Descriptive Notes- The Lighthouse Keeper’s Lunch

These descriptive notes will give character and set descriptions, and a full summary of the performance including visual moments.

**Set Descriptions**

On the stage a large piece of flooring with thick stripes of white and shades of blue divides the black stage in two diagonally. On the back left is a tall two dimensional red and white striped lighthouse with a gold dome roof and black railing at the top. A real light beams out of the lighthouse to sweep across the audience and across the white backdrop at the back of the stage. Stretching from the lighthouse across to the left side of the stage and out of sight is a white rope will pulleys on each end. The pulleys are out if sight. A small red boat with a horizontal white stripe and two yellow oars is on the front left of the stage. This boat can move along the stage on wheels, propelled by the actor’s feet. On the right is Mr and Mrs Grinling’s house. The house is represented by a large bed with a red and white striped duvet and red and white pillows on each end of the bed. A three level shelf at the foot of the bed holds kitchen supplies, and wicker baskets and cases are under the bed. A red table with a red checked cloth and two white stools is opposite the shelf.

**Characters**

Mr Grinling: A rugged old seadog with a grey beard in a striped white and black shirt, navy pants, red braces, a red knit cap, and black wellies. In the morning times she wears a long nightgown and a floppy nightcap. Mr Grinling has a twinkle in his eye and a ready smile.

Mrs Grinling: A shapely matronly figure with short grey hair, billowing blue patterned culottes, slippers, and a ruffly pink blouse with a red and blue tartan apron. In the morning times she wears a long night dress and a ruffled white mob cap. Mrs Grinling is efficient, clever, and organised.

Hamish the Cat: Played by a man walking on hands and feet, Hamish has orange tufty fur, a long bushy tail, and detailed orange face paint. Hamish leaps and bounds like a real cat across the stage.

Seagulls: Three puppeteers wearing grey and white ombre shirts that match the colouring of a seagulls feathers each carry a long pole with a life sized seagull puppet, wings spread in full flight, attached to the end. They have yellow bandanas on their foreheads with points like beaks between their eyes, black shorts, and grey socks.

Fisherperson: A woman with long dreadlocks in a fishing vest, checked shirt, and a wide brimmed hat sits on a foldable stool with a fishing pole and picnic backset.

Whales: The whales are small puppets made of spiralling wire wrapped in blue cloth. There is also a large version of the whale puppet which is almost two metres long. All are carried by the puppeteers who are wearing black.

Cameraperson: A man in plain black with a dark blue One News raincoat, carrying a large shoulder mounted TV camera with a red One News mic.

Inspector of Lighthouses: In a high visibility vest, hard hat, and clutching a clipboard, the inspector’s sunny personality is odds with her love of rules and regulations.

Sam: A surfer in a blue polo, cargo shorts, work boots, and backward baseball cap, Sam exudes a relaxed, go with the flow energy. He changes into a shorty wetsuit to hit the waves.

Scene 1

We hear the sounds of the ocean and sea birds calling as lights brighten on the stage. Mr Grinling comes from the lighthouse holding a large burned out bulb. He enters the lighthouse and fetches a new bulb. Offstage, he changes the bulb. Lights darken on stage, and a beam of light sweeps out from the lighthouse over the audience and across the stage.

Lights brighten as dawn arrives. We hear loud snoring. Mr and Mrs Grinling are asleep in the bed, positioned head to foot. Mrs Grinling wakes up and tries to wake Mr Grinling. He doesn’t wake up. Mrs Grinling gets out of bed and Hamish the cat tries to wake Mr Grinling by kneading him with his paws. Eventually Hamish licks Mr Grinling’s face and he wakes up with a start. He gets ready to go to the lighthouse. Hamish begs for Mrs Grinling to feed him, batting his bowl around the stage and purring and nuzzling Mrs. Grinling. Mr Grinling rows across the stage in his boat to the lighthouse as Mrs Grlinling packs him a delicious lunch in a basket. Hamish is very interested in the basket, trying to stick his head in it.

Scene 2

Mrs Grinling hangs the basket on the line stretching from the house to the lighthouse, and begins to winch the basket across to Mr Grinling. Suddenly, three silly seagulls swoop in and gobble up the lighthouse keeper’s lunch! Mrs Grinling brings the basket back, packs a new lunch, ties a napkin across the top, and tries again- but the seagulls pluck the napkin right off and still manage to eat all the lunch. Mrs Grinling decides to send Hamish across in another basket so he can guard the lunch. A basket with cat ears and a tail can be seen hung above the food basket, and both baskets travel across the line. Being up high makes Hamish dizzy, and he yowls in distress. The seagulls get the lunch again!

Mrs Grinling has a great idea. She makes hot mustard sandwiches and sends them across in the basket. The seagulls gobble up the sandwiches, then fly off hacking and spluttering in distress. They decide to eat the lunch of a nearby fisherperson instead. Mr Grinling finally gets his lunch. Mr and Mrs Grinling sing a song about the lighthouse keeper’s lunch.

Scene 3

Mr Grinling is full from his big lunch. He falls asleep against the lighthouse. The lights darken to indicate the sun going down. Suddenly, Mr Grinling wakes up, realising he is late putting the lighthouse light on. He puts the light on and rows back to his house.

Mrs Grinling is upset- the inspector of lighthouses called, very cross that the light came on late. Mr Grinling promises that he won’t fall asleep at work again. Mr and Mrs Grinling go to bed.

Three puppeteers holding a pair of small whale puppets enter and swim the whales around the stage, and then exit.

It’s morning, and loud snoring is heard. It’s Hamish! He won’t wake up until Mr Grinling shakes his cat biscuits, then he pops up. Mr Grinling starts to make the bed, and he falls asleep again on the bed with Hamish. Mrs Grinling wakes him up, and Mr Grinling goes to put his boots on- but he falls asleep again at the table with Hamish. Mrs Grinling wakes him up once more and shoos him off to work. He gets into the rowboat with Hamish to go to the lighthouse. The warm sun and the gentle waves lull Mr Grinling and Hamish to sleep.

Mrs Grinling sends a basket of lunch down the line to the lighthouse. The seagulls swoop in, but they know not to mess with the basket. No more mustard sandwiches for them! The lights fade until the stage is dark- it’s night time. We hear the noise of a motor and voices from a coastguard boat, coming to tow Mr Grinling back to the lighthouse. The lighthouse light comes on and sweeps around the theatre.

Scene 4

The next morning Mr Grinling is already awake. He couldn’t sleep, worrying about missing the light for the lighthouse for two nights in a row. There’s a knock at the door, and the Inspector of Lighthouses come in. She tells Mr Grinling that because of his mistakes he can no longer be the lighthouse keeper. Mr Grinling is very sad, and Mrs Grinling tries to comfort him. They begin to pack up the house to make way for Sam, the new lighthouse keeper.

A large whale puppet is brought in across the stage, beaching itself in the right corner.

Mrs Grinling looks through her spy glass to enjoy the view. She sees something on the beach- it’s a whale! She and Mr Grinling don yellow rain slickers and rush over to help the whale. They pour buckets of water over the whale and Hamish helps dig a trench, and when the tide comes in they help the whale float back to sea.

Scene 5

The lights on the stage go dark, and a clip of TV news is projected. Simon Dallow of One News talks about the whale rescue and interviews the Grinlings, who are being filmed on stage by the cameraperson. The news clip ends and the lights brighten. Mr and Mrs Grinling go back to their cottage to finish off their packing.

Scene 5

There is a knock at the door. The Inspector of Lighthouses enters and congratulates the Grinlings on their rescue of the beached whale. The Inspector tells Mr Grinling he can have his job back as the lighthouse keeper, and Mr Grinling is very happy. The Inspector introduces Sam, Mr Grinling’s new assistant lighthouse keeper.

Scene 6

It’s morning again, and loud snoring is heard. Mr and Mrs Grinling and Hamish are all awake- they realise Sam must be snoring! They wake Sam up, and Mr Grinling watches him row out to the lighthouse. Sam makes a few mistakes- he sits down backward in the rowboat, and has to turn around. Then, he docks the boat at the lighthouse and tries to tie it up, but instead pulls and pulls at a long line that’s attached to nothing. Sam chuckles at his gaffs and goes into the lighthouse.

Mr Grinling is bored- he doesn’t know what to do with his free time. He keeps getting in Mrs Grinling’s way. Mrs Grinling tells him that he needs a new hobby. He tries baking the bread for lunch, but he adds too much yeast. The bread dough rises so much it smothers his face! Mrs Grinling helps him wipe off the sticky dough, and Mr Grinling decides that cooking is too messy for him. He tries playing the violin, but his playing is very screechy.

He brings cat toys into the kitchen for Hamish to play with, and he tries to juggle. Hamish bounces on the squeaky toys, getting in Mrs Grinling’s way. Mrs Grinling collects up all the toys into her apron pockets. Suddenly Mr Grinling enters on a scooter! He goes round and round the table, but he isn’t very good. He keeps bashing into the stools. Mrs Grinling stands in his way and makes him stop, and Mr Grinling sails off on the scooter, crashing and banging his way out.

Scene 7

Sam enters wearing a wetsuit and carrying a surfboard. Mr Grinling comes along and Sam tries to teach him how to surf, but first Mr Grinling needs to learn how to swim! Sam teaches Mr Grinling how to swim, and then how to surf. A montage of Mr Grinling learning is accompanied by upbeat beach rock music. During the montage, Sam puts on a shark fin and Mr Grinling manages to do a full surf on the wave to escape the “shark.”

Mr Grinling is very proud. Sam fetches Mrs Grinling, and Mr Grinling shows off with an impressive surf routine while wearing s. Mrs Grinling admires the surfer without realising it’s Mr Grinling. When he arrives back at the beach he removes his sunglasses. Mrs Grinling is surprised and impressed with Mr Grinling’s new skill- an old dog can learn new tricks!

Scene 8

The actors all sing “The Lighthouse Keeper’s Lunch” song as they pack one more lunch basket together. Two seagulls enter and join in the song. Everyone takes a bow. They exit, the seagulls carrying off the basket. Mr Grinling calls Hamish for lunch, and they both bustle off.

End of descriptive notes.