

The town sat on the edge of a gray-blue sea, not far from the bustling city of Portland. Ships no longer relied on the old lighthouse; modern navigation systems had replaced its steady golden beam. The paint peeled, the windows rattled, and seabirds nested in its rusted crown. Years ago, during a violent storm, a small fishing boat had nearly shattered against the rocks. The navigation system had failed, and the captain—young and terrified—had no guide through the black waves. Through sheets of rain, one steady glow cut across the darkness. Elias had lit the lamp that night, even though no one had asked him to. On the final evening before demolition, a storm rolled in—fiercer than any in years. The power grid failed. Modern systems blinked out across the harbor. Fishing boats returning from sea found themselves swallowed by wind and rain.