

# **BEAST**

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A Play in Two Acts

by

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### CAST OF CHARACTERS

CARTER: (30-50/m) A castaway.

ZERO: (30-50/m) A castaway.

### THE SET

An island beach littered with debris including a broken driftwood RAFT, a wooden CRATE, and a BOULDER that offers a good look out post across the water. Upstage is the JUNGLE and a climbable TREE.

The audience should feel like they are being watched.

### TIME

The present.

SCENE 1

AT RISE:

Day. Calm.

On the beach is an ornate circular pattern in the sand: the nest. In the center of it a threadbare pilot's uniform has been laid out.

A wind picks up, rustling through the trees.

FADE TO NIGHT.

The wind builds to a storm that batters the island.

WIND. CRASHING WAVES. THUNDER.

STATIC cuts through the maelstrom. With it, a panicked radio message.

CATHERINE SWAN (V.O.)

Mayday, mayday [static] Captain Swan of the sailing vessel Courage [static] sailing vessel Courage [static] located at one one one four zero [static] drifting... drifting... two knots bearing south by south [static] taking on water! Mayday, mayday--

A lightning strike cuts the radio off and reveals a person now wearing the uniform: CARTER.

CARTER

No... no! Please... forgive me... I'm sorry...

He sits up suddenly.

CARTER

(yelling)

Hello? Hello!

He tries to stand.

CARTER

Come on... damn you, GET UP!

He struggles to his feet, holding on to the crate for support.

CARTER

Where am I? What happened?

Distraught, he looks around, trying to get his bearings.

CARTER

What is this? How did I... was it... the plane? Yes. The plane! With... uh... their name... god, come on... Swan! yes!

(yelling)

Captain Swan! Where are you? Can you hear me? Swan? SWAN!

He waits. The wind rages.

CARTER

Anyone?

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 2

Day. Calm.

Something moves in the jungle.

The side of the crate falls open.  
Carter crawls out

CARTER

Who's that? Captain?

He stands, and grabs his leg in pain.

CARTER

Aagh!

He spots a tree branch on the beach.  
It's sharp on one end, like a spear.

Using the spear as a crutch, he hobbles to the raft. It's old, decayed.

CARTER

A raft. A raft?

Carter looks into the jungle.

CARTER

(yelling)

Hello?

A moment.

I need water.

CARTER

He hops around the beach, drinking any collected rainwater. It's not enough.

Okay... Okay, think. What do I-- Resources. Yes. What's here--

CARTER

He scans the beach--

A growl from the jungle stops him.

What was that?

CARTER

A moment.

Hey! Who's there? Stop hiding!

CARTER

The jungle is quiet.

Swan? Is that you?

CARTER

Carter checks the sharp end of the spear.

Whoever that is I'm coming in! You hear me? Right...

CARTER

Carter steels himself and exits.

BLACKOUT.

### SCENE 3

Dusk.

Carter enters, dragging a tarp loaded with several coconut.

He hobbles to the boulder and slams a coconut into it.

He inspects the coconut. It didn't open. He hits it again.

And again.

FADE TO NIGHT.

CARTER  
Come on, for the love of--

The coconut eventually splits.

CARTER  
Yes! Yes... oh thank god!

He gulps down the milk. Not enough.  
He grabs another coconut--

Something moves in the jungle.

CARTER  
Hello?

Something moves again.

CARTER  
Swan? Is it you?  
(beat)  
Losing my mind here--

Carter hits the coconut again.

More movement, a different place.

Carter throws a rock into the jungle.

A moment.

CARTER  
Hey... we can help each other! I have... coconuts!  
(beat)  
Hello? Just come out! Do you have any water?

Movement, a different place. Carter  
grabs the spear and threatens to  
throw it.

CARTER  
Damn it, stop playing with me!

GLOWING EYES appear in the jungle.

CARTER  
Oh shit... what is that? What the hell is that!

The eyes rise into the canopy. The Beast growls.

Carter bangs the spear against the boulder.

CARTER

Get out of here! Go on! Get away! I'm not afraid of you!

The eyes disappear.

CARTER

Jesus... okay, okay--

Carter grabs the coconuts and the spear, hurries to the crate, and climbs in.

BLACKOUT.

#### SCENE 4

Morning.

From off, ZERO argues with himself.

ZERO (OFF)

No, I said we don't come here... You know why... Before... No, I wasn't... You said to come here, not me... I didn't-- I didn't... We'll look, but that's all. Then we go!

ZERO enters. His clothes are threadbare, an old satchel slung over his shoulder. He hesitates.

ZERO

See? Nothing here, can we leave?... Because I don't like it here... Well, I don't care what you think.

He works his way along the beach cautiously, poking at debris.

ZERO

Oh really?... Very clever... And have you considered why we're here?... Just a "thought" was it? Who suggested it to you? Me? I don't think so!

He returns to scavenging the beach, muttering to himself.

He stops when he sees the nest in the sand.

ZERO

Yes, I know what it is... I don't know who made it. Maybe you did... I think I'd remember!... That's different--

He picks up a piece of broken coconut.

ZERO

These might have washed up, in the storm. Or... yes, I know what you're thinking! Someone's been touching things.

He savors a piece of coconut.

ZERO

Well, I don't want to know. Don't think about it, you know what happens--

The side flies off as Carter kicks it open and scrambles out.

CARTER

Hey! Who's there--

(sees Zero)

Oh thank God! I thought you were that thing...

ZERO

No!

(to the JUNGLE)

No no no no no! This isn't real!

CARTER

You've got to help me--

Carter hobbles towards Zero. Zero scampers away.

ZERO

No! Stay back!

CARTER

Calm down! I'm not going to hurt you!

ZERO

You're not real!

CARTER

Me? I'm real! Hey, I just want to talk--

ZERO

(to the JUNGLE)

I didn't do this! I didn't!

(MORE)

ZERO (cont'd)

(to Carter)

A ghost! That's what it is! Something from the Before! Stay back!

He threatens Carter with the spear.

CARTER

Hey easy! Easy!

ZERO

(to himself)

What does it mean? I didn't! I didn't! It's a ghost!

(to Carter)

Are you a ghost?

CARTER

Of course I'm not a ghost.

ZERO

(to himself)

He's real... oh, yes, okay--

(to Carter)

That's what a ghost would say!

CARTER

I'm standing in front of you. I'm not a ghost!

ZERO

(to himself)

Perhaps it doesn't know.

CARTER

Listen. My name is Carter--

ZERO

No. Impossible!

CARTER

What is? That's my--

ZERO

Liar! Liar!

Zero advances on Carter, thrusting the spear at him.

CARTER

Hey! Stop that!

ZERO

No more liars! We don't want you here!

CARTER  
Stop! Can you just-- will you calm down?

ZERO  
Get off my island! Get off!

CARTER  
I want to!

Carter swings his crutch defensively.  
They stand off.

CARTER  
Keep away from me!

ZERO  
(to Carter)  
Stop talking! Stay back! I'm thinking--  
(to himself)  
I know, I know, but I don't remember doing that!

CARTER  
What's wrong with you?

ZERO  
(to himself)  
Why would I do that!? It'll just come for me! And you!  
(to Carter)  
Stay back!

CARTER  
Listen. My name is Carter.

Zero growls at him.

CARTER  
Easy.... I was in a plane crash--

ZERO  
A plane?  
(to himself)  
He said a plane. He's seen the plane--

CARTER  
Are you talking about my plane? Do you know where it is? Can you take me to it?

ZERO  
A ghost, from the plane...

CARTER  
Not a fucking ghost! Look, touch me--

Carter reaches, Zero waves the spear.

ZERO

Stay away!

CARTER

Oh my God, please! Try to understand. I was on a plane, we were flying-- somewhere, I don't know... God, I'm so thirsty. Do you have any water?

ZERO

Pattern in the sand, a circle, leading us back to the beginning. Repeating. But the storm--

CARTER

Yes, yes-- the storm! That's why we crashed!

ZERO

--the storm washes it all away. Memories, thoughts... so who made--

(re: the nest)

--this? That's the riddle!

CARTER

Christ, is there anyone else here--

He looks out over the water and stops, shocked.

CARTER

Is that a boat? That's a boat!

Carter waves his arms.

CARTER

Hey! Hey!! Over here! Help!

ZERO

There was a boat? Yes, of course! But it doesn't see me. Never.

(to Carter)

But they might see you. I do. I think I do.

CARTER

There's a boat out there for God's sake!

ZERO

What do you mean? Of course I see him, I'm looking at him.

CARTER

Fire! We need fire! Do you have a fire?

Zero shakes his head, no.

CARTER

You don't have a signal fire ready? Nothing?  
(waving to the boat)

Hey! Over here!

ZERO

He's very preoccupied with the boat. Yes, I know I was too - but that, and the clothes, the coconuts, and look, he even has that branch to help him walk. It all seems to be there for him, like he was expected.

CARTER

It can't see us!

ZERO

Well I'm just thinking-- who invited him? If it was me then I can accept that, but you just need to tell me. This memory--

CARTER

Where did it go? There it is! Hello! Hey!

ZERO

And look - the circle! Well it's a puffer fish nest, isn't it? That's what they look like. Circles in the sand. No, you're not thinking! Think! What do we know about puffer fish?

CARTER

(to Zero)

Hey! Are you listening? There's a boat!

ZERO

(to Carter)

Yes, we're waiting to see if it sees you. Carry on. Keep your distance.

(to himself)

Not until we find out what he is. What was I saying? Oh, puffer fish. They're always alone, yes? I don't know, unpopular? Not my point. Okay, so pay attention now - how do they find a mate?

CARTER

Where did it go?

ZERO

Right! They make a nest - patterns in the sand. We've seen them, when the water's calm. Yes, when it's calm. Well I'm just saying, has it been calm?

CARTER

I've lost it!