

## The Misfits, Part VIII

John Huston, Director (1961)

Suddenly, the horse makes a run for it. Guido and Perce go for the tire, to give it weight. As the horse pulls, Guido struggles to hold the rope in his gloved hand. Gay throws another lasso around the horse's neck, which rears up. Then Perce throws another lasso.

From the cab, Roslyn watches the horse struggle against the three men.

Finally, she can't stand by any longer. She runs out of the truck and grabs the rope that Gay is holding.

"Why are you killing him?"

"Stand aside, honey!"

But she persists. "Okay, you won! All right, you've won!"

"Let go of that rope! Get outta here!" He pushes her aside.

She rushes back to him, grasping his shoulder. "Gay, darling..." When she tries again to grab the rope, he pushes her down to the ground.

Perce sees and hollers, "Roslyn!"

Gay yells back at him, "Shut up and pull that horse down!"

Pulling herself up, Roslyn walks away slowly, almost staggering under the weight of her feelings. The men hold tight as the horse bucks and rears up in desperation.

At last the horse gives up. It goes down on its knees and then lies down, completely spent. The men rush to tie it up. Roslyn watches, her face streaked with tears.

As the men bind the horse, Gay strokes under its mouth almost lovingly, soothing him. When they're finished, they stand, looking down at the tethered horse with what might almost be pity.

Roslyn stands in the back of the shot, with an unforgiving look. Taking her point of view for a moment, Gay says pensively, "Well, I guess comin' up here for the first time, there might not seem much sense to it, for only five horses – not knowin' how it used to be."

Perce lights a cigarette, as Gay goes on. "I never thought of it, but I guess the fewer you kill, the worse it looks. What do you say we give her these horses?"

Guido scowls back at him, with the look of a man who's been betrayed.

At that moment, Roslyn confronts Gay, demanding, "How much do you want for 'em? I'll pay you. I'll give you \$200. Is that enough?" She asks, looking angrily at the other men.

The camera zooms in on Gay, who looks down, his face a mask of disgust. Deeply offended, he ignores Roslyn. "Let's get in the truck."

He starts off and the others follow, but Perce reminds him, "Gay, you was about to give 'em to her."

"I did think of it, but I sell to dealers only. 'Cause all they're lookin' to buy is a horse."

Roslyn runs up to him. "I didn't mean to insult you, Gay."

"No insult. I'm just wonderin' who you think you've been talkin' to since we met." He gets up on the back of the truck and Perce joins him. Roslyn gets into the truck along with Guido, who's at the wheel, as usual.

They start off to get the other horses. The men up top don't speak, each lost in his own thoughts.

In the truck, Guido offers, "Listen, do you want me to stop this? I know how you feel, Roslyn. I never liked this part myself. Truthfully, the only part I enjoyed is the flying. You want me to stop it?"

"You would?"

He turns his head, his eyes agleam, and asks, "You're through with Gay now, right?" Guido seizes the moment to make his case: "He doesn't know what you're all about. He'll never know. Tell me, Roslyn. I've been waitin'. I'm goin' out of my mind with waitin'. Come back with me. Give me a week, two weeks. Let me show you what I am. Tell me, Roslyn. Give me a reason and I'll stop it. There'll be hell to pay, but give me a reason and I'll do it."

Shocked, she understands now that there is a price. "A reason? You, a sensitive fellow. So sad for his wife. Crying to me about the bombs you dropped and the people you killed. You have to get something to be human? You never felt anything for anybody in your life. All you know is the sad words. You could blow up the world, and all you'd feel is sorry for yourself!"

Guido doesn't answer. He grits his teeth and they drive on in silence.

Through the windshield, we see the silhouette of a colt following a mare. The men get out of the truck. Gay and Guido hold looped ropes.

Roslyn watches as the men go through the same motions as before, pulling down the mare. The colt trips over the rope and falls.

But Perce isn't participating and Gay doesn't call him. Perce glances back at Roslyn, who's watching in anguish as the men struggle to keep the horse down.

As Gay ties up the colt, he and Guido talk about the weight of the horses, how much money they'll get for them and how they'll divide it up. Roslyn hears every word.

Abruptly, she turns and runs off. The men don't notice. Gay tells Perce what his share is, but Perce refuses, saying, "No. You fellas take it. I just came along for the ride anyway."

Suddenly they hear Roslyn, screaming in the distance, "Horse killers! Killers! Murderers! You're liars! All of you, liars! You're only happy when you can see something die! You and your God's country! Freedom! I pity you!"

She's a tiny figure in a vast desert, seen in an extreme long shot. The camera zooms in on Gay and Guido, who says bitterly, "She's crazy. They're all crazy. You try not to believe it because you need them. You struggle, you build, you try, you turn yourself inside out for 'em. But it's never enough. So they put the spurs to you. I know. I got the marks. I know this racket. I just forgot what I knew for a little while."

"Butchers! Murderers! I pity you! You're three dead men!"

In a close-up, the colt nuzzles the mare. He whinnies a little, setting his hoof lightly on her neck, as a dissolve brings the scene to an end.

Gay stands in the dusk, the plane and truck in the background. We hear the murmuring of horses. Guido calls him over to hold the flashlight.

“Buck up, boy,” Guido laughs. “Before you know it you'll be up to your neck in dames again. I just been thinkin'. The world is full of mountains. Montana, Colorado, Canada, even Mexico. And where there's mountains, there's gotta be horses. We'd work a while and I could even sell my house. I don't know what I've even been keepin' it for anyway. Put everything into a good plane. We've just been foolin' around here, Gay.”

But Gay is not interested. “I wanna get out of here. Come on.”

Perce walks over to the truck, where Roslyn sits, the door propped open. He asks, “Do you want me to turn 'em loose?”

“No. There'd just be a fight.”

He stands at the front of the truck and stares out over the expanse of country, horizontal clouds above the jagged mountain tops. A horse sits quietly nearby.

As Gay is helping Guido get the plane going, Perce makes a decision. He runs to the truck, jumps in and takes off. Gay notices and starts to run after it.

At Roslyn's side, Perce drives with a fixed expression. He seems almost surprised by what he's doing. When they reach one of the tethered horses, Perce jumps out and cuts it loose.

As the horse gets up and starts to trot away, Gay appears. He tries to catch the horse, and then runs after the departing truck, both efforts equally futile.

At the next horse, Perce again leaps out and frees it.

As the horse gallops away, Roslyn whispers, “Go home! Go!”

Searching on foot, Gay comes upon a horse flat on its side on the ground, still tied to a tire, as the colt nuzzles its neck. With a loud whinny, another horse arrives.

Gay can't believe it. Here are three horses, just waiting for him.

The stallion starts to run and Gay grabs the rope that's still around its neck. At that, the horse really takes off.

Gay clings to the rope and is dragged along the ground, as the horse runs.

While Perce and Roslyn look on from beside the truck, Gay gets back on his feet, still holding the rope, but is thrown back to the ground. The horse rears up over him. Roslyn tells Perce to help him, but Perce replies, “He don't want no help.”

Suddenly somehow, Gay has subdued the horse. He reaches out and pets the animal's mane. Roslyn and Perce watch as Gay forces the horse down to the ground.

Finally, Gay and the horse collapse together, exhausted, with Gay on top. Gay gets up then and staggers to the truck, breathing heavily.

Once the horse is tethered, Gay collapses against the truck, blood trickling down his face, utterly exhausted. Guido runs up to him. "You held him! I'm proud of ya, boy. You held him. We'll get them all back tomorrow. Just get your wind back now. Get your wind back."

Gay turns to face him, with a look of contempt. But Guido is oblivious and he adds. "Don't worry, we're not through here. We're only gettin' started. We don't need anybody in the world. You know that now, don't you?"  
Gay opens up his knife and pushes Guido aside.

He bends over and, under the gaze of Perce and Roslyn – and an astonished Guido – he cuts the horse loose.

"What are you doin'?" demands Guido. The whinny of the horse catches everyone's attention and they look over to watch it run away one last time.

Gay goes to the side to the truck and sits down heavily. "What in the hell you catch him for?" asks Guido, incredulous.

Perce and Roslyn come around then. All stand, a row of puzzled faces, looking down at Gay. He answers, "Don't want nobody makin' up my mind for me, that's all.... Damn 'em all! They changed it. Changed it all around. Smearred it all over with blood. Well, I'm finished with it. It's like roping a dream now. Just gotta find another way to be alive, that's all. If there is one any more."

He stands. "Perce, cut that mare loose for me, will you?"  
"Sure."

Roslyn goes to Gay. He offers, "Drive you back, if you want." They get into the truck.

Perce goes to the window and tells Roslyn, "Um, I'm pleased to have met you, Roslyn."  
"Don't get hurt any more, will you, Perce?"

"See you around, Guido," says Gay as he starts the truck.

Guido screams back at him in a fury as the truck drives away, "Where'll you be? Polishin' windshields? Makin' change in a supermarket? Try the laundromat! They need a fella there to load the machines!"

In the truck, Roslyn looks over at Gay, a worried expression on her face. Gay looks miserable. She says, quietly, hesitantly, "I'll leave tomorrow... Okay?"

Then they are back at the plane, where Dooley has been tied up all this time. He wags his tail like crazy and paws the earth, excited to see them.

Roslyn gets out and goes to him as he bounds up and down greeting her. Gay watches them and the trace of a smile crosses his lips.

They get into the truck, Dooley sits on the seat next to Roslyn. Gay gazes at her with love. "I bless you, girl," he says and starts the truck. She slides over close to him and he puts his arm around her.

As they drive on, they see the wild horses galloping across the plain.

Roslyn holds his hand against her cheek. She's thinking back to the night after the rodeo when Gay asked if she'd have a child with him. "Gay, if there could be one person in the world, a child who could be brave from the beginning... I was scared to when you asked me. But I'm not so much now. Are you?"

"No."

"How do you find your way back in the dark?" she asks.

"Just head for that big star straight on. The highway's under it. It'll take us right home."