

Them That's Dead

(or: The Final Tale of Shark Tooth O'Shea)

An original short screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CLIFFSIDE, THE CELTIC SEA - NIGHT

A shovel punches into the moist and fleshy earth, as angry waves crash and pound the rocks from far below.

BROCC, a muscular young man, works the shovel by moonlight.

An older, bearded rouge, GULLEY, holds aloft a lantern as he looks on intently.

And last, an ancient crone dressed in the garb of a gypsy, RHIANNON, sits at the trunk of a nearby Wych elm.

Rhiannon gazes out over the dark, open water -- no interest in the activity behind her.

AT THE HOLE

Brocc pauses, then tosses the shovel aside. He stoops and begins to clear away dirt with his hands.

Gulley peers down with interest.

GULLEY

What have ye got, then?

As Brocc brushes the dust and gravel aside, the face of a corpse is revealed -- sunken features, dried flesh, and a worm-eaten patch over one eye.

The remains of a pirate. Gulley smiles.

GULLEY

Aye, that does look to be
him...but we can't be havin'
any doubt, now can we?

(to Brocc)

Show 'em to me.

Brocc whimpers a bit, almost childlike -- he knows what Gulley wants, but he doesn't want to do it.

Gulley grips the handle of a whip strapped to his belt.

GULLEY

Show me the teeth, ya' damned,
mute bastard!

Brocc's eyes move from the whip to the corpse as he readies himself for the grisly task --

-- then he reaches out quickly, grips the leathery lips of the corpse, and spreads them wide.

Every tooth in this pirate skull has been filed to a sharp, menacing point. Gulley laughs heartily.

GULLEY

Ah-Ha-Ha! There be no mistakin'
that smile!

Gulley grabs a flagon of rum and takes a long swig.

Then he spits a mouthful of rum down onto the corpse.

GULLEY

The dreaded Shark Tooth O'Shea!
And look at ya' now, ya' lousy
bilge rat...sorry grub that ain't
fit even for worms!

Gulley calls out to Rhiannon.

GULLEY

It's time, witch!

The old woman glares at Gulley, but she gathers a satchel and walks slowly over to the grave.

She stands toe-to-toe with the Gulley, unintimidated.

RHIANNON

Them that's dead, they're dead
for a reason.

Gulley's response is more growl than words.

GULLEY

Just you make him speak.

Gulley turns back to the grave, and with a smooth motion he grasps his whip and snaps it at Brocc -- CRACK!

GULLEY

Get out the hole, ya'
feeble-minded turnip!

Brocc scurries from the hole and cowers a few yards away.

Gulley offers Rhiannon his hand, but she scowls, rejects it, and lowers herself unassisted into the shallow grave.

IN THE GRAVE

On her knees, Rhiannon straddles the corpse. From her satchel, she extracts a thin, long-stemmed funnel, encrusted with jewels and etched with ancient runes.

She pries open the jaws of the corpse and jams the funnel deep into its gullet with a bone-grinding crunch.

Next she pulls out a small bottle of green elixir, pulls the cork with her teeth, and pours it into the funnel.

And finally, a wooden match. She lights it, then drops it into the mouth of the funnel.

FWOOM -- a pillar of flame explodes from the funnel.

Then, fearless, Rhiannon clamps her hand atop the funnel, squelching the flame.

RHIANNON

(whispers)
I avail myself, and your lifeless
secrets are mine to snatch.

She lifts her hand, and a thin, silver stream of smoke rises from the mouth of the funnel -- and with this smoke, a sound -- a whispered sound, like the buzzing of flies, or a soft breeze rustling through tree branches.

Rhiannon places her ear to the funnel.

After a moment, she turns a stern eye toward Gulley.

GULLEY

What tales from beyond?

RHIANNON

He says it was you what killed
him...you what planted him on
this sorry cliff.

GULLEY

You waste my time, shrew, with
yer deceitful hearsay! Where's
the chest?!

RHIANNON

But that's the rub, ya' haggard
fool! He won't have his spoils
scuttled by the likes of you!

Enraged, Gulley pulls a broad cutlass and sets it to
Rhiannon's neck. He lets it linger by her throat.

GULLEY

You find a way, old crone,
or you'll be havin' a taste
of me steel. Mark my words,
this hole in the ground could
just as easy be holdin' two
souls on this night.

RHIANNON

Aye, then...you'll get what's
comin' to you. I'll see to that.

Gulley withdraws the blade, satisfied. For now.

Rhiannon turns back to the corpse, leans in close, and
whispers harshly into its ear.

RHIANNON

You'll be tellin' us what we need,
O'Shea, or I'll be havin' your skull!
I'll fling it from off this cliff and
you'll never know peace. Just see if
I don't!

Steam and soft whispers rise from the funnel once more.

Rhiannon lowers her ear to the mouth of the funnel and is enveloped by the sliver mist.

DISSOLVE TO:

RHIANNON

Enveloped by smoke, she waves her hand before her face to clear the air.

INT. A CAVE

A fiery torch in hand, Rhiannon leads Gulley and Brocc down a passage so tight they must travel single file.

She stops to examine a crude **X** carved into the wall.

Rhiannon takes her bearings, turns a corner, clears a few cobwebs, and proceeds on.

Gulley and Brock exchange uncertain looks, but follow.

INT. AN ALCOVE

Torches held high, the group enters a small alcove.

Rhiannon uses her torch to light several more torches set into the wall, illuminating the space.

And at the far end of this alcove -- a chest!

GULLEY

My confidence was beginnin'
to wane, ya' old crow.

Gulley rushes to the chest and grabs the latches.

Twin spikes shoot from the latches, one from either side, skewering both of Gulley's hands.

GULLEY

AH! Traps! That would be just
like O'Shea, to run such a rig.

Gulley frowns as he examines the pools of blood now forming in each of his palms.

He attempts to stand, but staggers and falls to one knee.

He grasps his head.

GULLEY

Eh...my head...so foggy...it's like to explode.

RHIANNON

That would be the poison.

GULLEY

What? What poison?

RHIANNON

A parting gift, from O'Shea hisself, ya' wretch...and he sends his regards.

GULLEY

What? Ya' knew...but gave me no warning?! Ah, ya' filthy cow!

Gulley draws his cutlass...

GULLEY

I will have your head after all!

...but it slips from his fingers and clatters to the ground. Gulley himself collapses a moment later.

RHIANNON

You'll be havin' no such prize tonight...but you can rage to Shark Tooth soon enough when you join him...in the inferno!

Rhiannon cackles to herself as she now whirls on Brocc.

RHIANNON

And you...you also have designs on these spoils, mute one?

Brocc flinches away, shaking his head.

RHIANNON

Good. Any trouble from you,
I will curse your eyes and ears
to match your useless tongue!

Rhiannon leaves Brocc cowering in a corner as she turns her attention to the chest.

She avoids the spikes, grasps the lid, and flings it open.

Empty!

After a moments shock, Rhiannon begins to laugh -- and she turns back to Gulley, who spasms on the cold ground in the final throes of death.

RHIANNON

Shark Tooth got the best of
us all, ya' gutter snipe!
(strokes her chin)
I've half a mind to wrench him
back up...
(then to Brocc)
It's all yours, lad...a king's
ransom...in folly!

Rhiannon continues to laugh as she exits the alcove.

Brocc listens to her shuffling footsteps as they recede.

Then he races to the chest. He drops his hands inside, a few clicks, and he removes the false bottom.

The lower-half of the chest is thick with jewels and golden doubloons. Brocc lifts a long pearl necklace, the string seemingly endless.

Then, from behind him...

RHIANNON (O.S.)

So, it would seem the mute has
secrets of his own.

Brocc does not turn around -- but now he speaks -- with a voice surprisingly clear and strong.

BROCC

I am not so mute, witch. I have a voice...and reasons why my lips remain sealed.

RHIANNON

I think you've known of this chest all along -- that's what I think.

BROCC

I knew of it, yes, but not where it lay. Shark Tooth did not speak tonight for your benefit, old hag. He spoke for me! That his fortunes might now be passed to my hands.

Brocc glances over at Gulley's twitching carcass.

BROCC

That my father's vengeance is satisfied, so much the better.

RHIANNON

Ah...the kin to Shark Tooth O'Shea! HA-HA! And I can only imagine the wench what would have him!

(she darkens)

But you must know it matters not a whit, lad. Step away from the chest, and perhaps I might spare you a curse.

BROCC

A curse?

(he laughs)

The world will curse this night, as I now step forward to claim that which is mine...

Brocc finally turns to face the witch.

BROCC

...as heir to the dark legacy of Shark Tooth O'Shea!

And now Brocc smiles.

Rhiannon is stunned -- as all of Brocc's teeth have been filed to fine, razor-sharp points.

Firelight glistens off his shark-like maw.

BROCC

And now we see how well you
mutter your vile curses...
with no throat to form them!

ON THE CAVE WALLS

Silhouettes -- shadows given life by flickering torchlight.

A vile screech from Rhiannon as Brocc springs from the ground to clamp his razored teeth about her neck.

Thick splashes of arterial blood paint abstract patterns on the stone canvas of the cave wall --

-- and Rhiannon's cries are reduced to senseless gurglings as her throat is torn asunder.

FADE OUT.