

EXTRACT

**THE BLACKBIRD  
AND THE WHALE**  
ALISON ROOKE

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**NOTE ON THE SCRIPT**

This is an unedited manuscript as provided to us by the playwright. We distribute it in good faith; however it may contain layout inconsistencies or typographic errors.

Cora: Female, early 20's  
Mulligan: Male, late 20's  
Whale: Female  
Blackbird: Male

Setting:  
A beach, in the time after.

Notes:

Scenes 22 - 25 can be played on either side of the stage, lights up/down swapping between each so both sides of the story can be revealed.

The script is a jumping off point, there is scope to reveal the characters of Blackbird and Whale and their story via puppetry, audio visuals or choreography. Blackbird and Whale are swap between manifestations of the inner worlds of Mulligan and Cora so feel free to explore - the wilder the interpretation the better.

## ACT ONE

## SCENE ONE

*Gloom. Seaside mist. Sound of waves crashing onto the shore. Figures emerge out of the dark. A woman and a man. They are silhouettes, weighed down in wet clothes, they cling to each other, they sink to the ground. Behind them two shadows appear, human or animal it is hard to tell. They climb down from the rafters or slink in from the wings. They watch the man and woman. They wait.*

*There is a shriek - bird or human we cannot tell.*

*Blackout.*

## ACT ONE

## SCENE TWO

*Sometime later ... Waves crash onto a shore.*

*Cora sits spread out on the sand. Behind her sits a makeshift camp; its base made from the shell of an old longboat, a canopy made out of a torn sail, the rest a ramshackle collection of tin and wood and other belongings. There is another sail draped across the front of it to create a 'door'. Off to the side, closer to shore there is a half-built pyre of wood.*

*Cora is laying out what looks like a series of pebbles in an elaborate pattern in front of her.*

*She selects a final pebble and stares at it for a long time. She then turns it back down and places it at the bottom of the stack. Mulligan enters carrying a haphazard collection of firewood. He is trying to slap away an attack of sandflies.*

MULLIGAN: Death?

CORA: -

MULLIGAN: Did ya get death again?

CORA: Don't be joking about such things Rory Mulligan.

*Mulligan bends down and takes a pebble from her collection.*

MULLIGAN: Ominey, jeggity oom, I see something, yes, it's becoming clear ... I see a great big bird, black feathered wings and eyes that pierce your soul. Ominey, ominey oog - yes, it's telling me something ... Something, what's it trying to tell me?

*He holds the pebble to his ear.*

It wants ... It wants ...

Dinner. It's hungry and it says that if Cora doesn't pack her game away soon we're all going to go to bed hungry.

CORA: Shut up!

*Mulligan laughs.*

Don't be making fun of me.

MULLIGAN: Then don't be wasting your time on such superstition.

CORA: Your mother would be saddened to hear you talk of our ways so carelessly.

MULLIGAN: My mother, like the rest is dead.

CORA: Doesn't mean she doesn't still see.

MULLIGAN: Right.  
Ya gonna help me or what?

*Cora packs away the pebbles.*

CORA: In a minute. There's rain on the wind/

MULLIGAN: Then now would be better.

CORA: OK. OK.

*Cora exits. She returns laden with branches and sticks.*

MULLIGAN: Good haul for today don't ya think?  
You should be proud of ya old Mulligan here.

CORA: I am.

MULLIGAN: You should be.

CORA: I am.

*Cora looks at Mulligan - a charge is in the air.*

MULLIGAN: -

CORA: -

MULLIGAN: Cora?

CORA: Mully...

*Cora moves in closer to Mulligan. She takes the remaining haul from his hands and places them on the ground. She grabs him tightly by the chin. She breathes in his face so close, so close.*

MULLIGAN: Ya gotta remember better manners Cora Mulligan.

CORA: Maybe you should teach me Rory Mulligan.

*Mulligan moves across to the side of the camp, he opens a ripped box and takes out a bottle of whiskey. He examines it to check the level, eyes Cora and takes a swig.*

CORA: I never.

MULLIGAN: You'd better not. You know how you get when you've had too much.

CORA: -

MULLIGAN: -

*Cora turns her attention to the haul.*

CORA: How much would you be reckoning?

MULLIGAN: Almost enough for a few days.

CORA: That's good.  
That's really good.

MULLIGAN: Yep.  
Might even let you share the fire.

Don't know if I should though.  
It's not like you do anything to help.

CORA: I do. I read the signs.

*Mulligan snorts.*

MULLIGAN: Fat lot of good that does.  
Who the fuck wants to know their future these days?

Look around.

CORA: It helps.  
Gives us hope. They keep us safe.

MULLIGAN: I keep us safe.

*Mulligan rattles the branches next to him.*

This. This is better than hope. Right?  
Warmth.

Protection.

'Til I figure out what to do that's all  
we should be concerning ourselves with.

CORA: You should listen to the elements.

MULLIGAN: -

CORA: What are you so afraid of?

MULLIGAN: I'm not afraid of anything Cora Mulligan.

CORA: You're scared of anything you can't control.  
That (*she points to the ocean*), that terrifies  
you.

MULLIGAN: You're ridiculous.

CORA: Don't/

MULLIGAN: I should've left you there, with the rest/  
You hold me back.

I could move faster if you weren't around my  
neck.

*Cora rushes to him.*

CORA: Don't leave me Mully.  
Don't leave.  
I'll do better, work harder - I'll come with  
you tomorrow, look for more firesticks, I'll  
help. You'll see.

MULLIGAN: What'll you do if I stay?

CORA: What do you want?



*Mulligan watches and waits for her to become still.*

MULLIGAN: Show me.

*Cora walks up to him, stares into his eyes until the tension is unbearable, then moves into kiss him.*

Not out here.  
The rain.

*Mulligan pulls her into the shelter and closes the sail around them. Sky grows darker. Thunder. Light fades. Blackbird and Whale enter and move silently across to the camp. They sit and wait outside as Cora cries out.*

ACT ONE

SCENE THREE

*Morning. Mulligan and Cora sit  
outside the shelter.*

*Mulligan laces up his boots. Cora  
stirs her tea and frets.*

MULLIGAN: I won't be long.  
3-4 hours at most.

CORA: I don't want to be here alone all day again.

MULLIGAN: I need to find us a new place to stay before  
the weather turns. You'll hold me back.

CORA: I won't, I swear.

MULLIGAN: You know you will.

CORA: It's just... Eyes are watching me here.  
I can feel them creeping across my shoulders.

MULLIGAN: The only think creeping across your bony  
shoulders are sandflies. We need to move on,  
can't stand the fuckers. They're everywhere.

CORA: I like it here.  
Near the water.  
Reminds me of home.

MULLIGAN: I don't get you. Two seconds ago, you hated  
this place and now you're waxing lyrical about  
the seashore. You're a dozy cow.

CORA: Shut up.  
I like the sea.  
I don't like you leaving me here alone.

MULLIGAN: Aww poor baby Cora.  
Hates being all alone ... Poor baby Cora.

CORA: Mulligan/

MULLIGAN: Had no idea I'd married such a weak heart.

CORA: Why'd you marry me then?

MULLIGAN: Simple. You might be little, but you're as  
strong as an ox. I knew I'd need someone to  
work the farm out here.



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