

## OLD GODS OF APPALACHIA

### Season 1 Episode 0: Prologue

*Old Gods of Appalachia is a horror anthology podcast, and thus may contain material not suitable for all audiences, so listener discretion is advised.*

[The Land Unknown by Landon Blood]

*I walk these hills, leave these dark valleys,*

*Where I can't stay in the land unknown*

*In these hills that I walk so often,*

*I can feel the wind now on your ghost...*

Appalachia. A word stolen from more than one language, it conjures images of the beauty of God's creation, and the darkness of man's various poverties. The simpler way of life here bespeaks a time passed of purity and piety, but turn over a stone... you'll find the underbelly of suspicion and clannishness. Folk who live here don't trust easy. There's whole graveyards full of what we've learned about outsiders. And before you judge us as backwood hillbillies or opioid-addicted rednecks, take a minute to understand how we got here. I mean how we really got here.

There are places in this world that humanity was never supposed to see — walled in by mountains of burning black rock, isolated by a choking canopy of poison flora, woods where tooth, claw, and hunger still sit atop the food chain. Long before our kind ever set foot in these mountains, when the peaks of the Blue Ridge towered above the stars, and the heart of the plateau still rolled with ridges tough as pine knobs, darkness was brought here in cages made of fear. Our tongues do not have the shape to speak the true names of what they are... and that's *are*, not *were*. They are hunger, consumption, lust — all the things that settle under the heart and below the ribcage. They are the cancer that will one day eat the edges of this universe, and leave nothing in its place. They are not evil. They are not of hell or the Christian devil. They simply are.

Now these Things came close to consuming this world before man ever took our first shaking steps into sunlight, and the only way they was ever stopped was that a prison that was deep and sound enough was built. In a far corner of a backwater world that nobody would ever miss, a range of mountains was lifted high, and the darkness buried beneath them. Warning beacons and guardians were placed all around that blighted Eden so that no living thing with a reasoning mind and the ability to do harm would ever try to live there, and for thousands of years the barriers held. The darkness was bound and time passed. But winds and weather wore at the walls of the prison until they were shadows of their once towering selves, and then men came to know this land.

Even by the maps they made, you can see that this place is defined by mostly natural boundaries. The earliest men knew. Oh they'd come here and hunt, end up being hunted, and not return. Centuries passed and more came that managed to keep this land a little

while, learning the places where the dark ran the deepest, and building their homes on the edge of the dying light. For generations they lit their fires to push back the shadows, whole nations woven into the fabric of the mountains whose tainted heart wore at the weaving until they weakened and frayed. It was then that the men would come from the north, and from the eastern shore. They would come here as if called — the outcast and the impoverished with nowhere else to go. The opportunists, the frontiersmen, those eager to kill and die for the sake of glory or land... and kill and die they did. But these roughneck forebears that gave rise to our bloodlines did not come here by chance. You see, we were never meant to be here at all. But our mamaws and papaws took to these hollers, dug in deep and claimed blood and root, kin and bone, fought this land for every inch they managed to take, and even with what they gained... they lost.

On the orders of richer men and their machines, they dug into the earth to find a paycheck. They just wanted to claim a little piece of what they thought was already theirs. But they didn't claim the land — the land claimed them. These are some of the oldest mountains in the world. How dare we think we could break the skin of a god and try to dig out its heart without bringing forth blood and darkness? For generations the outside world has looked at us and wondered why we really never climbed out of these hollers, wondered why we reject outsiders, why we bind ourselves to industries that destroy us, why we drown ourselves in pills and the bliss of ignorance. They see us feed ourselves to the earth like martyrs. They see us dig into the mines, watch our fortunes rise and fall, cave in and burn. They don't understand how short the days are here, how these mountains swaddle us in an early night. They don't see how little sunlight we actually get. And they don't see the shadows stir, don't hear the lost hymns that haunt these hillsides, don't hear the prayers that rise up in the night... prayers raised to a god on high that fall back down to feed the old gods of Appalachia that sleep below.

Which is fitting. First come, first served.

[I Cannot Escape The Darkness by Those Poor Bastards]

*There is a curse upon my every waking breath,  
And I cannot escape the darkness...*

STEVE: Hi. I'm Steve Shell

CAM: and I'm Cam Collins. We're the creators of Old Gods of Appalachia.

STEVE: Old Gods of Appalachia is a horror anthology podcast set in the mountains of an Alternate Appalachia, a place where the bloody history and rich folklore of these stolen mountains bleed into our original stories and the stains never quite wash out.

CAM: As a team, we write for everyone who knows that behind every small mountain town there lies a legion of nightmares, ghosts, and things that cannot be explained. We grew up in the shadow of these mountains, and the shadowy industries that continue to

exploit and pillage a land and people who offer themselves up again and again as sacrifice.

STEVE: We have seen the shadows stir. We have heard the calls in the night. And this podcast is our attempt to answer them, and to make sense of where we come in the telling of these tales. Come with us, won't you Family? Join us over at [oldgodsofappalachia.com](http://oldgodsofappalachia.com), where you'll find links to all of our social media and more information about the show. You can also help us keep the lights on — or off, as the case may be — by supporting us on Patreon ([patreon.com/oldgodsofappalachia](http://patreon.com/oldgodsofappalachia)).

Old Gods of Appalachia is a production of DeepNerd Media. Our intro music is by Landon Blood. Our outro music is by Those Poor Bastards. Today's story was written and performed by Steve Shell .