

Revenge of the Hapless short film Screenplay by Sasan Golfar

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A short film

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Ext. The Fields – Day

Three Cavaliers, wearing the Northern uniforms of the 1860s American civil war, are passing some burnt plains and fields; ashes, smog and sparks flying around them.

The lieutenant, riding in front, is a gray beard white man. Two younger cavaliers, a white sergeant and a white corporal are after him. The captain notices something in the road and slows down. His hand reaches into his revolver, and then he hears a voice. Two black hands come out of the smog.

The Old Man: Don't shoot, master! I'm unarmed.

The captain stops and raises his right hand. The head of a gray hair black man comes after his hand out of smog.

The Old Man: I'm a friend, master!

The Lieutenant: I'm not your master!

The Old Man: Sorry, I'm used to calling you whites, master! Meant yes, Captain!

The cavalry officer looks around. The old man points to somewhere.

The Old Man: Once there was a mansion right there.

All that the lieutenant could see is some half-burnt wooden pillars in the middle of a large pile of ashes.

The Lieutenant: Where is the granary? We need provisions.

He watches the old man, who is dragging his heel and lingering.

The Lieutenant: We are the Union Army, not the Confederate. We came to free slaves.

The old man: I know, master...eh, Sir. But there ain't really nothing left to eat. Everything burned in war with the masters. But come, please; it's an important thing.

The officer first hesitates, and then reluctantly rides toward a small adobe shed the old man shows and couldn't be seen before because of the smog. The ragged old man walks in front of the officer's horse and two other riders after them. Near the shed, the officer looks around suspiciously.

The Lieutenant: Where are the others?

The old man: There ain't many people left alive. Many of us blacks were killed. We killed the whites to the last person. Of course, apart from...

The old man points to the shed. Suddenly the lieutenant reaches into his sword and the two other cavaliers pull out their revolvers, ready to attack the shed.

The old man: Ow, ow, no... I mean, that's not what you think. It's just... [Pushes the broken door of the shed and calls] Come out!

A black woman comes out of the door. The three soldiers anxiously watch and ready to act. She brings out two white little kids, a boy and a girl. Two black children are behind them. Although there is a layer of dirt and ash on the clothes of the white kids, just like their hair and face, apparently they wear expensive dresses, unlike the others. The lieutenant looks surprised.

The old man: Sir, Please take these two children of the master with you.

The Lieutenant: I can't take any children...

The old man: Please, Captain... sir! If our younger folks come back and find them here, they ain't show any mercy, even to these orphans.

The officer tries to say something but just sighs and eventually remains silent.

The old man: I know you'll be upset if you know what happened to the white masters - their old and young, even the stewards.

The Lieutenant: Whatever they've been through, I've seen much worse in this war!

The old man: I mean, because you're white...

The Lieutenant [abruptly]: I don't believe in slavery!

The officer reaches into his jacket and pulls out a rolled-up paper.

The Lieutenant: This is called the Emancipation Proclamation. From President Abraham Lincoln: ... by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and

parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that...

The Old Man: I wish you'd arrived sooner, wish you'd come much earlier. You don't know how they made dark days for us. The masters treated us like cattle. Cauterizin'... They whipped us. Raped women. They cut off limbs. Made some folk blind! They would kill a black people whenever they wanted... Now, whatever they came through, maybe they deserved! But these two innocent children did nothing. Ain't believe with what misery and difficulty I saved the two...

The officer turns away from the old man and shouted over his shoulder, trying to hide tears from the old Black Man.

The Lieutenant: Sergeant Murphy, Jeff, get kids in. We ride slowly. Hold them firm so they don't fall.

Still hiding his face from the old man, he turns and rides slowly towards the broken fences of the farm. The two other cavaliers, each one with a kid on the back of his horse, come after him. They slowly ride away from the black people behind them.

The End