

Old Gods of Appalachia  
Season 1: Barlo

Episode 9  
Homecoming

FADE IN:

**EXT. STREETS OUTSIDE OF BARLO- EVENING**

THE HORIZON GLOWS FROM THE FIRE RAGING THROUGH BARLO.

CLETUS GARVIN DRIVES GRACIE THE MULE TOWARD IT AS HARD AS HE DARES, KNOWING IF HE PUSHED TOO HARD, SHE WAS LIKE TO BOW UP AND STOP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD AND REFUSE TO GO ANY FARTHER.

**CLETUS**

There's still time... There's still  
time... There's gotta still be time,  
please God...

CUT TO:

**EXT. TAYLOR HOME, DRIVEWAY- CONTINUOUS**

CLETUS PULLS GRACIE TO A STOP AND TIES HER UP WITH HIS CART BY THE GATE. AS HE STEPS DOWN INTO THE YARD, HE FEELS GOOSEBUMPS RISE UP THE BACK OF HIS NECK. THE CABIN IS DARK. HIS DAUGHTER AND HER HUSBAND SHOULD BE JUST ABOUT TO SIT DOWN FOR THE EVENING MEAL, BUT THERE WAS NO SOUND OF CLINKING DISHES OR RATTLING PANS, NO TEMPTING AROMAS OF FRESH BISCUITS AND BACON FAT.

CLETUS STEPS ONTO THE PORCH. THERE ARE NO SOUNDS OF A CRYING INFANT INSIDE THE CABIN. THERE IS NOTHING AT ALL.

**CLETUS**

(Clears his throat) Lily Ruth?  
Daniel? Y'all home?

HE REACHES FORWARD TO KNOCK... AND THE FRONT DOOR SWINGS OPEN UNDER HIS FIST.

CUT TO:

**INT. TAYLOR HOME- FRONT ROOM, CONT.**

THE CABIN IS NEARLY EMPTY. LILY RUTH AND DANIEL HAD ALREADY PACKED MOST OF THEIR BELONGINGS INTO THEIR OWN CART, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LARGE PIECES OF FURNITURE. IN A SHADOWY CORNER, CLETUS CAN SEE THE BED STILL HEAPED WITH QUILTS, BUT THE WALLS AND FLOOR ARE BARE.

TO THE RIGHT OF THE DOOR, THE DINNER TABLE IS UNCOVERED. ONE OF THE CHAIRS LAY ON ITS SIDE IN THE FLOOR. NEXT TO IT IS A SMALL QUILT RUBY HAD MADE FOR DANIEL JR.

CLETUS FEELS A SUDDEN, NAUSEATING CHILL SWEEP OVER HIM. ICY SWEAT BREAKS OUT ON HIS SKIN.

CUT TO:

**EXT. TAYLOR HOME- BACK PORCH, CONT.**

CLETUS STEPS OUTSIDE AND WALKS AROUND THE SIDE YARD TO THE BARN. DANIEL'S HORSE AND THE OLD MILK COW DROWSE, UNDISTURBED, IN THEIR STALLS. DANIEL'S CART IS STANDING, FULL OF THEIR BELONGINGS, NEXT TO THE HOUSE.

**CLETUS**

Lily Ruth? Daniel?

SILENCE. THEN, FROM THE DARK CORNER FROM WHENCE THEY ALWAYS SPOKE, HE HEARS A GLEEFUL, MOCKING LITTLE LAUGH.

CLETUS TURNS AND RUNS. HE NEARLY CATAPULTS HIMSELF BACK ONTO HIS CART, SLAPPING THE REINS AND URGING GRACIE ON. HE HAS THE LITTLE CART BACK ON THE ROAD IN MINUTES, HEADED TOWARD CLETUS JR.'S HOUSE.

**CLETUS**

(muttering frantically) ...just playing their tricks, trying to scare me. That's all it is... just tricks... *Come on, Gracie, move it!*

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**EXT. CLETUS JR. HOUSE, DRIVEWAY- NIGHT**

**CLETUS** RIDES ONTO THE PROPERTY. **CLETUS'S** FACE DRAINS OF COLOR.  
THE SCENE IS EERILY SIMILAR TO LILY RUTH'S.

THE LITTLE COMPANY-OWNED SHOTGUN HOUSE WHERE **CLETUS JR. (20)**  
LIVES WITH HIS WIFE **MARY (19)** AND SON, **ISAAC (2)** IS SILENT AND  
FULL OF SHADOWS.

CLETUS STOPS HIS CART RIGHT NEXT TO A CART PACKED AND READY FOR  
MOVING. THE CART IS ALREADY HITCHED UP TO JUNIOR'S HORSE.

THE HORSE IS TIED TO THE PORCH RAILING. HORSE IS SEDATELY  
CROPPING GRASS, HER GRACEFUL TAIL SWAYING PEACEFULLY.

**CLETUS** TIES GRACIE'S LEAD TO THE PORCH RAILING, RIGHT NEXT TO  
THE OTHER HORSE.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**EXT. CLETUS JR. HOUSE, PORCH- CONT.**

**CLETUS** CLIMBS THE PORCH STEPS. HE HESITATES AT THE TOP.

THE FRONT DOOR IS SWINGING WIDE OPEN, STIRRING GENTLY BY THE NIGHTTIME BREEZE. A STREAK OF SOMETHING DARK FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE STRETCHES OVER THE THRESHOLD, ACROSS THE PORCH, AND DOWN THE STAIRS ALONGSIDE HIS FEET.

**CLETUS**

That aint... Can't be...

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**INT. CLETUS JR. HOUSE, MAIN ROOM- CONT.**

**CLETUS**

C-Cletus Jr.? Mary? You kids... you  
kids home?

SILENCE.

**VOICES (O.S.)**

*(awful, mocking laughter. A  
thunderous chorus of mad,  
shrieking giggles)*

**CLETUS'S** NOSE BLEEDS AND HIS EYES WATER. HE CLAPS HIS HANDS OVER  
HIS EARS.

**VOICES**

*[More mad, ghostly cackling.]*

**CLETUS**

*(shouts in his Pastor's Voice)*  
*Quiet! Be silent, you goddamned  
haints!*

THE LAUGHTER TAPERS OFF, AND FINALLY DIES.

**CLETUS** WIPES A SHAKING HAND OVER HIS DAMP FACE. HE TASTES BLOOD  
AND HE LOOKS AT HIS HAND. HE REALIZES HIS NOSE HAD NOT BEEN  
RUNNING BUT BLEEDING.

FOR A MOMENT, HE LOOKS AROUND, NOT ENTIRELY BELEIVING THAT JUST  
WORKED. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD TO CLEAR IT. HE WIPES HIS BLOODY HAND  
ON THE SIDE OF HIS PANTS.

**CLETUS** GRUNTS, FINALLY CONCLUDING THAT NO ONE IS ACTUALLY HOME.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**EXT. CLETUS JR. HOUSE, PORCH- CONT.**

**CLETUS** SPRINTS BACK TO HIS CART, AND STARTS TO UNHITCH GRACIE FROM THE CART.

HIS EYES FALL ON JUNIOR'S HORSE. THE MARE IS YOUNG AND STRONG.

**CLETUS** GIVES GRACIE A SAD, FINAL PAT AND A LONG LOOK.

**CLETUS**

I'm so sorry, girl.

**CLETUS** TURNS GRACIE LOOSE IN THE YARD AND UNHITCHES THE HORSE FROM HER CART.

CUT TO:



FADE IN:

**BARLO, MAIN ROAD- LATER**

THE MARE IS AN AGREEABLE LITTLE THING, RUNNING SWIFT AND STEADY THROUGH THE NIGHT. **CLETUS** RIDES AS FAST AS HE DARE IN THE DARKNESS, STEERING HER UP THE ROAD TOWARD THE GARVIN FAMILY HOME.

THEY PASS THE FORK IN THE ROAD THAT LEADS INTO BARLO PROPER. A HAZE OF ORANGEY LIGHT AND SMOKE HANGS OVER THE TREES DOWN THAT PATH.

IN THE SHADOWY WOODS, THINGS ARE MOVING... JERKY, SLINKING, UNNATURAL. **CLETUS** HEARS A SCREAM, BUT IT IS CUT OFF SO FAST HE CAN'T BE SURE.

**CLETUS** RIDES FASTER, HIS EYES FIXED FIRMLY ON THE ROAD AHEAD OF HIM.

OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS EYE, TWISTED SHAPES FLICKER IN AND OUT OF THE WORLD, VOIDS IN SPACE EVEN DARKER THAN THE NIGHT AROUND HIM.

HERE AND THERE, A FLASH OF TEETH.

GLOWING EYES THAT ARE SOMEHOW WRONG.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**EXT. GARVIN FAMILY PROPERTY, TOP OF DRIVEWAY- NIGHT**

THE GARVIN HOME IS NESTLED UP AGAINST A MOUNTAINSIDE AND RINGED IN BY WOODS. IT WAS A NICE PIECE OF LAND, SHADY AND PLEASANTLY COOL IN THE SUMMERTIME AND SHELTERED FROM THE WORST OF THE CUTTING WIND AND SNOW IN WINTER.

**CLETUS** TURNS THE MARE UP THE NARROW TRACK ONTO HIS PROPERTY.

IN THE MOONLIGHT, HIS OWN HOUSE STANDS DARK AND SILENT AT THE TOP OF THE HILL.

NOTHING STIRS.

RUBY'S CHICKENS ARE PUT UP FOR THE NIGHT.

CLETUS'S SKINNY OLD POINTER DOG, RUSTY, IS ABSENT FROM A WORN-OUT OLD HORSE BLANKET AT THE CORNER OF THE PORCH.

**CLETUS** SLOWS AS HE RIDES UP TO THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

IN THE WOODS SURROUNDING THE HOUSE, THE SHADOWS BETWEEN THE TREES DON'T SHIFT WITH THE NATURAL SWAYING OF THE TREES.

IT IS TOO QUIET, TOO STILL, AS IF SOMETHING OR SOMEONE IS  
HOLDING ITSELF MOTIONLESS, WATCHING.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**EXT. GARVIN FAMILY HOME, PORCH- CONT.**

**CLETUS** SLOWLY STEPS DOWN FROM JUNIOR'S HORSE, AND LEADS THE  
DOCILE MARE TOWARD THE HOUSE. SHE FOLLOWS ALONG PLACIDLY.

**CLETUS** TIES HER UP TO THE PORCH RAILING, BY A TROUGH OF WATER  
THEY'D KEPT AT ONE END FOR OLD GRACIE.

SLOWLY, CAUTIOUSLY, HE STEPS UP ONTO THE PORCH, WITH A SENSE OF  
DREAD NO MAN SHOULD FEEL ON HIS OWN LAND, IN HIS OWN HOME.

THE SILENCE IS JUST LIKE WHAT CLETUS HAD FOUND AT LILY RUTH'S,  
AND CLETUS JR.'S HOUSE. ALTHOUGH HIS OWN FRONT DOOR IS FIRMLY  
SHUT.

**CLETUS** STANDS OUTSIDE THE DOOR FOR A LONG MINUTE, LISTENING, IN  
SEARCH OF SOME SIGN OF LIFE, OF THE PRESENCE OF HIS WIFE AND  
CHILDREN.

NOTHING.

NOT SO MUCH AS A CRICKET CHIRPING, NOR A LEAF STIRS.

THE ATMOSPHERE IS SO STRANGE, SO ALIEN, **CLETUS** ALMOST RAISES HIS HAND TO KNOCK. HE CATCHES HIS HAND AND DROPS IT JUST SHY OF THE DOOR.

HE SWALLOWS HARD, AND REACHES FOR THE LATCH.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

**INT. GARVIN HOME, FRONT ROOM- CONT.**

THE DOOR SWINGS INWARD WITH A SOFT CREAK, AND **CLETUS** STANDS ON THE THRESHOLD, WAITING FOR HIS EYES TO ADJUST TO THE INKY BLACKNESS WITHIN.

[THE SOFT SCRATCH OF A MATCH BEING STRUCK]

A DIM, COPPERY GLOW SPREADS FROM THE NEARLY- EMPTY OIL LANTERN ON THE KITCHEN TABLE AS **LILY RUTH (19)** LIGHTS THE WICK.

**LILY RUTH** STANDS NEAR THE MIDWAY POINT OF THE TABLE, THE MATCH STILL IN HER HAND. SHE HOLDS THE BABY, **DANIEL JR. (1)**, IN THE CROOK OF ONE ARM.

THE CHILD DOESN'T STIR. ONE LITTLE HAND SWINGS LOOSELY WITH HIS MOTHER'S RECENT MOVEMENT.

**DANIEL (22)** IS SEATED AT THE LONG TABLE NEXT TO **LILY RUTH**, AND AROUND HER SIT HER **SIBLINGS**, AS WELL AS **CLETUS, JR.**, **MARY**, AND THEIR **BABY**. ALL ARE STILL AND QUIET.

THERE IS A SMOKY STENCH IN THE AIR THAT **CLETUS** DOES NOT BELIEVE CAME FROM ANY SINGLE MATCHSTICK. HE COUGHS AND COVERS HIS FACE.

**LILY RUTH**

*Welcome home, Daddy.*

SHE SMILES, AND HER TEETH ARE BROKEN, HER ONCE-LOVELY SMILE NOW A GAPING, BLOODY MAW, THE SKIN PALE AND GRAY AS ASH.

**LILY RUTH** TURNS HER HEAD TOWARDS **CLETUS**, TIPPING SIDEWAYS ON HER NECK WITH A SUDDEN AND UNNATURAL MOTION LIKE AN OWL... AND STAYS THERE, AT AN ANGLE THAT COULD NOT BE RIGHT.

**CLETUS'S CHILDREN** TURN THEIR HEADS TOWARD HIM IN UNISON.

**CLETUS** TAKES A STEP BACK. HIS BOWELS TURN TO LIQUID AND HIS HANDS ARE SHAKING.

**EVERYONE'S** SKIN IS ALL THAT SAME, GRAY COLOR AS LILY RUTH'S.

**CLAY** IS MISSING HALF THE RIGHT SIDE OF HIS SKULL.

**HERSHELL'S** LEFT EAR WAS LOST IN A DARK SMEAR OF BLOOD THAT COVERS HALF HIS FACE.

**VIRGINIA** HAS A BLACK PIT WHERE HER RIGHT EYE ONCE SHINED A PRETTY BLUE. THE LEFT EYE WAS INTACT, BUT... CHANGED. LIKE ALL OF HIS CHILDREN, HER LEFT EYE THROBS WITH A DULL ORANGE GLOW.

**CLETUS** FEELS A HARSH, PAINFUL SOB WRENCH FREE OF HIS THROAT BEFORE HE EVEN KNOWS IT IS COMING OUT OF HIM. HIS CHEEKS ARE WET. HE PISSES HIMSELF.

THERE IS A LOW, KEENING SOUND IN THE ROOM, AND IT TAKES CLETUS A MOMENT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE NOISE IS COMING FROM DEEP INSIDE HIS OWN CHEST. HE TAKES A DEEP, SHUDDERING BREATH AND ANOTHER STEP BACK.

SOMEONE STANDS BEHIND HIM, NOW STANDING DIRECTLY UP AGAINST CLETUS'S BACK. **CLETUS** GASPS AND SCREWS HIS EYES SHUT.

**CLETUS**

*Oh, god, please... no...*

A HAND SETTLES INTO HIS PALM AND BEGINS TO LIGHTLY PULL, TURNING HIM TO FACE HER.

**CLETUS** LOOKS DOWN INTO **RUBY'S** FACE, THOUGH THE SAME ASHEN COLOR, WAS STILL AS LOVELY AS EVER. HER NECK IS RINGED IN BLACKENED BRUISES. HER EYES, ONCE A CLEAR GREEN LIKE PERIDOT, NOW GLOWED WITH THE SAME SMOLDERING, DEAD ORANGE LIGHT AS THEIR CHILDREN'S.

**RUBY** SMILES DOWN AT HIM AS **CLETUS** SINKS TO HIS KNEES. HER FACE IS SLY AND FULL OF DARK GLEE.

**CLETUS** CLOSES HIS EYES.

**RUBY**

*Cletusss... sweetheart. You're finally home.*

END

