


GILLES NUYTENS  
PRESENTS

The poster has a dark, textured background. A large, detailed fly is positioned on the left side, facing right. To its right is a bright yellow splash or explosion. The word 'HARMLESS' is written in large, bold, black letters across the center, with the fly and splash partially overlapping it.

# HARMLESS

A SHORT STORY WRITTEN BY GILLES NUYTENS  
BASED UPON A SCRIPT BY GILLES NUYTENS & ERIC CHU

# HARMLESS

*By Gilles Nuytens*

*Based upon a script by  
Gilles Nuytens & Eric Chu*

## English version

*Translated from French by Gilles Nuytens  
Revised by Eric Chu*

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## **About this story...**

This short story is an adaptation of « *Harmless* », a short film script written in 2010 by Gilles Nuytens and Eric Chu.

Eric is known in the science-fiction world for having worked on the design of the TV show, Battlestar Galactica, in 2003. It is his work that inspired the unique style of the show, which went on to become a world-wide cult hit.

Gilles has, among other things, created official websites for many TV show actors and actresses, as well as sites such GateWorld and The Scifi World. He is not only a computer graphics designer, but also an actor, photographer and writer. Gilles is a passionate artist.

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## **HARMLESS**

The sky was clear. The night had fallen over the forest and the full moon shone in all its glory. Blanketing the mountains and the forest below, it stretched as far as the eye could see. It was magnificent. Peace reigned over the green vastness.

But the tranquillity would not last for very long.

From their celestial vault, the stars twinkled in the dark and watched silently over the Earth. There were thousands. One of them, brighter than the others, grew bigger.

And bigger.

Its diameter continued to increase until it became a fireball slicing through the darkness. Whatever this object was, it was clear that it was not a shooting star. *A meteor?*

No, the glowing object began to slow down as it approached the treetops, piercing the darkness with blinding rays of light.

The vessel had stopped its progress and sought to position itself between the trees. Searchlights illuminated the entire area and detected a small clearing. In a deafening roar and a flurry of dust, the ship deployed its landing gear and landed on the forest ground. The silence returned. There was peace and serenity once again.

It wasn't going to last.

Surrounded by a fine mist covering the ground, mixed with dusty fallout, the vehicle stood proudly among the trees, imposing and ominous, like a stone monument in the middle of the forest. The lights shut down, a shadow emerged from the smoke and descended from the machine. The man set foot on the mossy ground.

Well, man in form only, because this thing was definitely not a man. Equipped with a heavy armour and formidable weaponry, the alien was big, mean and downright ugly. Its gaze was enough to inspire terror and dread. It was not to be reckoned with. *And it was going to prove it!*

After a short pause in the cool night air, it plunged headlong into the forest.

It was dark and dense. The full moon barely peeked through the trees. Only the sound of the buzzing crickets was perceptible. But they went silent, one after the other...

Equipped with a targeting device attached to its yellow eye, the alien charged straight ahead through everything in its path, brutal and ruthless. Contaminating the sanctuary by its presence,

the alien continued to advance until an alert made it stop right away. The device homed in on a potential threat up ahead. The image on the screen flickered as it tried to identify the lifeform: a rabbit.

After a few seconds of analysis, the unit decided its verdict: « HARMLESS ». Without hesitation, the alien raised his arm and in a flash of sizzling light, the poor animal was disintegrated.

« Grzzzaaappp! »

Of the beast, only ashes and charred meat was left. The body still smouldering, the alien continued on its way and resumed its mission.

The few animals that crossed its path were no luckier, each one was sentenced and executed without exception. Squirrels, deer, rats, foxes, birds, all met the same fate:

« Grzzzaaappp! »

« Grzzzaaappp! »

The bloodbath only ceased when it caught sight of a small light further behind the trees. Immediately, and without remorse over what atrocities it had inflicted on the local wildlife, the alien set off towards this strange light source.

The darkness of the forest contrasted with the glow that seemed to emanate from nowhere. But as it approached, it could see that it was really just a simple little dwelling. An old decrepit

wooden house, the sort of house one would probably peg for a hunting lodge or a shelter for lost hikers.

The alien had now arrived at the shack and went to the window. He positioned himself against it, in plain view, unconcerned about being seen.

Inside, an old man, sitting at an old table, was having supper. Bite after bite, the man gnawed his meal, unaware of the danger that lurked nearby. On his plate were the remains of a big red steak.

Frail, pale and scrawny, he had a grey beard and wore an old worn plaid shirt. He was a pathetic sight.

He leaned forward to bite down on a new mouthful. Suddenly, he closed his mouth and sat up. His arm remained raised, with his fork in his hand. He sat motionless.

*He had felt something.*

Behind the window, in the shadows, the alien was watching the old man carefully. Flies circled around him but it did not care, it was focused on its target. It was human, according to its targeting device, which then began analysing the old man's threat level. As the information was being processed, a single fly passed in front of the sensor. Suddenly, the device offered up its verdict:

« HARMLESS ».

With an indefinable grunt, it raised its arm blaster towards the window.

« Grzzzaaappp! »

The old man's jaw dropped as the glass shattered. Inside, the explosion threw debris across the room. Electrically-charged black smoke blew out of the gaping hole.

When the air had cleared, the alien analyzed the situation. Something was wrong. It examined the place carefully, turning its head to the left, then right, and again. The old man was gone!

*Completely obliterated?*

Wanting to be sure, it kicked in the door and entered the house. The chair where the man had sat fell apart into glowing embers. The table had been wiped out and debris littered the floor. The fork had embedded itself in the wall, the meat still attached to its prongs... but no trace of the old man.

*Nothing ... Nobody! He was no longer there!*

The alien inspected the room again. It was a simple log cabin, decorated with hunting implements, guns, photos and... trophies. *Hunting* trophies. It turned its head back.

Still no signs of life.

A shadow loomed behind him. The alien looked up, but it was too late! A six-inch blade had pierced its throat...

The alien gave a muffled scream and took a step forward. Staggering, it turned and saw the old man leap out of the shadows, the knife in his hand. Yellowish blood spread across his fingers and dripped to the layer of ash and dirt covering the floor.



Furious, the alien stood up and opened fire. The man was surprisingly agile and dodged the shots towards the 12-gauge shotgun, across the room. The two adversaries exchanged gun blasts in the tiny kitchen, blowing holes in the walls. A stray round of buckshot hit the alien and it toppled backwards. Out of shells, the man flipped the shotgun around, grabbed it by the barrel and held it like a club. Oblivious to the hot sizzle of his own flesh, he swung the shotgun at the intruder's head.

« *Aaaaggh!* »

A searing pain shot up from his hands, and he missed his target. The shotgun still managed to smash the arm of the alien, before it could open fire again. Disrupted by the shock, the weapon misfired and struck a small oil lamp that exploded, showering the air with flaming kerosene. The old man's shirt caught fire and he fled into the next room. The alien, meanwhile, crashed onto the floor, its back against the ground.

The room plunged into darkness.

The moon reflected its light through the trees, some of the rays reached inside the house and across the face of the alien. Lying on its back, it had suffered heavy injuries. Fortunately, because of its unusual anatomical layout, no vital organs had been damaged. However, its wounds were not benign and it needed to complete its mission as soon as possible. The shame of failure was not an option.

Gasping for breath, the alien scanned the surroundings and detected something: the sound of tiny running footsteps. He got up slowly, went to the doorway, and entered the second room of the house. It was even darker, but it found the burnt remains of a shirt in the middle of the floor. It stepped forward and picked it up.

*Something was not right.*

It dialled up its visual enhancers to night vision. The room brightened and came into focus. The alien looked down again. The floor was carpeted with bear traps!

It continued to move forward, carefully skirting the steel jaws on the floor.

*Where did the human go?*

A drop of greasy water fell to the floor in front of its boot, and it raised its head.

Shirtless, bathed in sweat, a dagger in one hand and another clenched in his teeth, the old man hung from the rafters. He leaped and landed on its shoulders, stabbing it with rage and determination. Stepping between traps, the alien tried as best as it could to throw off the troublesome pest, but this human bastard was tough. It finally succeeded in grabbing him by the neck and slammed the little man against the wall.

The man gasped, locked the grip of this alien bastard. He clawed weakly but the strength of its wrist seemed unbreakable. The bones in his neck were at their breaking point and his eyes bulged out of their sockets. The alien watched the old hermit

with attention and curiosity. It was going to take its time to study this strange creature.

So fragile, and yet, so dangerous.

*Why had the detector had not accurately assessed its threat level?*

It increased the pressure of its grip. The man began to choke louder and drool dripped from his mouth. His veins popped out and his face began to change colour. It was... fascinating.

It approached his face get a better look.

It approached even closer to study this unusual specimen.

It approached closer still, *to look its enemy in his eyes...*

There was now only a few inches that separated the old man from the head of the alien. He could smell the putrid breath escape from its horrific visage. He could see every twitch in his enemy's face. His eyes convulsed. He was at the point of losing consciousness.

Without warning, he lunged forward and bit off a piece of the alien's face with his teeth. From the open wound, putrid yellow blood spurted in his face! The alien bellowed in pain and let go of the old man, who used his legs to shove the creature to the floor. It fell to the ground and a bear trap clamped over its head.

The man grabbed a chain hanging from the wall and began to wrap it around the alien, with disconcerting speed and dexterity... like a spider spinning its web. The alien tried to struggle in vain, but it couldn't move. It was trapped!

*No escape!*

The alien saw the old man leaning over him. Now it was at his mercy, it was his prey. And, for the first time, it felt a new sensation: terror.

Lying in its own yellowish blood, it lost consciousness. Its ocular device emitted a little sizzle, then sputtered, before shutting down completely.

*A short circuit.*

There was a pungent smell that filled the place, a disgusting odour, the smell of death. The atmosphere itself was heavy, saturated with dread.

It woke up.

Its device had produced an electric shock and momentarily flickered to life. Helpless, the alien felt its body slide down a slope gradually, fitfully, as if ...

*It was being dragged down a flight of stairs!*

It tried to struggle, but there was nothing it could do, the chains were wound tightly around its body. Its armour seemed to weigh a ton, and dug into the wounds that the bastard had inflicted. The pain was too strong and the chains were too tight. It felt its end was closing in...

Around him, the cellar was littered with objects that could not be defined in the darkness; it was a real mess. The alien's head struck the cold floor repeatedly while it was pulled toward the centre of the room. The old man turned away for a moment. The alien turned its head and focused on an object near its head. It was...

*...a human skull!*

The old man switched on a work light and the prisoner realized what the objects littering the ground were: bones and body parts! There was blood everywhere! The room was filled with dead bodies, arms, legs, hands, severed heads... The work of a real butcher! Added to this, a wide assortment of tools hung from the walls and stored on the shelves! They were caked in dried blood.

The man returned and lifted his catch onto his work table... *a butcher's table!*

For a moment, he just studied it, chewing, as if something was stuck between his teeth. He looked away, lost in thought. Then he grinned and began to work. He pulled the trap off the alien's head and noticed the ocular device. Its face covered with a yellowish liquid, the alien blinked, it was in agony, choking on its own blood. A very worn old bulb was hung from the ceiling, connected by an old electrical cable that disappeared into the murky darkness. The man took the device and held it up to the light. The screen focused on the old man's face. Close-up. In a blink, the device changed its assessment from « HARMLESS » to « DANGEROUS ».

The man emitted a small grunt and tossed the worthless gadget over his shoulders. He was not interested... No, what interested him was there, lying on the table!

On the ground, the device went into high alert, the word « DANGEROUS » started blinking insistently, this was no longer just a threat but a critical situation: the old man had a chainsaw in his hands and was yanking on the cord...

Far away, other eyes were watching the scene unfold. *Other aliens.*

Three of them sat in front of a monitor displaying transmissions from their comrade's targeting device. They witnessed his exploits. Or rather, *his ordeal.*

The noise of the chainsaw broke the silence and echoed across the walls of what appeared to be the control room of a massive spaceship. The rumble of the chainsaw, and the screams of their fallen brother resonated throughout the room. It sounded like a pig being slaughtered.

The chainsaw stopped and the silence returned. The seconds that followed seemed like an eternity. The old man then threw an object onto the floor and it rolled in front of the camera.

*The alien's head!*

The screen focused, processed the new information, and changed its assessment from « DANGEROUS » to « HARMLESS ».

In front of its monitor, the alien leader seemed terrified. It looked at its two sidekicks. They were as pale as it. At least, pale by the standards of their species. Horror was written on their faces, they had never seen anything like this in all the thousands of worlds they had visited. One of their own had just been hacked to pieces before their very eyes. It was something inconceivable, unbelievable, unimaginable!

After a long silence, the leader finally came to a decision and turned on the communicator. Its voice was solemn and grave, announcing to the entire fleet:

- INDIGENOUS LIFEFORMS EXTREMELY VIOLENT AND HOSTILE.

It paused for a short break, then added:

- INVASION ABORTED.

In the coldness of space, lighting its engines, the ship that was in orbit over the Earth backed away and departed from the blue planet. In its wake, the other ships followed one after the other...

*...thousands of other ships.*

One by one, the thousands of stars that decorated the night sky disappeared from the sky.

In the cabin below, the old man sat at the table, leaning back. His plate was empty in front of him, he burped and rubbed his stomach. He was sated. He had just finished a magnificent feast.

Outside, the grill was still smoking, the remains of a fresh carcass sizzled among the ashes...

A fly landed on the edge of the plate...

*... a « HARMLESS » fly...*

THE END

More to come at:  
**[www.gillesnuytens.com](http://www.gillesnuytens.com)**

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**BONUS**

*Alternate covers!*

**#1 : Alien**



**BONUS**

*Alternate covers!*

**#2 : Horror version**

