

Dirty Winds

By

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FADE IN

SUPER: SOUTH CAROLINA, 1780

EXT. FIELD - EVENING

A young girl, ROSE, stands in the field. Her dress blows in the breeze. She looks painfully into the woods in the distance.

EXT. LAKE - EVENING

A young boy, ETHAN, stands by the lake, gazing into his reflection.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH - EVENING

A woman, ANNA, stands on the porch, looking toward the fields. She cries silently as tears roll down her face.

FADE OUT

SUPER: NORTH CAROLINA, 1781

EXT. CAMP FIRE - NIGHT

Four men sit around the fire, eating. They wear rough clothing and have muskets stored at their feet. MIGGS, a scrawny, gruff man breaks the silence.

MIGGS

Shoulda killed all of 'em.

NINE TOES, a tall, husky fellow responds.

NINE TOES

Us and what army?

Miggs holds up his hands and balls them into fists.

MIGGS

(motioning with his left fist)
Washington (motioning with his
right fist) and Lafayette.

FREEMAN, a large black man, interjects.

(CONTINUED)

FREEMAN

When you get so keen on the French?

MIGGS

Since they saved our hopeless asses.

NINE TOES

I killed my fair share today.

MIGGS

No amount of dead Redcoats is enough. There's no "fair share" when it comes to freedom. Ain't that right, Freeman?

FREEMAN

Freedom doesn't mean the same thing to you as it does to me, little man.

MIGGS

(motioning to the fourth man)
What do you say, Hayes? Think we could of taken more worthless Redcoat lives today?

Hayes' face is scarred, and he looks older than he should.

HAYES

We took enough.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Miggs, Nine Toes, and Freeman are perched against adjacent trees. They occasionally pop out and fire at oncoming Redcoats.

Hayes sweeps past them, sword raised. He slides behind a log. Bullets fly past his head. He sheathes his bloody sword and pulls out a pistol. He quickly looks up and shoots a soldier who is reloading.

Hayes moves gracefully from behind the log and circles behind a small group of four soldiers. He quietly slices three of them with three strokes of his blade, then shoves the fourth into the dirt. As the man screams, he slides his sword into the soldier's mouth and silences him.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. CAMP FIRE - NIGHT

NINE TOES

Sometimes I think you don't have a
soul. The way you take a man's
life. Ruthless.

Hayes gazes into the fire and remains silent.

FREEMAN

(looking at Hayes)

You can do whatever you want as far
as I'm concerned. Saved our asses
more than once.

MIGGS

I hear that.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

Hayes stands at the edge of the treeline. He slowly emerges
from the woods. He strides through the field, looking in all
directions.

He sees Rose in the distance. As he walks toward her, she
turns around. He gets close to her and reaches out his hand.
She slowly reaches out hers in return. As their hands near
each other, she turns to ash and dissolves into the night
air.

Hayes reaches into the air, trying to collect the ash. As we
see his hand clutching toward the sky...

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT

...Hayes jerks awake, sweating. He looks around at the other
men who are sleeping. He falls back to the ground, shaking.

EXT. OLD ROAD - NEXT MORNING

The men walk in a line.

MIGGS

Stay alert. Could be some coats
still lurkin' about.

(CONTINUED)

NINE TOES

Do I not look 'alert' enough to you?

MIGGS

Shut it before I cut off another toe.

NINE TOES

You can take a few more before I start complainin'.

FREEMAN

So what are we doin'?

HAYES

We need to find the battalion. Been split up for too long.

NINE TOES

We goin' the right way?

HAYES

I hope so.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The men walk from the road up a hill and into the clearing. Bodies litter the field.

FREEMAN

(mouth agape)

My Lord.

MIGGS

Whadya reckon happened here?

NINE TOES

Are there more of ours or theirs?

HAYES

Can't tell. Let's take a look. And be sharp.

The men cover each other's backs as they move down into the field. They work their way around the bodies, speechless. They near the middle of the field.

MIGGS

Looks like they won.

(CONTINUED)

FREEMAN

I'll say.

NINE TOES

Bodies are pretty fresh. I'll check
the woods.

Nine Toes walks off to the woods, gun raised.

HAYES

Looks like militia men. General
Ashe's, if I had to guess.

MIGGS

That mean we're headed in the right
direction?

HAYES

Hard to say. Let's move back to the
road and head north. Only been two
days since we got separated. Can't
be too far.

MIGGS

(yelling)

Hey Toes! Movin' out!

No answer.

MIGGS (CONT'D)

Hey! You crippled bastard! You hear
me!?No answer. Hayes moves toward the woods. Freeman and Miggs
fall in behind him for cover.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The three men enter the thick forest. They call out for Nine
Toes to no avail. As they continue walking, we see Nine Toes
hunched over the base of a tree.

MIGGS

Hey! You hear me callin'?

Nine Toes turns around, revealing a man propped up on the
tree. He is bleeding from his torso and breathing heavily.

NINE TOES

Get over here!

The men rush to the tree.

(CONTINUED)

HAYES

What's your name, son?

DEAN

(struggling to speak)

Name's Dean. Ashe's militia.

HAYES

It's gonna be okay, Dean.

Miggs and Freeman exchange a skeptical glance.

HAYES (CONT'D)

What happened here?

DEAN

Redcoats swarmed us as we marched north. Had to sweep back and face them in open battle. No cover. We didn't stand a chance.

HAYES

You're with Ashe's militia? Were there any left?

DEAN

I don't think so. Wiped us out pretty good.

HAYES

Why were you going north?

DEAN

Supposed to meet up with more militia toward Raleigh. Last we heard they needed help pretty bad.

His breathing gets faster. Hayes assesses the man's wound for the first time. There's nothing he can do to stop the bleeding.

HAYES

It's okay. You'll be okay.

DEAN

Tell my family I'm sorry. Can you tell them?

Hayes shoots a hopeless glance at the other men.

HAYES

Yes, I'll tell them. Just be calm.

The man gasps for air. His head drops to the side as his body goes limp. Hayes stands up and looks somberly at the other men.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

The men finish burying the body. Hayes lays the man's militia cap on the dirt mound.

MIGGS

Better head north. Got some catchin' up to do.

EXT. CAMP FIRE - NIGHT

The men eat around the fire. They share silence for a few moments.

FREEMAN

I wonder what Dean's family was like.

MIGGS

Maybe had a wife. Couple of kids.

FREEMAN

I got a baby girl back home.

NINE TOES

Never knew you had a family. You never talk about 'em.

FREEMAN

S'cause when I talk about 'em it makes me miss 'em more. I miss 'em so much.

MIGGS

Never did have time to settle down myself. Pretty handy with a blade. Made for a good butcher.

FREEMAN

You was a butcher?

MIGGS

Yessir. Kinda funny how those skills translate to the battlefield. Cuttin' a man's a lot like cuttin' a pig.

(CONTINUED)

NINE TOES

I had a lady.

MIGGS

"Had?"

NINE TOES

Left me for another man. S'why I
joined up. Really had nothin' left
back home.

MIGGS

Maybe your feet smelled as bad as
they look.

Nine Toes throws a piece of food at Miggs.

NINE TOES

What about you, Hayes? Whatchu got
back home?

Hayes is silent for a few beats.

HAYES

Long day tomorrow. Get some rest.

He gets up and leaves the fire. The other men look at each
other incredulously.

EXT. LAKE - EVENING

Hayes stands by the lake looking forward. The water lies
still, peaceful. He studies the lake for a few moments.

He walks closer to the edge and looks down at the water. As
his reflection appears, we see the face of a young boy,
Ethan, instead of Hayes'. Hayes, startled, jerks his head up
and slowly looks to the right. We see Ethan standing off in
the distance, looking forward.

Hayes begins to walk toward him. As he gets closer, Ethan
begins to dissolve into a black liquid, tar-like substance.
Hayes runs toward him, but just as he can almost touch him,
he is gone.

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Hayes lays on his side, motionless. His eyes quickly dart
back and forth. The other men are still asleep. He turns
over and pulls his blanket closer around him.

EXT. OLD ROAD - NEXT MORNING

The men occasionally drag their feet and walk with tired legs. The sun beats down from above as sweat pours down their faces.

MIGGS

If I'd known war was gonna be so
much walkin' I'da never enlisted.

Hayes looks down at his feet as he walks. He gets lost in the rhythm of his foot steps.

NINE TOES

Worst part is not knowin' if we're
even goin' in the right direction.

FREEMAN

Just gotta catch up with Ashe's
men. They'll point us where we need
to go.

Hayes snaps out of his gaze and looks toward the woods. He can hear shouting in the distance.

HAYES

Get off the road! Now!

MIGGS

What is it?

HAYES

Don't you hear it!? Someone's
coming!

The men sprint off to the right side of the road and up an embankment.

EXT. EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

They sprawl into prone positions and look down at the road beneath them. We hear scattered gun fire.

As the gun shots get closer, we see dozens of militia running toward the road from the other side. Redcoats swarm over top of them, killing a few men every few seconds.

FREEMAN

We gotta help 'em!

Freeman moves to get up. Hayes shoves him back down.

(CONTINUED)

HAYES

No! There's nothing we can do. We need to pull back and find higher ground. They'll overtake us in a couple of minutes.

Militia begin to run up the hill in the direction where the men are hidden. The Redcoats follow in pursuit.

HAYES (CONT'D)

We gotta move! Hurry!

The men sprint from behind the embankment and up the wooded hillside.

EXT. HILLSIDE - CONTINUOUS

The men are a few hundred feet beyond the fleeing militia. A cabin rests on top of the hill in the distance.

MIGGS

Make for the cabin! Move!

A bullet whizzes past Nine Toes' head. He stumbles. Freeman goes back to help him up. He lifts him up by the arm, and they keep running.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The door flies open. Hayes and Miggs sprint through, taking covering positions on either side. Freeman and Nine Toes run inside.

HAYES

Take positions by the windows! Stay low!

The men fall into cover by the windows, waiting.

MIGGS

Damn militia are gonna get us killed!

NINE TOES

Shhh! Keep quiet. Let 'em pass.

Hayes slowly peers out his window to assess the battlefield. The militia are running toward the cabin.

(CONTINUED)

MILITIA MAN
Head for the cabin!

FREEMAN
We can still help 'em!

HAYES
Too many Redcoats. We need to let
them pass.

Six militia men are visible now, running for cover by the cabin. Thirty Redcoats appear at the top of the hill. They take aim and fire. Five militia drop lifelessly to the ground.

The last man makes eye contact with Hayes and runs for the cabin door. Hayes grips the doorknob, ready to turn it. As the man reaches out for the door, another shot is fired, and he falls to the ground.

MIGGS
There's gotta be at least two dozen
of 'em. What do we do?

The men turn to Hayes for direction.

HAYES
Stay quiet.

The Redcoats march toward the cabin.

REDCOAT OFFICER
Search the house!

They spread out and begin to walk around the back of the cabin. The officer walks up to the door. He slowly turns the knob. As his arm stretches through the opening, Hayes cuts it off with his sword. The man screams, alerting the other soldiers.

Shots rain down on the cabin from all directions. All four men begin to fire out of their windows, tightly hugging the walls with their bodies.

A couple of soldiers hit the ground. Freeman and Miggs reload as Nine Toes and Hayes fire out of their windows with pistols. A few soldiers take cover behind trees. The rest close in on the cabin. We hear a scream.

MIGGS
Ah! I'm hit!

Blood gushes from Miggs' arm. Freeman moves up to his window and pushes Miggs behind him.

(CONTINUED)

FREEMAN

Get down! Get down!

Miggs pulls out his pistol and fires one last shot at the Redcoats.

NINE TOES

There's too many! We gotta push back!

MIGGS

There's nowhere to go! They got us surrounded from each side!

Hayes finishes a reload and fires out the front door. The bullet smacks his target right through his open mouth.

A dozen soldiers move up onto the cabin porch. They form up and kick open the door.

Nine Toes removes a hatchet from his hip and begins slicing. He kills two Redcoats simultaneously, but another one fires a pistol into his gut. He slumps to the floor, taking out one more soldier before two more shots are released into his chest.

HAYES

(to Freeman)

They're inside!

Freeman turns from the window and fires a shot over Hayes' shoulder into the heart of a Redcoat. Hayes throws a soldier against the door and shoves him outside, knocking two more to the ground in front of him. He makes quick work of them with his sword.

EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Freeman moves to cover the front door and shoots over Hayes' shoulder, killing another Redcoat.

Hayes is in the open now, with more Redcoats closing in. He slices each one that gets close to him then hears a cry from the doorway. He looks back to see Freeman, shot twice in the torso.

FREEMAN

If I die, I die for no man but myself!

A bullet notches itself in his skull. He falls to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

Hayes stands in front of the cabin, alone. Another British officer appears on the horizon. He takes aim, and fires. The bullet hits Hayes in the shoulder. He continues fighting, killing one soldier after another.

The officer pulls out his pistol, takes aim, and fires. He hits Hayes in the torso. Hayes slows his pace. Another bullet hits him in the leg. He stumbles to the ground. The officer draws his sword. He briskly walks up to Hayes and raises it.

The sword swoops down toward Hayes' neck. As the blade meets flesh...

INT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

...Hayes walks through the foyer toward the front door. He slowly opens the door and walks onto the porch.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH - EVENING

Anna stands at the edge of the porch. She stares into the fields, crying. Hayes walks up to her. He stands next to her for a few moments. He reaches out his hand to grasp hers.

HAYES

I'm home.

As they touch, they turn to flame and disappear.

FADE OUT

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Hayes and Anna stand in front of the house. Rose and Ethan run through the fields toward them.

FADE OUT