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# československý film



ČESKOSLOVENSKÝ FILMEXPORT

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## CARRIAGE TO VIENNA

/Kočár do Vídně/

A dramatic treatment of the right to revenge

In black and white; for the wide screen; footage 2460 metres

Script by Jan Procházka - Screenplay by Jan Procházka and Karel Kachyna - Directed by Karel Kachyna - Director of Photography Josef Illík - Music by Jan Novák - Set Decorator Leoš Karen

The Cast: Christa  
Soldier  
Wounded Soldier

Iva Janžurová  
Jaromír Hanzlík  
Luděk Munzar

Produced by Barrandov Studios, Prague  
Production Group Švábík - Procházka  
Production Year: 1966





A young village woman's husband was condemned to death and hanged in public for no greater crime than the theft of a couple of bags of cement. The widow buried the body that same night, for the fighting was moving closer all the time and there was no telling whether it could be done later. Shortly before daybreak two enemy soldiers entered the widow's cottage and, ignorant of what had gone before, ordered her to hitch her horse to the car and drive off with them. As she silently obeyed, she told herself that this was surely a sign of God's will. She prayed for strength to carry out an act of justice.

With these words opens the film whose plot is set in a village in Moravia, at the close of the second world war. As the three unequal passengers set out on their fateful journey, we follow their cart through a thick wood and watch the young woman, Christa, gather courage for the deed she is planning to do in revenge for her husband's death. One of the German soldiers is seriously wounded. He is unconscious and in great pain in turns. Groans rise from his throat as he nervously looks about him trying to assess his chances. And again he falls into a black well of pain and despair, a state of a hopelessness so profound that he attempts to take his own life. But his friends watches him with eagle eyes and takes his weapons away. Christa watches the two with outward impassivity concealing the excitement in her mind. That one will die anyway, she tells herself, but this other one will pay for my husband's death with his life. Yet the object of her homicidal designs is a frail, young lad, fully aware of his army's impending defeat and afraid for his safety. He has torn the buttons and badges off his uniform and now needs desperately to talk with someone. But Christa discourages his attempts at establishing a conversation. She indifferently lets him show her photographs of his folk, waiting only for the right moment to commit her act of justice. A hatchet is hidden under her seat and ready to be used. When the soldiers aren't looking she stealthily hides their

weapons one by one. On and on they travel, through never-ending thick forests. Now Christa feels that her moment of revenge is here. The wounded soldier, so nearly reconciled to dying a little while before, suddenly fears for his life, as he guesses Christa's murderous intentions.

His friend too now knows what their companion is up to. Too undecided to get rid of Christa, he tells her to get out of the cart and takes the reins himself. But that is no good, either, because he can feel her gazing at his back. Yet there is nothing for it but to drive on, though he notices with horror that his friend has died. At a small clearing he pulls the horse to a standstill and gets out to dig a grave for his friend. After shovelling the earth upon the body, the survivor falls asleep, overcome by the stress and tension of what he has been through. Christa creeps near, resolved to kill him now, while the moment is right but at the last instant she cannot summon up the strength to commit the act. All she manages to do is to slap his face, and then she breaks down under the weight of her experiences, becoming a helpless creature that turns for support to the only human being near. Dawn finds the two clinging to each other in a lovers' embrace.

A group of partisans coming upon the clearing find a village woman making love with an enemy soldier. That is all they need for their contempt to be complete. They see it as an act of retribution pure and simple to shoot the lad and rape the woman.

Once again Christa climbs to the box of the cart. She wearily whips up the horse, to drive the second corpse in her life off to the infinity of her destiny.