

THE HUMAN THING

By

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FADE IN

INT FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

PA, 60, as rugged and grizzled as a farmer gets, sips coffee and erases an answer to the faded crossword puzzle on the table.

The décor and appliances are old, worn, repaired, nothing new. Even the clothes are worn. MA, 60, shuffles past.

MA

Don't you get tired of doing that puzzle?

PA

Workin' themind, Ma, workin' themind.

She leaves as the door opens. COLT, 25, enters and slips out of his worn boots. He pours himself a cup and sits.

PA

Well?

COLT

Got two three-year-olds ready to fry.
Moved three to the baby barn.

(beat)

Lost another head last night.

Pa lays aside his pencil and worn glasses.

PA

That's two in the last two weeks.

COLT

Yep.

PA

You know what that means.

COLT

Poachers.

Pa looks out the window and sighs before he pushes back.

PA

Time won't make it better.

COLT

No, sir.

The lights flicker.

PA

You refuel?

COLT

It ain't the fuel, it's the plugs. It
needs new plugs.

PA

We'll clean 'em when get back.

COLT

We cleaned 'em last week.

PA

Best we can do, son, best we can do.

EXT PASTURE - DAY

Colt and Pa, carrying rifles, walk toward a hole in their barbed
wire fence.

COLT

That's where they came in.

PA

We got any spare fence left?

COLT

No sir, used it all last time.

They slip through the hole.

EXT WOODS - DAY

Pa and Colt follow a faint trail through the woods. Suddenly,
Colt stops and raises his rifle to his shoulder. Not far away
stands a ten-point buck.

PA

What're you doin'?

COLT

Easy shot.

PA

We don't waste ammo on what we can't eat.

COLT

It's been twenty years since the turn. All the bad stuff is dead already.

PA

That's what your Uncle Rob thought. Remember how he died?

Colt's face says he remembers exactly how his uncle died.

PA

I don't know how long it's gonna take to get that stuff out of the food chain, but it ain't gone yet. Put your gun down.

Colt lowers his rifle.

PA

Come on, we don't want to be out here after dark.

They head on.

EXT CAVE - DAY

Pa and Colt study a large cave mouth, watching a wisp of smoke leak out.

PA

What do you think?

COLT

At least two, maybe more.

PA

We ease in. Be ready.

COLT

Wish we had a flashlight.

PA

Folks in hell want ice water. Come on.

INT CAVE - DAY

Pa and Colt slink along a rock wall. They stop.

Ahead, two MEN, 40s, and a WOMAN, 50, in tatters, squat by a small fire. The Men eat cooked human arms. The Woman gnaws a hand. To the side, a headless, armless human torso.

Pa motions to Colt. They raise their guns and walk ahead. The Men spot them and stand. The Woman cowers.

PA

Sit down!

The Men hesitate, and Pa cocks his rifle.

The Men squat as the Woman makes a break for the entrance. Colt hits her with his rifle, and she drops like a stone. The Men stir.

PA

On your bellies, now!

The Men lie on their faces as Pa hands Colt a rope. Colt kneels and ties up the men.

PA

Make sure they can walk.

COLT

What we gonna do with 'em?

PA

Fry 'em and add them to the herd.

COLT

Even her?

PA

Leave her. She's too old to breed.

Colt looks up at Pa.

PA

I suppose the wolves will get her when the fire dies.

COLT
You want me to shoot her?

PA
Ain't worth a bullet.

Colt jerks the men to their feet.

COLT
Wolves ain't a good way.

Pa and Colt trade stares.

PA
You're right. The human thing. Take
'em out.

Colt pushes the men toward the entrance.

EXT CAVE - DAY

Colt stands with the bound Men. A GUNSHOT echoes from the cave.
Moments later, Pa emerges from the cave.

COLT
Thanks.

PA
What we got left if we ain't human?

Pa smiles, and they start into the woods.

FADE OUT