

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

Written by

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BLACK.

The rumble of a lonely FOGHORN. Low. Faint.

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

1 EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

1

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.

2 EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TENDER - PROW - LATER

2

CLOSE ON: The rotten, rusty prow carves through the waves.

The third-rate engine rumbles.

Hold.

3 EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TENDER - DECK - SUNSET

3

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.

4 EXT. PILOT ROCK - SHORE - SUNSET

4

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.

5 EXT. PILOT ROCK - NEAR THE LIVING QUARTERS - SUNSET

5

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.

6 EXT. PILOT ROCK - NEAR THE LIVING QUARTERS - LATER

6

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.

7 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - EVENING

7

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.)...

8 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

8

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.)...

9 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

9

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...

10 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - CONTINUOUS

10

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.

11 INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

11

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.

12 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY/VESTIBULE - NIGHT

12

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.

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
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.

OLD
Did you?

YOUNG
Yessir.

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

YOUNG
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
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 startlingly 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.

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

13 EXT. PILOT ROCK - NIGHT

13

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

14 INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

14

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
SON-OF-A-BITCH!

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

15 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - TOWER STAIRS - NIGHT

15

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.

16 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - LANTERN ROOM - NIGHT

16

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.

Toast.

OLD

To ye, me beauty!

17 EXT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

17

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.

21 INT/EXT. BOATHOUSE - SHORE - MOMENTS LATER

21

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:

27 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - MORNING

27

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
Tend to 'em after the cistern. And
the lamp, she needs oil.

He flops down on the sagging mattress. Asleep instantly.

YOUNG
Aye, sir.

28 EXT. PILOT ROCK - PATHWAY - DAY

28

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

It's hard work.

The wind blows like hell.

29 EXT. PILOT ROCK - CISTERN - DAY

29

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.

30 EXT. LIVING QUARTERS - ROOF - DAY

30

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.

32 EXT. SUPPLY SHED - DAY

32

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...

33 EXT. COAL HOUSE - DAY

33

YOUNG opens the door: COAL. Heaps of it.

This door does fall off its hinges.

34 EXT. COAL HOUSE - LATER

34

He loads up a wheelbarrow overfull with coal.

35 EXT. PILOT ROCK - PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

35

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....

36 EXT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

36

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.

37 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - OIL ROOM - DAY

37

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.

38 INT. LIGHTHOUSE. TOWER STAIRS - DAY

38

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

....

....

Clunk.

....

....

Clunk.

39 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MACHINE ROOM - DAY

39

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.

OLD
I said catch your breath, lad!

YOUNG grits his teeth.

OLD
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.

40 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - NIGHT

40

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

(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

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.

OLD

'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 somewhere in ye, lad.

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

Pause.

OLD

Out with it, lad.

YOUNG

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

OLD

Him? My second?

YOUNG nods yes, eating.

OLD
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
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
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.

42 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - NIGHT

42

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.

43 INT. SUPPLY SHED - NIGHT

43

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.

45 EXT. SUPPLY SHED - A BIT LATER THAT NIGHT

45

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.

48 EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAY

48

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!

50 INT. MACHINE ROOM - LATER

50

YOUNG is still, holding a rag against the brass he's polishing.

YOUNG

?

OLD is fuming.

OLD
Don't deny it.

YOUNG

Sir?

51 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - DAY

51

OLD stands in the galley, pointing at the floor in horror. It looks like it always does. How could it look any different?

OLD
What d'y'call this?

YOUNG

Sir?

OLD
What?

YOUNG

I mopped and swept. Twice over,
sir.

OLD
Ye lyin' dog.

YOUNG

I swept 'em--

OLD

'Tis begrimed and bedabbled.

YOUNG

I--

OLD
Unwiped, unwashed, and distained.

YOUNG
(under his breath)
You git some kinda peart outta
molestin' me?

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

YOUNG starts to mop.

OLD sings mockingly:

OLD
(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.

52 INT. OIL ROOM - LATER

52

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...

53 EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAY

53

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.

54 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - NIGHT

54

YOUNG and OLD eat their scrod and potatoes in silence.

RAIN AND WINDS BLAIR JUST OUTSIDE THEIR FLIMSY WALLS.

Tension.

Hold.

Thunder claps.

BLACK.

57 EXT. LIGHTHOUSE TOWER - DAY

57

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'!

OLD
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
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
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.

59 EXT. FOOT OF THE LIGHT TOWER - LATER

59

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
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

61 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - PARLOR - VESTIBULE - EVENING

61

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.

62 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - NIGHT

62

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 damned 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
Ain't nothing what can touch it.

He snaps himself out of it:

OLD
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.

OLD
'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
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
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, somewhere 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.

63 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - PARLOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

63

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

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

They be a-cursing yer name.

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

OLD

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.

64 INT. LIGHT STATION - VARIOUS - A DAYS WORK

64

- 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.

65 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - NIGHT

65

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.

66 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

66

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
(louder)
Veritas...

YOUNG's eyes widen.

72 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - DAY

72

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.

73 EXT. PILOT ROCK - CISTERNS - DAY

73

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.

85 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - LATER

85

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.

86 INT. LIGHTHOUSE . MACHINE ROOM - DAY

86

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

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.

87 EXT. SIGNAL HOUSE - DAY

87

YOUNG boards up the windows. OLD helps.

OLD (V.O.)

Now then, I've a surprise.

88 EXT. PILOT ROCK - SHORE - DAY

88

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

Look at 'em! Better than fin
fishin'!

89 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - NIGHT

89

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.

OLD

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

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

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

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
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
'Tis Gospel!

OLD
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 pours himself another drink.

OLD
Don't concern yerself with the
beacon! Mine, lad!

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
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.

92 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - NIGHT

92

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.

93 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - MORNING

93

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.

94 EXT. PILOT ROCK - LATER THAT MORNING

94

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

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

95

96 EXT. PILOT ROCK - CLIFFS - LATER

96

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
FUCK!!

98 EXT. PILOT ROCK - PATHWAY - LATER THAT MORNING

98

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

99 INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

99

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

100 EXT. PILOT ROCK - LATER THAT MORNING

100

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.

102 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

102

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.

103 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - LATER

103

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

104 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - LATER

104

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

105 EXT. PILOT ROCK - NEAR THE SHORE - LATER

105

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.

106 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - NIGHT

106

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.

107 EXT. PILOT ROCK - NIGHT

107

ANGLE ON: Huge waves crash.

108 EXT. PILOT ROCK - CLIFFS - NIGHT

108

ANGLE ON: Enormous waves crash.

109 EXT. PILOT ROCK - CLIFFS - NIGHT

109

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
...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
(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
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
(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...

115 INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

115

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!

116 EXT. PILOT ROCK - PATHWAY - LATER

116

THE TWO walk through the storm.

117 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - LATER

117

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.

118 EXT. PILOT ROCK - BEHIND THE QUARTERS - NIGHT

118

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

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.

123 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - NIGHT

123

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.

OLD
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.

125 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

125

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.

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
What?

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.

YOUNG
(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
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

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.

126 EXT. PILOT ROCK - NIGHT

126

The cataclysmic storm continues.

Flash.

The wind.

Flash.

The rain.

Flash.

The waves.

Flash.

The foghorn.

Flash.

127 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

127

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.

129 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BREEZEWAY - MORNING

129

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

130 INT. TOWER STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

130

YOUNG slinks up the stairs.

131 INT. MACHINE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

131

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!

132 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

132

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.).

133 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNKROOM - DAY

133

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
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
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
To work!

Pause.

OLD FARTS.

YOUNG SMILES AGAIN, A WEIRD, FALSE SMILE.

139 EXT. PILOT ROCK - PATHWAY - DAY

139

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.

141 INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - DAY

141

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.

144 EXT. PILOT ROCK - SHORE - DAY

144

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:

153 INT. SUPPLY SHED - DAY

153

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.

164 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - NIGHT

164

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

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 FLASHERS 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.

OLD

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
Atta boy!!

YOUNG
Aye, aye, AYE, AYE! AYE!
AAAAAAAYYYYYEEE!!!!!!

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
No.

Pause.

YOUNG
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.

175 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - BUNK ROOM - LATER - THAT SAME NIGHT 175

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.

YOUNG

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

Tom?

Long pause.

YOUNG

Tom?!

OLD (O.S.)

(far away, whispered,
echoing)
Why'd y'spill yer beans, Tommy?

176 INT. KITCHEN - BREEZEWAY DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

176

OLD'S voice echoes.

177 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - TOWER STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

177

The chains clink, echoing too...

OLD (O.S.)
(whispered)
Why'd y'spill yer beans?

YOUNG ascends the stairs...

178 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MACHINE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

178

THE DOOR to the CATWALK FLIES open...

Rain blows wildly into the machine room.

YOUNG goes through the door...

179 EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - CATWALK - NIGHT

179

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.

191 EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAWN

191

CLOSE ON: YOUNG RUNS THROUGH THE STORM!

193 INT/EXT. BOATHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

193

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...

197 EXT. PILOT ROCK - CONTINUOUS

197

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

YOUNG runs into the QUARTERS.

198 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - CONTINUOUS

198

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...

199 INT. PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

199

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. Crazed. 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
Free from yer designs!

OLD makes no expression.

YOUNG stops jiggling.

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

He points to THE LANTERN ROOM.

YOUNG
... 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

There's a good lad.

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

OLD

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 overtakin'
ye.

Pause.

YOUNG

I could use a smoke.

OLD

We're outta drink.

They smile at each other like old friends.

201 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - OIL ROOM - LATER

201

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
Oooooh, monkey pump!

They both drink... fighting over it like giddy children.

202 INT. FOG SIGNAL HOUSE - NIGHT

202

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

203 EXT. THE SEA - NIGHT

203

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

205 EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

205

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

ANGLE ON: THE LIVING QUARTERS, WATER RUSHING OVER THE ROOF.

Will it survive?

208 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - NIGHT

208

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.

212 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - MORNING

212

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.

213 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - PARLOR - LATER

213

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.

214 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

214

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

(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

Thankee.

Pause.

OLD

What's wrong with yer hand?

YOUNG looks at the match hand in confusion.

OLD

T'other one.

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

He slithers his cut hand away.

OLD

Ye hear o' tetanus?

YOUNG

--

OLD
Tet-a-nus?

YOUNG
(quietly, rigid)
Yep.

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

YOUNG is motionless. Boiling.

YOUNG
I said I heard of it.

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

YOUNG
Can't you never shut up.

OLD
... but come a fortnight...

YOUNG
Stop.

OLD
The bosun was a-shakin'...

YOUNG
Shut up, I says.

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

YOUNG explodes:

YOUNG
SHUT IT! I told you I can't hear no
more! Hold yer jaw!

OLD
What were it yer accused me of?
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
all-the-while turning this station
to the Devil's own rum hole.

YOUNG
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.

YOUNG

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 'specta 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
 Assistant slept late. Work below
 standard.

Turns the page.

YOUNG
 Attitude Hostile

Turns several pages.

YOUNG

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

A few more pages.

YOUNG

Drunk on duty.

Turns a page.

YOUNG

Incoherent speech.

Another page.

YOUNG

Attempted to abandon his post.
Assault. Theft.

Another page.

YOUNG

I do not feel safe with him.
Recommend severance without pay.

SEVERANCE WITHOUT PAY?!

YOUNG throws THE LOGBOOK at him.

YOUNG

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

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

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 forget, 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 yours. 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
'TWAS YE WHAT DAMNED US, DOG! 'TWAS
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.

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
Git in there, you old dog. Where
you belong.

Pause.

YOUNG
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
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
Y'wish to see what's in that
lantern?

OLD
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
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
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...

OLD
ancient

Mud...

OLD
mutable

More mud on his face...

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

More mud...

OLD
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.

241 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - OIL ROOM - AFTERNOON

241

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.

242 INT. LIVING QUARTERS - GALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

242

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.

246 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - BREEZEWAY - NIGHT

246

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

247 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - TOWER STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

247

YOUNG continues, slowly...

248 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MACHINE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

248

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...

249 INT. LIGHTHOUSE - LANTERN ROOM - NIGHT

249

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 loosing 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.

250 EXT. PILOT ROCK - DAWN

250

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.