

**T H E   L I G H T H O U S E**

by

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**PLAYERS:**

YOUNG, a new assistant lighthouse keeper with a sordid past.

OLD, a crusty lighthouse keeper. His boss.

**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

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 puffs from its crooked chimney. Its old engine sputters softly.

Hold.

The FOGHORN again, louder now. Closer.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TENDER. PROW - LATER

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

Hold.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TENDER. DECK - SUNSET

WIDE: SHADOWS stand on the bow of the 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 tall, crumbling LIGHTHOUSE TOWER. 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.

A TRANSFER BOAT is beached on the shore. TWO RELIEF MATES doll out provisions to TWO MEN in dark uniforms and caps. The hand-over is challenging.

The TWO UNIFORMED MEN come in and out of view, carrying supplies.

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 the twisted runners of the launch that stretch out into the lapping waves.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. NEAR THE LIVING QUARTERS - SUNSET

TWO OTHER MEN (late 60s, same uniforms) exit the one-story CLAPBOARD SHACK that adjoins THE LIGHTHOUSE by a remarkably long breezeway. 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 YOUNG (early 30s). Tall, athletic -- but starved. His deep set eyes are haunted, and his left eye is healing from a week-old shiner. His crooked expression is severe. There's an eerie disquiet about him. He's like a dog that's been beaten and caged too many times. A small mustache shows his vanity.

The other is OLD (Haggard 60? Spry 70?). He's weathered, feral bearded, and hunched, with hands like vises. His lack of visible lips suggests some missing teeth. He tremors a bit, but he's lean and sturdy as a lead pipe. His high cheekbones smile even when he grimaces. His wild eyes shine like jewels. He's an old Pan. A Satyr.

Both of them seem like the kind of man you might find muttering to himself in the corner of an empty bar room with a distant look in his eye.

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 - *shocks him* - but not the OLD one. He's used to it.

OLD puts the stump of an unlit clay PIPE in his mouth (upside down). He lumbers out of frame, limping a bit, and happy to finally be "home again."

YOUNG stays standing, staring out. A bit of fear strikes him. There's no turning back now.

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 cupboard, a table and two chairs.

The wind blows. It's depressing.

He keeps walking.

He hears the sound of dribbling water (O.S.)...

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

Entering the parlor, he sees: A reed splint rocker with a busted seat, a rattling potbelly stove, and a small, very dusty, government issue book chest.

A CLOCK ticks monotonously.

Then, YOUNG spots a fine DESK with a ship in a bottle on top. It's rolled shut. He looks around, shifty eyed, to be sure no one is watching him...

Instinctively, he passes his hand along the top of the desk to the LOCK. He jiggles it. Locked. *Damn.*

Then, there is that persistent sound of dribbling water (O.S.)...

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

The sound grows louder as he climbs the narrow stairs, every tread creaking along the way. The dribbling grows louder...

He enters the sleeping quarters...

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - CONTINUOUS

THUD! YOUNG bumps his head on the low ceiling...

                          YOUNG  
                          (under his breath)  
                          Son-of-a--

He shakes it off...

The bunkroom is also dismal. Not much more than two sagging cast-iron single beds.

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. A deliberate display of power.

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 GAIT disappearing: *walk-drag, walk-drag, walk-drag...*

YOUNG sits on his bed. Still. Simmering. He's *not* pleased. But he'll try to keep that to himself. He holds his head.

The CLOCK from downstairs ticks...

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 a hungry curiosity...

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

He feels a bit guilty and puts her in his pocket.

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 SIREN 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 SIREN BLOWS: LOUD. CLOSE. PAINFUL.

YOUNG BRACES HIMSELF, REELING FROM THE SOUND.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY/VESTIBULE - NIGHT

The contents of a kitchen cabinet are strewn about the floor. OLD is inside the built-in cabinet up to his waist, butt out. If he had a tail, it'd wag. He's looking for something. Something secret.

YOUNG watches from afar in the staircase. OLD crawls out with a wooden crate. He grins with relief, pulling out a sea glass LIQUOR BOTTLE. He tremors a bit, it's been too long.

OMITTED

- 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. YOUNG looks at their meal, trying to hide his contempt: Lukewarm scrod and potatoes wait on battered mess plates. He 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. *Damn, it looks good.* He could use a drink. But he hesitates as if he thinks he is being tested.

He decides to stay focused on the cigarette.

YOUNG

No, sir. Thank you.

OLD

Bad luck to leave a toast  
unfinished, lad.

YOUNG tucks his cigarette behind his ear.

YOUNG

Meanin' no disrespect, sir.

OLD

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

YOUNG

Ain't it--



YOUNG stops himself to rephrase, more respectfully. It's not easy for him to be well-mannered. He takes his time, so as not to fumble with the multisyllabic words.

I'd -- I had understood it's  
'gainst regulations, sir.

OLD  
Did you?

YOUNG  
Yessir.

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

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
From them's manual.

OLD  
Didn't picture you was a readin'  
man.

YOUNG  
Ain't trying for trouble--

OLD  
Then y'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. He's proud. He won.

YOUNG  
To four weeks.

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

They drink...

Just as soon as they do: YOUNG RETCHES! A terrible taste. He spits-up into his cup. A bit on the floor.

OLD revels in the mishap.

OLD

Aye. The cistern needs a-lookin' to. One of yer duties, lad. Or didn't y'read yerself about it? Polishin', swabbin'. Swabbin' and polishin'. You'll clean the brass and the clockwork, and you can tidy the quarters after. There's well-more to be mended outside.

YOUNG nods yes, his dry heaving subsiding.

OLD (CONT'D)

D'y'hear me, lad?

YOUNG

Yessir--

OLD

(correcting him)

"Aye, sir!"

YOUNG

Aye, sir.

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

OLD

When the fog clears, you'll work through the dog watch--

YOUNG

Doggin' it? Was 'spectin' I'd git up to the lantern.

OLD

I tend the light.

YOUNG

The rules is alternatin' shifts--

OLD is startingly stern. Unblinking. No tremors. A speck of scrod hangs in his beard.

OLD

It's the mid watch that's to dread, lad: night to morning. My watch.

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

Some new junior man I'm fixed with--  
Y'act like y'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.*

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Aye, sir.

OLD looks at him with disgust.

OLD

That uni'form don't fit ye.

YOUNG

Well, sir, it's the one them  
establishment fellers gave me--

OLD

I'm meanin' y'ain't fit fer the  
wearin' of it. See to yer duties.  
The light's mine.

OMITTED

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. ANGRY!

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

YOUNG

Son-of-a-bitch.

THE FOGHORN BLASTS.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

SON-OF-A-BITCH!

THE FOGHORN BLASTS AGAIN! YOUNG KICKS THE CHAIR OVER... THE MANUAL FALLS TO THE GROUND.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. TOWER STAIRS - NIGHT

MUSIC CUE: Weird, haunting, ancient.

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.

Otherworldly.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. LANTERN ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES.

OLD sits in a sweat, mesmerized by the LIGHT. The machinery whirs and clicks. THE HEAT from the huge THIRD-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 alcoholic's gut protrudes from his wiry frame. His strong, sinewy arms shine with sweat. There's a faded three-masted ship tattooed on his chest, and several crooked stick-and-pokes elsewhere -- all glistening.

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.

OLD  
To ye, me beauty!

EXT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES.

YOUNG is staring up at the magical light. Eight beams -- a rotating starburst. Weird light patterns dance across the rocks below. It truly is a wonder. He yearns for it. It's primal.

He's outside the signal shed. It's an odd looking building with a 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.

INT/EXT. BOATHOUSE/SHORE - MOMENTS LATER

MUSIC CONTINUES.

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...

IS THAT A BALL OF LIGHT OUT IN THE SEA...?

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 CAULK BOOTS WITH THICK HOBNAILED SOLES.

Nearby is some kind of tool floating: A WOODEN POLE WITH A SINISTER IRON HOOK at the end of it (a peavey or "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 TURN TO SALT WATER GURGLES!

QUICK CUT TO:

IMAGE, WIDE: Underwater, A MERMAID swims gracefully -- MENACINGLY -- in the sea toward CAMERA.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - MORNING

Water drips on YOUNG'S FACE

Drip. Drip. Drip.

He opens his eyes, startled.

OLD is disrobing in the mirror, carefully -- 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 CHALK 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 porridged 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 chalk. 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 scrapes at old cedar shakes.

Scrape. Scrape. Scrape.

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

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. Barrels of dried fish, shelves of tools, tapers, paper-wrapped parcels, wooden crates, casks, kegs, rope...

EXT. COAL HOUSE - DAY

YOUNG opens the door: COAL. Heaps of it.

This door does fall off its hinges.

EXT. COAL HOUSE - LATER

He loads up a wheelbarrow overfull with coal.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

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

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 TOWER CATWALK (an exterior observation deck), puffing his pipe. Watching.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. OIL ROOM - DAY

The double-doors of the breezeway open, revealing: Oil drums at the bottom of the staircase. THE OIL ROOM. 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 chalk 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... *what's in there?*

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.

HE BLOWS SMOKE IN YOUNG'S FACE. YOUNG closes his eyes.

                                  OLD  
                                  Tired?

                                  YOUNG  
                                  No, sir.

Says YOUNG, still panting.

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

YOUNG CATCHES it awkwardly.

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

YOUNG

--

OLD continues to taunt him.

OLD  
Catch yer breath, lad.

Pause.

I said catch your breath, lad!

YOUNG grits his teeth.

OLD (CONT'D)  
Then bring that drum back down the  
ladderwell where y'found it. 'Less  
yer fixin' to burn the whole light  
down.

OLD climbs the ladder to the LANTERN ROOM. YOUNG watches with  
spite.

YOUNG  
Aye, sir.

OLD pulls out a KEY RING attached to his watch chain. A half  
dozen BRASS KEYS in varying sizes.

OLD  
Then see to the rest of yer duties.  
Yer behindhand already.

YOUNG  
Aye, sir.

YOUNG watches him unlock the door with the largest KEY.

OLD  
Yer too slow. You a dullard?

YOUNG  
No, sir.

OLD  
Fooled me.

OLD slams the door and locks it from the inside.

HOLD on YOUNG.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

Scrod and potatoes again.

YOUNG has his water. OLD pours himself a dram.

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 head?

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.  
Y'best be enjoying it. Come a  
fortnight 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 y'hotter than  
hell!

YOUNG

I ain't much fer talkin'.

OLD

Reckon yer the first?

YOUNG

No, sir. I don't.

OLD

Y'ain't. Y'ain't. Aye, the  
Chicopee, a fine-un, she were.  
Clean-built and trig-lookin'! None  
more fleet in '64 than she... We  
were on the breaks -- a mutiny it  
were. And why, ask ye? Why? What's  
the terrible part of the sailor's  
life ask ye, lad? T'ain't Cap'n,  
workin' 'em double-tide. Nay, no.

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

'Tis when the workin' stops when  
yer twixt wind and water. Doldrums.  
Doldrums. Eviler than the Devil.  
Boredom makes men to villains...  
And the water goes 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 in spite of himself, it's hard not to.

OLD pours another and toasts.

OLD

Curse me if there ain't 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 damn 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. In the end, no more sense left in him than a hen's tooth. 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 seen ye sparrin' with a gull.

YOUNG licks the paper.

OLD (CONT'D)

Best y'leave 'em be. Bad luck to kill a sea bird.

YOUNG laughs, dismissively.

YOUNG

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... YOUNG raises his fist in defense...

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.

YOUNG looks again at OLD: He's 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, rubbing it reflexively in all the wrong places.

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.

Just as he turns to face it... THE SEAGULL has flown away.

YOUNG feels uneasy. He sits up.

Back to his bed: the MERMAID CARVING is nestled in his sheets. Waiting for him.

INT. SUPPLY 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.

CAMERA DOLLIES INTO: YOUNG'S head and into ...

BLACK.

EXT. SUPPLY SHED - A BIT LATER THAT NIGHT

YOUNG emerges from the darkness of the shed, smoking. He closes the door behind him and leans against it. He sighs. Soothed. Calm.

The LIGHTHOUSE LIGHT illuminates YOUNG in waves of hot white panels, otherwise, the soft glow of his cigarette indicates his location in the dark.

Suddenly, he notices something odd, a DARK SPOT in the center of the light. The panels of light streaking across him have a MAN'S SILHOUETTE within them. YOUNG looks up to the tower:

YOUNG'S POV: Is that OLD... *hugging the lens?*

YOUNG is startled, confused. He looks again.

YOUNG'S POV: Somehow, OLD is now on the CATWALK. Surveying. He pulls suspenders over his shoulders, as if getting dressed after a night with a woman. A lantern in his other hand helps him look below....

YOUNG skulks beneath the eaves of the roof, wary of the man above. He puts out his glowing cigarette... Hiding.

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAY

EXTREMELY WIDE SHOT: YOUNG pushes the wheelbarrow through a storm, an oilcloth tarp over the coal. (Time has passed, his shiner has healed.) He struggles through the mud...

Hold.

AUDIO PRE-LAP:

OLD  
You've been neglecting yer duties,  
lad!





OLD

Come now?

YOUNG

I already says--

OLD

How dare y'contree'dict me, y'dog--

That sets YOUNG off:

YOUNG

Now look here, I ain't never intended to be no housewife nor slave in takin' this job. It ain't right! These lodgings is more ramshackle than any shanty boy's camp I ever seen. The queen of England's own fancy housekeeper couldn't do no better than what I done, 'cause I tell you, I scrubbed this here place twice over, sir and-

OLD

And I say y'did nothin' o'the sort.

I say, y'swab it again, and y'swab it proper-like this time, and then you'll be swabbin' it ten times more after that. And if I tells ye to pull up and apart every floorboard and clapboard of this here house and scour 'em down with yer bare, bleedin' knuckles, you'll do it. If I tells ye to yank out every single nail from every moulderin' nail-hole and suck off every spec of rust till all them nails sparkle like a sperm whale's pecker, and then carpenter the whole light station back together from scrap -- *and then -- do it all over again* -- you'll do it! And by God and by Golly, you'll do it smilin' lad, cause you'll like it, too. And you'll like it 'cause I says you will!

Contree'dict me again I dock yer wages.

Y'hear me, lad?

Long, painful pause.

YOUNG

Aye, sir.

OLD

Now swab, dog. Swab!

YOUNG does as he's told - he grabs the mop and pail, finally resigned to his fate on this light station.

OLD smiles.

OLD (CONT'D)

Now that's a good lad. That's what I like to see.

YOUNG starts to mop.

OLD sings mockingly:

OLD (CONT'D)

(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.*

INT. OIL ROOM - LATER

OLD watches YOUNG polishing the brasswork.

OLD

(singing)

*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.*

YOUNG keeps polishing... harder... faster... harder...

EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAY

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

OLD (V.O.)  
 (singing)  
*The oil containers I polish until,  
 My poor back is broken, aching; and  
 still...*

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

Coal scatters all over the place. YOUNG stands still.

He wants to scream.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

YOUNG and OLD eat their scrod and potatoes in silence.

RAIN AND WINDS BLAIR JUST OUTSIDE THEIR FLIMSY WALLS.

Tension.

Hold.

Thunder claps.

BLACK.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TOWER - DAY

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

CAMERA BOOMS DOWN TO: YOUNG, sitting on a KITCHEN CHAIR held up by ropes, attached to a jerky BLOCK AND TACKLE. One of the wheels is coming off the pulley.

YOUNG is whitewashing the tower, some 50 feet above the ground. A 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'!  
 (MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

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.  
'Tis 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 y'down a few feet.

OLD lowers him some more; YOUNG slips quickly. Suddenly...  
The pulley whirls too fast... YOUNG and the moving block  
shift quickly and SLAM to a halt.

YOUNG

Easy.

OLD

Never been in better hands.

Another shift: HARD.

Is OLD struggling? He anchors his good leg to the catwalk.

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

YOUNG

Easy!

YOUNG thrashes in the wind...

OLD

Quit yer flailing, lad.

YOUNG

I ain't!

OLD

Y'are!

OLD (CONT'D)  
Keep still!

                          YOUNG  
I am--

THE PULLEY'S BUSTED WHEEL FLIES OFF... the rope springs backward...

YOUNG, the chair, and the block and tackle plunge 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 perched on his leg. It pecks him, scavenging the fresh meat.

                          YOUNG  
Shoo.

It pecks again. TAP. TAP. TAP. On his leg. The GULL blurts out a hostile kek

                          YOUNG (CONT'D)  
You! Git!

It persists, pecking with its sharp beak.

YOUNG is afraid of the bird. Afraid to harm it...

TAP. TAP. TAP. Damn! It hurts!

YOUNG KICKS IT HARD!

THE GULL flies away, mocking him with mews and yeows

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. PARLOR/VESTIBULE - EVENING

OLD peers through tiny, delicate spectacles worn at a cant. The left temple tip is too high, and not looped round his ear.

He is finishing writing an entry in his LOG BOOK. He writes the "period" with gusto.

Pen down. Book closed. Glasses off.

He rolls his desk top shut with a slam, and locks it with the littlest KEY on his key chain.

CAMERA pushes into the lock.

REVERSE: YOUNG IS HIDING IN THE SHADOWS of the vestibule... WATCHING.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

OLD sits on the same chair he's been sitting in for the past weeks. YOUNG sits on an upturned NAIL KEG.

YOUNG turns HARDTACK in his hand. He's debating eating it. He KNOCKS it against the table. The biscuit clangs like metal. Nope.

YOUNG pours OLD a drink instead. Passes it to him.

OLD  
Thankee, lad.

YOUNG  
Winslow.

OLD  
--?

YOUNG musters a little courage.

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 were  
 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 goin'.  
Workin' one man harder than two  
hosses, 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. 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.

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)  
'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 tries not to give in to the feeling.

YOUNG  
Like you says, just had enough of  
trees, I guess.

OLD looks him over suspiciously as he lights his pipe.

YOUNG focuses on his cigarette. Lights. Draws.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
Since I left Dad, well... I done  
every kind of work can pay a man.  
Some I ain't near proud of.

OLD  
Drifter, eh?

YOUNG  
No sir! Just can't find a post I  
can take a real shine to, so I keep  
movin' along. And I ain't the kind  
to look back at what's behind him,  
see.

OLD  
On the run?

YOUNG gets defensive. Did he say too much?

YOUNG  
No sir -- now look here, now -- I  
mean, nothin' wrong with a man  
startin' fresh, startin' new,  
lookin' to earn a living--

OLD

No...

YOUNG

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

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 says,  
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.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. PARLOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

OLD sits in his rocker, knitting, smoking his pipe.

YOUNG sits on the floor by the open stove, warming his hands.  
He lights his cigarette with a splinter of kindling and  
closes the door.

He takes a drag.

YOUNG

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 prayin' man, Winslow?

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

YOUNG tries to take another 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 stops rocking.

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. LIGHT STATION. VARIOUS - A DAYS WORK

- YOUNG sweeps the galley.
- OLD ascends the tower stairs. He pauses, out of breath.
- YOUNG is inside the fog trumpet, cleaning it.
- OLD swiftly rolls his DESK closed and LOCKS IT.
- YOUNG winds the clockwork mechanism.

- YOUNG cleans the clockwork. Leaning in a strange position, his TOBACCO POUCH falls to the ground.

- OLD goes into the LANTERN ROOM and LOCKS IT.

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 like an angry toddler...

He's only in his underwear. The MERMAID carving is in bed by his side.

(Pinned on the wall behind him are clippings of desired objects from a Sears and Roebuck catalogue, a Tenderloin music hall program, and a few pornographic playing cards.)

Kicking off the linens doesn't help. 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

MUSIC CUE: The eerie "light" music.

YOUNG sees the POUCH resting on top of the spinning clockwork. He 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, undulating through the cast-iron lens deck. 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 of the lens deck: 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.

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

It's OLD all right, 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...

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

PIECES OF OLD, IN AND OUT OF SHADOW. HIS SINEWY 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*.

Then, TAP, TAP, TAP on the window. He doesn't seem to hear it

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

Just then, he hears THE PLAINTIVE CRY OF A GULL, outside.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. CISTERN - DAY

YOUNG exits the back door of the quarters. He looks out to the cistern.

The CRY continues.

He walks slowly toward the cistern.

THE CISTERN'S HATCH IS OPEN.

The CRY gets louder as he approaches.

He looks in:

DEAD GULLS float in the bloody cistern. ONE SEAGULL is trying to escape -- pathetically, desperately -- crying. Its wing is broken.

JUST THEN, A LOUD FLUTTER OF WINGS IS HEARD ABOVE... and the sound of a gull landing.

YOUNG LOOKS UP...

THE ONE-EYED GULL STANDS ON TOP OF THE CISTERN... HE RAISES HIS WINGS AND STANDS STRAIGHT UP, STRUTTING AGGRESSIVELY... HE STRETCHES HIS BEAK WIDER THAN EVER AND LETS OUT A LOUD HORRIFYING LONG-CALL TOWARD YOUNG!

YOUNG is frozen.

Then, THE GULL swoops his beak into the cistern... he grabs the gull in his beak, and begins to eat it.

YOUNG tries to intervene...

ONE-EYE ATTACKS YOUNG'S FACE!

YOUNG TEARS IT AWAY IN WILD RAGE...

IN ONE SWIFT MOTION, HE GRASPS THE GULL BY THE LEGS AND BEATS IT AGAINST THE EDGE OF THE CISTERN...

OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER...

AND OVER...

UNTIL IT IS A BLOODY PULP OF FEATHERS...

THE ONE-EYED GULL IS DEAD.

YOUNG breathes heavily. Guilty.

Hold.

The wind blows softly.

He makes himself a cigarette, shaking. He looks sheepishly up to the tower to see if OLD is watching.

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

THE WEATHERVANE: THE ARROW POINTS WEST...

Suddenly, the wind gusts... THE ARROW starts to jiggle a bit...

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

It settles. Jiggling slightly in the wind, THE ARROW 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. *He's asleep -- isn't he?* 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 cursin'. 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 signal house winders.

YOUNG  
Aye, sir.

OLD  
'Twill keep steady afore the tender comes in the morn, I 'spect... but there's dirty weather knockin' 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. SIGNAL HOUSE - DAY

YOUNG boards up the windows. OLD helps.

OLD (V.O.)  
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.  
(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

And bein' our last afore relief, I  
never know'd an inspector what  
wouldn't turn a 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.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Ah hell -- to relief!

They clink.

OLD

And how!

They drink.

YOUNG remembers how much he's been missing the drink.

YOUNG

Damn! Like comin' home.

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!*

-PARLOR. 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-goin' to begin me 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 of this station,  
lad.

                  YOUNG  
The... I ain't...

                  OLD (CONT'D)  
Some other station y'can tend  
the light.

                  YOUNG  
The manual says--

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

                  YOUNG  
I mean, I'm a wickie, you  
says, but I ain't trimmed one  
wick once--

                  OLD (CONT'D)  
'Tis Gospel!

                  OLD (CONT'D)  
I'm the keeper of the light, lad, I  
never let no man touch her--

                  YOUNG  
I ain't -- the book says we  
alternate--

                  OLD (CONT'D)  
Don't concern yerself with  
the beacon! Mine, lad!

OLD pours himself another drink.

YOUNG laughs. The tension goes away.

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

                  OLD  
Wake.

                  YOUNG  
Yer Christian name?

                  OLD  
Thomas.

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 gittin'  
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 staircase: OLD is asleep, sprawled out on the steps.

YOUNG 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.

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!!

EXT. PILOT ROCK. PATHWAY - LATER THAT MORNING

YOUNG hauls coal, his face covered in shit. It rains.

INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

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

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. *Is it a dead sailor?*

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 screams drowned out by the FOGHORN.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG is out of breath from screaming. Wild eyed.

OLD

What'r y'splittin' yer lungs fer?

YOUNG

I--

OLD

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

YOUNG

I--

OLD

Y'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.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

YOUNG AND OLD sit at the table perfectly still. Drenched.

A lit cigarette hangs on YOUNG'S bottom lip.

The storm outside is something biblical.

Very, very long pause.

                                YOUNG  
                    They didn't come.

Long pause.

EXT. PILOT ROCK - NIGHT

ANGLE ON: Huge waves crash.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. CLIFFS - NIGHT

ANGLE ON: Enormous waves crash.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. CLIFFS - NIGHT

Rain pours. A deluge.

OLD is in his oilskins. He stands like a magician in front of the BOATHOUSE, facing the waves. He holds his right hand over the sea with two fingers extended. He holds his bottle in the other hand.

He counts the waves as they crash onto the shore.

                                OLD  
                    ...Four ...Five ...Six

The waves are growing higher!

                                OLD (CONT'D)  
                    ...Seven ...Eight ...Go down!

He makes the sign of the cross (*like a Catholic*) on the ninth wave, and DOUSES THE SEA with liquor from his bottle.

THE WAVE FLOUNDERS AND DIES...

OLD smiles at himself. *I've still got it*, he thinks. He takes a swig from his bottle...

Did he really make the wave descend? Or is it a coincidence?

Regardless, the wind comes back with a vengeance ...

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 ye blood red roses, go  
 down!*  
 (beat)  
*And there's many a ship lost round  
 Cape Horn.*  
 (beat)  
*Go down ye blood red roses, go  
 down!*  
 (beat)  
*Oh, ye pinks and posies... EIGHT...  
 Go down!*

NINE! He makes the sign of the cross. Douses the sea.

He stops singing and shouts:

OLD (CONT'D)  
 ABATE, O YE WAVES OF FATHER  
 NEPTUNE! I BEG OF YE! DRINK OF THIS  
 GIFT, QUENCH THY SPLEEN, AND ABATE!

He tosses some more liquor into the sea, and takes another swig himself.

OLD (CONT'D)  
 (singing)  
*Well, the captain he's o'er come  
 with fear.*  
*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.

He has bits rags shoved in his ears, trying to muffle the sound.

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.

He lights a cigarette instead.

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?

YOUNG pulls the scraps of fabric from his ears.

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 y'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 askin' ye to ration fer weeks now, too, and you've kept barking at me like a mad dog, sayin' 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 wantin' to be stranded here with some damned lunatic.

YOUNG  
Stranded?

OLD  
That's what I said.

YOUNG  
I thought you said relief was comin'.

OLD  
If we can wait out this storm.

YOUNG  
The tender is comin'.

He says, trying to convince himself.

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 tryin' to scare me.

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

OLD

Look at ye. Pretendin'. But ye well-know yer lot.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. BEHIND THE QUARTERS - NIGHT

The storm continues. OLD holds two SHOVELS. He throws the shorter 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.

YOUNG EYES A LEDGER 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.

OLD proudly shows off his missing front teeth.

Their legs withered and turned gangree'nous, every shade of the peacock's tail. The worst of us couldn't fend 'gainst the ship rats what gnawed at the soles of our feet.

"Land ho!" hears I, but only grass and trees on that island. So we drunk upon the sap, and et upon the grass. 'Twas providence saved us from turnin' to each other's flesh, like bare-naked 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  
 Yer leg. Catholic nuns, and such like.



OLD  
...No, y'must'a misheard.

YOUNG looks at OLD suspiciously. OLD reciprocates.

CAMERA REVEALS: YOUNG is secretly pocketing a DINNER KNIFE.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

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

YOUNG  
No, no, no. No! And I says git off  
me, I says.

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  
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 foreman Winslow that goddamned Canady son-of-a-bitch 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.

OLD

Raggin'?

YOUNG

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

OLD

Raggin'? Who's raggin'? What island? That's the trouble with ye, 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 eatin'  
grass without no teeth.

OLD

Come now?

YOUNG

Yer sea maties' 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

Y'know how y'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

Y'don't?

YOUNG

I don't.

OLD

What?

Pause.

YOUNG

What?

Pause.

What? OLD

What? YOUNG

What? OLD

What? YOUNG

What? OLD  
(quickly, on his heels)

What? YOUNG  
(faster)

What? OLD  
(even faster)

What? YOUNG  
(as fast as possible)

What? OLD  
(faster than that)

What? YOUNG What? OLD (CONT'D)

What? YOUNG What? OLD (CONT'D)

What? YOUNG What? OLD (CONT'D)

What? YOUNG What? OLD (CONT'D)

What? YOUNG What? OLD (CONT'D)

What? YOUNG What? OLD (CONT'D)

YOUNG  
*That's* what I mean.

OLD  
 What?

YOUNG  
 That's the trouble with you.

OLD  
 That's the trouble with ye!

YOUNG  
 With you!!

OLD  
 With YE!!!

YOUNG  
 NO!!!!

Pause.

(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?

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
 Them tin kitchen shanty cooks  
 gave us fried donuts three  
 times a day and country ham  
 bigger than yer fist.

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

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 nothin--

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:

OLD (CONT'D)

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 Young)

... to choke ye, engorging yer organs till ye turn blue and bloated with bilge and brine and can scream no more... 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 like a lunatic. 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  
lens deck. Hypnotized.

SMILING. SHAKING. INSANE?

WHISPERING ABOVE. Or is it just the spinning lens?

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

He pulls out THE DINNER KNIFE and holds it to the light...

He smiles like a Jack-o'-lantern.

Hold.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BREEZEWAY - MORNING

YOUNG unlaces his boots and puts them in his pockets, heels  
up. He creeps toward the TOWER like a stocking-footed  
burglar.



INT. TOWER STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG slinks up the stairs.

INT. MACHINE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG is trying to pick the LOCK of the LANTERN ROOM with THE DINNER KNIFE.

HE is twisting and turning the KNIFE roughly in the lock...

Twisting...

Jiggling...

SUDDENLY, the knife blade breaks in two...

YOUNG  
(under his breath)  
*Son-of-a-bitch.*

He looks at the KNIFE. It's now very thin. Needle-like. *An idea!*

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG tiptoes to Old's DESK with THE THIN, BROKEN DINNER KNIFE...

He can hear OLD snoring (O.S.) upstairs.

He brings it to THE LOCK...

He jiggles the knife... the top jiggles too...

It's unlocked already!

He quietly opens the desk...

THE LOG BOOK is gone.

*Son-of-a-bitch.*

OLD keeps snoring (O.S.).

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. BUNKROOM - DAY

YOUNG watches OLD sleep. THE LOGBOOK and spectacles rise and fall on his belly. His loud SNORE follows. THE BRASS KEYS hang on their chain, his watch tucked under his pillow.

WATER DRIPS from the ceiling, plinking into a pail.

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

OLD keeps snoring...

Every step is silent...

Plink... plink... plink...

He reaches his hand out, unfurling like a lure in slow-motion, fishing for... the BRASS KEYS...

YOUNG sees OLD'S sweaty THROAT...

Pause.

YOUNG slowly brings the KNIFE out...

Another step forward...

The floorboards betray YOUNG with a loud GROAN.

YOUNG stops. *Caught!* He quickly throws his knife hand behind his back.

OLD opens one eye.

OLD  
Queer way to wear yer shoes.

YOUNG  
Didn't wanna wake you, is all.

Pause.

Long night.

Pause.

And such.

OLD  
Mm-hm.  
  
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, thinking.

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

Pause.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
Yer only tol'able when yer dunk.

OLD  
Get to work, says I!

YOUNG STANDS STILL, DEFIANTLY.

CAMERA REVEALS: THE KNIFE STILL HIDDEN IN YOUNG'S HAND.

OLD (CONT'D)  
To work!

Pause.

OLD FARTS.

YOUNG SMILES AGAIN, A WEIRD, FALSE SMILE.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. PATHWAY - DAY

YOUNG wears his OILSKINS, pushing the wheelbarrow through the tempest. It's almost impossible. Is he drunk or hung-over?

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.

ANOTHER BIG, LONG SWIG.

EXT. PILOT ROCK. SHORE - DAY

THE GALE IS MERCILESS AS EVER.

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

IMAGE: THE MERMAID'S BREAST.

IMAGE: HER MOUTH.

YOUNG pulling the rope...

IMAGE: THE LIGHTHOUSE, at a 45 degree angle, LOOKING LIKE A PENIS.

YOUNG pulling the rope...

IMAGE: THE MERMAID'S SLIMY VAGINA.

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

IMAGE: WET TENTACLES WRITHING

IMAGE: THE MERMAID'S FACE, UPSIDE DOWN. SCREAMING, MOANING. EYES ROLLED INTO THE BACK OF HER HEAD.

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. 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, FUCKING HER WHILE THE SEA LAPS OVER THEM.

IMAGE: TENTACLES, FISHTAILS, SEAWEED ALL ENTWINED, WRITHING.

IMAGE: THE MERMAID'S HANDS GRAB YOUNG'S THROAT, DRAGGING HIM INTO THE SEA AND SLIME.

IMAGE: A MAN'S FACE (not Young's), SURROUNDED BY A MACKINAW COLLAR, GURGLES, SCREAMING, SUBMERGED IN WATER.

BACK TO THE SHED: YOUNG howls, an animal in an iron trap!

HE THROWS THE MERMAID CARVING...

IT BREAKS IN TWO!

Desire quickly turns to shame.

The foghorn calls. The wind howls. Rain pours into the shed.

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  
git to me. I'll get yer gullet!

He crawls to the broken carving and starts wildly stabbing it with the DINNER KNIFE!

IMAGE: YOUNG is pulling the rope down by the rocks... HE PULLS UP THE LOBSTER POT...

BACK IN THE SHED: YOUNG, SEIZED WITH FRIGHT.

BACK ON THE ROCKS: INSIDE THE POT IS THE SHRIVELED CORPSE HEAD OF A MAN with ONE EYE.

A SEAGULL FLIES RIGHT BY YOUNG, SQUAWKING AS IT GOES!

YOUNG ALMOST FALLS IN THE WATER FROM TERROR.

SMALL CRABS CRAWL OUT OF THE EMPTY EYE SOCKET.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - NIGHT

THUNDER CLAPS.

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

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!*

YOUNG AND OLD

(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. *How's it possible?*

YOUNG joins the diddling and jigging...

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!

YOUNG  
(singing, very, very, very fast)  
Come all you boys who wish to hear  
How we got up to the woods last  
year,  
Oh, into the sleigh we jacked our  
boots  
Our teamster pointed to the big  
blue spruce  
Timmy-ran-tin-ah Falla-doo-a-dah  
Rant-and-roar and drunk-on-the-way!  
Timmy-ran-tin-ah Falla-doo-a-dah--

LIGHTNING FLASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW.

- LATER

YOUNG AND OLD 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.

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.

(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

*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.

They start throwing the scraps of fish bones and potato skins from their plates at each other... laughing.

They're hysterically drunk. Demented.

YOUNG throws the soapbox... It breaks apart against the



range!

They get closer to each other, running out of things to throw. Howling laughing...

-PARLOR. LATER

OLD pulls out another bottle and slams it down in front of YOUNG.

OLD  
Drink.

YOUNG  
Aye, aye, sir.

OLD  
In one draft.

YOUNG  
You do it.

OLD  
GODDAMN YER CALUMNY! The law says  
ye do as I command! Any word but  
"aye" be mutiny!

Pause.

YOUNG pulls the cork off. He drinks, and drinks, liquor pouring down the sides of his stubbly face.

OLD (CONT'D)  
Atta boy!!

YOUNG  
Aye, aye, AYE, AYE! AYE!  
AAAAAYYYYYEEEE!!!!!!

- LATER

BOTH of them pour booze all over their faces.

THUNDER CLAPS. LIGHTING FLASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW.

- LATER

YOUNG is so drunk, it's hard to believe. He is soaked in liquor.

OLD has his head on YOUNG'S shoulder. He falls in and out of consciousness.

YOUNG  
Thomas.

                  OLD  
Aye?

                  YOUNG  
It's Thomas.

                  OLD  
Aye.

                  YOUNG  
No, I... I'm Thomas.

                  OLD  
I'm Thomas. You're Ephraim.

                  YOUNG  
I lied.

                  OLD  
Well, I'll be scuppered.

                  YOUNG  
I'm Thomas. Tommy.

                  OLD  
Tommy?  
                  (laughs)  
Tommy Winslow.

                  YOUNG  
Tom Howard.

                  OLD  
What's Winslow?

                  YOUNG  
Nothing.

                  OLD  
Nothing?

                  YOUNG  
It ain't my fault... I...

Pause.

                  YOUNG (CONT'D)  
No.

Pause.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
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.  
Git 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 own rag box.

YOUNG  
I can trust you.

OLD  
No.

YOUNG  
I trust you, Tom.

OLD  
Y'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. The plinking slowly disappears, too.

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

YOUNG  
And I had 'im handy and helpless.  
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. 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 git swallowed  
down by them logs.

(MORE)

YOUNG (CONT'D)

All I thought when he was done is,  
 "I could use me a smoke." That's  
 it. So, I packed up his kit and  
 fixins, 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 y'spill yer beans, Tommy?

INT. KITCHEN/BREEZEWAY DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

OLD'S voice echoes.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. TOWER STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

The chains clink, echoing too...

OLD (O.S.)

(whispered)

Why'd y'spill yer beans?

YOUNG ascends the stairs...

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. MACHINE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

THE DOOR to the CATWALK FLIES open...

Rain blows wildly into the machine room.

YOUNG goes through the door...

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE. CATWALK - 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.  
IT 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...

Suddenly...

OLD  
DON'T LEAVE ME!

OLD SWIPES THROUGH THE AIR WITH A FIRE AXE, SMASHING THE DORY RIGHT BY YOUNG!

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 storms into the...

INT. PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

WATER is leaking from the ceiling, heavily. It flows down one of the walls.

YOUNG  
What're you gonna do? Send for 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.

YOUNG SMILES.

OLD

--

For once, OLD is speechless. In horror.

YOUNG is happy as can be. Crazy. Manic.

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 trinket,  
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 and does a celebratory jig!

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
Free from yer designs!

OLD makes no expression.

YOUNG stops jigging.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
And I got it all figgerd out, 'cept  
what's the secret mischief yer  
keepin'...



He points to THE LANTERN ROOM.

... up there!

OLD

--

YOUNG

I figgerd you, old timer. This whole time, I've been watchin' you and I've got you figgerd.

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 nothin' to confess, but you, Tommy, a-spillin' yer beans... now look what it's done to ye. It's made ye mad. I knew ye was mad when y'smashed up the life boat just now, a-chasing me with an axe, tryin' to kill 'Ol Tom.

Don't y'trust me, Tommy?

YOUNG

--

OLD

Better hand me the dinner knife you pocketed. Y'aint safe with it.

YOUNG

--

OLD

Them's government property.

YOUNG does so, looking like a guilty child.

OLD (CONT'D)

There's a good lad.

OLD, stepping on it, breaks it in two and throws it in the stove.

OLD (CONT'D)

Deducted from yer pay.

YOUNG

--

OLD

Look at yer shiverin'. Yer so mad, y'know not up from down. How long have we been on this rock? Five week? Two days? Where are we? Help me to 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. Yer probably wand'rin' through a grove of tag alders, up in north Canady, like a frostbitten maniac a-talkin' to yerself, knee-deep in the snow, the blizzard overtakein' ye.

Pause.

YOUNG

I could use a smoke.

OLD

We're outta drink.

They smile at each other like old friends.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. OIL ROOM - LATER

HONEY DRIBBLES into a BRASS KEROSENE CANISTER.

YOUNG still wears the cork vest as he drips the HONEY, smoking his cigarette.

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 scrap of rebar.

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 like giddy children.

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

YOUNG and OLD laugh and laugh and laugh, holding cups of thieves' oil. YOUNG still wears the life vest. WATER DRIPS AND POURS FROM THE CEILING

THE AXE in the table top between them.

They keep laughing in a frighteningly hysterical manner...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

SUDDENLY, THE FORCE OF A WAVE CRASHES THROUGH A WINDOW... WATER FLOODS INTO THE ROOM WITH RAPID SPEED. But YOUNG & OLD don't notice. They keep laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

Laughing...

HOLD.

BLACK.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS. GALLEY - MORNING

THE KITCHEN is an absolute catastrophe. However terrible it looked the night before, it is even worse now. Mess is everywhere and every surface is soaking wet. Water drips in a way that suggests the storm is over. The quarters utterly destroyed, and by the looks of it, not just by the storm.

THE AXE still stays buried in the table.

YOUNG is sitting in the SINK, drinking TURPENTINE straight from the tin. He's in his undershirt and trousers, but still wearing 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. PARLOR - LATER

The CLOCK ticks monotonously.

The room is half flooded. YOUNG stands in ankle deep water, pissing, missing the chamber pot, following it around as it floats across the room. As he does this, he is taking off the life vest...

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

He falls to his knees... splash... and sees...

OLD'S LOGBOOK... it floats by... 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... (CAMERA doesn't see the entries.)

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

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

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 in a heap of trash. He's wearing only his sweaty, baggy, mostly unbuttoned union suit, his vest with his watch chain, and his cap.

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 (CONT'D)  
(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?  
Y'already told me y'had me figgerd--

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...

OLD

(to himself)  
'Nother conniption fit.  
(to Young)  
Yer makin' a fool of yerelf.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

all-the-while turning this  
station to the Devil's own  
rum hole.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Well, it's all horseshit, 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.

(MORE)

YOUNG (CONT'D)

I'm sick of lookin' at you, I'm sick of lookin' at week-old food in yer beard starin' me in the face like it 'spects me of somethin'. You think yer so damned high and mighty cause yer a goddamned lighthouse keeper? Well, you ain't a captain of no ship and you never was, you ain't no general, no copper, you ain't the president, and you ain't my father -- and I'm sick of you actin' like you is! 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! That's what you are, you're a goddamned drunken horse-shitting -- short -- shit liar. A liar!

Long pause.

OLD

Y'have a way with words, Tommy.

YOUNG

Damn you.

OLD

Yer relieved of yer duties.

YOUNG

No need to tell me, old timer.

YOUNG reveals the LOG book. He reads aloud:

YOUNG (CONT'D)

*Assistant slept late. Work below standard.*

Turns the page.

YOUNG (CONT'D)

*Attitude Hostile*



Turns several pages.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
*Assistant missing. Given to  
 habitual 'self-abuse' in the supply  
 shed.*

A few more pages.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
*Drunk on duty.*

Turns a page.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
*Incoherent speech.*

Another page.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
*Attempted to abandon his post.  
 Assault. Theft.*

Another page.

YOUNG (CONT'D)  
I do not feel safe with him.  
Recommend severance without pay.  
 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 (CONT'D)  
 Y'lie to yerself, but y'ain't  
 have the sauce to see it.

YOUNG changes his tune:

YOUNG

Work as hard as a man and two  
horses, you said so yerself, I work  
like I'm a damn foreigner.

YOUNG works at getting into the BREEZEWAY toward the TOWER.  
OLD stands in his way.

YOUNG begs, desperately:

YOUNG (CONT'D)

Please, please, 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. Forgive and forgit, I  
says -- just let me into that  
lantern, is all, don't make me beg--  
I will -- I'll beg if that's what  
you want, PLEASE--

OLD keeps his ground.

OLD

Stand down.

YOUNG

SELFISH BASTARD! Keepin' it all to  
yerself. Left yer old lady, yer  
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 nothin' but being  
born, cryin' bout the silver spoon  
what should've been yers. Now look  
at ye cryin'.

YOUNG

--

OLD

Boo! Boo! What're y'to do?

Look at ye. Look at ye.

Will y'kill me? Will ye?

Will y'kill me like y'done that  
gull?

YOUNG

I didn't--

OLD

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

YOUNG

Damn you!

OLD

'T WAS YE WHAT DAMNED US, DOG! 'T WAS  
YE! Will y'do what y'wish y'done to  
ol' Winslow?

YOUNG

--

OLD

Would ye best me then? If y'break,  
I win. If I break ye, I still win.

YOUNG

--

OLD

I always win because yer 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. And the truth is that  
yer a nothin', Tommy-Tom-Tom. 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 GRINS BACK...

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 in his mackinaw coat...

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 mer-person, 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 indeed ended. Clapboards and shingles have been torn from the quarters. The supply shed is nowhere to be seen.

YOUNG walks OLD on a leash, well, a rope 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)  
Git in there, you old dog. Where  
you belong.

Pause.

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

OLD slinks into the wet, muddy grave. He settles down, semi-submerged in a foot or so of water and sludge.

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)  
Y'wish to see what's in that  
lantern?  
(MORE)

OLD (CONT'D)

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

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

More mud on him...

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 mud on him...

OLD (CONT'D)

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

Dirt on his face...

ancient

Mud...

mutable

More mud on his face...

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

More mud...

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 and sloshing...

He lifts OLD up. He holds him.

Pause. YOUNG catches his breath.

YOUNG takes the BRASS KEYS from OLD'S vest...

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 - AFTERNOON

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... no smokes.

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 mud, 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! (OLD'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.

MUSIC CUE: The eerie "light" music. Continues to the end of the film.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE. BREEZEWAY - NIGHT

Crawling, trembling, and bleeding, YOUNG slowly works his way to the tower...

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 with eight shimmering brass legs. It seems to sing...

He walks toward it...

As if by magic, the LENS' rotation begins to decelerate...

The LENS stops turning...

He marvels at it.

Slowly, the doors of the lens open like wings, facing him...

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.

Is he breathing?

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.