

THE PURPOSE OF A SAILOR

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SHORT PITCH

A weathered lightkeeper lives alone on his island, tending to his light in solitude and safety, and content in his purpose. His light guides ships safely through the dangerous maze of rocks that jut from his island. His only contact with the town near him, or the outside world, is with the delivery merchant, Sawyer, who delivers his monthly shipment of rations and necessities, and though he may not show it, the lightkeeper waits for this with an eager heart. One day, he finds a man washed ashore, discarded from a pirate's ship where he was held captive. The man tells him he was searching for the greatest treasure known to man; a single piece of the sun, buried far across the sea. The lightkeeper shrugs it off, knowing that he could not forsake his important purpose on the island. However, one night a horrific storm desecrates his cabin and his lighthouse, leaving his sanctuary in ruins. Heartbroken, the lightkeeper collects the pieces of his home and his precious light, when he suddenly notices a ship in the fog. He tries to turn the ship away from the rocks, but without his light he cannot signal them, and the ship crashes. Realising that his purpose is now in pieces around him, the lightkeeper is devastated, when he remembers that his next shipment in three weeks time, delivered by the only friend he's ever had. . Knowing that he must fix his light to save him and the other ships, and to restore his purpose, the lightkeeper decides to replace it with the treasure he had heard about, so he gathers the broken pieces of his cabin and builds a sailboat, leaving the man he saved to look after his island and embarking on a hopeful quest for the piece of the sun and a race against the clock, finding strange lands and with each one, something more about the life outside of solitude.

Scene Set-Up

This would be an early scene in Act 1 of a feature, introducing Sawyer as a character, as well as the lightkeepers dynamics with others.

INT. KITCHEN OF A LOG CABIN - EVENING

A clattering from the kitchen as THE LIGHTKEEPER bustles in the rickety cupboards next a whistling kettle. One of the cupboard doors swings, detached from its top hinge. He mutters to himself as he dumps tea leaves into a porcelain teapot- a surprisingly delicate thing for a cabin so weathered.

SAWYER sits at the wooden table, unlit pipe clasped in one hand, his greying hair almost touching his chin. He picks a piece of seaweed from his short beard.

SAWYER

So, my friend. How have you been keeping?

LIGHTKEEPER

Yes, yes, fine, fine. You know me.

He takes the kettle from the stove and pours it into the teapot.

SAWYER sighs at the table.

SAWYER

You don't do yourself any favours here, you know.

THE LIGHTKEEPER turns.

SAWYER shrugs.

SAWYER (CONT'D)

I'm just saying.

LIGHTKEEPER

What do you mean by that?

He asks it almost accusingly.

SAWYER

Nothing, nothing. Just that, you know, you keep yourself all away in here. It can't be healthy, the only thing you're talking to being a blockhead lubber like me.

THE LIGHTKEEPER tries a chuckle. It comes out as a cough. He clears his throat.

LIGHTKEEPER

I don't only talk to you.

SAWYER

Oh, my humblest apologies, I'd forgotten about the seagulls that also crap on your house. I'm sure they're a real barrel of laughs.

THE LIGHTKEEPER turns back to the teapot, clasping it with one enormous hand, ignoring the Irishmans' taunts. He bring it to the table and pours it's steaming contents into the just-as-delicate cups on the table. He takes a slow seat, pulling his pipe from his jacket and lighting it. Smoke billows as he takes a long drag.

SAWYER watches him quizzically all the while, taking a sip from his tea.

SAWYER (CONT'D)
Come on man. You gotta get out there. Meet some fellas. Maybe meet a girl...

He wiggles his eyebrows.

THE LIGHTKEEPER taps his fingers on the table before abruptly standing. He walks to the window, gazing out at the rippling sea, his beard whispering in the slight breeze.

LIGHTKEEPER
My purpose is here, Sawyer.

SAWYER (EXASPERATEDLY)
Oh, you and your bloody purpose.

LIGHTKEEPER
Ships would never make it through those rocks without my light. I'm...I'm saving lives here, Sawyer. I'm sending husbands back to their wives and children. I'm doing good work.

SAWYER rolls his eyes. Unfortunately, he sees his friends point.

THE LIGHTKEEPER turns to face him, smoke clouding from his mouth.

LIGHTKEEPER (CONT'D)
Besides, then who would serve you such lovely tea?

SAWYER
You can make tea in town, chuckle-head. But, suit yourself. I'm just saying, you're not a bad fella you know. Many a bloke would be happy to buy you a pint in town.

He takes sip of his tea before coughing so hard that the hanging cupboard door falls off its final hinge.

THE LIGHTKEEPER blinks, startled.

SAWYER is bright red.

SAWYER (STRAINED) (CONT'D)
Wrong pipe.