

OLD GODS OF APPALACHIA

Season 2 Episode 25: The Siege of Pleasant Evenings

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

[The Land Unknown: Hollow Heart version by Landon Blood]

Her cold wind calls

And so I follow

No time to rest these weary bones.

I hear her song

And my heart goes hollow

Best not to walk these woods alone

Best stick to the roads

Stay out of the shadow

Best get on home

Best to leave them ghosts alone...

Marcie slammed the door and bolted it behind her with a curse. God damn that no count Jerry Brotherton! She had never liked the man—had known him to be a coward down to his bones—but how had he got himself mixed up with the trouble Vera Blevins had brought to her door this morning? Marcie sighed. she might never know, and

however it happened, Jerry Brotherton was not her responsibility. Stars alone knew she had enough people to worry about right now. Most of them were safe under her roof. She'd sent one of the boys to fetch Vera's father this afternoon. With that lot running loose around Baker's Gap, it—well, it wasn't safe for anyone to leave the property now. She could only hope he'd made it safely to Blevins' farm.

“Marce,” Ellie called to her, “you should go check on Tish,” her sister said softly, and Marcie took the stairs two at a time to the second floor and turned for Tish's room.

She found Tish by the window she'd leaned out of with her shotgun, sitting against the wall in a pretty yellow dress, hugging her knees to her chest. Her blue eyes were getting puffy from crying, and her black hair was coming loose from the elaborate twist she'd put it up in for the evening.

“Hey—hey, now,” Marcie said gently, patting the air with her hands as she squatted down for all the world, like she was trying to calm a spooked horse—a gesture that usually irked Tish to no end; but she paid it no mind now, which was a bad sign.

“Talk to me, honey, what's going on?”

“Those men, or whatever they are—they're threatening to kill us over that girl? What's going on, Marcie?” Tish sobbed.

“Tish, honey, it’s okay—everything’s gonna be all right, I promise you. I’ll take care of everything. Listen—”

“No, you listen! This is more of that, that... that woo-woo bullshit, isn’t it? Marcie... Marcie, I told you I don’t want nothing to do with all that! I told you, that’s the devil’s business, just like mama always said, and here we are, and they’re coming for us now, and we’re all gonna die, and, and, and—”

“Tish!” Marcie clapped her hands once, sharply, and Tish fell silent with a sob.

“Sweetheart,” Marcie crooned softly, reaching out to grasp her lover’s hands. “Look at me, Tish. Listen to my voice,” she said in a calm, measured tone, gathering power to her as she caressed her thumbs in gentle circles counterclockwise round Tish’s palms.

“Take a deep breath, now. That’s good—hold it just a second there. Now let it out—good. Don’t that feel better? Now, just listen to my voice, Tish. All will be well. you can do this. You are brave and strong, and you are not afraid of those men, hear me? What are they to you?” Marcie spat. “You’re Leticia Owens! the finest shot in east Tennessee.” she winked. “not to mention the prettiest girl in the finest parlor house on the eastern seaboard. You got shoes worth more than the likes of them. Bah! You’re not afraid of that loudmouth fancy boy or his lap dogs.”

As Marcie watched, Tish’s eyes cleared, and her tears dried, and she smiled back at Marcie’s wink. “Did you get a load of that suit?” She chuckled. “He’ll probably run away if we kick some dirt on his shoes.”

Marcie smiled back and got to her feet and reached for Tish's hands. "Come on, now. They'll be back at dark."

Tish reached for her shotgun with a nod. "We'll be ready for 'em."

When the sun went down over Baker's Gap, an uncustomary hush fell over Pleasant Evenings—a tense, bow-strung anticipation—as Marcie and her sister and all those who called that establishment home stood ready. Tish was not the only woman at Pleasant Evenings that knew how to handle firearms—no, sir. Though none could match her marksmanship, so they had armed the most competent among them. For everyone else, they had improvised—iron skilletts, a billy club, knives aplenty—although, hopefully, no one would need them.

Marcie and Ellie had crafted those wards with great care, had layered them and strengthened them over time—they *should* be fine. And of course, the sisters themselves were there to back them up.

As promised, the strange man in the charcoal suit and his compatriots returned at dark. With them, they brought Jerry Brotherton—who, to be fair, seemed even more reluctant to be a part of this whole affair than before—and others: men and boys whose faces were troublingly familiar to Marcie. She might not know their names, but there—that boy. Didn't he used to work at the general store? And oh, stars, she'd hired that young man on last summer to do some yard work when his mama was sick. The townsfolk

looked, and felt, odd to Marcie. Their faces hung slack, their eyes heavy-lidded. They almost swayed on their feet, and to her senses, they felt muted somehow—almost empty.

“Miss Walker, we have come. Thrice now I ask you: will you surrender the gir—”

[SHOTGUN FIRING]

As her shotgun blast tore a hole into his chest, Marcie heard Tish call out, “In this house, we only got one answer for folks who don’t listen when a lady says no!” [Chk-chk of a shotgun being racked]

As they watched, the Man from the Railroad, looking only mildly perturbed, reached long fingers into the wound. And, fishing around for a moment, pulled the lead pellets from his chest, dropping them one by one onto the ground at his feet.

[chuckles darkly] “Blood it is, then, Miss Walker. Blood it is.” The Railroad Man clenched his fist around the last metal slug and squeezed hard. Blood welled up and poured forth—an ever-flowing crimson river spilling between his taut fingers and onto the ground. And it should have vanished there, should have been soaked up by the thirsty ground or boiled to a hissing steam by the wards woven into the earth by will and water, earth and stone. But instead, the blood pooled and spread, growing outward from the man in the charcoal suit’s feet like a dark sigil of corruption. The man laughed and opened his hand, and instead of the projectile that Tish had launched into his chest,

he held a shiny black business card, just like the ones he'd handed out to the assembled throng of workers and travelers who had followed him to this place. He paced among them, the bloodstain he had birthed following him like a second shadow.

“My friends,” called the man, lifting the black-edged, blood-smearred card into the air, “it is time to go to work.” The business card flashed in a pulse of violet fire and was gone. All around the assembled mass of men, similar flashes appeared in hands, pockets, hat bands, wherever these fell invitations had been stowed. And with each murmur of grease-smearred light, the men began to change.

It started with a quiver in the belly, in a wild itching of the skin, but soon eyes went wild, and their shapes distorted—bones stretched and joints doubled. Big men grew taller and thicker, muscles shifting like tectonic plates and rupturing through skin like broken continents. This dark remaking turning normal men into discarded leavings from the lathe of some dark god. A few roared like animals. Others screamed in fear and pain as their bodies warped and betrayed them. The smaller men and boys in the crowd grew angular and bladed, their bodies becoming slinking, pointed things made of too many bendings, their mouths splitting into needle-toothed grins, their skin reshaping into chitinous scales in some places, flaking like shale in others. Claws erupted from the points of some fingers. Faces became muzzles and maws.

This menagerie of the discarded and defiled was naught but raw materials to the fiend dressed in bespoke finery. They had been the iron to be hammered into rails, the timber

to be cut into ties, the spikes to be hammered into the earth to allow passage—the very nature and essence of the railroad to find ingress and egress at any cost. And at a gesture from the man in the charcoal suit, the men and boys of Baker’s Gap began a disorganized shuffle towards Pleasant Evenings, the movement not quite a march, but all the more unnerving for its lack of clear coordination. And at the Man from the Railroad’s direction, the first wave of these newly made monstrosities roared and howled and rushed onto the Walker property, crossed the wards, and died. They didn’t scream; they simply fell—quiet and bloody and broken—where they stood, as if they hadn’t cared whether they lived or died. And the next wave came on—this batch unchanged and as human as you please, mostly younger men, seemingly unperturbed by the fate of their fellows, even as they met the same. And a third wave of writhing and changing creatures stepped behind them and layered behind them. Waiting was a fourth, and a fifth...

Marcie stepped out onto the porch, fists clenched. There wasn’t much she could do to stop it—not without risking herself and those under her protection. Well, it was gruesome and cruel, and it filled her with rage. The next monstrous regiment emerged from the trees, dead eyes set on the hulking form of Pleasant Evenings.

The Man from the Railroad looked up at her and sighed dramatically. “Oh, Miss Walker, please see sense. You’re doing nothing but covering these beautiful wards of yours with the blood of those who have nothing to do with our dispute. And the bloodier it gets out here, the more your land becomes my land, where I might go and do as I please.” And he

proceeded to demonstrate this by stepping gingerly atop the fallen forms of the dead, caving in faces and cracking spines as he stepped, the bloody shadow moving with him, slithering over each corpse like a slick of gore-kissed oil. “So, please, send out the girl, and I’ll only kill you. Anyone else who is still breathing can just walk away.”

Marcie gritted her teeth and held her tongue defiantly. She met the thing’s eyes, not giving him the satisfaction of a single shake of her head.

“Then if we must spill the blood of these poor, discarded, raggedy, old lambs, then let us sweeten the pot with the blood of the fatted calf—one fed milk and honey, ripe with tender meat that’s never known a real day of work or struggle in its life. Jerry, my friend, come here!”

Judge Jerry Brotherton was hefted forward by a massive man with a heavy brow and pale skin. He was weeping, had literally pissed himself in fear. His voice shook with terror and revulsion as he looked at his old acquaintance. “P-p-please, b-buddy, come on now, you, you said we’s gonna be even St—”

The man’s hand closed around Jerry’s throat and then tore it away without further preamble. “Good night, Mr. Brotherton. I can’t say it’s been a little slice of heaven knowing you... because it hasn’t.” Jerry Brotherton’s blood soaked the soil at the Man from the Railroad’s feet, mingling with the growing stain that flowed across the ground in his wake as he paced to the edge of Marcie’s wards. Marcie eyed that spreading pool

nervously. Her wards had always held, that was true; but they'd never encountered whatever the power of the man in the charcoal suit wielded.

And then as if to answer her unspoken query, the Railroad Man's body flickered and changed. He seemed to grow taller, and then shorter, he seemed to distort into impossible forms and faces, and collapsed back into the well-dressed fiend in the charcoal suit. In one flickering moment, and dark-skinned, wrought with muscles, his back misshapen by a slab of scars; in his hand hung a heavy hammer. Another shift, and he was a woman cradling her dead husband's head in her lap, his body crushed by stones. another flicker and he was a burning town, billowing black smoke into the trees, the heat and burning stench of men dying ripe on the air, for but a moment before he flickered again, and he was a salt and pepper playboy in a fine hand-tailored suit. Other visions flickered across the eyes of those who saw him there, each one a custom-made image of pain and loss and violation.

He grinned up at her, stark and feral, like a wolf with a mouth full of your firstborn. "Do not mourn these poor souls, Miss Walker, for they have all fallen short of the glory of their god—be it the one who takes their tithe or the one who signs their paycheck. They look to both for salvation and find naught but throats like sepulchers and feet quick to shed blood." Suddenly, the Man from the Railroad stopped his pacing. He smiled—genuinely smiled!—and cocked his head, holding one hand theatrically to his ear, as if catching wind of something only he could hear. "Oh, Miss Walker, our business may be at an end, as I believe Mr. Erskine has introduced himself to Miss Blevins. Best go make

sure your house is in order, nnyess?” And with that, he turned his back on her, returning his attention to the poor, damned souls at his back and the hellish business of sending more lost folks to their death against Marcie Walker’s wards.

Marcie turned for the door at a run, and quick as a snake, before anybody but Marcie noticed what she was doing, Ellie slipped out past her, out the door and into the deep evening shadows with her white blade in her hand and a determined look in her eyes—stars bless her! Ellie would keep watch and be ready should the worst happen., Marcie knew. Ellie would keep them safe.

The witches’ wards had been as solid as brick and mortar—at least from the outside, but Abel Erskine had always had a thing for smoke and for chimneys. As a boy, they’d sent him to work as a sweep, and he’d learned early on he could find his way into folks’s houses that way, too, when they weren’t home—or sometimes, when they were. It was so easy to start a fire in a chimney—so easy, so beautiful to watch it burn. And working so close to fire, Abel had developed a fascination with it, you might say, early on. Some 30 homes, schools, and churches—hell, probably more—had gone up under the spark of his tinderbox well before the company came knocking. So much fiery death had marked his life that when his Hollowing came, it seemed only natural that smoke and shadow had come to define his new form. And as the sun set on Pleasant Evenings and his skin came off, Mr. Erskine felt his bones simply dissolve, becoming light as ash, as soot, and he let the warm breeze take him up, up into the air, over the house, and down again

through the chimney—no one ever thought to guard their chimneys—and into the house, where he reformed again, all blackened bones and hidden steel.

He found the girl alone in a room on the uppermost floor. Silent swept he; no footsteps to mark his passing, just a trail of creosote and the stench of burning as he floated—a shadow with no face and arms and fingers like the clutching branches of a poplar tree. He found her sitting at a writing desk in one of the smaller rooms; it was a posh little affair: a fine, woven, circular rug set beneath the stout desk. Colored light drifted in from stained glass at the top of the window.

The girl's attention was fixed on a sheet of paper as she hurriedly scratched out some sort of note. Her bag sat on the floor behind her, and the watch lay on the table. She was making a run for it, the stupid thing. Before she could turn and see his monstrous form stretched out from floor to ceiling above her, all burnt flesh and drifting smoke, he flexed his fingers so that the charred skin and flesh crumbled away, revealing those gleaming razors that were his namesake: Erskine, being from the old Scots, *Eris-skyne*, which loosely translates to “upon the knife,” where Vera Blevins would soon find herself.

Perhaps he should take the watch first, he thought—secure the property, then terminate the interloper—yes that made the most sense. But when he turned back to the table, the watch was gone.

the girl had spun around and was offering the silver disc to him in her outstretched palm. “Please, just take it! this is what you want, ain’t it? You killed all these people for this—what is it, magic? Some family heirloom to that thing that et my friend? You want it? *Take it!*”

Erskine would have stared wide-eyed, if he’d had eyes in this form, at the girl’s hand, which was blackening with the beginnings of rot wherever she touched the metal of the thing. He could see other spots of the same decay on her other hand, where she must have handled it earlier. The monster that was Abel Erskine backed away from the offering. “Girl, put that down. You’re, you’re hurting yourself more than I ever could by letting that thing touch you.”

Vera ignored him, squeezing the thing harder, as so not to drop it, thrusting it out to Erskine. “Just take it, mister!” Her voice was weakening, the vile taint of the metal that was not silver and was not steel, of what was not actually a timepiece at all—at least not in the way we think of it—pouring its poison into her. Her face was withering now, her hair thinning, running out her clock, so to speak. Vera’s hand shook, and the cursed talisman fell to the floor in a flutter of spoiled, tangerine-colored light as it flipped open, and for just a moment, Vera Blevins saw what was inside. And all that was left of her fell to the ground in a heap of bones and wet flesh. The cover snapped closed over the dark thing inside it, and it rolled back to the center of the rug under the table, coming to rest on its back.

“Oh, foolish child. Could have spared you that last bit,” Erskine tsked and reached for the object, but realized he could not move. He frowned, looking down to the floor, and it was only then that he spotted the fine weaving of the rug—not pretty, ornamental flowers or patterns, but runes and sigils of binding.

“Empty vessel, hollow bone,” came the voice of Marcie Walker from behind him. “By the words of my mother, and my mother’s mother, and by all the strength of my ancestors, I bind you. By earth and by fire, by air and by water, I bind you. By blood and bone, sigil and thread, I bind you.” The air around Erskine constricted, and on instinct, his amorphous form sought to escape, to dissipate like wood smoke, but he found himself trapped by an invisible wall measuring the circumference of the rug he stood upon—a mysterious ring he found he could not escape, and that ring was inexplicably shrinking. As Erskine frantically tried to escape, the space around him grew tighter and tighter, until the heavy desk groaned, cracked, and splintered as the unseen wall of force moved through it and him. The very air began to crush him, squeezing Erskine until he was a narrow column of smoke spinning wildly within the shrinking circle of will that his bladed hand could not break. He spun round and round until he faced the tall woman, who held a long walking stick with a silver tip that blazed with a purifying white light. Her voice did not thunder, nor scream; it was a low growl of focused fury and rage.

“Soot-breather. Bottom-feeder. Hollow Man of black breath made. I see you. I *name* you. I call you *lightless*. I call you *nothing*. I call you *gone*.” and the circle closed on itself

without a sound, and Abel Erskine, or what was left of him, tumbled to the ground in a small pile of ash that could easily be swept into a shoebox.

Outside in the slaughter that painted the front lawn of Pleasant Evenings, the Man from the Railroad felt Vera Blevins die, but he also seemed to have lost track of Mr. Erskine, but—oh well, whatever the Hollow Man had done had made the whole house shudder. And the Railroad Man grinned his old tiger's grin and called, "Ah! Hear that, Mr. White? The walls are crumbling now! I think you might be the proverbial straw to break the camel's back. If you would, please."

"You want me to throw myself onto a camel? I-I know your ways are different from ours, sir, but I don't think animal ritual—"

The Railroad Man rolled his eyes. "Ugh. Knock the door down, you foo—" [SHOTGUN FIRING]

But his last words were cut off by a shotgun blast that caught the man in the charcoal suit from behind and spun him across the ground. A voice as big as the man that carried it followed the shot "Vera! Vera, Daddy's here sugar, you just hang on!" And then a man, seemingly the size of Black Mountain, stepped into view, reloading a sawed-off shotgun. At six-foot-six and around 300 pounds, Melvin Blevins had made the trip out to the Gap when Dale Weathers had showed up at his house with a wild story about trouble out at the parlor house where Vera was. A boy had come earlier in the day and tried to get him

to come then, telling him Vera was in some kind of trouble, and she needed her daddy, whether she knewed it or not. And he tried telling that boy, the girl didn't want nothing to do with him. But Dale said it was something wild, and that bad men were trying to get in the house, and they kept saying Vera's name, and that's all it took. He nearly burned the tires off his work truck to get there.

Now, Melvin didn't know what to make of all the dead men—or things—covering the lawn of the parlor house, but the ones that were trying to break into it were after his little girl—again, that's all he needed to know—and he knew what a boss looked like, so the one in the fancy suit got it first. His muscle came running when he went down—a thick, pale man, screaming in what sounded like... German, maybe? He was faster than he looked, but Melvin and his shotgun were faster, [shotgun firing] and the big man's head disintegrated in a cascade of what looked like plaster and rock. No blood, no brains; just shattered white stone. Melvin watched in shock as the headless corpse slumped to the ground and crumbled into dust.

Melvin's blood ran cold and his stomach dropped. He looked from the empty suit that once contained the body of a pale giant to the patchwork quilt of corpses that littered the surrounding green. Finally, his eyes fell on the body of the man he shot first. He watched, unbelieving, as that man stood up, watched as his wounds healed, hell—even his suit stitched itself back together. The stranger stood in a literal puddle of blood that was pulsing and moving, shrinking as it fed into the man, healing his wounds. He

stepped from that bloody ground onto the dry, clean earth of the driveway and looked Melvin Blevins up and down, clearly annoyed.

“My friend, you have entered a situation that you do not understand, and I’m sorry, but I cannot allow new players to enter the field at this time. So if you’d do me a small favor, and *just die*—” he reached for Melvin just as he reached for Jerry Brotherton and would have ended this harder man’s life the same way, but a voice from the upper balcony drew his attention.

“Stranger,” called Marcie Walker, stepping out under the upper Veranda, “if you want this so badly, come and get it!” She held up her walking stick like a fishing rod, and from it, dangling on a thin silver chain, was the thing that was not actually a pocket watch that had started this whole mess. Without waiting for a reaction, Marcie swung her staff out and snapped it back, breaking the chain. The cold, metal disc arced over the yard toward the Railroad Man, who stepped back further out of his ever-present circle of blood to catch it lazily in one hand.

And suddenly sank to his knees with a cry, as a white blur flashed from the darkness and a spray of blood spattered the ground at his feet, the tendons of his ankles neatly severed by the glowing blade of Moonbone.

Ellie Walker moved around the hamstrung man quickly, etching a perfect circle in the red clay dirt around him. She had spent most of the night creeping through the edges of

the yard, getting as close as she could to the men that man had changed, trying to find a sense if she could break his hold on them, undo whatever this working was, but it was no good. The best she could do was trace the threads of magic and pain back to the smear of crimson that followed that bastard in the fancy clothes wherever he went—it was the link to whatever power he was using to try to get into their house. All she needed was for him to step away from it for a breath. And lo, here he was, on his knees.

She leaned in close—but not too close—and hissed, “My sister’s the one who’s good at binding things, mister, but I think this will hold you long enough.” She cast her eyes askance at the rivulets of blood draining from the yard, sloshing around her closed circle, trying to find a way in, to the wounded man. “You can stop trying to heal—I cut you off from your power source, there. And it looks like your big-mouth friend done been put down, so he’s not going to be a help to you, either.” She looked at the cold, metal thing in his hand and nodded. “You got what you came for, but that’s all you’ll get tonight, understand? See, like I said, my sister? She’s the best at binding things. But me? I’m better at severing ties and cutting things loose.” Before a silver-tongued word could slip from the old tiger’s mouth, Ellie Walker drew the paper-thin edge of the hunting knife that had been her companion since childhood across the Railroad Man’s throat and then knelt fully down and whispered in his ear, “Your compact here is done. You have your prize. Your ties to this place are cut. Speak no more. Do no more. Hush, now. *Hush.*”

The ground began to shake, and light began to well up and glow and then blast from the handsome man's eyes, mouth, and throat, as the sound of a passing train *roared* through Big Gap Holler. And when it was past, the blood and the death and the Man from the Railroad was gone.

Marcie had maintained Pleasant Evenings as a parlor house for a time, though its sterling reputation had been tarnished by rumors of the bloodshed within its walls. A few of the girls had packed up and left—not that she could blame them much, but one of them had been Tish. She hadn't left right away; there'd been a lot of talk and a lot of tears between the night the man in the charcoal suit came and the night Tish left.

Tish had never been comfortable with the side of Marcie's family business that had brought the Man from the Railroad into their lives, but she'd been willing to overlook it—at least until it knocked on her door and threatened her life and the lives of all her friends. Marcie had tried to reassure her Pleasant Evenings was safe. The house was warded, and their wards had held, and now that she'd seen their weak points, she'd shored those up. She could keep Tish safe—but it wasn't just a question of safety.

“You did a working on me!” Tish had said angrily. “You made me not be scared—and maybe, and maybe right then, it helped me, but—but you didn't ask, Marcie! You know how I feel about it, and you went ahead and did it without asking me. How—how can I trust you, Marce, if you can affect my feelings like that? How could I trust you not to

just make me not mad at you, when you deserve me being mad at, but—or try to make me happy when I'm feeling sad. It's—it's just not right.”

Marcie couldn't argue with that. She had done what she thought was right at the time, but she hadn't stopped to consider what Tish wanted. She'd made a terrible mistake. She could apologize, and did many times, but she couldn't wrangle her way out of Tish's logic. She pleaded with Tish for a second chance, and to be fair, Tish considered her words and thought long and hard about her choices. But in the end, Tish had said no.

“I love you, but I can't trust you; and that means I can't stay.” And Tish had packed her things and gone to stay with a cousin who was opening her own new brothel up Louisville way.

They had retrieved Vera Blevins's remains and brought them to her family. Marcie had offered to pay for the girl's funeral and take care of anything else the family needed, but Melvin Blevins had his pride. Marcie expected the man to hate her—to curse her or attack her for getting his daughter killed, but Melvin, and his wife Clara, was grateful for the shelter and protection the Walkers had tried to give their daughter when they had not. Melvin flat out refused to let Marcie take the blame for Vera's death and swore on his own grave that he'd do whatever he could to keep other girls and boys working at the house out in the Gap safe. And Melvin Blevins was true to his word—he became, for a time, Pleasant Evenings's first bouncer, and quickly endeared himself to all who

worked there, and the regular clientele, as well—well, leastways those who tended to mind their p's and q's.

Over time, Marcie supposed, he'd become her best friend. He'd stuck by through the good times and the hard times, and when inevitably the law came knocking Sheriff Andy Hodge came to her, hat in hand, to quietly suggest that with that whole business with Judge Brotherton dying under mysterious circumstances on her property, it'd probably be best to close up shop before someone directed him to start investigating Pleasant Evenings official-like. And it was Melvin who was there to support her, to help her forge a new path forward.

That all seemed like a lifetime ago to Marcie as she stood in the now-quiet hall of the Walker House. She glanced up at the grandfather clock in the hall. It was getting late, and she needed to hustle. Melvin's wife had gone to visit some family up in Kentucky as she did around this time every year, and Marcie offered to bring Melvin some supper. and when it came to feeding family, Marcie Walker was not one to keep 'em waiting.

[Paper, Ink, and Sorrow by Jacob Cody Moore]

Yeah, Virgil Collins had some acreage back in the Devil's Mile

It'd only been inside the family for just a little while

He fell every tree and built the house where he raised his boys

And a man came into the holler, we didn't know his drawl

*With a quarter-million dollars and an offer for us all
Said the railroad wants to build—you'll never have to work again*

*And the road that he was traveling on was misery and loss
Deserving jail, deserving hell, no one could stand the thought
Suitcase full of dollars from the belly of the rock
Paper, ink, and sorrow, charcoal suit and all*

Well, hey there, family. Welcome to the end of the Railroad Man and the Local Magistrate saga, here in season two of Old Gods of Appalachia: In the Pines. I hope you all enjoyed that journey, learning what brought Melvin and Marcie and the whole Walker clan close together in that transition from Pleasant Evenings to the Walker House. I want to give special thanks to Mr. Yuri Lowenthal and Mr. Corey Ryan Forrester for being our special guest voices during this story arc! I could not be happier, and the response we've gotten from y'all says y'all couldn't be much happier, either. I don't let voices into our world lightly, and when I had the chance to work with both of these amazing human beings, I jumped at it, and I'm so so happy with the way it turned out. So to the man in the charcoal suit and to His Honorable Judge Jerry, thank you so very much for being part of the family. You are welcome at our table anytime.

And family, if you'd like to belly up to the table, well, head on over to oldgodsofappalachia.com, where you can find links to our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, the Discord server, and our [Patreon](#), where you can toss your tithe in the

collection plate and gain exclusive access to stories like Door Under the Floor and the epic Build Mama A Coffin. we're going to be announcing some exciting things on Patreon and otherwise in the month of May, so please complete that social media ritual and follow along.

Old Gods of Appalachia is a production of DeepNerd Media. Our intro music is by Landon Blood. Today's outro music is by Jacob Cody Moore. The voice of the Railroad Man was Yuri Lowenthal. The voice of Judge Jerry Brotherton was Corey Ryan Forrester. Today's story was written by Cam Collins and Steve Shell and performed by Steve Shell. See you soon, family. See you real soon.

[Whistling]

*...And the road that he was traveling on was misery and loss
Deserving jail, deserving hell, no one could stand the thought
Suitcase full of dollars from the belly of the rock
Paper, ink, and sorrow, charcoal suit and all*