

A FIRE AT LUBEC CHANNEL LIGHT

by: Eli Appleby

As we approached the lighthouse, I felt cold and scared. We had left all my friends on the mainland for this dismal life in this prison on water. The lighthouse was in Lubec, but it might as well have been in Alaska. When we docked, I begged my parents to let me go home and live with my grandparents, but as always they said, "No."

We opened the door and I was shocked to see how small it was. "How can four people live in such a small space?" Then Father said, "This is just the living room, there are six floors in the lighthouse: the oil storage room, the living room, the kitchen, the master bedroom, the two-bed room, and at the top, the light. My room was closest to the light which meant I was three feet below a four foot tall light that could be seen for up to fifteen miles. I rarely got more than five hours of sleep between the light and my brother screaming at all hours of the night.

Over the next few weeks, I never saw anyone except my parents and my baby brother, but Father was always tending the light and Mother was either napping or cooking and never had time for me. I was always stuck babysitting Jason who was twelve years younger than me and a pain in my behind. He pooped and cried, and then pooped again.

Someone showed up about a month after we arrived; Father said it was the tender, the man who brought supplies to lighthouses. He was a grumpy old man with no top teeth and an odd looking face and he was always yelling. He screamed at me to help

him unload the supplies. To my astonishment, Father didn't scold the tender for yelling at me, his son. He just stood there and said, "Go on then, help him." As I helped the tender unload the supplies, I noticed that most of the barrels we were carrying were full of some sort of liquid. When I asked father what the liquid was, he said, " It's oil, that's the fuel for the light."

After we finished unloading the supplies, it started to rain and thunder boomed across the sky. Father insisted the tender wait for the storm to pass before returning to the mainland, but that stubborn old fart left anyway. Just before his boat was out of sight, lightning crackled across the sky and the tender's boat burst into flames. Later we would find out that the tender's body was never found.

The next day I was babysitting Jason when father burst through the doors to the living room and yelled, " Fire!" Fire, the word I had been dreading the most while were at the lighthouse. One of the barrels of oil I had carried in had somehow caught, fire and now the entire basement was ablaze. It was only a matter of time before it spread to the rest of the lighthouse.

I could swim but my brother was only nine months old and could barely walk let alone swim the 2,000 yards back to shore. I ran to the kitchen to grab the fire extinguisher and then raced back downstairs to help father. As I started running down the stairs, I was immersed in a haze of smoke; Father was throwing buckets of water onto several barrels that were burning. " Give me the fire extinguisher!" he shouted. I tossed him the extinguisher, and he quickly went to work, spraying barrel after barrel with white smoke. After about twenty minutes Father put out the last barrel and the fire was finally out. Suddenly there was a loud explosion.

As we rushed upstairs we saw a bright light at the top of the spiral staircase; the light had exploded. The top two floors of the lighthouse were gone, reduced to a pile of bricks and ash. My mother was holding Jason in the kitchen. "We have to leave," said father. " but we don't have a boat. What about Jason?" "You'll have to carry him," "WHAT! It's 2,000 yards back to shore. "You can do it I believe in you." As I strapped Jason to my back there was a second explosion. "Hurry, go now," said father, " Me and your mother will be right behind you."

I jumped into the water not know what to expect: seventy or thirty degree water? It was a hot August morning and the water was a cool seventy-two degrees. About two hundred and fifty yards in to the swim, the entire lighthouse burst into flames. Luckily my parents were out about twenty seconds before. I continued to swim for about another ten minutes when my foot finally touched land. My parents came ashore about three minutes later. My brother was unharmed and so was my family. We were safe and back on the mainland and that prison on water was gone.

THE END