

5-2017

Beacon

Samantha Eroche
University of New Orleans

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uno.edu/honors_theses



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), and the [Screenwriting Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Eroche, Samantha, "Beacon" (2017). *Senior Honors Theses*. 85.
https://scholarworks.uno.edu/honors_theses/85

This Honors Thesis-Unrestricted is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by ScholarWorks@UNO with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Honors Thesis-Unrestricted in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Honors Thesis-Unrestricted has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uno.edu.

BEACON

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Film and Theatre
of the University of New Orleans

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts, with University High Honors
and Honors in Film and Theatre Arts

by

Samantha Eroche

May 2017

Acknowledgement

I would first like to thank my advisor Erik Hansen, without whose guidance I wouldn't have learned this craft. Thank you for taking me in your FTA 2250 Intro to Screenwriting class last summer and then under your wing to guide me in this admittedly intimidating process of figuring out what story I wanted to tell and learning how film scripts work. You are knowledgeable, kind, constructive, and patient, and I can't imagine having done this with anyone else. You're my beacon, and I will always appreciate you coming aboard this voyage with me.

Thank you, Diane Baas, my second reader. To agree to peruse and notate a screenplay and sit through an oral defense for me when we're both about to open *Twelfth Night*, I thank you for making time for me and I appreciate you.

Thank you to the wickedly smart, beautiful, talented, and funny Claudia Smith, for endless words of encouragement throughout this process. Your writing inspires me, you're a cool human, and I miss you much.

Thank you to the wickedly smart, handsome, talented, and funny Austin Krieger, for enormously, ridiculously constructive edits and for telling me to do my work when I didn't want to do my work. And for telling me I could do this. And for buying me wine and cookies, and mango smoothies from McDonald's. You're great. I'll keep you.

And to everyone who endured me saying, "Sorry, I can't, *my thesis!*" for the past several months, well, I can't say that anymore! And thank you for your patience with me!

Abstract

Beacon is a short, relatively low production value screenplay about two people coming to know each other better, about them coming to know *themselves* better and to grow as human beings. When Kate Clarence realizes she's discovered the journal of her favorite pen-named author from childhood—"C. Rimes"—she embarks on a journey to return it to him, whoever he is. She's delinquent on her rent, her bookshop's failing, she's far from her landlocked Midwest home and family, and she's single; the obligation to return the journal is a welcomed adventure and reprieve. However, when she comes to the conclusion that C. Rimes *meant* for her to find the journal because he's in love with her and wants to reveal who he is to the world, the situation gets complicated. A lighthouse on the coast of Maine will beckon her to a special meeting with the mysterious C. Rimes and serve as her guiding light while she gropes through the dark to find him—and who he is.

Keywords: lighthouse, ocean, seagull, writer, books.

Beacon

By

Samantha Eroche

2016

sameroche@yahoo.com

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE DECK - MORNING

CU LIGHTHOUSE BULB going dark.

Now ROBERT JAMES--a sea-weathered man, 40s-50s--sweeps 3 dead seagulls off the deck into the ocean, crashing below.

CUT TO:

EXT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - MORNING

A seagull quickly lands on a large sign reading "Heck's General Store," next to a smaller sign reading "& Kate's Hooked Books," like a postscript that a book shop's there, too.

We watch KATE CLARENCE, 20ish with a sweet, smart, mischievous charm, nod to the bird with a smile, a giant tote bag of books on her arm as she enters her shop.

INTERCUT

A RAIN GAUGE sits by Robert's feet and a WIND VANE sits atop the lighthouse. He studies them, then removes a LOGBOOK from his pocket and pencils in his findings.

Gulls squawk overhead, a bright day. We hear his thoughts, spoken as though being written, with a TYPEWRITER clacking in the background:

ROBERT (V.O.)
Poor animals. They always go to the
light. You'd think they'd learn.
But no. They don't.

The gulls SPLASH! into the water.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - MORNING

The sound of the SPLASH! carries us into a CU of Kate's coffeemaker dripping fresh coffee into a pottery mug.

One by one, she places each of the books she's brought on their own shelf--they all bear the same author's name: C. Rimes.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE BASE - MORNING

At the base, a THERMOMETER hangs 5 feet above the ground on the lighthouse, in the shade. Robert studies it, records it in the LOGBOOK.

ROBERT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Do you ever wonder where things go when you lose them? Sometimes it's a more difficult question to answer than you think.

With another THERMOMETER from his pocket, he takes the water's temperature: records it.

ROBERT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Well, I do. I wonder. I think about it all the time. Like, where do the dead seagulls go once they're swept away--by a broom, a breeze, a wave? Do they find another light, another life?

Lastly, he grabs a SLING PSYCHROMETER from his jacket, dips it in the water, and spins it to gauge the relative humidity: records it.

INTERCUT

There's a piece of duct tape on the ground separating Kate's shop from the general store: she measures with a ruler from the tape to her counter. She moves it further into the general store, giving her more shop space.

CUT TO:

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MORNING

A BAROMETER on the wall: records it. In the columned logbook, the last entry under the other measurements: "Monday, June 16, 2003: Misc.: 3 birds." He shuts the logbook, pockets it.

A modest room. B-roll: we move slowly over self-help books on grieving heaped in a corner, then freeze on Harold S. Kushner's *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, then freeze on Moliere's *The Misanthrope*, and similar works.

A comfy armchair, small kitchen, dresser, bed, minibar. A radio seems the only electronic device. A typewriter, crumpled paper balls, pencils, and manuscripts litter the low-lit place.

(CONTINUED)

The manuscripts bear the name "C. Rimes," his pen name, with "Robert James" in parentheses underneath--for his publisher.

We slowly pan over yellowed newspaper clippings on the walls reading, "Magical Novel of Rare Excellence," "Praise for C. Rimes's *Waterfront: A Book of Poetry!*", "Who is C. Rimes, the Man behind *Endless Deep?*"

He writes in a small Moleskin JOURNAL now:

ROBERT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Maybe they grow into something
 beautiful...

He pauses his writing, flips to the back inside pocket, and removes a small, dainty HANDKERCHIEF, embroidered with "Eliza" and flowers. He gently lifts and unfolds it, brings it to his nose, and smells, wistful.

He types at the typewriter now:

ROBERT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...since no one ever likes them
 when they're seagulls. Maybe they
 just rot and are forgotten. Maybe
 people just go on hating seagulls.

INTERCUT

ROBERT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Or maybe, perhaps, nothing happens
 to them at all.

Kate walks around her shop with a BOOK and her COFFEE MUG, smiling. As Robert's narration ends and the clackety typing stops--her book--she closes it and reveals its title: *Seaside Ponderings*, by C. Rimes.

She puts it on the shelf of Robert's other works.

Kate's shop is cozy, with a little sunlit nook, crowded bookshelves, and winged armchairs--but there's shit everywhere, re-organizing's a hobby.

Walks to the counter, sighs: several ENVELOPES with big red-letter type read NOTICE: DELINQUENT PAYMENTS. Sets down her mug.

KATE
 (calls, shaking envelopes)
 Appreciate you, Gus!

GUS HECK, 50s-60s, Kate's crochety-occasionally-endearing landlord, comes into view with a crate of produce. He also owns and runs the general store next to her book shop.

GUS
Puh! You're late.

KATE
I can see that.

GUS
Yeah, well don't make me--

KATE
I'll make it work--

GUS
(and walking away with the
last word,)
You keep saying that.

Kate's dissatisfied and exasperated with the interaction. She blows her hair out of her face.

INTERCUT

Robert shuts the JOURNAL, deeply sighs, and looks to the handkerchief. He folds it and places it back in the journal.

ROBERT
"Miss" still isn't a strong enough
word...

Beat: glances at watch, still early. He twiddles his fingers, looking around, then:

CUT TO:

We see how Robert spends his days when not manning the lighthouse--he has hobbies, all from his armchair:

He's surrounded himself with dozens of pieces of ROPE, all tied into various nautical knots. He struggles with what looks like a Cat's Cradle, and he's getting himself all tied up, then:

CUT TO:

He's comically focused on his PADDLEBALL, trying to beat his record. When he misses:

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT

Ah, shit.

He starts again, then:

CUT TO:

He's managed to knit a ridiculously long SCARF. It's funnier because of how long it takes him to loop, this must've taken forever.

He looks at his watch again and tosses the knitting aside. He grabs his key, places 2 wine glasses in a canvas TOTE, and leaves.

EXT. ROCKY BRIDGE - MORNING

The lighthouse sits on a rocky land bridge separating it from the mainland--it's only navigable by walking/climbing. Gulls squawk and circle over the jagged black rocks.

EXT. EDGE OF MAINLAND - MORNING

A plain bicycle with a basket is chained to a sea-weathered wooden fence. A mailbox. Tall beach grasses, thick bushes, white sand.

At the mailbox: Robert shuffles through junk mail until he gets a ENVELOPE addressed to "Current Lighthouse Keeper," reading, "ROSTELLAIRE HAVEN TOURISM COMMISSION, 222 Conch St., Rostellaire Haven, ME. 04007."

He pockets it and rides his bike into town.

EXT. TOWN - MORNING

A made-to-look-sea-weathered wooden sign reads "Rostellaire Haven, Maine" a New-England coastal town--a gentrified, now rich touristy town. Pretty white buildings, well-manicured, safe, clean, mostly bikes for transportation, not much "character."

Already a sunny, breezy day.

Robert approaches a combination general store/book shop and chains his bike outside.

INT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - MORNING

Gus and Kate fuss over where the dividing line is between his store and her shop: they keep moving the comically long piece of duct tape around on the floor.

KATE

Gus, you can't add another aisle,
this is my space--

GUS

(smoothing down tape)
Like hell it is! Not anymore--

KATE

(ripping up the tape)
NO. It IS. The line's right there,
that's what we agreed upon,
immediately after the little shelf
of on-special peas--

GUS

Don't you touch my little shelf of
on-special peas, now!

KATE

I'm not, but that's the line!

GUS

DON'T TOUCH 'EM!

KATE

All right Gus, shit!
(noticing Robert)
Hey, Robert.

GUS

Morning.

Robert enters the ongoing feud--this is routine with them.
He groans.

ROBERT

(heads to the back of the
store)
Hey, guys.

GUS & KATE

Morning.

Kate rips back tape but accidentally falls into the
peas--CRASH!

(CONTINUED)

KATE

Oof! Damn it!

GUS

(chasing after the peas O.S.)

WHAT DID I TELL YOU, WOMAN?! WHAT
DID I TELL YOU NOT TO DO?!

CUT TO:

Robert's TOTE at the checkout: flowers, 2 wine glasses, a bottle of wine. He stands behind someone checking out. Waiting, a magazine catches his eye: "The Science of Happiness" TIME issue.

Placing his bag of items on the counter, he flips open to a listical reading, "Spend time with people!"--quickly closes magazine and puts it back as the first customer leaves.

Robert scans the room--he's always looking, the constant observer.

GUS

(seeing items)

You're always seein' someone special, huh? Or maybe you're ooglin' the peas?--

KATE

(from her shop, embarrassed)

Oh my God.

ROBERT

Uh, simple pleasures.

GUS

(laughing like he knows)

Ahhh. All right, then.

Robert starts walking out, when:

KATE

Coffee before you run off?

ROBERT

(thinks, then)

Sure.

He sits in a winged chair with his TOTE on the floor--the JOURNAL falls out, under his chair, unnoticed. He sees Kate's bookshelf--of his work--intrigued. She brings him coffee.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Your personal collection?

KATE
Oh, yeah. Since I was a kid,
actually. Just put 'em up.

ROBERT
C. Rimes.

KATE
Are you a fan?

ROBERT
(smiles)
I'm familiar with his work.

KATE
(gushing)
Ugh, I've always loved his writing,
read all his books. The way he
talks about the sea, the creatures
living there, he's so
thoughtful...actually, it's kind of
what brought me to the ocean in the
first place...
(beat, noting her ramble)
Sorry, I--

ROBERT
You don't think you will?

KATE
Will...what?

ROBERT
Meet him.

KATE
Oh, no. It's a pen name, he's a
recluse? I mean, they *think*, no one
really knows. Doesn't do people. No
one'll ever really know him.

ROBERT
Maybe he prefers that.

KATE
That's sad.
(beat, awkward. To herself,)
People would love him...

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
(locking eyes)
Would you know him if you saw him?
(catching himself)
Or her?

KATE
In a heartbeat.

ROBERT
(tiny smirk, gives back mug)
Well, maybe you'll find him one of
these days.

KATE
Perhaps.

He quickly makes his way to the door, leaves. Kate watches him, also the constant observer, as he walks into a bank across the street.

KATE
(calling)
Hey Gus, what does Robert do
anyway?

GUS
Doesn't knock down the *peas*!

KATE
No, but really--

GUS
NOW who's nosy?

He shuffles O.S. to do work, dismissing Kate's questions. She still stares after the door.

KATE
Huh.

Suddenly: her laptop DINGS! on the counter.

At laptop: A shipping status email notification from SEASIDE TREASURES: "Your package has arrived."

She clicks the image to enlarge it: RUSTIC DRIFTWOOD WALL DECOR reading "The ocean is everything I want to be. Beautiful, mysterious, wild, & free."

KATE
Ugh, so cool. Perfect.

(CONTINUED)

She walks behind Gus's counter like she owns the place, super comfortable.

GUS (O.S.)

Woman!--

KATE

Just seeing if I got a package,
Gus, cool it.

GUS (O.S.)

You're killin' me.

KATE

Heh heh!

She digs through some boxes and finds one addressed to her--she's surprised at its size.

KATE (CONT.'D)

That's...odd.

Sets the BOX on her counter, carefully opens it: a LIGHTHOUSE BULB encased in a glass dome, not her sign. She reads the small card enclosed:

KATE

"A mint-condition, vintage
lighthouse bulb from days gone
by--the quintessential gift for the
nautica romancer."

(deep breath, annoyed sigh)

You're cool but no one will know
what you are.

She puts it back in the box, throws the padding on top, and pushes the box aside. At laptop: "Make a return" screen.

She eyes something on the ground: a corner? Under the chair, is the JOURNAL! A curious look, must've misplaced it--she nonchalantly places it in one of her many stacks of books.

EXT. BANK - MORNING

Leaning against the building, Robert smokes, counts a few bills, and finishes his cigarette. He quickly grabs his bike and rides further into town: businesslike.

EXT. CEMETERY - NOON

On the other edge of town, new and old graves sit by the sea, surrounded by a sea-weathered wooden fence, the trees provide great shade. Gulls cry in the distance, there's a peaceful calm, an easy sea breeze.

Tired, Robert grabs his bag and tosses the bike down by the gate. He maneuvers through the graves until he comes to an elegant, simple one: "Eliza Lovell James, 1953-1982. Beloved wife, daughter, & friend."

ROBERT
(to grave)
Hello, heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHADY GROVE - NOON

Kate sits in a shady grove, a nondescript place, with her lunch and a stack of books as usual--but Robert's JOURNAL is among them today. She works on a legal pad that reads "Biz Idea Brainstorming." Her bike with a basket lies nearby.

INTERCUT

The dead flowers have been strewn aside and replaced with the new, the wine's been opened and a full glass sits next to the bottle at Eliza's grave--Robert holds his own glass, drinking with her.

His shoes are off, pants rolled up, stick-doodling in the sand. He seems better for doing this, freer, like a young man.

ROBERT
(to grave)
All right, what about this: "E makes the 'sea.' From being torn asunder, in one piece she keeps it..."
(thinking beat)
"Calm, quiet, demure: a gentle sea breeze. And I, I am a captainless vessel, a directionless bottle floating to the ends of the earth. But you, you are the very beacon informing my contents: inscribed on my parchment heart, E, my sea."
(thinking beat, addresses her laughing at the bad poem)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT (cont'd)
Blegh. We're gross.

INTERCUT

Kate's legal pad now reads "Biz Idea Brainstorming" but with no ideas and just random doodles. She's reading now.

She finishes that book, puts it aside, and notices the JOURNAL as though for the first time. She flips curiously and reads.

INTERCUT

ROBERT
My day? The usual, Gus and Kate feuding. The bank. BUT, she's read all my work, been reading me since we were together, can you believe that? She's been here for months and I never knew. Something else...
(beat)
And she's the same age we were when...yeah. That was so long ago now, wasn't it? I didn't need to know anyone else--you didn't want that, I know, but you were gone and I...I was angry with you. And God. And, and--

Tearfully, he goes to grab Eliza's handkerchief from his journal, but both are gone! He panics, looking frantically.

ROBERT
...where is it? No, oh God, no.
Where *is* it?!

INTERCUT

Kate reads more urgently, in disbelief. Flips to a contact page: "C. Rimes," and tiny print, "Robert James, Lighthouse." It clicks.

She shuts it quickly, wide-eyed. She puffs a little laugh of disbelief, a hand to her mouth.

KATE
Oh my God. No way.

INTERCUT

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
I'll be back, my love.

In his rush to grab his bag, he knocks over his empty wine glass--it breaks and spills on Eliza's tombstone.

INTERCUT

Kate's head perks up at the sound of breaking glass--turns out she's not far from the cemetery. She gathers her things, an adrenaline rush, she goes toward the sound!

INTERCUT

As she reaches the cemetery, she sees Robert biking off furiously in the distance.

KATE
Wait, Robert! Don't go, I--

He's too far gone to hear her. She goes to the grave and shyly, gingerly opens the JOURNAL again.

KATE
(to the grave)
He really loved you, didn't he?
(flips through)
So that's what he does. I didn't
realize he came here. Every day...
(finds HANDKERCHIEF in pocket)
"Eliza." Pretty...

She tears up a little and rests her head on the grave to look out to sea.

EXT. TOWN - AFTERNOON

It's later now, we get the sense Robert's been all over town even though he hasn't been many places today. He bikes along, scanning and scrutinizing, retracing his path for the JOURNAL.

EXT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - AFTERNOON

He throws his bike down, gasping, panicking. Shaken, he lights a smoke in the alleyway to catch his breath.

He enters.

INT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - AFTERNOON

ROBERT
(searching)
Gus? Gus!

GUS
Back so soon?

ROBERT
Umm, yes, I may have lost something
in here earlier? A book?

GUS
Haven't seen a book.

ROBERT
Really? And none of your customers?
What about Kate? Did she find a
book?--

GUS
That's all her shop is is *books*. I
dunno. Maybe? She's closed for the
day, said she had errands.

ROBERT
No, I need this back, when will she
be back so I can ask her?

GUS
Tomorrow, I guess? These kids work
when they feel like it, who knows.

ROBERT
But--

GUS
That's what I know.

ROBERT
Okay. Thank you.

GUS
Mmhmp.

Robert runs back to his bike and quickly rides off.

GUS
(laughs to himself, too
amused)
Ha! Maybe he wasn't ooglin' the
peas!

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DUSK

Robert puts groceries away, pours a drink at the minibar, and slumps into chair. Downs drink and grabs coat: out the door.

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

Kate's fallen asleep in the sandy grass next to Eliza's tombstone: one hand bookmarking her place in the journal, the other making a tight fist around the handkerchief.

Wind whistles through her hair, waves crash, grasses rustle. She wakes, reads the last page, closes the journal to her heart, and grasps the handkerchief tighter.

KATE

He took another name and hid from
the world...and mourns you still.

(beat)

That's so...*romantic*.

INTERCUT

Robert aggressively skips rocks into the sea, tightly-wound--thinking, pacing, gesturing, trying to remember things.

INTERCUT

KATE (CONT.'D)

(also up and pacing now)

And now I know so much more about
him, I *found* this. Or maybe...or
maybe he *wanted* me to find it. So
he could show me who he *is*. *Me!* So
that way I could bring it back to
him, and, and--and maybe he wants
to...*be* with me? Because he's so
lonely?

INTERCUT

Robert ascending the stairs.

INTERCUT

KATE (CONT.'D)

(to the grave)

And you never wanted him to be
alone, right? Maybe he's moving on!

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE DECK - DUSK

He turns on the light for the incoming evening ships. He looks to the horizon and softly weeps.

INTERCUT

KATE (CONT.'D)
(teary but smiling)
Oh wow. This is crazy.

She holds her head: dizzy, teary, joyous. Dark clouds roll in overhead: time to go. She walks back to the shady grove to grab her bike.

INT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - NIGHT

Stormier now, light drizzle and thunder, Kate's RAIN SLICKER is wet. Yet she's giddy, humming and smiling to herself as she organizes some and grabs her things to leave when--RING!

KATE
Kate's Hooked Books, Kate. Oh, Mom,
hey! How are you--

MOM
Kate, do you need money?

KATE
What? I, no, I--

MOM
Kate.

KATE
No, I'm fine, don't send any more
money, I'm fine.

MOM
So you paid Gus?

KATE
Well, no--

INT. KATE'S PARENTS' HOME - NIGHT

A modest home, everything in its place. Kate's MOM, 40-50ish, worriedly paces, checkbook in hand.

(CONTINUED)

MOM
Kate Clarence--

INTERCUT

KATE
(defensive)
Look, it's hard being a small
business owner, tourists come in,
look around, and run to the beach!
(beat)
I'm trying.

INTERCUT

MOM
I know, baby, but your dad and I
said that, that it'd be easier to
just stay in Ironton--

INTERCUT

KATE
That's not where my heart is, you
know that--

INTERCUT

MOM
(beat, gentler)
I...I do know that...

KATE
(beat)
It's *fine*, Mom, I have a plan now.
A business plan.

MOM
A business plan?

INTERCUT

KATE
Well, okay, like, not a *plan* per se
but like, the planets are in
alignment or something. Like *fate*,
Mom. Because C. Rimes let me find
his journal, with all his notes and
like inner personal thoughts and
shit, so that I could give it back
to him and we could have a moment
and--

(CONTINUED)

MOM

Your favorite author? You took and read his journal?

KATE

Well, yeah, but--

INTERCUT

MOM

(sitting, hand to forehead)

You need to give that back to him now, Kate--

INTERCUT

KATE

I tried, but either he didn't hear me calling after him today to get it back or he *wanted* me to read it.

INTERCUT

MOM

That's a big jump to make, baby. And *how* will that help the shop?

INTERCUT

KATE

Mom, what if he wants to finally tell people who he is, and he's starting with me? Maybe he wants to make an appearance at the book shop or something--

MOM

Baby--

KATE (CONT.'D)

--and now I just need to bring it back to him--

MOM

You need to do that *now*, do you understand? That's a terrible violation, Kate--

KATE

I mean, no, I *get* that, Mom, and I feel weird for having it, but I also just cannot believe it, you know? And he's far out and the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KATE (cont'd)
weather's bad right now, I can't
till tomorrow.

MOM
He doesn't live in town?

KATE
No, that's the best part. He lives
in a *lighthouse*. He's a freaking
lighthouse keeper *and he lives in a
lighthouse!*

INTERCUT

MOM
(she defeatedly starts writing
a check)
That's nice, honey.

KATE
Yeah!

MOM
(beat)
Promise me you'll bring it back
tomorrow though, Kate? He's
probably sick about it. And don't
be too disappointed if--

INTERCUT

KATE
(pissed)
Mom. I will bring it back.

INTERCUT

MOM
(seals check in an envelope)
Okay.
(beat)
Did you get my package?

INTERCUT

KATE
Yeah, I just saw it somewhere, I
didn't get to open it yet.

(CONTINUED)

MOM

Is it with you now? It'd be cool in the shop.

KATE

Okay, wait, I've gotta find it.

Kate struggles with the phone, books, papers, etc. Mom starts singing the Jeopardy song, Kate eventually joins in, not pissed anymore.

She eventually finds a PACKAGE and opens it!

KATE (CONT.'D)

Oh wow, Mom...

She reveals a beautiful, stained, hinged WOODEN BOX, waves carved into the lid.

MOM

Your dad's handiwork--a little piece of home to keep with you, you can keep mementos your adventures in it--

KATE

(opens the lid, "With love, from Ironton, Missouri" carved inside. Awestruck.)
Incredible...tell him it's so beautiful, I love it.

MOM

We love you, Peanut.

KATE

I love you too, Mom. Thank you.

INTERCUT

MOM

Take care of yourself, don't get into trouble.

INTERCUT

KATE

(with a grin)
I will, and I won't. 'Night--

MOM

Kate?

(CONTINUED)

KATE

Yeah?

INTERCUT

MOM

Don't try to make this into
something it's not--

INTERCUT

KATE

Goodnight, Mom.

Kate hangs up and admires her wooden box. She goes to place it on the ground: too crowded with the bulb, so she places the bulb into the wooden box and pushes it against the wall behind the counter. She locks up and leaves.

INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LIVING ROOM

Door opens to dark room, lights switched on to reveal a modest but cozy apartment, books everywhere, funky and inspirational things on the walls.

Hand drops keys on side table, we watch a wetter Kate walk away. Her shoes squeak and trail watery shoeprints.

BEDROOM

We don't hear a storm outside anymore.

In bed with new clothes but wet hair, focused Kate reads and writes by the light of her bedside lamp and laptop glow. Marketing books and paper balls litter the bed. The legal pad has elaborate scribbles. The journal's also there.

Frustrated, she groans, places her laptop on the floor, pushes everything but the journal carelessly off the bed, and sighs.

KATE

(looks to window)

God, I hope he's okay out there.

She looks to the journal, gently lifts it, and holds it to her lovingly.

(CONTINUED)

KATE (CONT.'D)
(reaching for her lamp)
Goodnight, Robert. See you soon.

The light goes off!

BLACKOUT

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE DECK - MORNING

The next day: Tuesday, June 17, 2003. Robert's spent the night on the deck. He wakes with a start and hurriedly performs the same lighthouse maintenance routine as before, though the BULB goes out as he approaches to extinguish it--he sighs and writes in the LOGBOOK, "Must replace bulb later."

INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

KITCHEN

Bed-headed, Kate sits at a table with her coffee and the journal, talking into her phone.

KATE
(genuine)
Thanks, Gus. I appreciate you.

He hangs up while the phone's still to her ear. She realizes, makes a "wow, really?" face, and puts the phone down.

She packs as though prepping for adventure: a BACKPACK with her RAIN SLICKER, a notebook, a sandwich, water, sunscreen, sharpened pencils, a book, the journal.

Sunglasses on, she's out the door.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Later: the sun's high in the sky, bright. The rocky bridge reflects the hot sun, shiny.

At the mailbox: junk mail. Robert doesn't care, just mechanically drops it where he stands and bikes into town, obviously preoccupied.

He doesn't even notice Kate hiding in the bushes, her bike nearby. She squints and wipes her forehead, then heads to the lighthouse.

EXT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - AFTERNOON

Robert throws down the bike, looking everywhere for Kate. Not seeing her, he huffily enters the general store/book shop. Gus sees him, groans:

GUS

Gahhhh.

CUT TO:

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Kate closes the door and, childlike, gazes at the lighthouse.

KATE

Woah...

She runs her fingers along Robert's belongings, steps lightly to his desk and sits...

KATE (CONT.'D)

Is this real...?

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - AFTERNOON

ROBERT

What do you mean she's not here?
Can't you get in touch with her--

GUS

Robert I've got customers, I don't
know what you're talking about--

ROBERT

KATE! Kate, she has--I think she
took--something that belongs to me.

GUS

That book?

ROBERT

Yes, and it's very serious and I
need to find her now. I last had it
here.

(CONTINUED)

GUS

Well, I can't help ya there. I told you she'll come in when she comes in--

ROBERT

Gus, that doesn't help me--

GUS

And didn't I say I couldn't help you? She'll probably be here soon.

A CUSTOMER enters the store, which diverts Gus's attention; he's glad about this.

GUS (CONT.'D)

Afternoon.

Robert meanders to the book shop and paces, thinking. Something on Kate's counter catches his eye: the delinquent-payment ENVELOPES.

One's been opened and the contents are visible: a handwritten NOTE from Gus reads, "This is to document that the renter, KATE CLARENCE, is delinquent on her June payments for her business and residence..."

Robert scans ahead to the residence's address: "Azul Lagoon Drive, Apt. #21. Rostellaire Haven, ME. 04007."

ROBERT

(to himself)

Got you, Kate.

He tosses the NOTE back on the counter and rushes for the door, when:

GUS

(calling)

Uh, wait. I forgot. She called this morning saying if you stopped by lookin' for her, she was goin' to a, a lighthouse or somethin'.

ROBERT

(turns back)

A lighthouse?

GUS

Yeah, said she was goin' to a lighthouse somewhere I think--

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
(running out the door)
Thank you, Gus.

He hops on the bike, and races toward the lighthouse.

INTERCUT

Kate peeks in all the cabinets, drawers--including Robert's undies, which she quickly shuts with a snort.

Her phone rings: Mom. She answers:

MOM
Hey, baby, did you take care of
it?--

KATE
Mom, guess what?! Guess where I
am!!

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN - AFTERNOON

Robert bikes fast. He looks to the sky: dark storm clouds loom, the scorching sun shining through for now. He bikes faster.

INTERCUT

Kate's sitting among papers and books on the ground, huddled, looking at them, on the phone with her mom again.

MOM
(stern)
What the hell, Kate?! Get out of
his house.

KATE
He didn't lock it, the journal said
where he lives, he let me find it,
Mom! He probably went to the shop
for the journal, but I told Gus to
tell him to come here--I know I
know it's stupid and illegal; like,
I *get it* but it's *exactly* like I
pictured!--

MOM
DO NOT be in the lighthouse when he
gets there. Jesus, Kate--

(CONTINUED)

KATE
Has a nice ring to it.

MOM
(Kate pulls the phone from her
ear here, Mom's serious)

KATE.
(beat, defeated)
It's like you have no sense, baby.
Christ.

KATE
(pissed)
You know, that's really supportive,
you telling me that. I'm *fine*,
everything is *fine*, you'll see,
because I'm giving it back to him
and he's going to--

Robert BURSTS in!

ROBERT
WHERE IS IT?!

Shocked, Kate drops the phone. We hear the beginnings of
drizzle outside. They stare at each other wild-eyed, we hear
Mom on the line:

MOM
Kate?...Hello?

Mom hangs up. Robert, upset, advances toward Kate.

ROBERT
Give it back. It's not yours, where
is it--

KATE
(takes out journal, holding it
close)
Robert, I'm here!--

ROBERT
Don't you know my whole *life* is in
that journal, what's left of it, my
work, does that mean nothing to
you?! Don't you know how precious
that book is to me--

KATE
(softer)
Of course I do, you know I do...

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's all that I have--

KATE (CONT.'D)

No, no, listen. I know that. No one knows that better than me.

(beat, gushing, rambly)

But I'm here now, so now you'll have me, too! And I found your journal where you left it for me to find, and I know what you want and I want it, too, Robert. I do--

ROBERT

Wait, what?!--

KATE (CONT.'D)

--and it kinda works out, too, because, well, you probably know by now the shop's failing, you've seen my bills. And I'm not as business-savvy as I fancied myself to be...

(beat, rushing to the point)

But this is my *dream*, and I thought, maybe I could help you come out to the world, you could come to the shop as yourself, we could help each other, Robert--

ROBERT

(angrier, understanding. He moves toward her and forces her backwards)

HELP each other? Kate, I lost the one thing that still gives me some solace, the *one* thing, and you took it, that's it. You've misunderstood. So no. Of course not.

(beat)

And even if I *did* feel that way, I certainly wouldn't now. I'm taking back what's mine and you're getting the hell out of my house--

KATE

(hurt, can't comprehend)

Wait, but Robert, I thought--

Still moving, he forces her to back into the shelf of LIGHTHOUSE BULBS. CRASH! goes the shelf, all of the bulbs shattering! The rain's louder now.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

Oh shit.

ROBERT

NO!

He kneels, panicking, grabbing at the shards.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

No, no no no.

He's bleeding but looks up through the high windows: dusky light, sundown, heavier rain. We hear a SHIP'S HORN in the distance.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

(throwing handfuls of shards,
explosive)

Oh my God, *oh my God*. They're all gone.

Suddenly he climbs the stairs, Kate close behind.

KATE

Wait, I'm sorry, I can help you--

ROBERT

(tearful)

NO! YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH! GET OUT! I DON'T NEED YOU!

KATE

(with quiet shame, teary,
briefly pausing her pursuit)

Goddamit, Kate.

She resumes her pursuit.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE DECK - DUSK

Out of breath, they look out: both can see the SHIP on the horizon. They're getting drenched, thunder rumbles.

ROBERT

He's too far out, he'll never get to the mainland before dark.

(looks up, hopeless)

And it's raining...

KATE

(wipes tears)

Well, there's still time if you light it now!

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
(aggressively unscrewing bulb,
holds it to her)
This one burnt out this morning!

Throws it down on the deck, glass shards skid. Kate's face falls, Robert paces with his hands in his hair. Then:

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Stay here--use the foghorn, wave,
anything, I'm going for help.

KATE
(stopping him)
No, let me. I can do it.
(beat)
I'll fix this.

ROBERT
(beat, they hold eye contact)
Fast. The Coast Guard, the marina,
anyone.

Kate runs to leave.

A CRASH of thunder, the wind picking up, the storm closer!
Robert watches after her.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DUSK

Down the stairs, the old lighthouse creaks with the wind.
She grabs the RAIN SLICKER out her backpack, puts it on, and
is out the door!

EXT. ROCKY BRIDGE - DUSK

She struggles to navigate with the violent wind and crashing
waves.

At the end of the bridge, it's NIGHT.

EXT. EDGE OF MAINLAND - NIGHT

She frantically pushes her bike out of the bushes and rides
with some difficulty into town. A strong wind makes her lose
her footing at times, but she powers through.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE DECK - NIGHT

Robert futilely waves his arms, yelling to the ship.

ROBERT
NO, STOP! DON'T COME THIS WAY!
STOP!

It's useless. Suddenly he remembers the FOGHORN and tries it--it sounds, he squints: the ship still seems like it's coming closer. He bites his lip.

EXT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - NIGHT

Kate throws the bike down, finds her keys, and runs inside her shop.

INT. GENERAL STORE/BOOK SHOP - NIGHT

She's wet and her mascara's streaming down her face. She gropes clumsily in the dark and reaches a lamp on the counter: light! Kneeling, she sifts through her moving boxes and eventually finds...her WOODEN BOX with the LIGHTHOUSE BULB inside!

She grabs the bulb, locks up, and runs back out to the bike--from inside the shop we watch her speed away with it in the storm.

EXT. EDGE OF MAINLAND - NIGHT

She takes the dome out of her bike basket, throws the bike down, and braces herself for the rocky bridge.

EXT. ROCKY BRIDGE - NIGHT

Worse than before. The waves, wind, and rain fall her several times before she finally reaches the lighthouse.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

Soaked and breathless, she runs up the stairs with the dome.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE DECK - NIGHT

The door to the deck swings open. Robert is also soaked--and confused.

ROBERT
 (looking to rocky bridge,
 behind Kate)
 Did you get help? Where is
 everyone?

KATE
 (handing him the dome)
 This is better, we can do this
 ourselves, I--

ROBERT
 KATE, I TOLD YOU TO GO GET HELP!

KATE
 I know, but--

ROBERT
 This is a *novelty*, people's lives
 are on the line, don't you
 understand--

KATE (CONT.'D)
 Would you just try it goddammit?!
 Shit, you're wasting time!

She smashes the dome against the side of the lighthouse and tries screwing in the BULB--nothing.

KATE (CONT.'D)
 It's real, I swear!

ROBERT
 MOVE!

He tries--success! A warm yellow glow penetrates the blanket of night, blinking the signal. They look out for several beats, anxious.

After some time, the ship eases into the mainland and out of sight.

The storm has passed: a dark, clear, peaceful sky, hundreds of stars. They both lean against the lighthouse, laughing quietly, tired. Their speech imitates that of a prayer.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
You did it. They're okay.

KATE
Yeah...

They slide down, sitting somewhat apart. Then Kate remembers:

KATE
(reaching into her coat)
Well, here.
(the journal, pretty soggy)
I hope I didn't ruin it.

ROBERT
No, no...it's seen gallons of sea water in its lifetime.

KATE
I know...

Thinking beat. She looks out to the sea, then turns back to him.

ROBERT
So now you know who I am.

KATE
I do now.

ROBERT
Will you tell?

KATE
(childlike)
I...no.
(beat)
I'm sorry about your wife.
(beat, he stares at her)
Yes, of course I read it, what do you think? You're my favorite.
(sad)
I had to.

They're really quiet. Perhaps Kate moves closer to him or tries to touch his hand, perhaps he doesn't react or flinches away. Either way, Kate makes her move to go.

KATE
(standing)
Well, I guess...I guess just think about what I said. Before. And how--yeah. If you want, I just--

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
I'll think about it.

KATE
(beat)
Okay.

She turns and false-exits to the door, turns back:

KATE (CONT.'D)
Thank you. Thank you for letting me
see you. Who you are.
(beat)
You're not just another seagull to
me.

Beat: his back remains turned to her, he says nothing. Kate blinks, wipes her eyes, and leaves, shutting the door.

Robert's alone for several beats, the JOURNAL in his lap. He takes the little HANDKERCHIEF out of the pocket. He fondles the memento lovingly, holds it to his face.

Then, gently, tucks it away into his left inner coat pocket and closes the journal.

He breathes deeply and closes his eyes. A sigh of relief, his face is peaceful. He looks out into the darkness with world-weary eyes, and the waves crash loud but tranquil around him.

Works Cited

- Jeunet, Jean-Pierre, and Guillaume Laurant, screenwriters. *Amélie*. Directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Claudie Ossard Productions, 2001.
- Jones, Stephen. *Harbor of Refuge, Being the Recreation of Four Seasons on an Offshore Lighthouse from the Authentic Journal of S.P. Jones, S.N.* Illustrated by Richard Brown, New York, Norton, 1981.
- Price, Eugenia. *Lighthouse*. Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1971.
- Shanley, John Patrick, screenwriter. *Joe Versus the Volcano*. Directed by John Patrick Shanley, Warner Bros., 1990.
- , screenwriter. *Moonstruck*. Directed by Norman Jewison, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1987.
- Snow, Edward Rowe. *The Lighthouses of New England, 1716-1973*. New York, Dodd, Mead, 1973.
- Steele, Alexander, editor. *Writing Movies: The Practical Guide to Creating Stellar Screenplays*. New York, Bloomsbury, 2006.
- Sterling, Robert Thayer, and Robert P. Tristram Coffin. *Lighthouses of the Maine Coast and the Men Who Keep Them*. Brattleboro, Stephen Daye Press, 1935.
- Toro, Guillermo Del, screenwriter. *Pan's Labyrinth*. Directed by Guillermo Del Toro, Estudios Picasso, 2006.
- Winterson, Jeanette. *Lighthousekeeping*. Orlando, Harcourt, 2004.