

40 Acres is a gruesome parable about finding hope in the apocalypse

In a media landscape that is thoroughly saturated with postapocalyptic movies centering white families whose stories of survival are assumed to be relatable, cowriter / director R.T. Thorne's debut feature *40 Acres* stands out as an inspired new entry in the genre's canon. Rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, the film plays things straight with its brutal exploration of what it takes for hope to take root in a world that seems doomed.

Set in a near future where the world has been ravaged by a global pandemic, widespread famine, and the outbreak of a new civil war in the United States, *40 Acres* tells the tale of Hailey Freeman (Danielle Deadwyler) a soldier-turned-farmer fighting to keep her family safe. With society largely collapsed and the food production system destroyed by the depletion of arable land, fertile farms like Hailey's where crops still grow are a precious gift that people would gladly kill for.

To Hailey, the farm's more than just a remote plot of land up in the Canadian wilderness – it's a family heirloom passed down through generations from her ancestors who first claimed it during the Reconstruction. It's also the home she shares with her partner Galen (Michael Greyeyes), and their blended family of children (Leenah Robinson, Jaeda LeBlanc, Haile Amare). But as relatively safe as the Freemans are living off the grid and surrounded by their electrified fence, Hailey and Galen know it could all be taken from them in an instant.

That's why they keep their children trained for combat and ready to defend their land by any means necessary.