THE KEEPER

Written by

Daniel Mezzalingua

Phone Number 315-415-8794

OVER BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - ESTABLISHING

A cloudy morning. We see the singular, beautiful LIGHTHOUSE as ominous music immediately plays.

Title Card: Nantucket Island, 1840

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MORNING

A man, late 20s, wearing boots, dark pants, a large button down shirt and suspenders lies down, sleeping in the CHAMBER (the very top where the light sits) of the lighthouse. We'll call this person THE KEEPER.

CLOSE UP on his dirty, sweaty face. Close on his trembling eyelids.

Flashes of his DREAMS:

FLASH: He stands during the daytime looking STRAIGHT INTO THE CAMERA with a blank face, and walks out of the frame.

FLASH: Waves CRASHING against the rocks and the beach.

FLASH: A shaking gun to his head.

FLASH: He walks slowly and hopelessly into the ocean.

FLASH: He screams from beneath the water looking into the camera that watches from above.

His eyes open as he breathes intensely.

The Keeper sits up and grabs his NOTEBOOK beside him. He flips through it. Pages filled with notes in charcoal pencil. Sketches too.

He looks to his side. Muddy footsteps around him, headed out.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The Keeper sits in the sand smoking a brown cigar. He looks closely at the smoke and takes a swig from his BOTTLE.

CUT TO:

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IN THE OCEAN

He stands there with his shirt off, washing himself with the salt water and a soap bar.

In the distance, something catches his eye. It's a man who disappears behind the grassy hill. We'll call this man THE WATCHER.

He stares for a moment longer. Strange. He heads in.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY BEACH - AFTERNOON

He fishes with a ROPE and a LOBSTER TRAP. He hums to himself unenergetically.

CUT TO:

From Below: He pulls the rope hard and brings up the lobster trap from the sea.

CLOSE UP: He sets down the trap on the rock. Lobsters move inside it.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - LATER

The keeper returns with the rope around his shoulder and the trap in hand.

He sets it all down and kneels down to open the trap. He notices something next to the trap on the doorstep - ASHES. But they're not his.

He wipes his finger through the ashes and sniffs, looks at it.

CLOSEUP on his finger.

The Keeper looks around. He picks up his stuff and goes inside.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

He sets down a PLATE of fresh lobster on a wooden desk and begins to eat it like an animal. Grossly SHOVING the food into his mouth with his hands. Wiping his mouth with his shirt in between bites.

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INT./EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - DUSK

The keeper smokes on the balcony of the lighthouse.

He scans the island, as if saying goodnight, when he sees something down below. It's the WATCHER, staring at him from a distance.

They stare at each other, motionless, for a long moment, as the Watcher slowly creeps away. The keeper lets out an angry yell - AYE! (like, "HEY")

PRELAP: The sound of a scraping.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DUSK

Inside the chamber, surrounded by lit candles, as his cigar smokes, he sketches with a CHARCOAL PENCIL, making a scraping noise. Really taking his time with his long, intense brush strokes. The camera moves from in front of him to behind his shoulder as we see an eery sketch of the watcher he'd seen earlier.

A candle emanates light next to him.

He finishes and looks at it for a moment, then turns the page. In big capital letters reads: "I CAN NOT BE HERE ALONE ANY MORE"

He throws the notebook in front of him, almost as if it's hot. He takes another swig from his bottle. Then picks up the notebook and climbs downstairs.

The camera tilts down to reveal he's left the Charcoal Pencil behind.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS - DOWNSTAIRS

Focus on the bottle on the ground. Completely empty. The room is smoky as the keeper maniacally dances and sings.

He plops onto the ground and picks up the bottle again. He tries to take a sip but only gets a few drops.

He sets it down and drunkenly looks around the room.

POV: Looking around the room as his vision is blurred. Next to him, there's a GUN.

He picks up the gun, analyzes it. Opens it. It's loaded. He takes out a couple bullets and tosses them.

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The keeper spins the CYLINDER then cocks the gun back into place. As his hand shakes, he slowly points the gun to his head. Stops breathing, and PULLS THE TRIGGER. IT CLICKS. Nothing.

He exhales frightendly and starts laughing. He throws the gun aside and lies down (leaving the frame).

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

The Dark lighthouse sits. Suddenly, the light in the chamber turns on, casting a BRIGHT BEAM that swirls in a circle, then shuts off.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

He wakes up on the hardwood.

CUT TO:

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The keeper stretches and puts on a gray turtle neck and his hat.

He sees his notebook and opens it, but can’t find his pencil.

CUT TO:

THE CHAMBER

The keeper climbs up and notices next to the light is his pencil. But next to it lies another charcoal pencil. Completely the same.

He picks them both up and looks at them, confused.

He looks to the ground - now TWO candles sitting next to each other. One halfway burnt with wax dripping.

PRELAP: Waves crashing against the beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The Keeper sits on the beach and looks at the waves with a blank expression.

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He looks down at his notebook, where his thoughts play out on the page:

- One Page: TWO OF ALL THINGS

- Another page: A sketch of the CHAMBER of the lighthouse with a note that says - A Mind of it's Own - a copy of a copy.

- A sketch of the two charcoal pencils and the two candles.

He looks up at the water, and without looking away from it, he gets up and takes off his hat and boots. He walks towards the water, straight in. The water reaches his chest as he falls forward into the waves, drowning himself. We stay looking at the water for an eery moment. Until we...

CUT BACK to the keeper from moments before, still sitting on the beach, looking at the water. A Daydream.

He gets up and leaves.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - LATER

He arrives back to the lighthouse, but as he approaches, he notices something -- the front DOOR is slightly OPEN.

The keeper reaches behind and grabs the GUN from tucked inside his waistband.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Holding the loaded gun in front of him, he nervously makes his way upstairs in the dimly lit lighthouse.

He walks up the stairs, trying to keep his breathing under control.

As he gets to a room, he SEES A SHADOW OF A MAN.

He SHOOTS HIS GUN MULTIPLE TIMES until it makes an empty clicking noise.

He peers through the smoke to see that it's an assortment of clothes that look like a shadow of a man.

The keeper exhales nervously and wipes the sweat from his forehead.

CUT TO:

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As he walks down the stairs in a relaxed way, he sets his gun down and heads towards the front door of the lighthouse.

As we watch him leave the lighthouse, THE WATCHER APPEARS FROM AROUND THE CORNER, RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM. He Puts his hands on the keeper as the keeper wrestles him to the ground.

The Keeper stands up over the Watcher and THRASHES HIM with his fists.

He looks over and sees the shovel sitting against the Lighthouse. He GRABS IT and starts HITTING THE WATCHER WITH THE SHOVEL. OVER AND OVER AND OVER.

Once finished, he breathes heavily as blood is speckled all over his face and shirt.

He tries to breathe and calm himself through the adrenaline. As his breathing calms, he looks closer at the WATCHER. Looks at his face.

ON THE WATCHER'S FACE

Bloodied and battered, we see the watcher looks IDENTICAL to him. A near perfect copy.

As the Keeper stares in shock, he flashes back to the HINTS.

FLASH: The Pencil he left in the chamber.

FLASH: The Lighthouse Light Flashing.

FLASH: The Keeper confusedly looking at the two pencils.

FlASH: The Keeper sleeping in the chamber and waking up.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - LATER

The keeper buries the lens in sand and dirt.

He pats down his burial with the shovel.

CLOSE ON THE KEEPERS FACE. Still in shock.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Outside the lighthouse, smoking, he lights the JOURNAL on FIRE and THROWS IT in front of him.

PRELAP: The sound of fire burning. A big one.

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EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

The Keeper walks away from the lighthouse, which is set on FIRE and BURNING BEHIND HIM as he walks away.

OVER IN THE GRASS

He takes out the gun and SPINS the CYLINDER.

Holds the gun up to his head.

As he pulls the trigger...

CRACK!

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.

DANIEL MEZZALINGUA