

OLD GODS OF APPALACHIA

presents

BUILD MAMA A COFFIN

Episode 2: Mama's Dead & Gone

Build Mama a Coffin is a new story set in the world of Old Gods of Appalachia, which is a horror anthology podcast. But y'all already knew that, didn't you family? And y'all come anyway. Well ain't that sweet.

1927, Esau County, Virginia, from the *Esau Independent* obituary section:

Gloria Ann Boggs, age 79, was called suddenly home last Sunday on the 14th of September. A longtime resident of the Boggs Holler section of Glamorgan, Virginia, Glory Ann was born the eighth of nine children to Oliver and Jean Teasley, deceased, of South Fork. Glory Ann was a beloved and treasured member of her local community. She often served as a second mother to many less fortunate children in the Glamorgan and South Fork areas and was often acclaimed for her charitable works as a cook and nursemaid.

She is preceded into the Lord's kingdom by her loving husband, Waylon Gregory Boggs, and her siblings Selma, Bertie, Bradley, Martha, Verna, Inez, Dorothy, and Kyle. She is survived by her three children, Vernard Michael Boggs of Ivy, North Carolina; Walleydale Hobart Boggs of Stone Fort, Virginia; and her only daughter, Mercy Boggs-Carter of Pineville, Kentucky; as well as three grandchildren: Indiana, Daniel, and Delia.

She held no church affiliation. May God have mercy on her soul.

[Build Mama a Coffin by Blood on the Harp]

Gonna build Mama a coffin, I'm gonna make it out of pine

There'll be tears from sister to make those hinges shine

Gonna build Mama a coffin, I'm gonna make it out of spruce

They can all act broken when they hear the news

That Mama's dead and gone...

GLORY ANN: Well, they got some of it right. Seventy-nine is close, but I figure I might be closer to 77. Some years shouldn't count. It ain't fair if they all do. Time is a right bastard that

way. The older you get, the slipperier the days get, and the next thing you know you're just done. So the two years right after Waylon was gone? I don't count and you can't make me.

Besides, explaining how time and death works for one of us is too complicated to just jump right into, but... I guess y'all need at least some of that part to understand what's going to happen here, so let me go halfway around the house to tell this story.

In the history of this world, it's been women that's held it up and together. From the first mama to push the first baby screaming into this world to the last one born today, women are the path, the portal, and the light when it comes to bringing life into this world. And sometimes, we have to be the shadow that takes it out.

Some of us come as plain and simple as you can. Some come sharp and wise, others come kind and dull. We are flesh and water and blood and light, just like the Good Book told y'all. Others of us came in coming knowing different. Just from the jump we know different, we *feel* different. Our minds ask questions others might not. The earth and the wind told us our names before our mommies and daddies ever did. We were called to pray at a different altar, to serve in a different way. By word and plant and sky and tree, we were the heart of our people — and set far apart from them.

They call us witches, and that's a good enough word as any, I guess. They don't use that word in the old *Independent*, though do they? "She held no church affiliation, may God have mercy on her soul." How 'bout, "she lived and died so our babies didn't get cut up into lunch meat and fed to things the Bible don't have the stomach to talk about?" Ten heads and ten horns, my ass. How 'bout, "survived a mean-ass old drunk and raised three kids who all managed to get out on their own?" Or how 'bout, "protected her goddamn children from that mean-ass old drunk and put him under the smokehouse in about twelve pieces for threatening her and them and dared *anyone* to say something"?

Yeah. They don't wanna talk about none of that.

But that little story on page five of the paper said it right: I am officially dead and gone. Heart stopped beating while she was cutting firewood, wore her old self out after doing too much for too long all alone out there in the holler.

They ain't wrong. I'm dead, alright. I just ain't done yet.

[Build Mama a Coffin by Blood on the Harp]

Gonna build Mama a coffin, hmm-mmm

Gonna build Mama a coffin, hmm-mmm

Gonna build Mama a coffin, hmm-mmm

Gonna build Mama a coffin, hmm-mmm

Mmm-mmm...

Today's story was written and narrated by Steve Shell. The voice of Mama was Alison Mullins.

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There'll be tears from sister to make those hinges shine...

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