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### The Littlest Lighthouse

Ruth S. Sargent

Marion C. Litchfield

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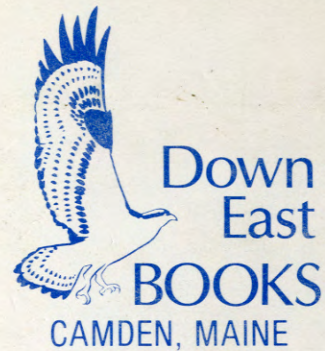
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Ruth Sargent has resided a quarter century on Peaks Island, Maine. She co-authored *Abbie Burgess: Lighthouse Heroine*, reprinted in paperback by Down East Books and most recently *Gail Laughlin: ERA's Advocate*, the story of one of Maine's most outstanding women. From her home facing Casco Bay, she writes for numerous publications with a salt-tipped pen.

Marion C. Litchfield, New York artist and summer islander, retired to Peaks Island a decade ago with her husband, Commander Francis A. Litchfield of the Maritime Service and King's Point. Although a world traveler, Marion finds her windowed views of Casco Bay the most inspiring of all places.

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# The Littlest Lighthouse



Story by  
Ruth S. Sargent,

Illustrated by  
Marion C. Litchfield



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# The Littlest Lighthouse



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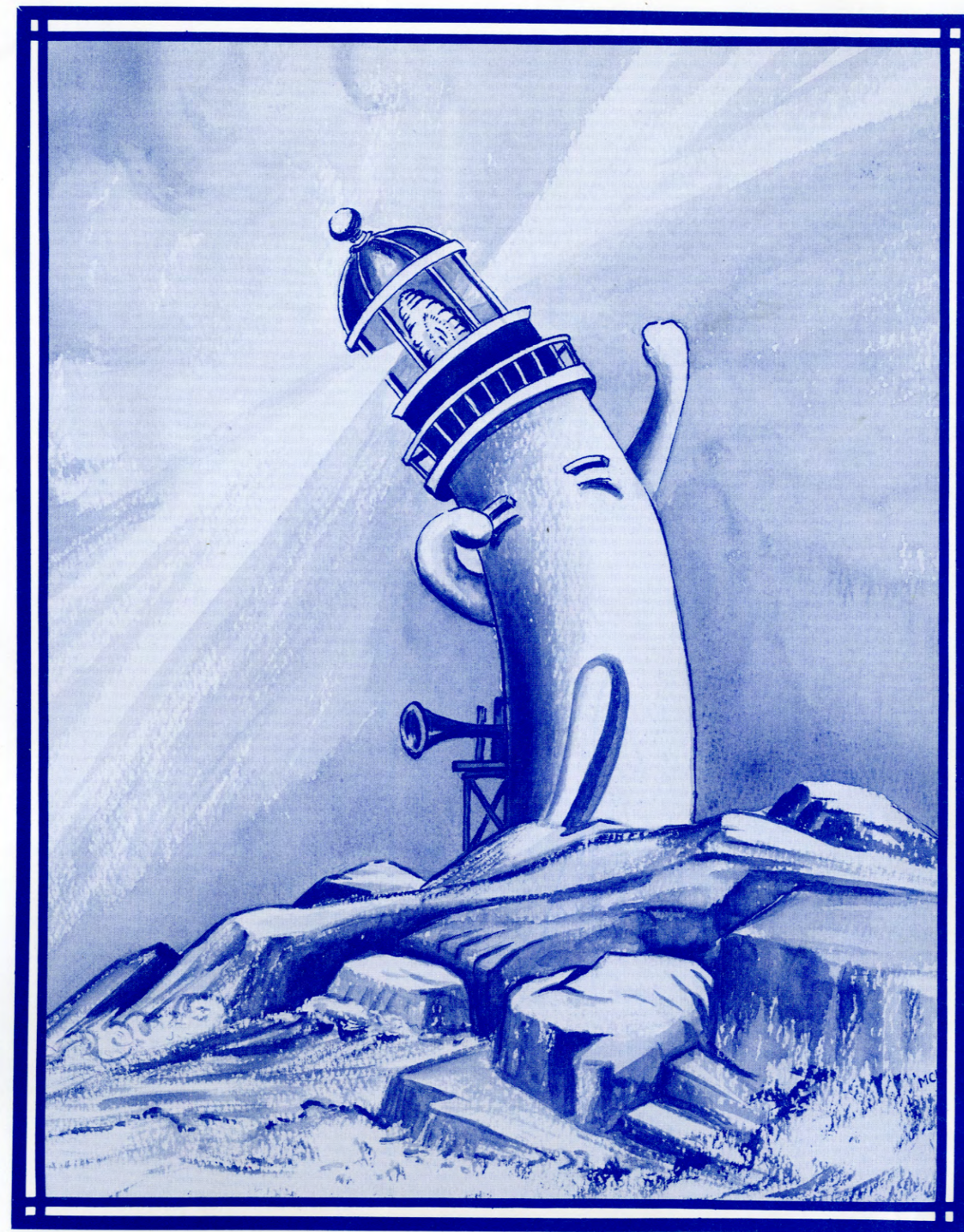


The baby lighthouse slowly blinked his small round eyes, opened his mouth in a big long yawn — shook his head with the sparkly cap atop, and gradually s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d himself way up high. So . . . this is the world and — here I am!

When he gulped in a deep breath of the sweet salt air, he felt a little switch clicking deep inside him. Then some wheels began to turn. They tickled his tummy and it frightened him. What was happening?

He opened his mouth and wailed out in a deep, loud voice,

OOOH    o o o h    OOOH    o o o h







“He works! He works perfectly. Just the way he is meant to.” He heard the workmen shouting below as they waved their arms in delight, cheering him happily.

“Yes sir, he’s a mighty fine lighthouse,” announced the foreman, “and even though he is the littlest one around here, he has a big job to do.”

A job? What was that, the Littlest Lighthouse wondered, what was he supposed to do?

As the work crew gathered up their tools and prepared to leave, the foreman looked up and told him solemnly, “You were built out here on Lone Reef because many ships have gone aground and been wrecked on these rocks on which you stand. Your job is to warn all the little boats and all the big ships passing by of the dangerous ledges under your feet. When they see you standing here as a beacon, they will heed your warnings and be safe.

“When it is dark, your light will shine out to guide them. If there is fog, your horn will blow. You will not be lonely, for everyone that passes by will become your friend. Do your job well, Littlest Lighthouse. Everyone is depending on you!”



At those words, the Littlest Lighthouse straightened up very tall, pushing his sparkly cap up towards the sky. He was filled with pride as he stood there, staring out over the surface of the sea. He really felt very small inside and rather frightened, but he tried to look important and full of confidence.

“Good luck!” the men chorused. “Perform your duty well.”

They shoved off in their boat and soon the Littlest Lighthouse heard a swish and a swoosh as the tide began to rise higher and higher with each surging wave. He felt his feet being wet by the surf rolling in over them. The seaweed on the rocks tickled his toes and the fish swimming by stopped to nibble them playfully. But the sun shone down warmly and the air smelled sweet with salt.





As the Littlest Lighthouse stood sentry, he saw large fishing boats wallowing by. Swarms of sea gulls swirled about them, begging and screaming for a taste of the catch.

The fishermen cheered when they saw the new lighthouse. They knew that during the bad storms he would guide them away from the dangerous rocks that could rip open the hulls of their boats.





He heard other little boats with racing motors whine along as they circled around to get a better look at him. The people on board called out a welcome and waved a greeting to him. They knew he would keep them on their course if they should lose their direction.







Soon there were groups of graceful boats skimming by quietly, their sails all puffed out with wind. They tooted gaily to him on little horns. When the wind dropped and there was no breeze to push their sails out, he would warn them not to drift towards the hidden ledges below his feet.





Later, three chubby red tugboats blasted sharply as they nudged along a big black tanker. It was bringing in a cargo of oil from far away. If it should run aground on Lone Reef at night, there might be a terrible oil spill that would pollute the water and harm the fish and sea birds. They were glad to see that the Littlest Lighthouse was there to warn them.



A loud horn blasted out, and then the tanker's crew ran up five flags as a message of greeting. The letters spelled out

H E L L O !

"This is exciting," the Littlest Lighthouse told himself.

"Everyone seems so glad that I am here. There is so much going by for me to watch. I have so many friends already and even though I am very small, I am not alone out here."





The Littlest Lighthouse was happy standing guard out on Lone Reef that first day. He was showing people just where the dangerous ledges lay hidden below the surface of the sea.

Before long, he would be able to recognize each type of boat and ship by their colors and whistles and horns.

When the sun went down and it started growing dark, the gulls came swarming and swooping around to find their nests on the rocks where he stood. One settled down atop his sparkly cap and went to sleep.





He felt the wheels tickling him inside again and suddenly there were long rays of light shining out from his cap. They stretched far over the black water, first here — then there — back here — over there.

The boats were gone now, but the moon came up and the stars winked out at him. He was content. He knew there would be friends with him during the night as well as the day.

It was exciting, flashing out his long rays of light into the darkness. His light told the ships going by to

**B E w a r e, T A K E c a r e !**







The days and nights passed happily for the Littlest Lighthouse — until one strange morning. As it grew light, the air seemed grey and heavy that day. He blinked his eyes hard. He could not see the boats and ships, nor the sun — not even the sea.

Everything . . . was . . . *gone!*

He could still feel the sharp reef beneath his feet and the slapping waves rippling in over his toes. He heard the gulls crying somewhere, but he could not see them. He tried to flash his light here-and-there, but the rays were feeble and dim.

“What is happening?” he cried, “Why doesn’t my light work? Where are all the little sailboats and the big tankers? Where are the fishing boats? Where are the sea gulls? *Where* are all my friends?”

The air seemed heavy with the scent of salt and was very, very still. Suddenly the Littlest Lighthouse felt small, frightened, tiny — and very much alone.

He was trying hard not to cry . . .





What was the use in being way out here all alone? No one could see him. No one was anywhere around. No one even *cared* if he stood guard.

"No one seems to need me," he sobbed very softly. "Why am I here?"

Then he heard something — a faint little whistle wailing sadly, a tiny bell ringing mournfully, voices calling — to him!

"Littlest Lighthouse, where are you? We are off course. We have lost our way. Are we near the reef and the rocks? Answer! Hurry . . . help us! *We need you!*"

He searched the sea in every direction, but all that he saw was a grey blur. Again he heard the whistle and the bell, then the slap of oars against the water.

Someone was rowing and coming in closer — closer — to the reef! They were getting nearer and nearer to the sharp ledges hidden beneath his feet.



So that was it. He remembered the foreman's words now: "When there is fog, your horn will blow to warn them." Now he understood. It was fog that was hiding everything from him, hiding him from the ships and boats. Everyone was still out there even though he could not see them. And they all needed his guidance and protection even more than before. He would help them by blowing his horn as hard as he could until the fog lifted.

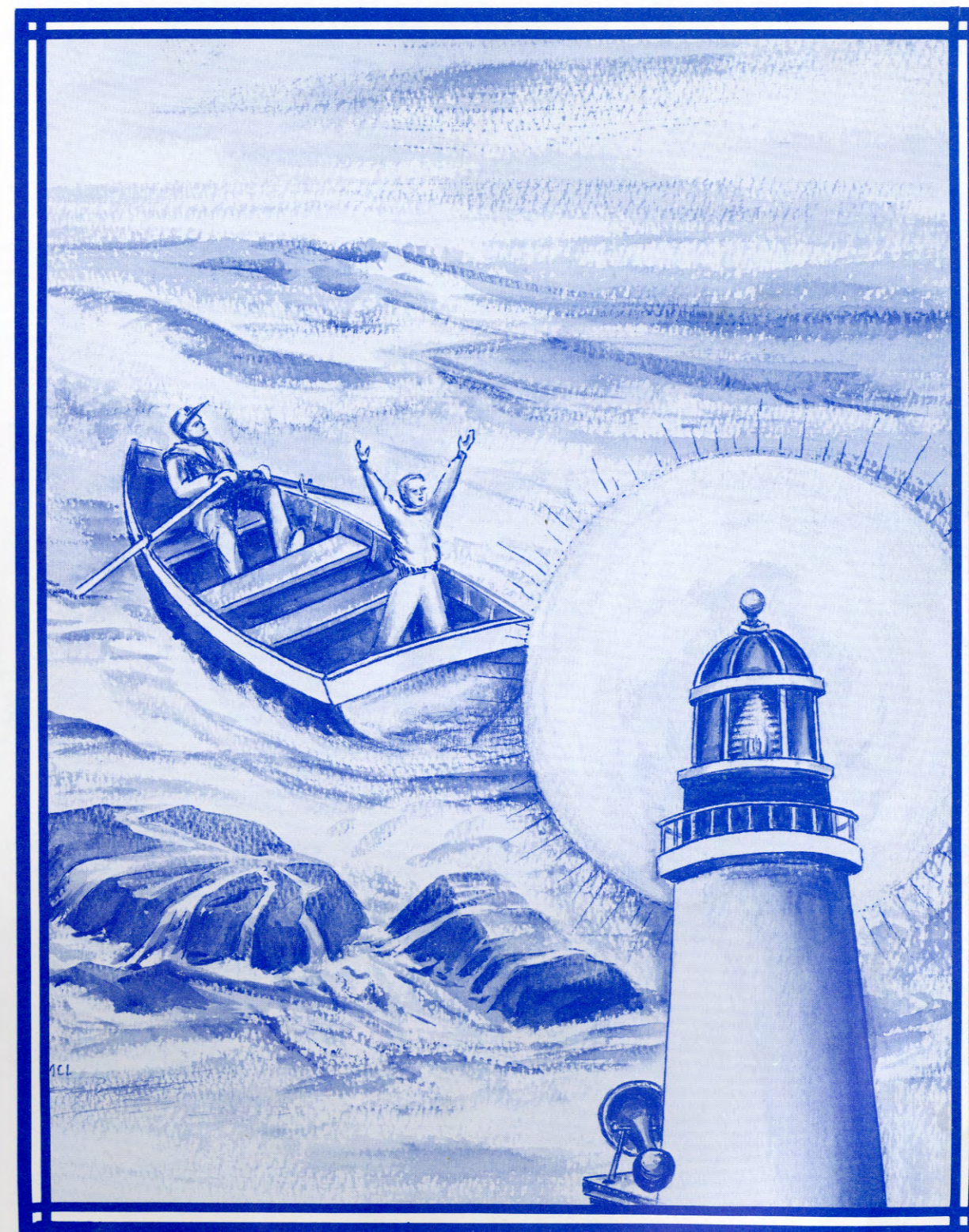
He blew and blew his warning in a big, loud, gruff voice, telling all the boats and ships out there to

**B E w a r e, T A K E c a r e.**

All night he continued his warning blasts as his light flashed out

**RIGHT here, OVER there,**

even though the rays were stunted by the thick fog. It was hard to keep on, hour after hour, but he knew his friends needed his help. They were depending on his warnings to keep them away from the ledges beneath Lone Reef. This was his job. He must keep them all safe.





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At last daybreak came. The gulls awakened and began to fly about, screaming in delight because the thick foggy air was lifting. Soon the warm sun glittered down on the surface of the water all around.

He stopped sounding his hoarse voice, stopped flashing his beams, and pulled himself up, very high, pushing his sparkly cap towards the sky. He had done his job as he was meant to and now he did not feel tiny any more.

Instead, he suddenly felt confident, proud — big! Why, now he felt like the very *tallest* Littlest Lighthouse on the coast.

PEAKS 18.

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