

THE GIVING

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - NIGHT

A generator HUMS near the side window of a modern but completely unkempt house.

The tall grass doesn't hide the fact that there's a higher level of security here, including bars on the windows.

What stands out most, though: the ring of military-style razor wire that circles the house, save for the iron gate that splits it.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - MAIN LIVING AREA - NIGHT

The open space holds the living room, dining room and kitchen areas, tightly packed with what might be considered junk, if it wasn't actually useful.

GEORGE, 40s, a scruffiness that matches the house, plucks a bit of herb from a makeshift planter -- an old TV, on its back, filled with dirt and plants instead of electronics.

He spins past the dining room table where ANNIE, 21, blind, sits. She sniffs the air.

ANNIE
Rosemary? Really?

George opens the oven, pulls out a beautifully-cooked turkey.

GEORGE
Why not?

He breaks the rosemary, rubs it on the turkey, then drops it in the juice.

GEORGE
It says something.

He bastes the turkey.

ANNIE
That we waste good rosemary?

GEORGE
That we're not animals.

George sets the turkey aside, moves to stir soup in a large pot on the stove.

A DOORBELL sounds.

GEORGE
Could you?

Annie slides from the table, feels her way to the front door.

The DOORBELL rings again. Then again. And, again.

GEORGE
Sounds nervous.

Annie smiles. She hits a button on the wall, turns a few locks on the door, returns to her seat at the table.

There's a KNOCK.

GEORGE
Come in, already! It's open.

BARRY, 40s, pushes in, quickly closes the door. He turns the locks, spins...

BARRY
Took your time.

George moves to grab a few bowls from a cabinet.

GEORGE
Calm down, Bare. It's too early to get all worked up.

Barry props a shotgun in the corner, removes his coat. He steps further into the house.

GEORGE
You mind?

Barry rolls his eyes.

GEORGE
House rules. As you know.

Barry takes a pistol from his waistband, sets it on a shelf. The THUD of the pistol on the shelf catches Annie's attention.

He takes another pistol from his ankle and a knife from a sheath. He sets them on the shelf.

Barry walks past Annie to the kitchen. As he brushes past her, he taps her shoulder.

BARRY
Hey, Annie.

ANNIE
Barry.

George eyes Annie's cold reaction as Barry eyes the turkey.

BARRY
That's quite the bird.

George smiles. Proud.

BARRY
Can I put it on the table?

George shrugs, pulls out an old hubcap.

GEORGE
I shined it up, just in case.

Barry slides the turkey from an old roasting pan to the hubcap, walks it to the table.

BARRY
It's been a long year.

GEORGE
Hell, it's been a long three years.

BARRY
I can't think of a better way to cap it than spending an evening with the two of you.

George scoops a bit of soup into dirty bowls, carries them to the table as Barry settles in.

He looks at his watch.

GEORGE
Generator'll go out soon.

He grabs a few candles, puts them on the table, lights them.

As soon as he does, the generator kicks off and darkness bathes the room.

George chuckles as he sits.

GEORGE
I'm getting better at guessing on the gas.

He looks at Annie.

GEORGE
Soup's in front. Spoon on your
right.

She feels for the spoon. They all eat the soup. Barry,
though, can't keep his eyes off that turkey.

BARRY
You raise them here?

GEORGE
A few. Out back.

BARRY
No trouble?

GEORGE
None yet.

Barry takes another sip of soup.

BARRY
This is good, thank you.

George laughs.

GEORGE
Don't know that I'd call it good.

Barry nods to the bird.

BARRY
So, when... ?

GEORGE
We've got time.

They continue to eat, the silence growing.

Eventually...

BARRY
So, Annie. You haven't been in town
lately. We miss you at the school.

She doesn't look up.

The silence grows again.

Barry jumps as George bellows...

GEORGE

Oh my goodness! We forgot to say
grace.

They all set their spoons aside.

GEORGE

Annie? You want to take this?

She shakes her head: Not me. George turns to Barry.

GEORGE

I guess it's you, then.

Barry nods.

BARRY

Happy to.

He closes his eyes.

BARRY

Dear Lord, on this day of thanks,
we want to thank you for your
blessings. This food that nourishes
us, the company you provide. And
Lord, in these tumultuous times, we
thank you for your protection, from
the forces of evil that lurk among
us, and those that would do us --

He stops cold. Probably because of the gun -- his gun -- that
Annie presses against the back of this head.

George opens his eyes, sees the gun.

GEORGE

Well. Ain't that an interesting
development?

BARRY

I -- can we -- please --

George looks at Annie, her eyes filled with rage.

He leans in to Barry.

GEORGE

You mind explaining why my daughter
wants to kill you?

BARRY

I, uh -- I -- don't --

She cocks the gun. Barry breaks down.

BARRY

I get so lonely. Ever since --

He looks at George, trying for a connection.

BARRY

You know. You lost your own wife,
too.

George flares, grabs Barry by the throat. Annie backs off a few steps.

GEORGE

Trying times show the true measure
of a man. I guess we know who you
really are Barry.

BARRY

No. I didn't -- I just --

A low RUMBLE echoes outside. A growl, really. Something big.

George releases Barry, looks at his watch.

GEORGE

Shit. It's early.

BARRY

Early? Why?

George grabs the turkey while Barry and Annie stand frozen.

GEORGE

Get the door!

Barry leaps up, slides open the back patio door.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Barry peers from inside the house. Razor wire rings the backyard, same as the front.

George, turkey in hand, sidles next to him, quickly joined by Annie, gun at her side.

The low RUMBLE grows closer. Their eyes go big.

Barry pushes George from the house.

George stumbles forward, holding out the turkey as he crosses the yard.

GEORGE

An offering. As requested.

A large shadow, created by the moon's glow against the creature's frame, sweeps across the yard, growing as George approaches.

He reaches the razor line, tentatively tosses the turkey to the other side.

The creature GROWLS again, modulating up and down. It's almost a language.

GEORGE

I don't understand. It's what you asked.

The shadow recedes a bit. Another shadow -- a much smaller shadow -- presses forward.

BARRY

Holy shit.

ANNIE

What is it?

BARRY

There's a child.

George watches as the smaller shadow overtakes the turkey, then retreats. With a louder GROWL, the larger shadow again steps forward.

GEORGE

I don't have another --

There's a commotion behind him, he spins...

BARRY

No -- please.

Annie walks Barry forward, the gun at his head.

ANNIE

Does he have to be cooked?

George steps aside, but Barry stops. He twists to grab the gun from Annie.

George jumps in as they all fight for control.

The shadow surges, overtakes them all.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - DAY

The lawn is mowed, the razor wire gone.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - MAIN LIVING AREA - DAY

George cooks in the kitchen while Annie sits at the table eating a bowl of soup.

He pulls a large ham from the oven, sets it on the counter.

ANNIE

Oh, wow. That smells amazing.

GEORGE

It's the clove.

She pulls in a long deep breath of air, savoring.

GEORGE

Then you agree. It's not wasted?

She smiles.

ANNIE

We're not animals.

George reaches back into the oven, pulls out another ham.

GEORGE

I think it's going to be an okay Christmas. Don't you?

ANNIE

And an even better New Year. I've invited the Reverend.

FADE OUT.