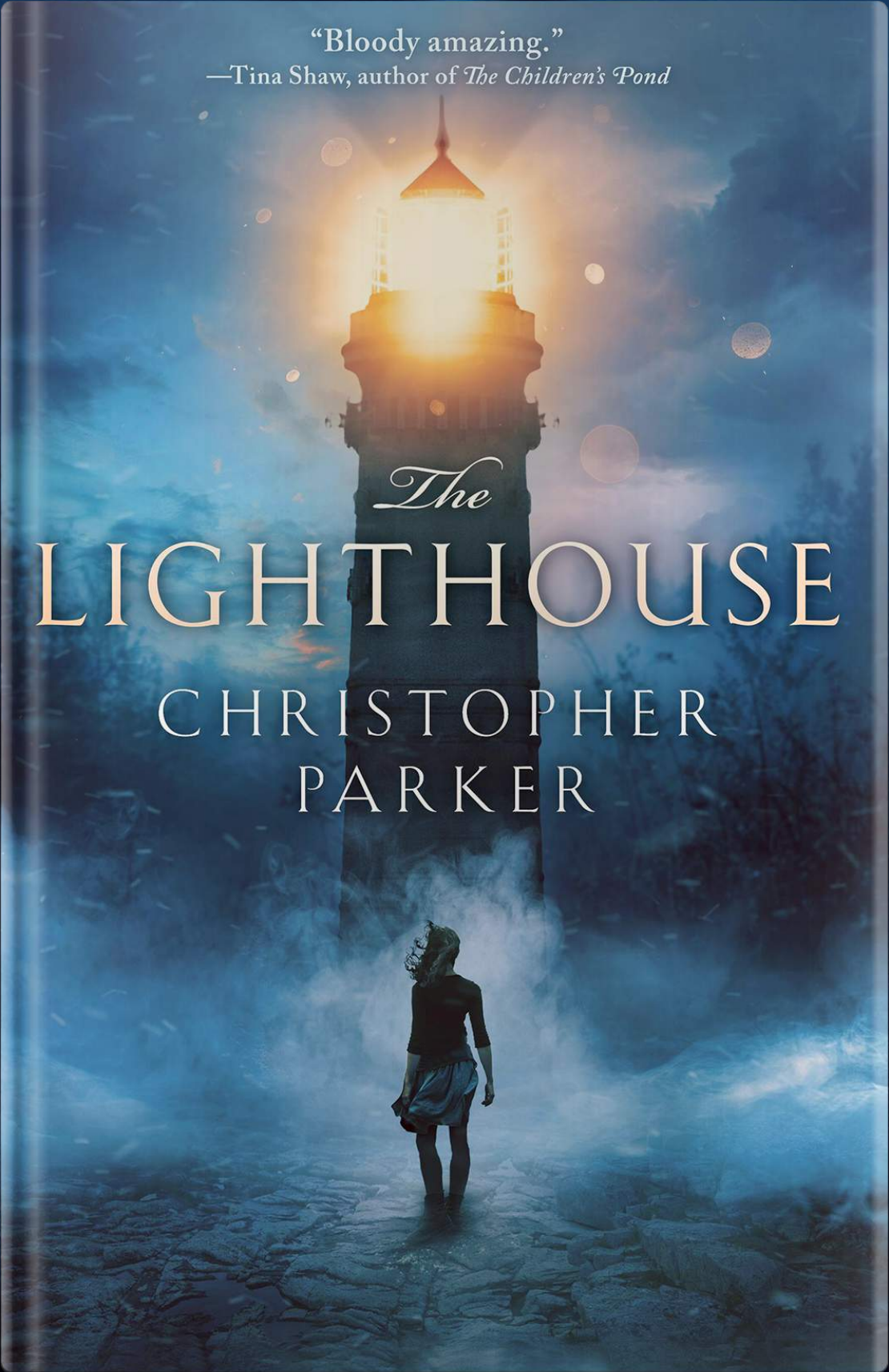


“Bloody amazing.”

—Tina Shaw, author of *The Children’s Pond*



The
LIGHTHOUSE
CHRISTOPHER
PARKER



A MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

Greetings! It's an honor to have my novel selected for your book club.

The Lighthouse tells the story of Amy, a young girl grieving the loss of her mother, who finds herself stuck in a strange new town and must uncover the secrets behind a mysterious lighthouse to find her way home.

Written over a period of nearly ten years, this is a story that's near and dear to my heart. There's mystery and romance, even a dash of magic, but at its core are characters undertaking a deeply emotional journey, one that irrevocably changes the course of their lives forever.

Your time is valuable and it's a privilege to have you spend it with Amy, Ryan, and the friendly folk of Seabrook.

I hope my novel enchants and entertains.

Happy reading.

Christopher Parker

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPHER PARKER

“The Lighthouse” is an exceptional story that took you nearly 10 years to finish. Where did it all begin and how did the timeline of the process progress?

It began somewhat naively. I had the idea for the story I wanted to tell, I calculated how many words I could write per day, and I figured I could be done in three months. The first draft ended up taking three years and it was awful. It was overwritten and full of subplots that went nowhere. I then began reading as widely and voraciously as I could, determined to learn and understand more about the craft, and I started the manuscript again from scratch. The second draft took a further three years, followed by another couple of years of editing and revision. Had I known what was involved at the beginning, I’m not sure I would’ve begun!

What was your motivation to keep writing all these years?

I believed in the story so much that I had no choice but to see it through to the end. At times I felt very much like a sailor lost at sea – too far from home to quit but no sight of a destination either. I had no choice but to just keep sailing. It did me no good to plot an end date or to try and hurry along the process. My only approach was to do my best every day, keep making progress and moving forward. As long as I did that, then I knew that one day I would find myself at the finish line.

What were some of your personal goals with writing this story?

To finish the thing! On a personal level, I simply wanted to do the best job I could and publish something my daughter could one day look back on and be proud to say, “My dad wrote that.” The book is dedicated to her, and she’s the reader I want to impress the most.

While you’re from New Zealand, you set your book off the coast of Oregon. Is there any significance with choosing this setting?

This was a decision made early in the process, mostly because the characteristics of the story lent to a North American setting. Ryan lives and works on a ranch, and Amy (in the first draft of the book) was a swimmer on a college scholarship – both these elements felt more quintessentially “American” than New Zealand. As for Oregon, that choice was driven by the needs of the story, too. It was important that the fictional town of Seabrook be situated in a picturesque landscape where a haunted lighthouse wouldn’t be out of place, and Oregon’s beautiful, dramatic coastline was the ideal setting.

How did you come up with Amy and Ryan? Are they inspired by anyone in your own life?

Amy and Ryan aren't inspired by anyone in particular. The idea began with the concept of the lighthouse and then the characters were brought to life to serve the building's pivotal role in the story. However, once I began writing Amy and Ryan and spending time with them, they took on a life of their own and I became quite attached. Over the years, they've become like extended members of the family. Even though the story has been written, I still think about them often and know everything that happens after the final page.

What are some surprising things you've discovered self-publishing your novel?

Just how challenging it can be to know when it's time to let go. When you're publishing traditionally, you'll likely have a deadline, but when you're self-publishing you've got all the time in the world, which can be a blessing but also a curse. It can be very tempting to get stuck in a loop of getting feedback and making tweaks to the manuscript in the hope that you'll be able to create something that pleases everyone. But that's never going to be possible. There's a fine line between making improvements and editing the life out of the story, and at some point, you need to know when enough is enough.

I believe love is more than a fleeting emotion or just a chemical reaction in the brain. To me it's a tangible part of the human spirit that endures long after we're gone.

One of the major themes in the book is Amy's process of grieving her mother. Why was it important to include themes of grief and loss?

I think, like everyone, I am intrigued by the concept of death and the eternal question of what ultimately becomes of us. The book does deal with grief and loss, but more than that, I believe "The Lighthouse" is a story about love — not just the love that exists between two young people who are fatefully thrown into each other's lives but also the kind of love that exists between a grieving husband and his wife, as well as that unconditional, unshakeable bond of love that exists between parent and child. I believe love is more than a fleeting emotion or just a chemical reaction in the brain. To me it's a tangible part of the human spirit that endures long after we're gone. "The Lighthouse" is an exploration of those ideas.

Why is “The Lighthouse” such an important story to you? What do you hope readers gain from the book?

It’s important to me because it’s the exact kind of book I’d like to pick up and read – a story that takes readers on an exciting, unexpected ride and has a bit of everything: mystery, love and a touch of magic. I just hope readers are entertained and that the themes and ideas explored in the story resonate with people.

What projects are you working on next?

I have the rough outline of the next novel sketched out, and in the meantime (while getting “The Lighthouse” ready for publication) I wrote a children’s story about a troublesome dog that’s being illustrated now. That only took a month to write, and I found the process refreshingly easier than the gargantuan task of completing a full-length novel. I am, however, looking forward to immersing myself in the next one.

Without any spoilers, can you talk about the significance of the lighthouse?

I’ve always been fascinated by lighthouses and long admired them. It was never my intention to write a novel featuring one, but when I thought up the central idea of the story, there was no other building better suited to play the part. There is also an obvious strong echo between a lighthouse’s role in being a guiding light for sailors out at sea and the part it plays in being a beacon for Amy and Ryan. In my story, it is a symbol of light and hope, both literally and metaphorically.



Visit Christopher Parker's website, and take your own **#JourneyToSeabrook** by using the hashtag and following him on social media



ChristopherParkerWrites



ChrisParkerNZ



christopherparkerwrites



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Spoiler alert: Crucial elements of the book's plot will be revealed in the following discussion questions.

- 1** Kevin and Helen's engagement is certainly 'out of the box'. How would you like to be proposed to? Have you proposed/been proposed to in a unique way? Do you prefer grand gestures or do you prefer a traditional and straightforward proposal?
- 2** Amy and Ryan strike up a close bond very quickly after Amy's brush with death. Do you believe it's due to the circumstance of their meeting? How much? Do you believe two strangers can form a strong connection so fast?
- 3** After Ryan's father's stroke, Ryan decides to keep all business news away from his father despite desperately needing help to keep it afloat. Do you believe Ryan's justification to keep his father in the dark was the right decision? What would you have done?
- 4** Kevin and Amy's decision to move to the country is very sudden, but moving suddenly can also be a bit spontaneous and filled with adventure. Have you ever dreamed of packing everything up and moving someplace entirely new? Where would you go?
- 5** Aside from the experience with Ryan, Amy also spends time processing her mother's death and reaches for her mother's pendant often. How does her mother's pendant play a role in the story? How has Amy assigned meaning to the pendant? And how does it help with her grieving process?
- 6** Seabrook's lighthouse is haunted, but also quite famous in the town for its haunting. Have you ever lived anywhere with a famous haunted setting? Is there a place you simply refuse to enter on account of what might be lurking inside?
- 7** There's always a certain actor or personality we envision while reading a book. Christopher Parker includes his dream casting for the book if it made it to the big screen, but if you had a choice what actors & actresses could you see being perfect for some of these characters?
- 8** After Amy's experience with Ryan, she's able to soothe Little Dipper (his horse) very quickly from her anxiety. Without the experience, she wouldn't have been able to do that. Do you have a skill you learned from a loved one? Do you believe that we each carry something of those that we love, or are we entirely separate and disconnected from each other?
- 9** One of the major themes of the book is purgatory and the afterlife; the ability to suspend yourself between the two worlds before crossing over. There were two significant characters who experienced purgatory throughout the story. Who were these characters and how did Amy react to both?
- 10** Another major theme of the book is grief and loss and the process of moving on. For Amy and Kevin, they're both going through the loss of Amy's mother in very different ways. How does the role of mental health and recovery from a loss play into the story? How do Kevin and Amy differ in their ways of coping with loss?
- 11** Ryan is persistent in trying to revive his family's ranch, but struggles with keeping it open. However, for the love of his family, he continues on. Have you ever tried to keep something going after a loss? If you're comfortable, please share.
- 12** The town of Seabrook is idyllic in its quaintness, but intriguing with its lighthouse and backstory. Can you think of any other fictional town that feels similarly to Seabrook?

DEEP FRIED SURPRISE BATTER RECIPE

YIELDS 2 1/2 CUPS OF BATTER
READY IN UNDER 30 MINUTES

*recipe from
cdkitchen.com*

KODAK PORTRA 400

47



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cornstarch
- 1 cup flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 dashes sugar
- 1 cup milk
- 2/3 cup water

PROCEDURE

1. In a bowl, stir together the cornstarch, flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar. In another bowl, combine the milk and water.
2. Slowly stir the milk mixture into the dry ingredients until the batter is smooth.
3. You can add any additional seasonings that you wish.
4. To use, dip the food (we suggest Oreos) into the batter and let the excess liquid drip off. Fry in hot oil until golden brown.

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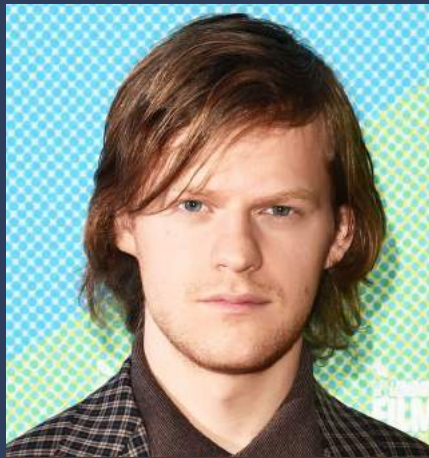
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THE LIGHTHOUSE DREAM CAST

These are author Christopher Parker's picks for the motion picture cast — who would make your cast list?



Raffey Cassidy, Amy



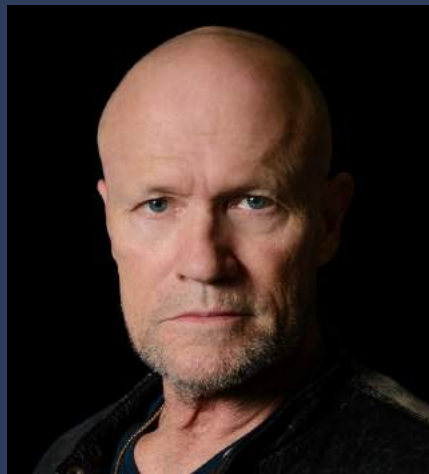
Lucas Hedges, Ryan



Bradley Cooper, Kevin



Sienna Miller, Helen



Michael Rooker, Roger



Kylie Rogers, Chloe

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO
TRAVEL FAR FROM HOME
TO FIND OUT WHERE YOU
TRULY BELONG.

AMY TUCKER IS STRUGGLING to put her life back together following the death of her mother. The loss has left the eighteen-year-old heartbroken, and she doesn't know if her world will ever be whole again.

Meanwhile, in Seabrook, a small town famous for its haunted lighthouse, Ryan Porter lives a simple but busy life, maintaining the ranch which he shares with his father.

Separated by hundreds of miles, yet drawn to each other by forces they can't understand, Amy and Ryan spend a magical day together and quickly forge a deep connection. But all is not what it seems in Seabrook and when strange events begin happening around town, they question if their meeting really was an accident at all.

Trusting in themselves and in each other, they attempt to unravel the mystery of why fate has brought them together, and in doing so they embark on an unforgettable journey of self-discovery, a journey that leads straight to the heart of Seabrook's mysterious lighthouse where they uncover the most shocking secret of all... a secret that will change the course of their lives forever.

