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**American Association of  
Community Theatre AACT  
NewPlayFest Winning Plays:  
Volume 2 (2016)**

*Lighthouse* by  
WILLIAM BAER

*Laguna Beach, Ohio* by  
MALCOLM MACDONALD

*Wash, Dry, Fold* by  
NEDRA PEZOLD ROBERTS

*Gracefully Ending* by  
A.J. DELAUDER

*The Emperor of North America* by  
THOMAS HISCHAK

*Shades of Valor* by  
KAREN L. LEWIS

*Get Out of Dodge* by  
JEANNE DRENNAN



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## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

The American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) is proud to present the seven winning scripts and playwrights of the second AACT NewPlayFest cycle. AACT NewPlayFest is an initiative by AACT to address the critical need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences around the globe. It has been embraced by playwrights and theatres across the country, bringing exciting theatrical journeys to producing companies and joyful realization and anticipation to playwrights and their work.

AACT is pleased to partner with Dramatic Publishing Company for this program. AACT NewPlayFest is unparalleled in new play competitions, providing full productions of the winning scripts, plus publication and rights representation by a major theatrical publisher. Also thanks to Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Inc., for pioneering the way. Its TNT POPS! New Play Project served as the model for AACT NewPlayFest.

This second cycle of AACT NewPlayFest, ending in 2016, proved even more successful than the first. More scripts were submitted, and seven theatres across the country produced world premieres of winning scripts. This festival continues to benefit the producing theatres by giving them the excitement of bringing new works to their patrons, and the playwrights by experiencing quality productions of their work, and publication and representation by Dramatic Publishing. The benefits of AACT NewPlayFest will expand as additional theatres produce these top-notch plays.

We hope you will consider one of these plays for your next season.

Break a leg,

Julie Crawford, Executive Director  
American Association of Community Theatre

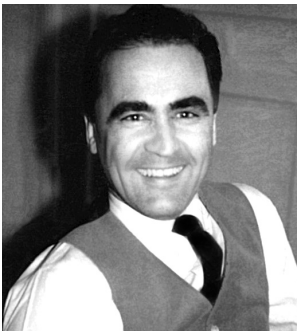
The American Association of Community Theatre is the resource connection for America's theatres. AACT represents the interests of more than 7,000 theatres across the United States and its territories, as well as theatre companies with the U.S. Armed Services overseas. To learn more about AACT NewPlayFest and AACT go to [aact.org](http://aact.org).

## FOREWORD

Jack K. Ayre, born in Pittsburgh on July 9, 1921, celebrated his 90th birthday before passing away in December 2011. At his birthday party in Sunnyvale, Calif., he sang with a barbershop quartet—one of his favorite activities—and celebrated with his cousin and lifelong friend, Frank Ayre Lee. Though as adults they lived on opposite sides of the country, the cousins kept in touch through letters that displayed a love for the written word and an irreverent sense of humor. Jack had participated in theatre productions at Drew University in New Jersey and at a community theatre in Connecticut in his younger years, and continued that interest when he moved to California.

Frank, a chemical engineer by profession, was also an avid aficionado of theatre and had dabbled in playwriting, adapting Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* for a children's theatre production, and penning *McSteg*, a tongue-in-cheek discourse ribbing his cousin Jack and based on a scene in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation has been created by the children of Frank as a tribute to their father, who passed away in August 2012, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of Jack, who was an advertising executive and public relations director. The family is pleased to honor both men through a lasting legacy promoting new works for theatre.



**Jack K. Ayre**



**Frank Ayre Lee**

*Photos: Courtesy of the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation.*



# Lighthouse

By  
WILLIAM BAER

*Lighthouse* was premiered by Windsor Community Playhouse in Windsor, Colo., on September 25, 2015, with the following cast:

Luce.....	Sarah Robertson
Michael .....	Barry Bartram
Amber .....	Julie Legg
Alice.....	Lindsay Savage
Dr. Ramsey.....	Dennis Conmay
Luke .....	Steven Haas
Nurse.....	Eika Haas

Production:

Director .....	Tim Bernhardt
Assistant Director/Stage Manager .....	Terri White
Set Dressing/Props/Graphic Designer.....	Laurie Ray
Tech Director/Lights/Sound.....	Eika Haas
Costumes.....	Miranda Lohry
Set Construction.....	Steve Ezinga

In addition to the information on the Important Billing and Credit Requirements page (p. 3), all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“*Lighthouse* was premiered in the American Association of Community Theatre’s AACT NewPlayFest by Windsor Community Playhouse in Windsor, Colo.”

# Lighthouse

## CHARACTERS

LUCE (LUCINDA) FOUCHET: A travel writer using the pen name “Stella Chase” and keeper of the Beach Haven Lighthouse. She is attractive and in her mid-20s.

HELEN DOUGLAS: A local travel agent in her late-50s.

MICHAEL BRAXTON: A Bronx homicide detective. He is a widower in his early-30s.

ALICE PALMER: A part-time college student in her early-20s who suffers from the rare genetic disorder known as Xeroderma Pigmentosum (XP).

DR. ELLIS RAMSEY: A world-renowned dermatological physician and researcher. He is in his early-50s.

LUKE (LUCAS) RIKER: Caretaker of the Beach Haven lighthouse. He is a former sailor in his 60s.

## PLACE AND TIME

The Beach Haven Lighthouse on Long Beach Island along the New Jersey shore. The present.

ACT I: Early morning

ACT II: Early morning, three weeks later.

## NOTES ON THE SET

The setting is Luce’s lighthouse workroom, which is high in the lighthouse tower, directly beneath the beacon room and right above her bedroom. The workroom is neat and comfortable but somewhat cramped. If possible, some sense might be given that the room is circular and the walls are curved. The workroom is mostly white, trimmed with green and somewhat old-fashioned—with a kind of chic cuteness or quaintness about it.

Center stage (C): A large comfortable couch with padded arms and a dark blanket sits at C facing the audience. To the left of the couch is a small table with (if possible) a frog ornament resting on top of it.

Stage right (R): The door to the workroom is downstage. Beyond it, there's a small mirror, a coat hook and a stairwell (the stairs themselves need not be seen). Behind the couch at R is the computer stand—with a desk, wooden chair, computer, CD player and a phone with a cordless receiver.

Back wall: At the center of the back wall is a small, fairly narrow window. The window has an automatic descending shutter. Nearby, on the back wall, there's a large photograph of a Central American red-eyed tree frog. At R from the window is the wall panel that controls the upstairs beacon, the window shutters and the lighthouse intercom.

Stage left (L): Behind the couch at L, there's an amateur telescope on a tripod. Beyond it, against the side wall, there's a small coffee stand. There could also be a wooden chair or a small bookcase downstage from the coffee stand.

# Lighthouse

## ACT I

*(Beach Haven Lighthouse on Long Beach Island along the New Jersey shore.)*

*High in the lighthouse, the dark workroom is intermittently flushed with light from the small window upstage and from an unseen window downstage. As the lighthouse lens rotates in the beacon room upstairs, there's a very slight hum in the workroom.*

*Eventually, footsteps are heard ascending the lighthouse steps at UR, and LUCE FOUCHET enters the room and switches on the lights. She wears blue jeans, all-white deck sneakers and a Columbia sweatshirt over a blouse with a buttoned-down collar.*

*LUCE is also wearing a pair of shades with side shields and carrying the glasses case in her hands. Stopping at the mirror, she looks herself over and smiles. Then she takes off the glasses, puts them in the glasses case and places them in a small, open pocket on her packed suitcase—which is waiting on its wheels near the workroom door. As she does so, a timer goes off, announcing the time of day.)*

FEMALE VOICE *(from CD player)*. 6:45 A.M.

*(The opening of “Good Morning Starshine” from Hair, or something similar, begins to play.)*

*Enjoying the music, which quickly fades out, LUCE walks over to the control panel and shuts off the upstairs beacon light. As the slight hum of the beacon fades away, a buzzer goes off.)*

HELEN *(voice from the intercom)*. I'm coming up, Luce. *(Edgy.)* I hope this damned elevator is behaving itself.

*(LUCE smiles to herself as she hits another switch on the wall panel, and a dark shutter comes down over the small upstage window.)*

HELEN (*cont'd, voice from the intercom*). Don't smile, Luce! I know you're smiling!

*(Amused, LUCE hits another button and watches as an unseen shutter comes down over the unseen downstage window. When she's done, LUCE glances down at her computer desk and picks up a white envelope. She thinks about it for a moment and places it face down on the desk. Then she hears the sound of the elevator arriving and its inner door opening.)*

HELEN (*cont'd, offstage, calling out*). I hate this thing!

*(As soon as LUCE hears the sound of the elevator door close, she opens the door to the workroom, and HELEN DOUGLAS enters.)*

HELEN (*cont'd, agitated*). It's like a coffin!

*(HELEN, dressed for the cold weather, wears a large winter coat with a hat and mittens. LUCE helps her take the coat off.)*

LUCE (*kidding*). You should take the stairs.

HELEN (*kidding*). Don't make fun of an old woman, Luce. Claustrophobia's *very* unpleasant.

LUCE (*sympathetically*). I know.

*(Under her heavy winter coat, HELEN is fashionably dressed in a business suit.)*

HELEN. I don't know what's worse, this hellish weather or that damned elevator. At least there's no snow yet. Did I ever tell you how much I detest February?

LUCE (*smiles*). Yes, you have.

HELEN (*tells her anyway*). It's such an ugly little month. I always diet in February because it's so miserable anyway—except, of course, for Valentine's Day.

LUCE. Tea?

HELEN. No thanks, and I can't stay long.

*(LUCE nods. HELEN walks behind the couch, rests her hand on the telescope and looks up.)*

HELEN (*cont'd*). I was hoping it might be clearer tonight—so we could go up (*Gestures upward.*) and look at the stars. (*Kidding.*) What good's a lighthouse, if you can't see the stars? Instead, we get pictures of frogs!

(*HELEN gestures first to the frog picture on the back wall and then to an unseen frog picture on the [also unseen] downstage wall.*)

LUCE (*smiles*). I like frogs! Besides, it's almost dawn.

HELEN. I know. And the light was on anyway. Some problem at sea?

LUCE. I guess so. Captain Edwards called about three o'clock.

HELEN. What did he say?

LUCE. Not much—just when to turn it on and when to turn it off. I don't ask questions.

HELEN. You're a good soldier, Luce—or sailor. (*LUCE nods.*) Well, it's mighty rough out there this morning. Did you see the waves crashing on the cliffs?

LUCE. No, I've been down in my bedroom reading.

(*For the first time, HELEN takes a good look at LUCE.*)

HELEN. You don't look so hot.

LUCE (*smiles*). Thanks.

(*LUCE sits down on the couch.*)

HELEN. You sure you're up for this trip?

LUCE (*determined*). I'm very up for this trip.

(*Then HELEN reaches into her pocketbook and takes out LUCE's plane tickets and flight itinerary.*)

HELEN. It's direct to Lisbon, unless there's a delay, with train tickets for Fátima and the Algarve. And I got you one of the best rooms at the Palácio in Estoril.

LUCE. Great.

HELEN. It sounds wonderful. And Fátima too. (*Pause.*) But maybe you should try Lourdes sometime.

LUCE. I did.

HELEN (*remembers*). That's right! I should have gone with you.

LUCE (*laughs*). *You?* You never go anywhere! The travel agent who never travels.

HELEN. I've done enough traveling in my life, thank you, ma'am.

I like it right here—on the Jersey coast. (*Also sits down on the couch.*) Who you writing for this time?

LUCE. I'll be doing a piece on the Fado clubs for the *Times*, and one on Fátima for *St. John's Review*.

HELEN. It sounds perfect. I look forward to the both of them, darling.

(*LUCE nods, and HELEN leans over and puts the flight tickets on the couch table.*)

HELEN (*cont'd*). Now, if you're delayed at Newark tonight, for any reason, just go to the Marriott. They're holding a room. I'll call from New York sometime tonight and check. If you're still there, I'll stop by and see you on the way home.

LUCE. What's happening in New York?

HELEN (*sighs*). We're setting up a special Cannes package with those Film Festival people. (*Rolls her eyes.*) Dealing with the French is just about impossible. They're so damned smug, you'd like to beat them with a stick. (*Pause.*) I know I can say that to you, dear, since we both have French blood. Thank God, it's been diluted.

LUCE (*smiles, then more serious*). Well, you be careful driving to the city.

HELEN. I will. But I hate it.

LUCE. Why don't you go with Dr. Ramsey?

HELEN (*horrified*). In that helicopter?! In that ridiculous, flying tin can?! Are you out of your mind? (*Pause.*) Besides it's a little bit pretentious, isn't it? Being chauffeured to the city in your own helicopter three days a week.

LUCE. He's a very important man, Helen, and he helps an awful lot of people.

HELEN. I guess so. (*Checks her watch*) Oh well, I better get going.

(*HELEN stands up and walks over to where her coat is hanging. As she does so, she glances down at the computer table, sees the envelope and picks it up.*)

LUCE (*teasing*). That's *not* for you.

(*Undaunted, HELEN reads the front of the envelope before she puts it back down. Then she turns around to LUCE.*)

HELEN. You need a lot more than *that* in your life, young lady. (*Remembers.*) You know, I think I saw some young lovers parked over by the cliffs. (*She points downward.*)

LUCE (*kidding*). How romantic! I hope they haven't asphyxiated themselves.

HELEN. I'm surprised Luke hasn't chased them off.

LUCE. He will soon. He's probably just getting up.

(*HELEN nods and thinks for a moment.*)

HELEN (*more seriously*). I mean it, Luce. You need some love in your life. Don't be so afraid of it.

LUCE. Why? Do I seem depressed?

HELEN. You *never* seem depressed, but that doesn't mean you're really satisfied. You should let yourself have what you *really* want, and *I* know what you really want.

LUCE. I tried it once.

HELEN. But that wasn't fair, Luce, and you know it. You've even told me so yourself. It was puppy love, and the poor boy died. (*Pause.*) Working with sick kids and trying to help Alice isn't enough.

LUCE. She needs someone.

HELEN. Yes, she certainly does. We all do.

(*The phone rings.*)

LUCE. Hit the speaker phone.

(*HELEN hits a button on the phone.*)

LUCE (*cont'd, louder*). Hello?

NURSE (*voice from phone speaker*). Hello, hon, it's Marsha. Dr. Ramsey's driving over. He'll be there soon. Sorry to keep you up.

LUCE (*smiling*). You *like* keeping me up.

NURSE (*voice from speaker phone*). No, hon. Nurses like people to go to sleep, so we can have the *pleasure* of waking them up. Take care, sweetheart, and have a great trip to Portugal—and buy me a present.

LUCE. I will.

*(The NURSE hangs up.)*

HELEN (*worried*). What's *he* want at this hour of the morning?

LUCE. I guess he wants to see me off before he flies to the city.

HELEN (*irritated*). Maybe he should spend more time helping that suicidal niece of his.

LUCE (*shrugs*). What can he do?

HELEN. Well, he could talk to her at least. Like you do.

LUCE. But she always cuts him off. You know that, Helen.

HELEN (*admits*). I suppose. (*Pause.*) Well, I think she's "putting on" anyway. Just for the attention.

LUCE (*reminds her*). She tried it once.

HELEN. But she failed. Doesn't that mean she *wanted* to fail?

LUCE. Not necessarily.

*(Then both women are startled by an unexpected noise from below.)*

HELEN (*concerned*). What was that?

LUCE (*calmly*). I don't know.

HELEN. The elevator's coming up! Is it Luke? Or the doctor?

LUCE. No, they always buzz first. (*Realizes.*) Did you prop that front door open again?

HELEN (*admits it*). You know I always leave it open. It helps me get into that tiny elevator. (*Tries to explain.*) It's like having an escape hatch or something. It's a psychological thing.

*(The women listen to the sound of the elevator arriving and the inside elevator door opening. Suddenly, someone bangs on the workroom door.)*

HELEN (*cont'd, frightened, softly*). Buzz the Coast Guard, Luce.

LUCE (*not overly concerned*). Who is it?

PRIVATE DETECTIVE (*offstage*). I'm a private investigator, and I'd like a minute of your time.

HELEN. Don't trust him, Luce. Call Luke.

PRIVATE DETECTIVE (*offstage*). Alex Hardon, the Chief of Police knows I'm here. If you'd like to call the station, I can give you his number.

LUCE (*steps forward*). Shut the elevator door behind you—and be sure it's tight.

*(The women hear the sound of the elevator door closing. LUCE opens the door to the workroom, and MICHAEL BRAXTON steps into the room. He's an imposing figure, sharply dressed in dark jeans and a leather jacket over a tinted dress shirt. He holds up his identification for HELEN to see.)*

MICHAEL (*kidding to HELEN*). It's like a bloody fortress!

*(Then the DETECTIVE sees LUCE, and he seems momentarily overwhelmed.)*

MICHAEL (*cont'd*). You're very beautiful.

HELEN. Now, I *definitely* don't trust him.

MICHAEL (*to LUCE*). Do you?

LUCE (*not responding to his question*). What do you want?

MICHAEL (*more businesslike*). I'm looking for Stella Chase. She's a travel writer for *The New York Times*, *Travel Magazine* and several other journals.

LUCE (*wary*). Who wants to know?

MICHAEL. My client.

LUCE. And who's that?

*(MICHAEL doesn't respond to LUCE's question. Then he remembers something else and changes the subject.)*

MICHAEL. Why's that girl sitting down there in the car?

*(LUCE is suddenly horrified.)*

LUCE. What kind of car?

MICHAEL. A blue Lexus.

HELEN (*frightened*). Oh, no! Is it Alice?

(*LUCE calmly checks her watch, pulls a dark blanket off the couch, walks up to MICHAEL and speaks to him directly.*)

LUCE (*with intensity*). Don't even think about what I'm telling you to do. Just go back down, get that girl, cover up her face, (*She hands him the blanket.*) and bring her right back up here.

(*MICHAEL takes the blanket, nods and turns to the elevator.*)

LUCE (*cont'd, pointing*). Take the stairs, and don't waste a moment.

(*MICHAEL takes off.*)

LUCE (*cont'd*). Break the windows if you have to.

(*As MICHAEL exits down the stairwell, LUCE steps over and calls down after him.*)

LUCE (*cont'd*). Use the elevator coming up. It's tight, but you'll fit.

(*Then LUCE opens the workroom door and sends the elevator back down. As it's heard descending, she walks back to her computer stand, picks up the phone and hits a button.*)

LUCE (*cont'd, calmly*). Lucas. Alice is outside in the car. Hurry!

(*Then LUCE hangs up the phone and sits down on the arm of the couch facing the door.*)

HELEN (*very upset*). That poor, stupid girl. What's happened? Why would she come here to kill herself?

LUCE (*softly*). I don't know. (*Pause.*) Dear God, help the little fool.

HELEN (*very agitated*). I can't stand the waiting. It's terrible!

LUCE (*reflecting*). We're always waiting for something, aren't we?

HELEN (*nods, but she needs to be distracted*). Talk to me, Luce.

LUCE. About what?

HELEN. About anything. About "waiting."

LUCE (*nods*). I was just thinking about something that happened to Alice when she was a little girl. When the whole, huge, immensity of her "problem" finally dawned on her for the very

first time. I think it was her fifth birthday, and her parents had arranged a little party over at the house, and it was wonderful. But when it was all over, and her little guests had gone outside to get their rides home, Alice heard a tremendous crash from out on the street—it was definitely a car crash. *(Pause.)* But, of course, Alice couldn't go outside—she couldn't even *look* outside. She couldn't do anything. Except wait. And wait some more.

HELEN. What about her parents?

LUCE. They'd gone outside—to make sure the little kids got their rides home.

HELEN *(understands)*. So Alice was all alone?

LUCE. She was all alone—and trapped—and all kinds of terrible things raced through her mind. She's told me about it a number of times: all her fears, and her imaginings, and the endless waiting—and that horrible feeling of restraint, of entrapment—and the sudden realization that she'd *always* be trapped.

HELEN *(comforting)*. You understand her so well, Luce, that's why you've helped her so much.

LUCE *(nods)*. Yes, but we *all* have to wait, Helen. We all have to be patient.

HELEN. So what happened?

*(LUCE has lost her train of thought.)*

HELEN *(cont'd)*. With the kids? And her parents?

LUCE *(remembers)*. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. It was just a loud fender-bender with a parked car across the street, and no one was hurt.

HELEN. Except for Alice.

LUCE. Except for Alice.

*(Then the women hear the sound of the elevator ascending again, and LUCE faces the door. As soon as the elevator door opens and closes, she opens the workroom door, and MICHAEL carries ALICE PALMER over to the couch. ALICE, dressed in a ski jacket and jeans, seems unconscious.)*

LUCE *(cont'd, to HELEN)*. There's a small towel and some water on the coffee stand.

*(HELEN goes to the coffee stand as LUCE steps over to the couch and looks down at ALICE.)*

LUCE *(cont'd, calmly, to MICHAEL)*. Is she breathing?  
MICHAEL. Yes.

*(As MICHAEL opens ALICE's coat and undoes the top button of her blouse, LUCE studies her friend very carefully. Then MICHAEL gently lifts ALICE's legs and feet onto the couch.)*

MICHAEL *(cont'd, confused, to LUCE)*. What's going on?

*(As LUCE responds, there's noise from the stairwell, and eventually LUCAS RIKER, wearing an old navy peacoat, rushes into the workroom. Out of breath from running up the stairs, LUKE stops by the computer stand and watches with concern.)*

LUCE. Do you think she's had a seizure of any kind?

MICHAEL. I don't think so, but she seems pretty stiff—kind of spastic. And she might have fainted; she was definitely awake when I broke in the car.

*(LUCE says nothing and reaches down to feel ALICE's forehead. Then HELEN arrives with a small wet towel.)*

LUCE. Try to talk to her, Helen.

*(Then LUCE steps over to the phone, hits a number and presses the button for the speaker phone. All the time, her eyes are on ALICE.)*

HELEN *(patting ALICE's forehead with the towel)*. Alice? Are you all right, dear?

ALICE *(suddenly opens her eyes in anger)*. Leave me alone, you bitch!

*(Then ALICE knocks HELEN's hands away, and HELEN backs away from the couch.)*

NURSE *(voice from speaker phone)*. Dr. Ramsey's office.

LUCE *(calmly)*. Marsha, it's Luce. Alice was outside for awhile. Should I call an ambulance?

NURSE (*voice from speaker phone, unsure, concerned*). You'd know better than me, Luce. Is she conscious?

LUCE. Yes.

NURSE (*voice from speaker phone*). Any problems?

LUCE. Nothing obvious.

NURSE (*voice from speaker phone*). Then let the doctor decide. He should be there any minute.

ALICE (*calls out angrily*). I don't want that damned doctor coming here!

LUCE (*ignores her*). All right, Marsha. Beep him.

NURSE (*voice from speaker phone*). I will, Luce.

*(Then LUCE hits a button to disconnect the phone and walks over to ALICE.)*

MICHAEL (*to ALICE*). Just try to rest.

*(ALICE seems to respond to the suggestion. As MICHAEL draws the blanket over her, ALICE pulls her feet up, cuddles into the couch and shuts her eyes again.)*

ALICE (*sleepily*). Just leave me alone.

*(LUCE seems relieved for the moment and turns to LUKE.)*

LUCE. It's all right, Luke, the doctor's coming.

LUKE (*nods*). I'll be downstairs.

*(LUCE nods her appreciation, and then, as LUKE leaves by the stairs, LUCE turns to HELEN.)*

LUCE. You'd better go too. You've got a long drive to New York.

HELEN (*softly, worried*). Is she all right?

LUCE (*confidently*). She's all right.

*(LUCE gets HELEN's coat off the hook.)*

HELEN (*nodding to MICHAEL*). But what about him?

LUCE (*looks at MICHAEL*). Oh, he's all right.

*(Then LUCE holds up HELEN's coat and helps her put it on.)*