

The Puritan

By

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Fade in...

BLACK.

CUT TO:

WIDE SHOT OF A MASSIVE PLAIN/DESERT.

Void of life.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP OF A PISTOL.

An 18th Century pistol made of rusted steel and wood. The pistol lays on the floor of a hard and rocky desert, disassembled, each of its many pieces neatly laid out.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

THE PURITAN (30s), pale and skinny, almost skeletal features, is dressed in the attire of an 18th Century Puritan, A long cloak, a white shirt and a 'capotain' hat. The Puritan is an Englishman from the South Carolina Colony on the Eastern Seaboard.

He traverses a barren, unchartered land which will later be known as the Great American desert. Sitting, sweating on the desert floor, he holds a component of his pistol and wipes it with a cloth. He then proceeds with the lengthy process of reassembling the pistol.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - LATER

The Puritan kneels, pistol assembled and aimed. He whispers a prayer rapidly.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF A BIGHORN SHEEP.

The sheep stands and grazes what little weeds there are.

He finishes his prayer and there is a silence before he fires. The sound and its echo are massive, a bullet flies and pierces the beast in the leg. The Puritan watches as it lets out a yelp and then runs off with an awkward limp.

The Puritan now begins reloading the pistol which takes some

time.

CUT TO:

AERIAL/WIDE SHOT OF THE PLAIN.

The sheep and the puritan are tiny in comparison to the massive plain that seemingly stretches on forever.

When the puritan has reloaded the weapon, he jumps to his feet and starts after the wounded beast. He has his own awkward, limping run, exhausted by heat and a lack of sustenance. As he runs, his aimed pistol wobbles uncontrollably.

He's catching up, but the beast is still far ahead and the puritan is running out of breath.

He eventually slows, kneels and aims the weapon in two hands. He holds his breath now in an attempt to remain steady but he's dizzy. He keels over on his side, panting and coughing. We hear his dry throat in his wheezing as he watches the sheep disappear.

After a moment, his breathing calms. He takes his canteen from his hip and rehydrates.

A beat.

He manages to stand. The muscles in his face are quivering. He puts his hands together and prays.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXTREME AERIAL/WIDE SHOT OF THE PLAIN.

The Puritan and the sheep are two tiny spots in an otherwise desolate land.

EXT. DESERT - MINUTES LATER

The animal has fallen. The Puritan walks to it, whispering another prayer. He draws a dagger and puts the beast out of its misery. He then begins skinning it and wrapping cuts of meat in strips of white cloth and laying them on the dusty rock where they quickly soak up the blood and turn crimson.

JUMP CUT TO:

SHOT OF THE ANIMALS CARCASS, NOW FULLY HARVESTED.

Blood is all over the Puritan's hands. He stares at them. He's thirsty and tempted by the thick liquid.

A beat.

He licks the blood of his hands like a rabid dog.

He wipes blood off his hands and sits for a moment, feeling guilty. He looks around him, scanning his environment for any sign of life.

A few miles away is a great boulder and some dead trees and bushes. The Puritan goes to them.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF THE FRONT LEG'S OF A HORSE.

This unknown stallion gallops across the plain. We see only the legs of its rider, moccasins and dusty light-brown jeans. Large jugs of water are tied around the horses neck along with a bow and and a tall basket of arrows and a tomahawk.

CUT TO:

EXTREME AERIAL/WIDE SHOT.

We see the boulder.

The Puritan is pulling dry branches off of dead trees and bushes and holding them under his armpit. He then starts back to where the carcass lies beside his possessions.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

He arrives at his possessions and begins constructing a fire and spit.

JUMP CUT TO:

SHOT OF A BALL OF DRY GRASS, BURNING.

Burning at the bottom of the fire. The Puritan places twigs upon this miniature fire. Then some larger twigs upon those.

He stands up as the fire grows and again, he scans the environment.

He suddenly stops.

Through the blur of the desert mirage, a tall figure flanked by a cloud of dust some miles away, indistinguishable. From what the Puritan can see, the figure could be some great, wandering apparition.

The Puritan just stands dumbly, unsure of what to do. Unsure of whether or not this figure is real.

The fire grows. The Puritan tends to it, his attention still being drawn to the distant figure. He places a cut of lamb on a spit and positions it over the fire.

He squints at the figure, blocking out the sun with his hat. Still a dusty blur, the figure is only a little closer now. Maybe 2000 metres.

He squats now, not looking away for a second. His hand moves to the pistol holstered on his hip.

A mile away, clearer now, a horse and a rider.

The lamb is charred on one side and raw on the other.

The Puritan prays.

THE PURITAN

(whispering)

Lord God, hallowed be thy name,  
deliver us from evil in this most  
wicked and darkest hour...

CUT TO:

THE PURITAN'S POV:

A mirage under pale skies. The rider dead in the centre. A dusty blotch.

CUT TO:

REVERSE SHOT OF THE PURITAN.

Staring directly at us/camera/rider, the Puritan prays.  
Camera creeps in.

CUT BETWEEN THE TWO SHOTS AS HE PRAYS.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)

And shall I fall by the wicked claw of  
Satan, let not my death be in vain and  
may our daughter Abigail, who hath

strayed from the way of the shepherd,  
return safely to the thy kingdom...

He holds back tears.

The horse and rider are less than a mile away now and riding at full speed, a cloud of dust following them, they look like the crop duster in *North by Northwest*, emerging from the mirage.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)  
and to her kin in the plantations in  
the East. And shall I commit mortal  
sin... may it not be in vain.

The Puritan aims his pistol.

The rider is close enough now that we hear the rapid beat of the horses hooves on the hard ground.

SHOT OF PURITAN MOVES TO CLOSE UP.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)  
May thine sons and daughters Abigail,  
Gabriel, Susannah... be absolved of  
sin and seen pure in thine eyes,  
Almighty God, for thine is the  
kingdom, the power and the glory,  
forever and ever... Amen.

The Puritan places his other hand on the pistol.

The rider's bow and arrow is drawn. We still see no face.

The Puritan paces forward, the rider now a hundred feet away.

The two march toward each other.

A great arrow flies and the Puritan fires. The arrow moves just flies past the Puritan. The bullet misses too and the stallion continues to gallop forward, the Puritan jumps to the side, dodging the animals path.

The Puritan turns.

THE PURITAN'S POV:

IN SEMI-SLOW MOTION:

It's absolutely silent in this moment. The rider, THE COMANCHE, a powerful leader of the 18th century Comanche

tribe of Native Americans, distinguishable by his attire. The Puritan studies the native as the horse loops around the fire, the stallion is saddleless, the Comanche shirtless, his skin painted blood red from waist to skull to fingertips, apart from his chin and neck, which are smeared black. And his mohawk that same shade of black. Like oil. His eyes are black like a shark, stalking the Puritan.

It's absolutely silent in this moment. The Puritan watches this being while desperately trying to reload his weapon.

The native is decorated with a necklace of the bones of his enemies. And like the keychain of a prison warden, a string of black and bloody ears sits on his waist with, what can only be, the grim, brown, sun-scorched skull of a baby.

This strange and gruesome and unknown man, of whom the Puritan had only ever heard tales. Horrific tales of evil and sin and gruesome things that one dare not imagine. A terrible myth realized.

IN NORMAL MOTION:

The Puritan's weapon falls into pieces on the ground. The Comanche readies another arrow in his bow as the horse turns back and faces the Puritan.

He drops the pistol and turns and runs with that same feeble limping sprint. The stallion slows and the Comanche holds the arrow steadily at his chest.

An arrow flies and pierces the Puritan in the abdomen. He falls forward as blood quickly leaks onto the desert floor. He writhes and moans in agony, blood soaking his white shirt. He wails and holds the tip of the blood arrow stuck in him.

The native watches the Puritan suffer for a slow moment before he dismounts and proceeds to pack the clothed cuts of lamb in a satchel strung to his horse, even returning to the carcass to hack off left over pieces of meat off the ribs and then claiming one of its mighty horns.

CUT TO:

SEMI-SLOW MOTION:

It is silent again. The Puritan tries to grip the arrow but the blood is too slippery. The native is coming toward him now, in great slow steps, wielding his tomahawk.

CUT TO:

IN NORMAL MOTION:

THE PURITAN

No! Away!

The Puritan stumbles backwards and takes out his own knife, a small silver dagger.

The savage towers over the Puritan, a massive swing breaks skin and bone of the Puritan's forearm. Blood pours out of the massive gash but the Puritan manages to cut at the Savage's bare chest.

The Puritan wails in agony but continues slicing aimlessly, cutting at the Savage's wrist now. The Native jumps backward and retreats from his attack, cursing the white man in his own strange tongue.

THE COMANCHE

(in Comanche)

The Sun scorch thee, Evil spirit!

He grows angry as blood begins to pour down his chest. He jumps madly on the white man attempting to split his skull with the tomahawk.

The Puritan manages to stop him but drops his knife. The savage holds the Puritan's wounded forearm and hacks at it with his tomahawk as if cutting the branches of a tree. The Puritan's cries are disturbing.

His bloody palm searches the dirt and eventually finds the knife. He stabs the savage in the side of the abdomen. The Comanche screams and jerks backward, falling on his ass. He holds the knife stuck in him, inspecting the wound. The Puritan does the same with the arrow in his stomach. The two men lie like babies on the desert floor, both unable to move.

The Comanche moans as he pulls out the dagger out and drops it. He then crawls toward his horse.

The Puritan looks at the arrow in him. Gritting his teeth, he pulls on the arrow head and the tail comes through his belly. He lies on his back as the sun beats down on him and he prays.

He then gets to his knees, to his feet, he stumbles toward the camp, passing the crawling native man. The Comanche clambers to his feet. The white man picks up the many pieces of his gun and wraps them in his purse.



The Puritan reaches the native's horse and takes an arrow from a small collection, wielding it by the sharp stone tip, he turns back to the limping red-skinned man.

The native stops and stares at the Puritan with the eyes of a shark.

THE PURITAN

Stay away!

The Comanche shows no fear, only some mad fury.

The Puritan sees evil.

The two remain still.

Then the native comes forward with a stronger wind now, and grabs the arrow, wrestling it from the white man's hand.

THE PURITAN

No!

The native's other hand claws at the Puritan's gaping forearm, jerking it as if to rip it off.

The Puritan howls in pain and stumbles. The native now holds the arrow blade in his hand and holds the Puritan in a standing rear naked choke. He pulls the man's hair upward, exposing his hairline which he begins to slice with the stone blade. The Puritan struggles with bloody, slippery hands. Blood trickles down the Puritan's forehead and face.

The savage's hand now sits in the Puritan's mouth, pulling at his jaw. The Puritan bites fingers and the two men scream.

CUT TO:

EXTREME AERIAL/WIDE SHOT.

The two adversaries are shrunk. The Puritan manages to break away, stumbling until he finds balance, leaning on the horse.

The native keels over now. They're too small to distinguish what happened. The Puritan manages to mount the stallion, equipped with supplies and sustenance, and ride away, leaving the native with the valuable cuts of wild game.

It is silent as we watch the two men grow further apart.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF THE MAN'S CLOAK, BLOODY, DUSTY, LYING ON THE DESERT FLOOR.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF OPENED JUGS OF WATER

CUT TO:

SHOT OF THE HORSE, STANDING IN THE DARK AND THE FIRE LIGHT.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP OF THE ENORMOUS GASH IN THE MAN'S FOREARM.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

He bites his tongue and winces as he places DIY bandages over the wound.

He's sickly pale and shivering. With his wound bandaged, he carefully lies on his side and holds himself, frail and motionless. He puts his hands together and prays.

Slowly, the fire turns to smouldering embers and darkness surrounds and consumes the praying man.

A beat.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF THE HORSE, LYING DEAD ON IT'S SIDE.

EXT. CAMP - MORNING

The Puritan stares at the horse, tears in his eyes.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

He continues on foot. He travels for some hours, slowly drying out in the sun.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

The sun goes down.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The Puritan walks, his breath is heavy on the cold air of the desert night. He shivers. His head bobs up and down weakly and he rests his chin on his chest. He looks like he's

sleepwalking.

His eyes move upward and something catches his attention:

A tiny speck of light, a campfire.

He slows and stares intently, swallowing nervously.

He begins to walk toward the fire and pray.

THE PURITAN

(whispering)

Lord God almighty who art in Heaven, I  
beg thee watch over me in my hour of  
darkness....

He's crying but he continues to pray as we see his POV.

His POV:

THE COMANCHE STANDS ON BOTH KNEES BEFORE THE FIRE.

A red figure surrounded by black, the fire casting strange shadows onto his face. He waits.

The Puritan's pistol is aimed now, he paces forward.

The Comanche raises his hands like Jesus at the cross, looking faithfully to the moon. He then readies his bow and arrow.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)

Brace my soul as I come forth to face  
the wicked. May I be absolved of sin  
and my soul made pure and not be  
condemned to perdition, Amen.

The arrow is released, the Puritan fires and the bullet lights a fire in the dark. The arrow flies past the Puritan and the small metal ball pierces the native man in the neck before he can ready another arrow.

He falls back at a strange angle and lays still beside the campfire.

The Puritan is frozen in shock. He eventually goes to the fire.

EXT. COMANCHE'S CAMPFIRE - CONT.

The native is not yet dead, he holds his bloody throat in one

hand and an arrowhead in the other, his gaze stalking the Puritan without remorse.

The Puritan bends beside his enemy.

THE PURITAN

I've come in search of my kindred. My daughter.

The Comanche's glassy eyes soften. He bares a hideous smile. His teeth are strangely long and soaked in blood and this disturbing grin seems too big and twisted to be human.

THE COMANCHE

(in English)

Witch!

The strange man turns away from the Puritan and stares at the full moon in the sky. He begins chanting in a hoarse tone and a foreign tongue, slowly losing breath.

Silence.

The Puritan kneels and prays for the dead man.

JUMP CUT TO:

The Puritan is watching lamb roast on the fire. He doesn't take his eyes off it.

JUMP CUT TO:

He eats the meat and drinks water from a jug.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - DAY

He inspects his wounded forearm, the gash has turned gangrenous colour while his face holds a sickly pale complexion despite patches of severe sun burn. His skin is white and looks thin like a plastic bag shrink-wrapped on a skeleton.

He continues on his journey.

Night comes.

He sees her face in a silent dream.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

He continues on foot.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

At midday, the Puritan kneels in the shade of a great boulder and prays.

He then sits and sips water from a jug, looking out on the barren plain.

Scanning the horizon, his eyes suddenly stop on something. He stands and squints at it.

HIS POV:

A tiny speck of red colour behind a mirage, standing out in the otherwise pale brown landscape. He goes to it.

The mirage slowly fades and this blood red figure becomes much clearer.

"Cannibalism" by Satoru Kosaki begins. The figure does not move but seems to float above the desert floor like crimson spirit.

The Puritan now paces toward the figure.

The Puritan's POV:

A shaky view of the figure, a bloody, naked and distorted body.

The violin solo begins. He stops running. His mouth ajar, tears in his eyes and on his pale cheeks.

HIS POV:

A naked girl, mutilated and strung upside down from the branch of a dead tree.

But he continues and the sight only becomes more gruesome.

He sees his daughter. Her face. He turns away, in a terrible panic, he breaks down screaming and crying. But his cries are silent over the music.

He gets up and runs to his daughter, still crying out in misery.

Even more graphic, we see maggots and flies in the girl's wounds and in her open mouth

Her head hovers just above the surface where the black soot of a fire remains. Her hair has been scorched off and her face is burnt.

Her corpse is horribly mutilated, her hands and toes cut off.

The Puritan stops running and stands before the unholy shrine.

JUMP CUT TO:

He limps in aimless circles, holding his hands on his head, he bends to vomit and spits on the dirt.

He cries and falls on the dirt. His cries are still silenced by the swelling violin.

"Cannibalism" ends.

A beat. We hear only the Puritan's staggered breath.

Night comes.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

He sits and stares blankly. He then stands and goes to his daughter.

He takes her body down and lays her with her hands on her chest. He takes his coat and covers the corpse.

Kneeling on the ground beside his daughter, clasping his hands together, the Puritan pauses. He looks at his hands then takes them apart. He looks around the empty plain and looks to the sky like a child looking to his mother. He breaks down crying once again.

He stands very slowly, very weakly and looks around, up to the sky. He then looks at his bandaged and gangrenous forearm.

He can barely move his hand. His eyes drift to his waist where his dagger is holstered.

A beat.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF BLOOD SPILLING ON THE DESERT FLOOR.

We hear the Puritan's visceral screams.

EXT. DESERT - MOMENTS LATER

The Puritan is hunched over, his arm in his lap and his back to us. He cries out as his forearm falls to the ground.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF HIS FOREARM, NOW BANDAGED IN CLOTH.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

He lays awake in the cold night, shivering. His eyes drift closed and open over and over as we watch him slowly dying.

A beat.

But in the distance we hear a howl. Not like a beast of any kind but the howl of a demon.

The Puritan jumps up and looks out on the plain. On the horizon, a gang of marauders ride horseback, lit in red firelight by their many torches, darkness surrounds them. Native Americans. The Comanches. We hear their terrifying war cry echoing in the otherwise silent land and we watch the crimson glow of lanterns moving in the darkness.

The Puritan follow the Natives with his eyes. He is awoken.

He gets to his feet and stares after them. The natives travel into the distance the red glow disappears.

The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you. But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. In the afterlife and in heaven, you will be blessed.

EXT. DESERT - SUNRISE

The Puritan continues his journey once again. We hear his voice over as we watch him travel. MONTAGE!

THE PURITAN (V.O)  
 Our father who art in heaven, hallowed  
 be thy name...

EXT. DESERT - DAY

He travels for days through this seemingly boundless desert.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

He travels at midday. In the far distance, great mountains  
 are visible through the dusty mirage.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)(V.O)  
 ...In times past, In Godless lands,  
 thou hath sent a disciple, as thou  
 once sent Moses to the land of Egypt  
 to free the Israelites. And now, thou  
 sent a new disciple. And upon  
 witnessing the craft of Satan, that  
 disciple, commanded by God, shall  
 eradicate that land of such evil....

EXT. FOOTHILLS - DUSK

He reaches the foothills of great green mountains. Trees and  
 bushes live here and grass grows in patches below his feet.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The Puritan kneels by the firelight and prays.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)(V.O)  
 Lord, I prithee, I shall find those  
 who hath taken my kindred from me and  
 deliver them before thee as is written  
 in John 2:17 'The world is passing  
 away, and also its lusts; but the one  
 who does the will of God lives  
 forever....

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

He scales a mossy, forested side of a mountain.

EXT. STREAM- DAY

He bathes and drinks where the stream is widest and deepest.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)(V.O)  
 And if you faithfully obey the voice



of the Lord your God, He will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you. You will be blessed...

EXT. RIDGE/MOUNTAINTOP - DAY

He has reached a ridge where he kneels in prayer.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)

In the afterlife and in heaven, you will be blessed'.

A beat.

On the other side of the mountain, a winding dirt road through steep forest leads down to a Comanche camp. He stares down at it.

He stands and begins his last descent as the sun sets in the West.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - NIGHT

He sits in the shadow of the trees and watches the camp. Women and children walk back and forth with horses and pales of water.

The wind rustles the leaves and the trees seem to breath. Still kneeling, he closes his eyes, holds his arms out and looks to the sky.

THE PURITAN (CONT'D)

Heavenly father, I feel your words echo through these woods. I feel your hand on my heart. I shall give my life for thee. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever Amen.

THE PURITAN

(whispering)

For thee, my lord, I shall give my life.

Loaded pistol holstered and a torch in his only remaining hand, the man marches into the Comanche camp and lights a corner of a great longhouse ablaze. Women and children scream in a panic while the warriors quickly surround the Puritan.

He aims his pistol and fires, taking down an old chief. He takes his dagger next and fights vehemently but he is eventually surrounded, hands grasp his arms and neck, he screams and struggles but he is consumed by darkness.

The camp continues to burn, women and children run around screaming in the darkness and smoke and the firelight.

"Goodnight Irene" by Leadbelly plays as the black smoke becomes too dense to see the Puritan or the Natives. Merely firelight remains distinguishable through the black smoke. The screams are drowned out by the music and the smoke soon fills the entire screen.

Fade to black.

THE END.