himself across the island, his screaming drowned out by the FOGHORN.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG is out of breath from screaming. Wild eyed.

OLD
What'r ye splittin' yer lungs fer?

YOUNG
I--

OLD
Ye smell o' shit. Best swab this mess afore the tender comes.

YOUNG
I--

OLD
Ye do as yer told, lad! The quarters are dire.

YOUNG
Aye, sir.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - LATER

THE GALLEY IS CLEAN. Well, as clean as it can be.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - LATER

THE BUNKROOM is orderly. Mattresses rolled up. Everything is in place. The CLOCK ticks monotonously.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. NEAR THE SHORE - LATER

OLD and YOUNG are in their topcoats, their gunny sacks over their shoulders, their ditty boxes by their sides. They look out to sea, waiting for the tender.

It rains. The wind blows.

Hold.

The rain begins to pour.

Behind him, the DORY that's tied up wracks in the wind, beating against the sides of the boat house.

The foghorn calls. The light flashes.

OLD (CONT'D)
 (singing "Blood Red
 Roses")
*'Tis frost and snow and winter
 storm.*
 (beat)
*Go down you blood red roses, go
 down!*
 (beat)
*And there's many a ship lost round
 Cape Horn.*
 (beat)
*Go down you blood red roses, go
 down!*
 (beat)
*Oh, you pinks and posies...
 EIGHT... Go down!*

NINE! He makes the sign of the cross.

OLD (CONT'D)
*Well, the captain he's o'er come
 with fear.*
 (takes a swig)
Go down --

SUDDENLY, A MASSIVE WAVE CRASHES OVER OLD, KNOCKING HIM OFF HIS FEET.

HE TRIES TO STAND, TO CATCH HIS BREATH...

HE IS TERRIFIED...

ANOTHER WAVE HITS HIM...

INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

ANGLE ON: THE BAROMETER. The needle is falling. It falls from "RAIN" to "STORM."

YOUNG has his shirt off, shoveling coal. Sweaty.

THE FOGHORN blasts.

YOUNG catches his breath. He has one of OLD'S LIQUOR BOTTLES on his chair.

He uncorks the bottle of liquor. Smells it.

He thinks hard about drinking it.

No.

He corks it.

YOUNG turns...

OLD is in the doorway soaking wet, and crazed.

YOUNG wants to ask what happened, but decides it's better not to.

YOUNG somehow feels too exposed without his shirt on.

OLD
(yelling over the noise)
THE DAMP'S GOT TO THE PROVISIONS.

YOUNG
(yelling over the noise)
WHAT?

OLD
(yelling over the noise)
THE DAMP'S GOT TO THE PROVISIONS!

EXT. PILOT ROCK. PATHWAY - LATER

THE TWO walk through the storm.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - LATER

OLD is shutting the door. YOUNG is shaking off the rain.

OLD
The damp's got to the foodstuffs.
The salt cod is out.

YOUNG
Out?

OLD
Blasted. Gone to rot.

YOUNG
Praised be.

OLD
Now will ye hear me?

YOUNG
Hear what?

OLD
That we best be rationing.

YOUNG
Rationing?

OLD
Insubordinate again--

YOUNG
It's only been one day.

OLD
The Devil's tail!

YOUNG can't figure out OLD'S train of thought.

YOUNG
Look, maybe the tender, maybe she
did come. We missed her, is all. I
can take the dory out--

OLD
Weeks, Winslow.

YOUNG
What?

OLD
What d'ye mean, what?

YOUNG
Weeks?

YOUNG is beginning to feel confused, afraid.

OLD
Weeks, aye. Weeks.

YOUNG
We slept in. Dead drunk.

OLD
It's been weeks ago since we missed
her, Winslow. And I've been asking
ye to ration fer weeks now, too,
and you've kept barking at me like
a mad dog, saying you can "take the
dory out"--

YOUNG
Now look--

OLD
Don't be losing yer head now.

YOUNG
This ain't funny.

OLD
No, it ain't. And I ain't wanting
to be stranded here with some
damned lunatic.

YOUNG
Stranded?

OLD
That's what I said.

YOUNG
I thought you said relief was
coming.

OLD
If we can wait out this storm.

YOUNG
The tender is coming.

OLD
In '75 'Ol Striker were marooned
here for seven long months, he was.
The storm died on the mainland but
here, waters were too rageful
neither to launch nor land.

YOUNG
Yer just trying to scare me.

YOUNG is worried he is losing his mind. Or is it OLD who's
losing it?

OLD
Look at ye. Pretending. But ye well-
know yer lot.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. BEHIND THE QUARTERS - NIGHT

The storm continues. OLD holds two SHOVELS. He throws one at
YOUNG.

OLD
DIG.

OLD starts digging like a madman in the wind and rain.

OLD (CONT'D)
DIG, SAYS I!

YOUNG joins, afraid of what they might be digging up.

-LATER

THEY have dug a deep, muddy hole. About the size of a GRAVE.

OLD
HERE SHE LIES.

OLD unearths...

A WOODEN CRATE.

He gives it to YOUNG.

-MOMENTS LATER

They open it...

INSIDE ARE TEN FULL BOTTLES OF BOOZE.

YOUNG
(to himself, ironic)
Rations.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

THE TWO DRINK while they ration out supplies. OLD is marshalling YOUNG. They are pretty drunk already.

A LEDGER is written in the LOGBOOK, marked with pounds of coal, number of tins, gallons of oil, etc.

OUTSIDE, THE RAIN HAMMERS DOWN. WIND HOWLS.

OLD
...their gums grew swollen, the
color of bone, then to rot. Tarry
blood oozed, teeth droppin' to deck
with none to hold on to. Their legs
withered and turned gangrenous,
every shade of the peacock's tail.
(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

The worst of us couldn't fend
'gainst the ship rats what gnawed
at the soles of our feet.

"Land ho!" I hears, but only grass
and trees on that island. So we
drunk upon the sap, and et upon the
grass. 'Twas providence saved us
from turning to each other's flesh,
like barenaked savages. And 'twas
that scurvy what left me locked
ever since.

He knocks on his leg again.

Pause.

YOUNG

Thought you said you broke it.

OLD

Eh?

YOUNG

Your leg. Catholic nuns, and such
like.

OLD

...No, ye must'a misheard.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

OLD sits on Young's bed, staring out the window, fixated on
the horrible STORM which is tearing the outbuildings apart.
He holds A MOSTLY EMPTY BOTTLE.

OLD

Fallin'. Fallin'.

YOUNG is on the floor, pouring himself another. TWO EMPTY
BOTTLES are by him.

YOUNG

No, no, no. No! And I says get off
me, I says. But they never
listened... they'd never... if I
had the chance, they'd never --
none of them Goddamned lily-livered
Canadian bastards. Lack-gall
cowards. Those bastard didn't fight
no revolution -- never -- and look
at em! Cowards and he-women all of
'em. Goddamn 'em!

OLD keeps staring out the window.

OLD
The eaves be fallin' fast.

YOUNG
Never! Any day, breaking my back,
working a man harder than two
horses, but Winslow, Winslow.., I
told that dumb bastard...

OLD
Yep. Them eaves is gonners.

YOUNG
Give me yer cant hook, I says to
him, but Winslow that goddamned
Canady fool bastard... always
callin' me a dog. A filthy dog.

OLD turns.

OLD
Winslow?

YOUNG
Yeah, that bastard. "I'll show you
who's a dog."

OLD
Winslow?

YOUNG
What of him?

OLD
Who, Winslow? The eaves be fallin'--

YOUNG
He's always raggin' on me, like
you. Damn fool nonsense.

Pause.

How'd you find yourself off that
grass island anyhow?

OLD
Raggin'? Who's raggin'? What
island? That's the trouble with
you, Winslow.

YOUNG
Yeah, that's the trouble with
Winslow.

OLD
That's the trouble with ye!

Pause.

YOUNG takes a swig and looks OLD in the eye.

YOUNG
The trouble with you is eating
grass without no teeth.

OLD
Come now?

YOUNG
Your teeth was fallen out--

OLD
What're ye getting at, Winslow?

YOUNG
Just... just, it seems powerful
hard to eat grass without no teeth.
Goats and sheeps and cows. Well
now, they all got teeth, don't
they?

OLD
Ye know how ye eat grass without
haven' yer teeth?

YOUNG
Oblige me.

OLD
Ye rip it out and ye swallow it.

YOUNG
You rip it out and you swallow it.

OLD
Ye rip it out and--

YOUNG
I don't know 'bout that.

OLD
You don't?

I don't. YOUNG

What? OLD

Pause.

What? YOUNG

Pause.

What? OLD

What? YOUNG

What? OLD
(quickly, on his heels)

What? YOUNG
(faster)

What? OLD
(even faster)

That's what I mean. YOUNG

what? OLD

That's the trouble with you. YOUNG

That's the trouble with you! OLD

With you!! YOUNG

With YOU!!! OLD

NO!!!! YOUNG

Pause.

(MORE)

YOUNG (CONT'D)

(Suddenly)

I want a steak! I want a goddamned
STEAK!!!!

OLD

Shut it.

YOUNG

A steak! A steak! A rare, bloody
steak. If I had a steak, I could,
oh boy, I could fuck it.

OLD

You don't like my cookin'?

YOUNG

Don't be such an old bitch.

OLD

You're drunk, you don't know what
yer talkin'--

YOUNG

How could I possibly like the
horseshit you fix us for supper?

OLD

Yer drunk, or ye wouldn't be saying
that!

YOUNG

I'm drunk? *I'm* drunk?

OLD

Ye heard me.

YOUNG

You've been drunk since...

OLD

Damn ye.

YOUNG

Drunk since I first laid eyes on
you.

OLD

Yer fond of me lobster, ain't ye?

YOUNG

Yer drunker than a Virginy fence.

OLD

I seen it, yer fond of me lobster.

YOUNG

--

OLD

Say it.

YOUNG

--

OLD

Say it.

YOUNG

--

OLD is furious.

OLD

Damn ye!

YOUNG

I don't have to say nothi--

OLD

Let Neptune strike ye dead,
Winslow!

OLD becomes dreadfully serious.

YOUNG is afraid. Silent.

OLD speaks more powerfully and passionately than any Tamburlaine or Lear. He calls out to the gods of the sea -- a man possessed:

Hark, Triton, Hark!

Bellow, and bid our father, the sea
king, rise up from the depths, full-
foul in his fury, black waves
teeming with salt-foam, to smother
this young mouth with pungent
slime...

(to Winslow)

to choke ye, engorging yer organs
till ye turn blue and bloated with
bilge and brine and can scream no
more...

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

only when, he, crowned in cockle shells with slithering tentacled tail and steaming beard, takes up his fell, be-finnèd arm -- his coral-tined trident screeches banshee-like in the tempest and runs you through the gullet, bursting ye, a bulging bladder no more, but a blasted bloody film now -- a nothing for the Harpies and the souls of dead sailors to peck and claw and feed upon, only to be lapped up and swallowed by the infinite waters of the dread emperor himself, forgotten to any man, to any time, forgotten to any god or devil, forgotten even to the sea... for any stuff or part of Winslow, even any scantling of your soul, is Winslow no more, but is now itself the sea.

OLD is shaking. Veins popping in every direction. Exhausted... eyes drilling into YOUNG.

YOUNG sweats. What can he do? What can he say? Has he been cursed? Doomed?

YOUNG

Alright. Have it your way. I like yer cooking.

EXT. PILOT ROCK - NIGHT

The cataclysmic storm continues.

Flash.

The wind.

Flash.

The rain.

Flash.

The waves.

Flash.

The foghorn.

Flash.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON: YOUNG watching the light through the grates. Hypnotized.

SMILING. SHAKING. INSANE?

WHISPERING ABOVE. Or is it just the spinning lens?

The sound is familiar and alien. Male and female. Celestial.

Hold.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - DAY

YOUNG watches OLD, his chest and the LOGBOOK rise, and a loud SNORE follows.

YOUNG creeps forward toward OLD, trying not to make any noise. The sounds of THE STORM outside help to disguise some of his movements.

OLD keeps snoring.

He reaches his hand out, unfurling like a lure in slow-motion, fishing for... the BRASS KEY around OLD'S neck....

The floorboards betray YOUNG with a loud GROAN.

YOUNG stops. *Caught!*

OLD opens one eye.

OLD

The sun is over the yardarm.
Best find me some winks afore the
day draws farther on.

OLD farts.

Pause.

YOUNG stands still.

OLD (CONT'D)

Get to yer duties or I'll give you
a real keelhauling.

Pause.

YOUNG stands still, defiantly.

YOUNG

You you ain't even human no more.
Workin' apart from folks so long.
What'd you lose?

OLD

What're ye doin'?

Pause.

YOUNG STANDS STILL.

OLD (CONT'D)

Get to work, says I!

YOUNG gives him a look that could kill.

OLD (CONT'D)

To work!

Pause.

OLD farts.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. PATHWAY - DAY

YOUNG wears his OILSKINS, pushing the wheelbarrow through the tempest. It's almost impossible. Is he drunk or hungover? He mutters to himself.

He has a BOTTLE in the barrow, floating in rain water. That's it. No coal.

YOUNG keeps his eye on the bottle. Watching it. Caring for it.

INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - DAY

The fog machine whirls, pumps and... BELLOWS!

YOUNG shovels a heap of coal into the furnace. Shirt off. OILSKIN HAT on.

He takes a swig from the bottle.

THE FIRE ROARS.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. SHORE - DAY

THE GALE IS MERCILESS AS EVER.

YOUNG is pulling up THE ROPE OF A LOBSTER POT...

IMAGE: CLOSE ON: THE MERMAID'S SLIMY VAGINA.

YOUNG pulling the rope...

IMAGE: CLOSE ON: AN ERECT PENIS.

YOUNG pulling the rope...

IMAGE: THE LIGHTHOUSE, SAME ANGLE AS THE PENIS.

IMAGE: YOUNG'S HANDS TIGHTLY GRIP A CANT HOOK.

YOUNG pulling...

IMAGE: CLOSE ON: THE BACK OF A MAN'S HEAD. WOOL MACKINAW COLLAR.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. SUPPLY SHED - DAY

YOUNG IS MASTURBATING IN THE DARK. FURIOUS. ANGRY. CONFUSED.

Shirt off. Oilskin hat on. Shivering. Rain pisses down through the holes in the roof.

He is holding the MERMAID CARVING. Staring at it. It's not working.

He throws his head back, thinking of someone, something, isn't he? He does it with a fury... lust...

It's taking too long to get anywhere.

Back to the MERMAID CARVING...

Beat. Beat. Beat. Beat. Beat.

His hand is getting tired.

Beat. Beat. Beat. Beat. Beat.

He can feel something coming, it's rising within him, he puts his other hand on the rickety wall... it's coming... soon...

He's lost it.

IMAGE: WIDE: YOUNG is straddling the MERMAID (the real one, not the carving), his pants half down, violently fucking her while she tries to drag him into the sea and slime.

BACK TO THE SHED: YOUNG crumbles. Desire turns quickly into shame.

The fog horn calls. The wind howls. Rain pours into the shed.

HE THROWS THE MERMAID CARVING...

IT BREAKS IN TWO.

YOUNG looks at the broken MERMAID and curls into a ball on the wet ground with his pants around his hips...

He seems like he is about to cry...

But he laughs. He laughs as if a great weight has been lifted.

YOUNG

I fixed you. You bastard. You can't get to me.

IMAGE: YOUNG is pulling the rope down by the rocks...

HE PULLS UP THE LOBSTER POT...

...INSIDE IS THE SHRIVELED HEAD OF A CORPSE with ONE EYE.

A SEAGULL SQUAWKS RIGHT BY HIS EAR (O.S.)!

YOUNG ALMOST FALLS IN THE WATER FROM TERROR.

SMALL CRABS CRAWL OUT OF THE EMPTY SOCKET.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

THUNDER CLAPS.

OLD

(singing)

*She swung her hips, she winked her
eyes, that sassy little whore,
So I took her in, I gave her gin,
and danced her on the floor*

OLD AND YOUNG are singing, dancing, do-si-do-ing, swinging each other with linked elbows around the room in circles.

OLD AND YOUNG

(singing)

*Doodle let me go, me girls, doodle
let me go,
Hurrah, me yaller girls, doodle let
me go*

OLD
 (singing)
*Oh 'round and 'round the sofa,
 boys, wasn't it a show
 She grabbed hold of my bobstay and
 she wouldn't let it go!*

They laugh, and break away from each other...

OLD begins diddling "Ten Penny Bit" and dancing a jig.
(Diddling is a kind of maritime scat-singing that mimics a fiddle)

YOUNG claps while OLD dances. His dancing is pretty impressive, especially with his bad leg.

YOUNG joins the diddling and jiggling...

OLD begins clapping, too. He claps a little faster, YOUNG matches his tempo.

IT'S COMPETITIVE. FIERCE. MEAN.

They diddle, jig, and clap faster and faster and faster and faster...

OLD (CONT'D)
 Dance! Dance, Winslow! Dance!

LIGHTNING FLASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW.

-LATER

OLD AND YOUNG are slow dancing. Arms around each others' shoulders. Tired.

YOUNG looks at him with anger and suspicion.

OLD sings a ballad. His voice isn't exactly pretty, or always on key, but the ballad is beautiful, with a haunting melody -- and his performance is moving. He's deep into it, experiencing every moment.

OLD
 (singing)
*Oh, where have all the evenings
 gone?
 Oh, where is the ale and whisky
 I've tasted?
 Gone the same way as the pay I done
 wasted,
 On a Monday morning.*

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

*If but the birds were gin,
If but the sun was a hearty
reveler,
If I might give someone else me
liver,
On a Monday morning.*

*My lover she lies asleep,
My lover is warm, and her heart is
mellow,
I would give the whole world just
to share her pillow,*

THE SONG has changed YOUNG'S mood, he has softened...

Timidly and quietly, he joins the last line...

OLD AND YOUNG

(half-singing)

On a Monday morning.

Thunder rumbles...

They lean into each other...

It is very tense...

It seems like they might kiss...

No, that's madness.

Pause.

YOUNG pushes OLD away. He puts up his fists like an old-timey boxer.

OLD does, too.

They take turns hitting each other, play fighting. OLD keeps hitting YOUNG, as YOUNG is more drunk.

YOUNG

You bastard.

THE PLAY-FIGHTING ESCALATES... THE PUNCHES GROW HARDER...

THEN...

YOUNG grabs OLD and hurls him against the moldy cabinet! OLD cackles. THEY send the whole cabinet of cups and dishes clattering down.

OLD throws plates at YOUNG, almost hitting him... dinnerware smashing on the walls.

No.

Pause.

Can I trust you?

OLD sits up.

Thunder rumbles.

OLD
Don't be spilling any of yer beans
to me.

YOUNG
No...

It wasn't that way, is all...

OLD
I ain't interested.

YOUNG
So I can trust you?

OLD
Never did like being confided to.

YOUNG
I know what you're fixin' to do.
Get me all liquored up--

OLD
Yer guilty conscience is ever as
tiresome-borin' as any a guilty
conscience.

YOUNG
It was a drive, see...

OLD
Worse.

YOUNG
A log drive and... he's raggin' on
me.

No -- I see what yer doing...

OLD
Nothing.

YOUNG

Look, I mean, look, Tom... don't be working to twist words out of my head.

OLD

I ain't.

YOUNG

I...

look...

I can't, I can't.

OLD

Shut up yer rag box.

YOUNG

I can trust you.

OLD

No.

YOUNG

I trust you, Tom.

OLD

You trust me?

YOUNG

No. I don't trust you at all.

They laugh. They drink.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNK ROOM - LATER, THAT SAME NIGHT

The CLOCK ticks monotonously. Somehow, the sounds of the storm have diminished.

CLOSE ON: YOUNG looking feral-eyed. Utterly still.

YOUNG

And I had 'im in my grasp. Alone. Too far downstream. And I wanted to do 'im in. I admit I did. Seein' the back of his head. One swipe of the cant hook'd be all. It was... I didn't... but I didn't... I did not. The day was long as hell on that drive. I was lead-tired. I admit it.

(MORE)

YOUNG (CONT'D)

But I saw him slippin', not me. And we saw the jam comin'. And I stood and he slipped. He shouted up. And I just stood. "Tom, you dog!" And I stood, is all. Just stood and watched 'im get swallowed down by them logs. I packed up his kit and fixings, as if they was mine. And, well, Ephraim Winslow has a spiffy clean slate. Thomas Howard, he don't. No prospects. How else am I gonna find respectable work?

Pause.

YOUNG turns. OLD is gone... *Did he even hear this?*

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Tom?

Long pause.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Tom?!

OLD (O.S.)

(far away, whispered,
echoing)

Why'd ye spill yer beans, Tommy.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. TOWER STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

OLD'S voice echoes. The chains clink, echoing too...

OLD (O.S.)

(whispered)

Why'd ye spill yer beans?

He ascends the stairs...

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. MACHINE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

THE DOOR to the GALLERY is open...

Rain blows wildly into the machine room.

YOUNG goes through the door...

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE. GALLERY - NIGHT

THE WIND AND RAIN ARE VICIOUS ON THE WALKWAY ATOP THE TOWER.

They push and slap YOUNG as he carefully makes his way to...

A BODY.

It's face down. Is it the OLD man?

NO. But it's familiar - the MACKINAW COAT...

THE HIGH LEATHER BOOTS WITH THICK HOBNAILED SOLES...

For some reason, known least to YOUNG, he reaches out for the familiar man and turns the wet body over:

IT'S YOUNG! HIS DOPPELGANGER. PALE. DEAD.

AUDIO: WALK-DRAG. WALK-DRAG. WALK-DRAG.

THE HULKING FOOTSTEPS ARE LOUD. VIOLENT. RIGHT BEHIND YOUNG!

SOMEONE GRABS HIS WRIST FROM BEHIND. A BRUTAL GRIP.
SPINS YOUNG AROUND... IT'S OLD. NAKED.

HE HAS YOUNG WITHIN HIS POWER. HIS WILL. BUT... THE OLD MAN'S EYES ARE CLOSED.

YOUNG tries to get away. But he can't. The OLD man is too strong. And something starts to happen. Something horrible...

THE OLD MAN SLOWLY OPENS HIS EYES.

YOUNG's expression tells it all: fascination moves quickly through confusion and deep, unknown terror as ...

A LIGHT BRIGHTER THAN ANYTHING BATHES YOUNG'S FACE!

OLD'S EYES SHINE LIKE THE LIGHTHOUSE BEACON INTO YOUNG'S FACE.

EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAWN

CLOSE ON: YOUNG RUNS THROUGH THE STORM!

INT/EXT. BOATHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG tries with utter desperation to launch the DORY out to sea. He throws on a CORK LIFE VEST.

HUGE WAVES CRASH AGAINST HIM.

It is a bitter struggle as he drags the DORY along the runners...

YOUNG throws the OARS in the boat, and jumps inside.

Suddenly...

OLD
DON'T LEAVE ME!

OLD swipes through the air with a FIRE AXE, smashing the DORY right by YOUNG.

OLD keeps hacking away at the DORY...

YOUNG jumps out...

OLD hacks and smashes until the boat is just a pile of splinters rolling out into the sea...

YOUNG stands in shock.

THEN OLD turns to YOUNG...

OLD LIFTS THE AXE...

YOUNG RUNS...

EXT. PILOT ROCK - CONTINUOUS

OLD chases YOUNG across the island, wielding the axe...

YOUNG runs into the QUARTERS.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - CONTINUOUS

OLD bursts in and swings the AXE at YOUNG, missing...

OLD buries THE AXE deep in the kitchen table. He falls with exhaustion. They are both soaking wet.

YOUNG
You crazy son of a bitch! You
smashed up the life boat!

OLD
Yer abandoning yer post!

YOUNG
What're you gonna do? Send for the
coast guard? The lighthouse
establishment?

OLD
 Certain, says I! I'll report ye,
 I'll bring the inspector up--

YOUNG
 I'll report you. I know what you
 done...

OLD
 Who's reportin' who?
 Ephraim Winslow?
 Or Thomas Howard?
 I know what you done--

YOUNG
 (suddenly)
 You killed yer second.

OLD
 --

For once, OLD is speechless. In horror.

YOUNG
 I found him. Yer one-eyed junior
 man.

In the lobster pot.

He went mad? You made him mad with
 that charm! That scrimshaw ditty,
 it's a sea spell to keep him from
 yer secret... But I broke it, see.
 I'm free.

YOUNG rummages awkwardly through his pockets and finds the
 broken pieces of the IVORY MERMAID. He throws it to OLD'S
 feet! Young smiles in triumph.

YOUNG (CONT'D)
 Free from yer designs!

OLD makes no expression.

YOUNG (CONT'D)
 And I have it all figured out,
 'cept what's the secret mischief
 yer keeping...

He points to THE LANTERN ROOM.

...up there!

OLD

--

YOUNG

I figured you old timer. This whole time, I've been watching you and I've got you figured.

OLD looks at YOUNG with pity.

OLD

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Tommy.

Last night you made a confession 'twould make a saint swear. I don't have nothing to confess, but you, Tommy, a-spilling yer beans... now look what it's done to ye.

It's made ye mad.

I knew ye was mad when you smashed up the life boat just now, a-chasing me with an axe, tryin' to kill 'Ol Tom.

Don't ye trust me, Tommy?

YOUNG

--

OLD

Look at yer shiverin'. Yer so mad, you know not up from down. How long have we been on this rock? Five week? Two days? Where are we? Help me recollect, who are you again, Tommy?

YOUNG

--

OLD

I'm probably a fig'ment of your 'magination. This rock is a fig'ment of yer 'magination, too.

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

Yer probably wand'rin' through a grove of tag alders, up in north Canady, like a frostbitten maniac a-talking to yerself, knee-deep in the snow, the blizzard overtaking ye.

Pause.

YOUNG

We're out of drink.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. OIL ROOM - LATER

HONEY DRIPS into a BRASS KEROSENE CANISTER.

YOUNG still wears the cork vest as he drips the HONEY.

OLD watches with intense curiosity.

YOUNG TAKES OUT A TIN OF TURPENTINE. He pours it into the CANISTER, too. He begins to stir it with a stick.

YOUNG

Thieves' oil.

YOUNG smells it. He likes it.

He pours OLD a cup.

OLD drinks.

OLD

Ooooooh, monkey pump!

They both drink... fighting over it.

INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE. NIGHT

ANGLE ON: THE BAROMETER. The needle is falling. It falls from "storm" to a blank space below. Off the chart, so to speak.

EXT. THE SEA - NIGHT

WIDE: GIGANTIC WAVES CRASH. THUNDER. LIGHTNING. THE END IS NEAR.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

WIDE: THE LIGHTHOUSE IS ASSAILED BY FEROCIOUS, 50-FOOT WAVES.

ANGLE ON: THE LIVING QUARTERS, WATER RUSHING OVER THE ROOF.
Will it survive?

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

OLD AND YOUNG laugh and laugh and laugh, holding cups of
thieves' oil. YOUNG still wears the life vest.

THE AXE in the table top between them.

They keep laughing in a frighteningly hysterical manner...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

HOLD.

BLACK.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - MORNING

THE GALLEY is an absolute catastrophe. However terrible it
looked the night before, it is even worse now. It's utterly
destroyed. Mess is everywhere. THE AXE still stays buried in
the table.

YOUNG is sitting in the SINK, drinking TURPENTINE straight
from the tin. He's still in the life vest.

YOUNG
This place is a sty.

OLD (O.S.)
Mornin' to you, too.

YOUNG
I wish I could go fer a walk.

OLD (O.S.)
Be my guest. You'll get drowned.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - LATER

The CLOCK ticks monotonously.

YOUNG is pissing, missing the chamber pot... taking off the life vest...

Suddenly, he begin to retch... he throws up.

He falls to his knees and sees...

OLD'S LOGBOOK... OPEN.

YOUNG fumbles around to snatch it up, to bring it to the dim window light.

He begins to leaf through the pages...

There are beautiful mementos of Old's past, newspaper clippings, tintypes...

YOUNG finds locks of Old's children's hair... he touches them gently...

Then...

HE FINDS THE LOG ENTRIES:

Assistant slept late. Work below standard. Attitude hostile.

YOUNG almost slams it shut. But he doesn't. He keeps reading:

Assistant will not adhere to hygiene regulations. Quarters a mess. Flagrant insubordination.

Assistant missing again. Given to habitual 'self-abuse' in the storage shed.

YOUNG'S face drops. The CLOCK'S ticking seems to grow louder every second.

Drunk on duty.

Erratic and incoherent speech.

*Attempted to abandon his post.
Violently assaulted the head
keeper.*

*Recommend severance without pay to
the inspector.*

YOUNG looks like a ghost.

HE SMASHES THE CLOCK WITH HIS FIST. No more ticking.

Glass and blood.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

OLD sits within a heap of trash. He's wearing only his
sweaty, baggy, mostly unbuttoned union suit. And his hat.

He smokes his PIPE...

It goes out.

OLD

Damn.

He tries to find a match in the chaos.

OLD (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Fiery pit! Ain't there no justice
left in this world?

He roots through the rubbish, throwing it around...

Suddenly, the sound of a MATCH striking(O.S.)!

OLD turns around, startled.

YOUNG is right behind OLD... with a LIT MATCH... utterly
still. Eerily still.

He calmly lights OLD'S PIPE.

OLD feels a bit uneasy.

OLD (CONT'D)

Thankee.

Pause.

OLD (CONT'D)
What's wrong with yer hand?

YOUNG looks at the match hand in confusion.

OLD (CONT'D)
T'other one.

YOUNG looks: his left hand leaves blood marks on the table.

He slithers his cut hand away.

OLD (CONT'D)
Ye hear o' tetanus?

YOUNG
--

OLD
Tet-a-nus?

YOUNG
(quietly, rigid)
Yep.

OLD
It started as a sliver of a cut is
all...

YOUNG is motionless. Boiling.

YOUNG
I said I heard of it.

OLD
...from the forestaysail when we
shoved off...

YOUNG
Can't you never shut up.

OLD
...but come a fortnight...

YOUNG
Stop.

OLD
The bosun was a-shakin'...

YOUNG
Shut up, I says.

OLD

....his chops was locked tighter
than an anchor bend--

YOUNG explodes:

YOUNG

Shut it! I told you I can't hear no
more! Hold yer jaw!

OLD

What were it yer accused me of?

YOUNG

I'm tired out of listening to your
damned-fool yarns and your Cap'n
Ahab horseshit -- you sound like a
goddamned parody. Givin' and
nagging orders like a spinster
schoolmarm... and... and... all-the-
while turning this light in the
Devil's own rum hole.

Well, it's all horseshit, all of
it, yer leg, and yer sea life, all
of it. And I'm tired of it. If I
hear one more word of horseshit
coming from your foul, rotten
tooth, smelly old mouth--

OLD

Ye--

YOUNG

Shut up yer gum, Goddamn it -- I
ain't finished. I'm sick of lookin'
at you, I'm sick of lookin' at week-
old food in yer beard staring at me
in the face like it 'spects me of
somethin'. I'm sick of yer orders.
I'm sick of your laughing, your
snoring, and your goddamned farts.
Your damned goddamned farts.
Goddamn yer farts! You smell like
piss, you smell like jism, like
rotten dick, like curdled foreskin,
like hot onions fucked a farmyard
shit-house. And I'm sick of yer
smell. I'm sick of it! I'm sick of
it, you goddamned drunk. You
goddamned, no-account, drunken, son-
of-a-bitch-bastard-liar!

(MORE)

YOUNG (CONT'D)

That's what you are, you're a
goddamned drunken horse-shitting,
shit liar. A liar!

Long pause.

OLD

Ye have a way with words, Tommy.

YOUNG

Damn you.

OLD

Yer relived of yer duties.

YOUNG

Severance without pay?!

YOUNG throws THE LOGBOOK at him.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Yer trying to ruin me?! I'm a hard
worker! I am! I work as hard as any
man!

OLD

Ye lie Thomas.

YOUNG

Stop it.

OLD

Ye lie to yerself, but ye ain't
have the sauce to see it.

YOUNG changes his tune:

YOUNG

Work as hard as a man and two
horses, I work like yer damn slave,
you said so yerself.

YOUNG works at getting into the OIL ROOM from the GALLEY. OLD
stands in his way.

YOUNG begs, desperately:

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Let me into the light, old man, and
I'll show you what I can do for --
I can -- I can do better -- I can.
I've learned so much from you.
Another chance. Let me show you.

(MORE)

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Forgive and forget, I says -- just
let me into that lantern, is all --

OLD keeps his ground.

OLD

Stand down.

YOUNG

Selfish bastard! Keepin' it all to
yerself. Left yer wife and children
for what? For what?!

OLD smiles. Creepily.

OLD

Look at ye, handsome lad, with eyes
bright as a lady. Come to this rock
playin' the tough, ye make me laugh
with yer false grum. Ye pretended
to some mystery in yer quietudes,
but there ain't no mystery, yer an
open book. A picture, says I. A
painted actress screaming in the
footlights, a bitch what wants to
be coveted for nothing but being
born, cryin' bout the silver spoon
what should've been yers. Now look
at ye crying.

YOUNG

--

OLD

Boo! Boo! What're ye to do?

Look at ye. Look at ye.

Will you kill me? Will ye?

Will ye kill me like you done that
gull?

YOUNG

I didn't--

OLD

LIAR! YE MURDERING DOG! TWAS YE
WHAT CHANGED THE WIND ON US!

YOUNG

Damn you!

OLD

'Twas you what damned us, dog!
'Twas YOU! Will ye do what ye wish
ye done to ol' Winslow? Take what's
left of me? Or do nothin' like the
coward y'are?

YOUNG

--

OLD

Will ye pick up that iron kettle
and rack me face? Would ye best me
then? If ye break, I win. If I
break ye, I win.

YOUNG

--

OLD

I always win because you are less a
man than I -- and them's the rules
of nature. Them's truth.

I am truth. I make the truth as I
see fit. Me. I make it as I demand
it. The truth is that you're a
nothin', Tommy-Tom-Tom. A nothing.
A nothing but a dog what thinks
he's the master when he pulls on
his master's leash. Well if you
pull on my leash, I'll choke ye,
Thomas Howard, I'll strangle ye,
fer Winslow were right: You're A
DOG, THOMAS, A FILTHY DOG! A DOG!!

OLD AND YOUNG ATTACK EACH OTHER AT THE SAME TIME -- GOING FOR
EACH OTHERS' THROATS! EYES BULGE.

OLD GRINS WILDLY...

YOUNG STARTS KICKING OLD IN HIS BAD LEG...

OLD CRUMBLES TO THE GROUND -- he tries to get up...

YOUNG KICKS OLD IN THE SPINE...

OLD'S FOREHEAD SMACKS AGAINST THE FLOOR. HARD. It bleeds.

YOUNG GETS ON TOP OF OLD AND TURNS HIM AROUND. OLD GRABS
YOUNG'S SHOULDERS.

YOUNG

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!

THEY ARE VIOLENTLY WRESTLING... ANIMALISTIC GRUNTING...
BREATHING... SWEATING... LEGS ENTWINED... VEINY THROATS...
VEINY BICEPS...

MOVING BACK AND FORTH, BACK AND FORTH...

WRESTLING... BREATHING... GRUNTING... SWEATING...

SUDDENLY, YOUNG LOOKS DOWN... IT'S NO LONGER OLD...

IT'S EPHRAIM WINSLOW...

YOUNG IS IN TERROR...

WINSLOW SPITS IN YOUNG'S FACE...

YOUNG GOES TO STRANGLE HIM, BUT AS HE DOES... WINSLOW HAS
BECOME...

THE MERMAID! SHE STRANGLES YOUNG... HER TAIL THRASHES...

HE TRIES TO GET AWAY...

THEN, THE MERMAID BECOMES...

OLD...

ONLY IT'S NOT: HE IS NAKED, HIS BEARD IS LONGER, COVERED IN
SEAWEED... AND HE HAS ENORMOUS SQUID TENTACLES FOR LEGS...

YOUNG PUNCHES OLD, AND SEA WATER FLOWS FROM HIS MOUTH...

OLD LAUGHS... TWISTING HIS TENTACLES AROUND YOUNG... WRAPPING
AROUND HIS ARMS AND LEGS, SQUEEZING...

YOUNG PUNCHES OLD AGAIN, BRUTALLY!

A TENTACLE WRAPS AROUND YOUNG'S THROAT, SQUEEZING...

YOUNG PUNCHES AGAIN!

TENTACLES SQUEEZING...

YOUNG PUNCHES AGAIN! AGAIN!!

OLD YELLS IN HORROR:

OLD
YER KILLING ME!

Suddenly...

YOUNG looks down.

It's OLD. Bloody. Whimpering.

No merperson, no Winslow, just an old, weeping man that YOUNG has beat to a pulp.

YOUNG stands, breathing heavily. He pulls up his suspenders. He wipes the sweat from his brow. OLD lies motionless, just breathing and letting out his almost inaudible whimper.

YOUNG leans on the table.

Very, very long pause.

YOUNG

Bark.

Pause.

Bark boy, bark, laddy.

Pause.

Bark!

OLD

(very, very weak)

Woof.

YOUNG

Ain't you never been to sea before,
bark I says, bark!

OLD

Arf.

YOUNG

Bark, laddy!

OLD

Ruff! Ruff!!

YOUNG

Now, there's a good boy. There's a
good dog.

Long pause.

Now roll over.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. NEAR THE HOLE - AFTERNOON

The storm has ended.

YOUNG walks OLD on a leash, well, a belt around his neck. OLD crawls on all fours.

YOUNG
Good boy.

YOUNG walks OLD to the GRAVE-SIZED HOLE they dug out.

YOUNG (CONT'D)
Get in there, you old dog. Where you belong.

Pause.

YOUNG (CONT'D)
You do as I say, dog!

OLD slinks into the grave.

YOUNG (CONT'D)
That's my good lad.

YOUNG picks up a shovel...

He begins to bury OLD.

OLD
No!

YOUNG puts more dirt and mud on him...

OLD (CONT'D)
You wish to see what's in that lantern?

So did me last assistant.

YOUNG shovels mud onto OLD'S face...

YOUNG
Shut up, dog. Polish yer brasswork.

He keeps shoveling...

OLD laughs, blood pouring out of his mouth. Dying.

OLD
You said yer a God fearin' man, Tommy? (laughs) Them's truth, Tommy!

More dirt on him...

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

O what Protean forms swim up from
men's minds and melt in hot
Promethean plunder scorching eyes
with divine shames and horrors

More dirt on him...

and cast them down to Davy Jones.
And others, still blind, yet in it
see all divine graces and to
Fiddler's Green sent, where no man
is suffered to want and toil, but
is

More dirt on his face...

ancient

More dirt on his face...

mutable

More dirt on his face...

and unchanging as the she who
girdles 'round the globe.

More dirt...

Them's truth. And you'll be
punished.

OLD becomes stifled from the dirt and mud.

Long pause.

Is he dead?

Suddenly, YOUNG panics...

He jumps into the grave and starts digging out OLD with his
hands...

Digging and digging...

He lifts OLD up. He holds him.

Pause. YOUNG catches his breath.

YOUNG takes the BRASS KEY that hangs from around OLD'S
neck...

He let's OLD fall into the mud, still as a stone.

YOUNG walks away.

YOUNG doesn't see it, but several GULLS fly into frame behind him.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. OIL ROOM - NIGHT

YOUNG slowly approaches the long staircase.

He looks up...

He puts his hands on the railing...

He is ready to go into the lantern room at last.

But something stops him...

No, he can't go on.

He pats his breast pocket...

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG walks through the galley. He goes to the table...

THERE IT IS: HIS POUCH OF TOBACCO.

He begins to roll a cigarette...

He looks down:

Staring at him is A HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE -- BUT THE AXE IS GONE...

OLD (O.S.)
THE LIGHT B'LONGS TO ME!

OLD, covered in dirt, barely alive, swings THE AXE, cutting into YOUNG'S shoulder. Blood gushes from the wound.

YOUNG picks up the IRON KETTLE and swings around, bashing OLD in THE FACE.

OLD falls hard to the ground, groaning...

YOUNG PICKS UP THE AXE...

HE LIFTS IT HIGH...

OLD tries to guard himself with his hands...

YOUNG DRIVES THE AXE INTO OLD'S HEAD WITH A BLOOD CURDLING CRUNCH! (OLDS'S head is O.S.)

But it is clear that this is what happened). BLOOD SPLATTERS ACROSS THE ROOM. His old limbs seize for a moment and drop back to the floor.

Pause.

YOUNG limps, covered in blood, back to the table.

He rolls the cigarette, his hands shaking.

He smokes it.

He pours some turpentine into a nearby cup.

He looks at OLD, the axe handle sticking up from his head.

YOUNG lifts the cup. Hand shaking. He toasts.

YOUNG

Should pale death with treble dread
make the ocean caves our bed,
God who hear'st the surges roll,
deign to save the suppliant soul.

He drinks.

Hold.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. OIL ROOM - NIGHT

Limping, trembling, and bleeding, YOUNG slowly ascends the long staircase...

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. TOWER STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG continues, slowly...

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. MACHINE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG ascends the ladder, slowly, and using THE KEY, HE OPENS THE HATCH that leads into the LANTERN ROOM...

The dazzling LIGHT swirling...

YOUNG is hypnotized...

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. LANTERN ROOM - NIGHT

YOUNG looks ahead...

There it is: THE FRESNEL LENS. It is a massive, six-foot-tall jewel of indescribable beauty. It seems to sing...

He walks toward it...

Pause.

He marvels at it.

Slowly, he opens the door of the lens...

The light grows brighter...

Pause.

He takes it in.

Pause.

A tear falls from his eye.

He smiles.

Slowly, he puts his hand into the light...

A deep, bassy, fire-crackling sound is heard as he touches the flames...

THE LIGHT grows brighter...

His hand is burning, but he keeps reaching...

The crackling sound growing louder and more otherworldly...

YOUNG starts to shake with insanity...

His face distorts...

THE LIGHT GROWS BRIGHTER...

YOUNG SCREAMS...

BRIGHTER...

INCONCEIVABLY BRIGHT...

YOUNG starts trembling, crying, he's terrified of what he has seen...

He cannot fathom it...

He foams at the mouth....

He teeters...

He's losing his balance... he's falling...

He falls backward out of frame...

OUT OF THE LANTERN ROOM...

SLAM.

INTO THE MACHINE ROOM...

BANG.

AND DOWN THE STAIRS...

...All the way down the long winding staircase, tumbling, tumbling, grunting, twisting, bones breaking, and clanging down four stories of stairs until YOUNG lands with a dull, bloody...

THUD.

FADE TO WHITE.

EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAWN

YOUNG lies naked, splayed out on the rocks, bones broken.

He is blind. His eyes are bloody, burnt-out sockets. He can't move. Seaweed is wrapped around him.

A seabird pecks at his abdomen...

Peck. Peck. Peck.

It is THE ONE-EYED GULL...

It pulls at YOUNG'S liver...

YOUNG groans...

Dozens and dozens of BIRDS fly to YOUNG, overwhelming him.

Eating him.

CAMERA pulls back to reveal him alone, on PILOT ROCK. (CAMERA doesn't pull back far enough to see the lighthouse or outbuildings.)

Only YOUNG and a swarm of seabirds eating him.

HOLD.

THE END.