

Old Gods of Appalachia  
Season 1: Barlo

Episode 5.5  
The Bad Death and Resurrection of  
Annie Messer

FADE IN:

**EXT. AVERY PROPERTY- AFTERNOON**

**THE EVENING ANNIE AND CLETUS CHECK IN ON THE AVERYS**

CLOSE UP OF DEAD CAROL ANNE'S FACE.

THE FLIES ON CAROL ANNE AVERY'S FACE SHIFT AND WAVE LIKE A MOURNER'S VEIL. THE WIND CAUSES HER BODY TO TURN AND CREAK ON THE ROPE NOOSE.

WHERE CAROL ANNE HAD EMPTIED HERSELF AFTER DEPARTING HER BODY, A DARK STAIN MARKED THE GROUND. AND FROM THAT STAIN A CANCEROUS BLACK SLUDGE SPREAD LIKE A FUNGUS. IT CLIMBED THE TRUNKS OF NEARBY TREES AND HAD BEGUN TO CREEP UP THE STEPS OF THE AVERY CABIN.

THE YARD ITSELF IS A DIFFERENT SORT OF HORROR. THE GROUND IS GOUGED AND SLASHED. IN PLACES IT LOOKS LIKE CLAWED FEAT HAD PUSHED OFF, LEAVING RAGGED CRATERS FILLED WITH A PUTRID, BILE-COLORED ICHOR. TINY THINGS SWIM IN THE PUDDLES.

**CLETUS** AND **ANNIE MESSER** HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED AT THE AVERY PLACE, FINDING IT RAVAGED BY VIOLENCE AND UNSPEAKABLE DARKNESS. THE ONLY SOUND OTHER THAN THE FLIES IS THE CREAKING OF THE BRANCH AS CAROL ANNE STARES UNSEEINGLY DOWN AT THE PAIR OF THEM. ANNIE MESSER IS STUNNED INTO SILENCE FOR A MOMENT BEFORE TEARS FILL HER EYES AS SHE BABBLES AND CRIES.

**ANNIE**

Oh my Lord, Cletus, I've never  
seen anything like this. This poor  
family... Oh my Lord, where's Sarah?  
We gotta find Sarah. Oh my God.  
You reckon we should cut her down?  
I mean, we have to cut her down,  
right? It's the right thing to do.  
We can't just leave her up there!

**CLETUS** STARES AT THE BODY, SPEECHLESS. AROUND HIM AND UNHEARD BY  
ANNIE, THE VOICES WHISPER.

**VOICES**

*Bring her... Find the girl... Bring  
her to us... BRING HERRRRRRRR.*

**ANNIE** RUNS TOWARD THE CABIN, NOW DESPERATE TO FIND SARAH, AND  
**CLETUS** IS NOT FAR BEHIND.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**INT. AVERY CABIN- CONT.**

THE DOOR TO THE CABIN IS IN SPLINTERS. THE GLASS OF THE  
WINDOWPANES LAY IN A THOUSAND BROKEN PIECES ON THE FRONT ROOM  
FLOOR. PILES OF ANIMAL SCAT LITTER THE FLOOR AND SMEAR ACROSS  
THE BARE WALLS. HUGE MAGGOTS MOVE AMONG IT. EVERYTHING INSIDE  
HAS BEEN TORN TO PIECES. SOMETHING HAD TORN THROUGH THIS HOUSE

AND BEFOULED IT. SOMEONE OR SOMETHING HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR SARAH AVERY.

**ANNIE AND CLETUS** ARE ROCKED BACK BY THE SMELL AS THEY ENTER. THEIR EYES WATER AND COVER THEIR NOSES.

**ANNIE**

Dear God Almighty, that *smell!*

**CLETUS**

Smells like dead roadkill and  
shit..

**ANNIE**

What could have done something  
like this?

**THE VOICES** SWELL IN RAPTUROUS APPROVAL OF HIS PRESENCE HERE AT THE AVERY HOMESTEAD. CLETUS'S HEAD FEELS IT MAY BURST AT ANY MINUTE. HIS NOSE BEGINS TO BLEED.

**ANNIE** WALKS THROUGH THE CABIN, FRANTICALLY CALLING OUT FOR SARAH.

**ANNIE**

Sarah? Sarah Avery? It's Miss Annie! If you can hear me, please call out or make a noise or somethin', baby! Sarah!!

**CLETUS** MOVES SLOWLY AMONG THE FRONT ROOM, SIMPLY TOO SHOCKED TO DO MUCH ELSE.

**ANNIE MESSER'S** VOICE SUDDENLY FALLS SILENT ALONG WITH THE VOICES.

**CLETUS** SPINS TO SEE WHAT IS GOING ON, THE SUDDEN SILENCE JARRING THE SHOCK OUT OF HIM.

**CLETUS**

Annie?

**ANNIE** IS BACK IN THE MAIN ROOM, STARING AT A SPOT JUST BEYOND THE CORNER OF THE CABIN. A HUGE SHADOW BOTH SOLID AND ETHEREAL FILLS THE DARKNESS.

**CLETUS**

Annie, what you looking at? Come away from that now—

**CLETUS** SQUINTS HARD AT THE CORNER. IT WAS LIKE HIS EYES WANTED TO SEE WHATEVER IT WAS THAT ANNIE WAS STARING AT BUT HIS MIND WOULDN'T LET HIM. LIGHT BENDS AND SHIMMERS AND REFUSES TO SHOW THE SHAPE OF WHATEVER IS THERE. HE REACHES OUT TO TRY TO GRAB ANNIE'S ARM, BUT FREEZES.

FROM OUTSIDE, THE GROUND SQUELCHES AND THRUMS AS SOMETHING HEAVY DROPS FROM THE BRANCHES OF A NEARBY TREE. **CLETUS** TURNS AS QUICK AS HE CAN TO SEE WHAT'S THERE. BEFORE HE CAN TRULY UNDERSTAND

WHAT IS HAPPENING, A SINGULAR VOICE IN HIS HEAD GROWLS A WORD LOUDER THAN ANY WHISPER IT HAD EVER USED TO SPEAK TO HIM.

**CLETUS** SCREAMS AND CLENCHES HIS EYES SHUT AS HE FALLS TO THE GROUND.

**THE VOICE** DISAPPEARS AND **CLETUS** OPENS HIS EYES, LOOKING TOWARD THE RAGGED FRONT DOOR THRESHOLD. HE IS STRUCK DUMB AND HORRIFIED AT WHAT HE SEES THERE.

JUST BEYOND THE DOORWAY STANDS SOMETHING VAGUELY LIKE A DOG, OR MAYBE A WOLF, BUT NOT EVEN. IT IS HAIRLESS WITH SKIN A PALE BLUE AND SOFT LIKE A DROWNED PERSON. IT STANDS ON SIX LEGS, EACH ONE ENDING IN THICK BLACK CLAWS THAT RETRACT LIKE A CAT. EACH LIMB IS COVERED IN EYES. BROWN WITH BLOODSHOT WHITES, GREEN WITH SCARLET BLOBS FLOATING AROUND THE IRIS, MILKY WHITE ORBS, AND SCARLET THAT SMOLDER AND THROB A SICK BLOOD CLOT BROWN. ITS BODY IS THICK AND BROAD LIKE A BOAR. ITS HEAD IS LIKE A HAIRLESS WOLF, WITH JAGGED TUSKS GROWING FROM THE UNDERSIDE OF ITS JAWS. ITS EARS ARE WIDE AND BATLIKE. IT HAS TWO BLACK AND EMPTY EYES, AND ONE MORE LIKE A BURNING GOLDEN SUN BETWEEN THE OTHERS. ITS MAW IS FULL OF JAGGED AND BROKEN TEETH AND FANGS; SOME LOOK LIKE SHATTERED BITS OF GLASS AND STONE.

AS **CLETUS** WATCHES IN PARALYZING FEAR, THE THING'S TONGUE SLITHERS FROM ITS LIMP JAWS - LONG AND BLACK AND FORKED - SMOKE RISING FROM WHERE THE VISCOUS ROPES OF BLACK SALIVA MEET THE AIR. ITS BREATHING IS RAGGED BUT BEGINNING TO STEADY.

THE THING SUDDENLY SNARLS AND CROUCHES, TONGUE RETRACTING AND STARING AT HIM. THE TIP OF THAT TONGUE NOW SCENTS THE AIR LIKE A SNAKE.

AGAIN, **THE VOICE** IN CLETUS'S HEAD SPEAKS A WORD THAT IS CLEARLY A COMMAND, BUT NOT IN ANY HUMAN LANGUAGE. THE LOW THING IN FRONT OF HIM COWERS.

**CLETUS**

Sweet Jesus, it's a *dog*.

WITHOUT WARNING THE THING LEAPS AWAY AND INTO THE WOODS.

**CLETUS** TURNS TO SEE IF ANNIE HAS SEEN IT TOO, BUT SHE STANDS ROOTED IN THE SAME SPOT WHERE HE'D LEFT HER.

**CLETUS**

Annie! What the hell are you doing, girl? Come on! We got to—

HE WALKS TOWARDS HER AND TRIES TO REACH FOR HER AGAIN, BUT STOPS WHEN HE SEES SHE IS SHAKING AND SEIZING.

**CLETUS**

*(stepping a bit closer)* Annie, girl?

FROM THE DARKNESS FILLING THE CORNER, AN IMPOSSIBLY LONG, BLACK TONGUE IS LATCHED ONTO ANNIE MESSER'S EYES AND FACE. THE TONGUE

IS FORKED AND EACH POINT IS LODGED DEEP AND WORKING DEEPER INTO ANNIE MESSER'S EYE SOCKETS.

THERE IS A SOUND LIKE FRYING EGGS. HER HAIR BEGINS TO SMOLDER AND HER BODY BEGINS TO WILT. **CLETUS** GAGS AT THE SIGHT AND SMELL.

SUDDENLY THIS SECOND THING FLICKERS INTO BEING - IT'S THE SAME AS THE FIRST, BUT TWICE THE SIZE. IT STANDS ON ITS FOUR BACK LEGS AND HOLDS UP THE OTHER TWO AS IF IN PRAYER.

THE THING ROARS AND SNAPS ITS HEAD. IT RETRACTS ITS TONGUE AND SLAMS ALL SIX OF ITS LEGS TO THE EARTH, WHIPLASHING ANNIE FACE FIRST AGAINST THE OPPOSITE WALL. HER NECK AND SPINE AUDIBLY SHATTER WITH THE SOUND OF A TREE FALL.

THE THING BOUNDS OVER TO ANNIE, KNOCKING CLETUS BACK IN THE PROCESS. IT LOWERS ITS HEAD AND LEANS IN TO TEAR INTO ANNIE'S CORPSE.

**CLETUS** SCREAMS THE STRANGE WORD THE VOICE HAD UTTERED. THE THING IMMEDIATELY FREEZES AND LOOKS AT HIM. HE HOLDS OUT A SINGLE HAND AND SAYS THE WORD AGAIN - LOWER, MORE THREATENING THIS TIME.

THE THING'S TONGUE TENTATIVELY SLITHERS FORWARD, THEN RETRACTS. IN THE DISTANCE THE FIRST THING HOWLS. IT GIVES CLETUS ONE LAST LOOK UP AND DOWN AND THEN LEAPS THROUGH THE SHATTERED BAY WINDOW, INTO THE WOODS.



**CLETUS** GOES TO ANNIE'S BODY AND TURNS HER OVER. HER FACE IS RIPPED FROM FOREHEAD TO CHEEKBONE. HER EYE SOCKETS ARE COOKED DRY AND CAUTERIZED. HER NECK AND SPINE ARE SHATTERED INTO A BAG OF BLOODY GRAVEL.

**CLETUS**

*(sobbing)* Oh, Annie. Annie, I'm so so sorry...

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**EXT. AVERY PROPERTY, DRIVEWAY- NIGHT**

GRACIE THE MULE ACTS LIKE NOTHING HAS HAPPENED, IN THE SAME PLACE CLETUS LEFT HER.

**CLETUS** CARRIES ANNIE'S BROKEN BODY, WRAPPED IN THE FILTHY RUG FROM THE FRONT ROOM. HE PLACES IT GENTLY IN THE BED OF THE CART, THEN CLIMBS INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT AND LEADS THE MULE BACK UP THE ROAD.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE- EARLY MORNING**

THE DAWNING SUN IS DAZZLING THROUGH THE LEAVES OF THE TREES. ALL IS PEACEFUL AND QUIET AND GENTLE IN THE LIGHT.

**CLETUS'S** HEART JUMPS, THINKING HE SEES SIX LEGGED TRACKS WITH UNNATURAL CLAW MARKS IN THE SCHOOLYARD - BUT LOOKING CLOSER HE COUNTS ONLY FOUR. HE IS SO TRAUMATIZED THAT HE COMPLETELY IGNORES THE FACT THAT THOSE TRACKS ARE OF AN IMPOSSIBLY LARGE BEAR. AND THAT THEY LEAD RIGHT INTO THE YARD OF THE SCHOOLHOUSE.

HE STOPS THE CART RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOLHOUSE AND PROCEEDS TO UNLOAD ANNIE'S CORPSE INTO THE ONE PLACE SHE'D EVER KNOWN HAPPINESS.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**INT. SCHOOLHOUSE- CONT.**

**CLETUS** SETTLES ANNIE BEHIND HER TEACHER'S DESK. HE GENTLY UNROLLS HER FROM THE RUG AND POSITIONS HER AS DIGNIFIED AS HE CAN.

**VOICES**

(swirling around the schoolhouse)  
*First you rise, then you clean  
her, prepare her for the fire.  
First you rise, then you clean  
her, prepare her for the fire.*

**CLETUS** LAUGHS A REAL, HARD, BELLY LAUGH THAT SHAKES HIM TO THE BONES.

**CLETUS**

Your dog killed her, clean her  
yourself you goddamned haints!

HE WINCES, EXPECTING PUNISHMENT, BUT NOTHING COMES.

**VOICES**

*...First you rise, then you clean  
her, prepare her for the fire..*

**CLETUS** IGNORES THEM. HE LEAVES, CLOSING THE FRONT DOOR BEHIND HIM.

THE SLEEPING FORM OF **SARAH AVERY** IS IN THE FAR CORNER, COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED AND COVERED BY SHADOWS AND A QUILT TAKEN FROM MISS ANNIE'S DESK.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**INT. SCHOOLHOUSE- MID-AFTERNOON**

**ANNIE MESSER'S** BODY TWITCHES, THEN BEGINS TO RISE.

SHE LEADS HERSELF, BY SOUND AND SCENT NOW, AND SHE FINDS THE BUCKET OF WATER SHE'D BROUGHT IN FROM THE WELL THE DAY BEFORE, ALONG WITH A CLEAN RAG BESIDE IT.

**ANNIE** GENTLY HUMS AMAZING GRACE, A GENTLE SMILE ON HER BROKEN FACE.

SHE MAKES HER WAY OVER TO SARAH AVERY'S SLEEPING BODY. SHE CARRIES HER TO THE TEACHER'S DESK AND LAYS HER ATOP IT.

SHE HUMS AS SHE WASHES THE MUD AND DIRT FROM BETWEEN SARAH'S TOES AND OFF HER FEET AND LEGS AND ARMS AND SHOULDERS, AND FROM HER LOVELY YOUNG FACE, PICKING OUT BRIARS AND BITS OF WEEDS FROM HER HAIR. ONCE SHE'S CLEANED, **ANNIE** TAKES THE GIRL OFF THE TABLE AND HOLDS HER IN HER ARMS. SHE SINKS TO THE FLOOR, SITTING AGAINST THE FRONT OF THE DESK. SHE CONTINUES TO HUM AS SHE STROKES THE GIRL'S HEAD. SLOWLY SARAH BEGINS TO ROUSE AND WAKE.

END