

The Pelican's Lighthouse



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On a bright windy morning, Percy the pelican glided over the sea with his blue sailor scarf flapping behind him. His creamy white feathers shone in the sun, and his big golden-orange pouch beak looked like a little net. Below him, waves rolled in and out like slow, sleepy breathing. Percy loved this quiet corner of the coast, where the water was calm and the sky was wide.



Pip the gull was small but oh so quick. He had white and grey feathers, black wingtips, and a bright yellow beak with a tiny red spot. On his head sat a little red cap that he never, ever took off. Pip zipped through the air like a happy arrow. "Race you to the point!" he called, and Percy chuckled as he followed along.



Near the cliff edge stood an old lighthouse, tall and round and painted white, though the paint was peeling and grey. It had been dark and silent for a long time. "Nobody uses it anymore," said a fisherman in the harbor. "No keeper, no light, no ships." Percy squinted at the tower. Something about it made him curious, and Pip was always curious too.



So the two friends flew up to the lighthouse door, which creaked open with a gentle push. Inside, everything was dusty and quiet. A spiral staircase curled up and up into the shadows. "Hello?" called Pip. A soft sound came from above, like boots on old wooden steps. Someone was up there, and someone needed a little company.



Down the stairs came an elderly man with bushy white hair and a full white beard. He wore a yellow raincoat and dark blue rubber boots, and he carried a round brass lantern that glowed warm and gold. "Well, hello, little friends!" said the keeper kindly. "I'm the lighthouse keeper, and I'm afraid my warning light has broken."



The keeper showed them the lamp room at the very top. The great glass lens was dusty, and the bulb inside was dark and cracked. "A big storm is coming tonight," he said, his blue eyes worried. "Ships need my light to find the safe way past the rocks. Without it, they could be in real trouble." Percy nodded slowly. "Then we must fix it," he said.



Pip darted to the window and looked out at the sea. Far away, dark clouds were piling up like grey mountains. The wind was already beginning to whistle. "The storm is closer than we thought!" he chirped. "Where can we find a new bulb?" The keeper rubbed his beard. "The little harbor shop sells them," he said. "But it's a long way, and the wind is getting stronger."



Percy thought carefully, the way he always did. "Pip is the fastest flyer on the coast," he said. "He can scout ahead and find the shop." Pip puffed out his chest proudly. "And Percy is the strongest," Pip added. "He can carry the new bulb back." The keeper smiled, and his rosy cheeks crinkled with deep smile lines. "Then we make a plan together," he said.



Off they went into the rising wind. Pip raced ahead, his narrow pointed wings slicing through the gusts. Percy flew steadily behind, his wide wings strong and sure. Below them, the harbor shop glowed with a warm little light. Pip tapped on the window with his yellow beak until the shopkeeper opened it. "One lighthouse bulb, please!" he squawked.



The shopkeeper wrapped the big glass bulb in soft cloth. Percy tucked it gently into his golden pouch beak, which was just the right size to hold it safe. "Careful now," said the shopkeeper. The wind howled, and rain began to splash down. Pip flew close beside Percy, pointing the way home. "Follow me!" he called. "Keep low and steady!"



Back at the lighthouse, the keeper climbed the spiral stairs with his brass lantern swinging. Up and up they went, the two birds fluttering beside him. The lamp room rattled in the wind. Percy set the new bulb down very, very gently. "Easy does it," he said softly. The keeper's hands were steady, and the storm roared outside the glass.



The keeper unscrewed the old cracked bulb and set it aside. Then, slowly and carefully, he fitted the new one into place. Percy held the cloth steady with his webbed feet, and Pip watched every move. "Almost there," whispered the keeper. He tightened it with one last gentle twist. The little bulb sat bright and ready in its shiny brass holder.



The keeper pulled the switch, and the great lens began to turn. A wide golden beam swept out across the dark, stormy sea. The two birds cheered, and the keeper laughed out loud. "We did it together!" he cried. Out on the water, a ship far away turned its bow gently. It followed the light, sliding safely past the sharp, hidden rocks.



Below the tower, the storm began to soften. The waves grew sleepy again, and the wind turned into a gentle hum. "You see," said the keeper warmly, "one bird can spot a problem, and one bird can carry a heavy bulb. But teamwork is what turns the light back on." Percy and Pip looked at each other and nodded.



The keeper gave them each a little biscuit from his pocket. "You're always welcome here," he said. "This lighthouse is ours now, all of us together." The two birds sat on the railing as the golden light turned slowly round and round. Below them, the sea sparkled, and every ship knew the safe way home.



From that day on, the lighthouse was never dark again. Pip kept watch from the top, and Percy carried whatever was needed, steady and strong. The keeper waved his brass lantern at them every evening. Together they protected the boats and the fishers and the whole cheerful harbor. Teamwork, they learned, is a light that keeps everyone safe.