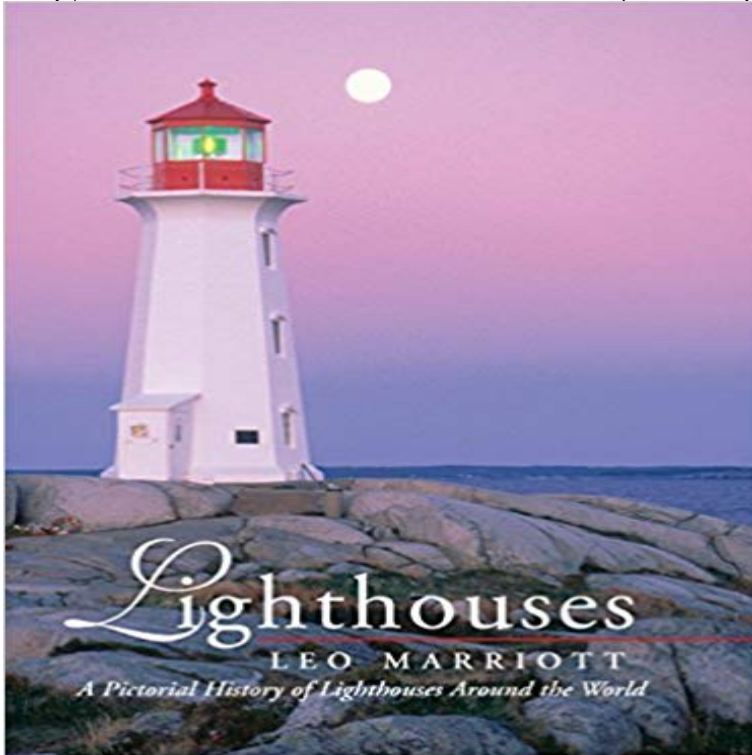


Lighthouses: A Pictorial History of Lighthouses Around the World



Crossing open waters has always been a dangerous undertaking, but drawing close to the destination is the most hazardous part of the sailor's journey. Reaching the right harbor during the night and knowing how to avoid razor-sharp rocks or reefs is a task that can defeat the most experienced navigator--often with fatal results. Since earliest times the response to these dangers has been to erect a light-bearing tower, a beacon to sailors that could guide them into port safely. Some of these early lighthouses were merely stone towers built on the shore, but others, like the Colossus of Rhodes--a 110-foot (33m) statue of the sun god Helios, built in 282 B.C. in the Mediterranean--became wonders of the ancient world. Architecturally imposing and cloaked with an air of romance, lighthouses continue to fascinate us. Often there are tales of strange events connected to lonely lighthouses--tragic stories of keepers and ghosts at sea. Minots Ledge is one such place. At least forty vessels had run aground off this deadly outcrop just southeast of Boston before construction of a tower began in 1847. It didn't last very long. Four years later, the original lighthouse was toppled by a devastating hurricane that washed its two keepers into the sea. Although Minots Ledge Light is no longer manned, tales persist of eerie sounds, slamming doors, and apparitions of a man, soaking wet, clinging to a rope outside the new tower! This is a chilling reminder that even the most valiant efforts to prevent tragedy can be in vain. Leo Marriott's LIGHTHOUSES, illustrated with more than 100 color photographs, takes readers on a historical and international tour of these wonderful structures. It recounts tales of great courage and tragedy, as well as details of why and how the lighthouses were built.

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