

Transcript:

TWO DEAD GIRLS IN JUBELIENE

EPISODE 5: "GOD'S TOOTHPICK"

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PODCAST SPOKESPERSON

"Two Dead Girls in Jubeliene"
contains material that may be
upsetting to some audiences,
including sudden loud noises, adult
language, and depictions of murder
and suicide. For more information,
please find us on Instagram:
@2deadgirlspod. That's the number
"2" dead girls pod.

FROM SILENCE:

MYRA

(narration)

There used to be a tree, out back.
This towering white pine that Pa
called "God's Toothpick." She
sprouted when Corydon was a
capital. When Indiana wasn't a
state. And by the time a girl named
Myra climbed her sappy branches...
hung a tire swing in her shade...
she was as tall as Rik Smits. As
old as Methuselah.

(almost reverent)

They say this is fly-over country.
But you had to pull up, just a
little, to clear "God's Toothpick."
Not because she could literally
reach airplanes. Just... as a
matter of respect. For a deep-
rooted, eternal thing... that had
forgot more about the world than
any of us would ever know.

(a twinge of sadness)

And then one night, the summer of
my seventh birthday... a straight-
line wind storm plucked her like a
dandelion.

Rain. Wind. A tree truck snaps, crashing to the ground.

MYRA (CONT'D)

(narration)

And if Ma's head had been on her
pillow, it would've flossed her
right between the eyeballs.

(a tiresome anecdote)

Instead... Ma was on her feet.
Awoken seconds earlier by the sound
of Annabelle's cries. My baby
sister had a nightmare, the story
goes... and saved my mother's life.

Sounds of the storm fade.

MYRA (CONT'D)

(narration)

Parents can't help but compare their kids. And between Annie and me, it wasn't a fair fight. But on the subject of God's Toothpick, things went a step too far. You can't saint someone for something they did in a dead sleep.

(sighs, letting it go)

It was an outburst on this subject that landed me as a one-girl chain gang, helping Pa repair a tree-shaped hole in our house. I piled sticks and hauled lumber-- the dismembered remains of a tree I thought would last forever. Some of it even served to repair the very hole it wrought. And when we finished each night, I held the big blue plastic sheet steady, while Pa tacked it over the slowly mending hole. "Keeps out the dark" he'd say. He thought that was clever. "Keeps out the dark."

(then)

Anyway. Years later, that's how I knew to ask--

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. JENKINS PHARMACY - AFTERNOON - AUGUST 4, 1997

Jingle of a shop doorbell. Sounds of a cash register.

YOUNG MYRA

(clears throat)

Do you sell tarps?

TIM JENKINS

(approaching)

You mean a big blue plastic-- uh--

YOUNG MYRA

Hi Mr. Jenkins.

UPCUT TO:

Mr. Jenkins rustles through shelves.

TIM JENKINS

Oh. I got shower curtains. Will that work?

YOUNG MYRA

...maybe.

TIM JENKINS

Well. If you tell me what it's for--

YOUNG MYRA

Uh... I'm... not allowed to say.

TIM JENKINS

...well. This one's got rubber duck print... I got two o' this one... worms I guess. No. Caterpillars.

After a long pause--

YOUNG MYRA

Someone threw a brick. Through our window? I guess whoever did it... they think Pa killed my sister? That maybe Ma is trying to cover it up?

An awkward shuffle from Tim. No reply.

YOUNG MYRA (CONT'D)

It doesn't really matter whats on 'em. The shower curtains. It's cold, in the house. And it's weird without Pa. We need something to keep out the dark.

END FLASHBACK

Score wells up, driving us out-- becoming our theme. Over the music, an audio montage-- sensationalist news clips and interviews from the era of the murders.

LOCAL NEWSCASTER

Tonight's top story: a deadly storm. A missing girl. And in Jubeliene, Indiana... *a homicide investigation.*

With school children playing in the background--

TEACHER

Annabelle was this beautiful, innocent little girl--

A different clip, camera jostling, slightly off mic--

ASSHOLE

--well beautiful is a stretch. Hang on, are you recording this?

A news segment--

LOCAL NEWSCASTER 2

But we're learning a second girl, Jessica Kaplan, has been found dead in Jubeliene--

Donnelly's press scrum is replaced with a cassette excerpt--

DONNELLY

There was no wiggle room for gut instincts. And anyway this wasn't anything concrete, just... a *confluence of coincidence*.

Snippets of different news programs--

BYSTANDER 1

It's a conspiracy-- that's what I say. God. Damn. *Conspiracy*. Truth is--

CABLE NEWS PUNDIT

--33% of murders in this country are never solved. Any reasonable person can see--

BYSTANDER 2

--this here's a small town. Them girls wa' killed by a grass cuttin' hymn singin' Jubeliener. *That's* why he ain't been stopped.

OLD WOMAN

(heated)

No. The murder of Jessie Kaplan could've been stopped. 'Cept nobody cared about Annie. Nobody did nothing until a second girl died.

The CLICK of a tape record. Play.

ED

You know who did it.

TIM JENKINS

Ronny Newsome.

(a self-impressed snort)

(MORE)

TIM JENKINS (CONT'D)
 Ronny Nuisance I call him.

The tape recorder stops.

MYRA
 This... is "Two Dead Girls In
 Jubeliene." Chapter Five: God's
 Toothpick.

INT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

We hear the spray of a piping hot shower.

MYRA
 (narration)
 After three days barely sleeping, I
 went back to Ma's last night and
 crashed in my jeans. I woke late,
 to a lively text chain between
 Berto and Liam. The former has
 Jenkins Pharmacy menace Ronny
 Newsome pinned to a parole program
 in Illinois-- drug dealing. The
 latter is cutting bureaucratic red
 tape, trying to get a phone
 interview. They're a good team.

The TWIST-CREAK-TWIST of a shower faucet. Water claps from a
 torrent to a drip. The shower curtain opens.

MYRA (CONT'D)
 (narration)
 I skim my inbox as I stumble back
 to Pa's room in a bath towel. I
 skip subjects like "URGENT:
 PROVENTIAL HEATLH LAWSUIT"... I'm
 looking for Ronny's background
 check, and surprise no one but
 myself when I open Liam's instead.
 Berto was right: honors at UMD,
 Baltimore PD commendations... clean
 as a whistle. There's the full name
 of his wife: FRANCIS NIKA ESFAHANI.
 I hover over the name. Then select,
 copy, web browser, paste. I add a
 fourth word for good measure.
 "Obituary."

We hear Myra click for "search" but before anything comes of
 it her phone RINGS, interrupting. She takes the call.

MYRA (CONT'D)
 Hey. What's up? Did you get Ronny?

LIAM
 Still working on it. But Maze has something for you.

MAISIE
 (apparently on the call)
 This is the Jubeliene Methodist e-bulletin... from two weeks ago.

MYRA
 Hi Maisie.

MAISIE
 Hi. It says--
 (reading)
 "On Sunday, celebrate the 80th birthday of Mr. Tim Jenkins. Festivities to commence immediately following the 11:00 service. Hot dogs and potato salad provided."

MYRA
 (processing)
 So... unless he skipped his own birthday party he didn't kill Pa. Is that the point?

MAISIE
 Yeah.

MYRA
 Huh. That's good work Maisie. Thank you.

MAISIE
 You're welcome.

Maisie passes the phone to Liam.

LIAM
 I'm making more calls. Wanna grab your dad's notes and come over?

SCRAPE of Myra's duffle bag dragged from beneath the bed.

MYRA
 Later. I'm just now getting dressed. I have to--

An ominous note of score.

LIAM
Hello? ...Hello? I think I lost
you.

MYRA
... it's *gone*.

Score builds.

LIAM
... what's gone?

MYRA
Pa's notes.

CUT TO:

INT. ABERNATHY BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The door crashes open and Myra races down the stairs.

MYRA
Ma? Ma! My bag... someone stole--
(realizing)
Is that my shirt?

We hear the constant whir of laundry dryer.

BRENDA
Almost finished. Do you air dry
these sweaters--?

MYRA
I said not to do my laundry.

BRENDA
Well you said you *could do it*. That
hardly seemed--

MYRA
There was something extremely
important and *extremely private* in
that bag.

BRENDA
Huh. Was it--?

A rustle of paper. Myra snatches Pa's envelope from Brenda.

MYRA
Give me that.
(suspiciously)
Did you open it?

BRENDA
 No. It fell in the basket.
 (a little defensive)
 I only just found it--

MYRA
 Well, it's privileged material.

BRENDA
 For work?

MYRA
 Yes for work. I could lose my job.

BRENDA
 Then no offense honey, but--

MYRA
 Don't call me--

BRENDA
 --you shouldn't leave it lying
 around--

MYRA
 It wasn't--

Myra huffs. Crosses. Shuts off the dryer. Quiet.

MYRA (CONT'D)
 Why do you do this? I told you not
 to do my laundry. I'm 34.
 (with some derision)
 I mean... do you enjoy it?

BRENDA
 (sarcastic)
 Why else do you think I spent my
 whole waking life down here washing
 clothes?

MYRA
 You didn't seem so burdened when it
 was a pile of Annie's cute little
 rompers.

BRENDA
 Well at least she had the good
 sense not to tear the knees out of
 'em. Between you and Ed I mended
 more seams and soaked more grass
 stains than the equipment manager
 for the Cincinatti Reds--

MYRA

Then I would've thought you'd be glad to be rid of us. For the sake of a little less drudgery.

Brenda exhales. A moment passes before she replies.

BRENDA

Maybe you don't understand this because you aren't a mother... maybe you can't, and won't ever. But that "drudgery"-- the labor to create simple, boring, dependable comfort around your little tribe... *that* is the purest of all love. I'm not saying I enjoyed it. But I hope you'll forgive me saying I miss it anyway.

(an edge of bitterness)

I know there's nothing about this place, or this family, that you remember fondly Myra. But I tried. I really tried.

With that, Brenda marches upstairs, leaving Myra.

MYRA

(calling after her)

I air dry them! The sweaters?

The door at the top of the stairs shuts hard in reply.

MYRA (CONT'D)

Great.

Score carries us across a transition to--

INT. LIAM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The screen door opens.

MYRA

Hey.

LIAM

So you are alive.

MAISIE

Dad, tone.

LIAM

Ah, sorry. The Peoria Parole Board's hold music is... maddening... and I'm in full blown nicotine withdrawal because someone--

MAISIE

Wants you to live?

LIAM

Yeah. Exactly.
(then)
Another tape?

MYRA

(sounding weary)
Read the spine.

She passes the plastic cassette case.

LIAM

(reads)
"Mama Tried." Songs by... Merle Haggard... and the Strangers?

MAISIE

(excited)
It's Ronny Newsome, isn't it?

MYRA

Yeah.

LIAM

Anything I need to know before we dive in?

MYRA

Ronny's a talker. I'm guessing he's gonna fill in the gaps.

The familiar CLICK-WHIR of the cassette player...

INT. PRISON VISITATION - DAY - SUMMER 2018

RONNY NEWSOME, 30s, is an arrogant grandstander. He speaks to Ed through a plexiglass booth.

RONNY

You know I didn't steal "a few bucks" or whatever. *I stole five "G"s.* And Mr. J didn't call the cops 'cuz he's making all that cash fillin' bogus scrips for oxy.

ED
 You're claiming... Tim Jenkins...
 is a drug dealer?

Ronny jingles his handcuffs comically.

RONNY
 I ain't claimin' nothin. He's got
 it up on his sign.

ED
 Very funny.
 (then)
 You aren't a very good criminal,
 are you Ronny?

RONNY
 What's that 'sposed ta mean?

ED
 You spend a lot of time in prison.

RONNY
 So I got bad luck--

ED
What you got is a big mouth.

RONNY
*Why you really all the way out here
 Mr. A? I think it ain't to ask
 about a smash and grab. An' I know
 it ain't to spread the word of the
 King James, cuz Gram's church gave
 up on that when I scared off
 volunteer number three.*

ED
 You don't believe in God?

RONNY
 I believe. Just figure he's a real
 piece of work. Lettin' people like
 your girl die. Sittin' on his
 incomprehensibly large invisible
 keister, all-powerful thumb up his
 all-knowin' asshole.
 (pressing)
 Don't duck the question. Why ya
 here?

Ed sighs.

ED

If you really took Jenkins for *five* "g"s, how'd you manage, for once in your life, not to brag your way into the nearest prison?

A note of threatening score.

RONNY

...what are you talking about?

ED

C'mon Ronny. July 19, 1997? Tim says you're too stupid to get away with murder. But uh... I'm not so sure.

For a moment, silence. Then Ronny BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.

RONNY

He says-- you think I-- he's no genius himself you know-- gettin' robbed in broa--

Ed BANGS fiercely on the plexiglass, silencing Ronny.

ED

I don't think it's funny.

RONNY

Christ me neither.
 (softening for once)
 You only know me as a screw up. But I lost my folks. I can understand what you went through-- losing' her like that.
 (then)
 She'd smile and wave, when most other people'd avoid me. Guess you'd count that against me. But... I was sad about what happened.

ED

If you mean that, I think you better tell me what really happened.

RONNY

(sighs)
 Alright. After I robbed Mr. J, I went to see my... lets say my silent partner. When I got out to his place... he's gone. Storm's rollin in.

(MORE)

RONNY (CONT'D)

So I turned back, fixin' to lay low until he crawls out of whatever hole he fell into. Would've been better off crawlin' in after him.

(still a little salty)

Some asshole sideswiped me on 19, driving like a maniac. Bangs the shit out of my front corner, does a full 360 into the ditch... and then sits there with his high beams on me... accusatory... like I'm the one could't keep it on my side of the yellow.

(resigned)

But... my Caprice was stuffed with stolen cash. So... I fled.

(connect the dots)

I knew if this guy called in the wreck, Donnelly was gonna be at Gram's door inside an hour. He'd tie the car to the cash to the pharmacy, me to the robbery... I was seventeen, but I knew a five year sentence when I saw one.

(sighs)

I convinced Gram to follow me up to Terre Haute... left the car with a real degenerate mechanic. Three "Gs" to fix it, fifteen hundred more to say he'd had it all week. I dumped the last five hundred behind Mr. J's-- a peace offering. And then, you're right... for once in my life, I shut my mouth. Because by the next morning I knew if anybody ever got serious about that robbery, or lookin' for my car... they weren't just gonna put me away... they were gonna end up... askin'... askin' what you're asking.

Silence hangs.

RONNY (CONT'D)

You workin' for the cops?

(then)

You have to tell me if you are. You can't lie to a--

ED

Hang on Ronny. *Your partner was gone the day Annie went missing.*

RONNY

Well he tended to be gone. Hidin' from girls who'd found out about each other... but I don't think...

Score plays a tickle of revelation for Ronny.

ED

...what? Who is he?

RONNY

...I'm no snitch.

ED

You snitched on Tim
(realizing)
You're scared.

RONNY

I ain't scared--

ED

Then who is he!?

RONNY

(low)
Wayne Harmon. Okay?

ED

(lost)
... Wayne... Harmon?

RONNY

You know... Jessie Kaplan's uncle?

A Boom of score. Then the tape CLICKS to a stop.

INT. LIAM'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Water runs in the sink. Myra sighs. Turns off the water.

MYRA

(narration)
Wayne Harmon? Crap.
(considering)
I know a lot about the death of Jessie Kaplan... but I know very little about her life.

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

About the day-to-day existence of the girl whose memory is so gruesomely intertwined with Annabelle. And I know even less about her uncle.

(strange words)

Wayne Harmon.

(struggling)

Was he investigated? I'm not sure. There were so many suspects. So many dead ends. His connection to Jessie is obvious. But to Annie..?

There's a KNOCK on the bathroom door.

MAISIE

(muffled)

You okay in there?

INT. LIAM'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and Myra steps out to find Maisie waiting.

MYRA

Sorry. All yours.

MAISIE

Oh. That's okay. I wanted to ask... what do you think about the tape?

MYRA

I dunno. Still processing.

MAISIE

Your dad's a good investigator. Gets people talking.

MYRA

(joking, but humorless)

Not how I remember him.

(steering away)

You're a... you're a strange kid.

You know that?

Liam pads into the hallway. We hear the quiet BUZZ-RING.

LIAM

Myra. Your cell's ringing.

MYRA

Thanks. Berto again?

LIAM
It's a blocked number.

BUZZ-RING. We hear the TAP-CLICK of Myra picking up the call.

MYRA
... hello?

Phone-filtered, we hear deep, ragged breathing. Creepy. Low suspense score. Building. *Building.*

MYRA (CONT'D)
Hello? Who's there?

More thick breathing.

MYRA (CONT'D)
... Hello?

No answer. Then, a CRASH of broken glass. The line goes dead.

Score tumbles to an uneasy drone, mixing with distant crickets and the hum of the air conditioner.

LIAM
... what was that?

MYRA
(creeped)
I'm not sure.

A muffled BUZZ in the lingering silence. BUZZ-BUZZ... BUZZ--

MAISIE
Dad, phone.

LIAM
Oh. Yeah--

Overlap RING-RING of a landline. Two phones at once.

MYRA
Is that a land-line?

LIAM
(flustered)
Job requirement. Maze.

MAISIE
I'll get it.

Maisie's feet scamper as Liam rustles and finally locates his phone. The BUZZ and RING stop simultaneously.

LIAM
Hello?

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Shepard residence. Maisie speaking.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Okay, slow down. Say again?

MAISIE (CONT'D)
He's on the other line. Can I take a message?

We hear Myra's ringtone a second time. She answers.

MYRA
... Ma? What's wrong?

The drone of score crescendos to a near-unbearable SNAP--

EXT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

A car races up a gravel driveway and skids to a stop--

MYRA
Did he say anything else?

LIAM
Just to come fast.

MYRA
I should've known something like this was going to happen.

Doors opening and slamming. Footsteps racing up gravel.

LIAM
Denson!?

MYRA (CONT'D)
Ma!?

BRENDA
(off mic)
Myra!

DENSON MCDUGAL
(off mic)
In here Sheriff!

A torrent of feet up the porch steps. The screen door swings open and clatters shut.

INT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Myra and Liam come to a stop. Ragged breathing.

LIAM
... You two okay?

BRENDA

Yeah. I think so.

MYRA

(narration)

They are... technically.

(as she sees it)

Sheriff Deputy Denson McDougal is seated on the sofa. The grown up version of the kid I was crushing on when I sent Annie to her death. He has an unholstered firearm in his lap. His finger isn't near the trigger... thank god, because he's shaking like a leaf. Did I ever consider he may harbor his own demons from Annie? No. Something to unpack another time.

(then)

Ma stands in the kitchen doorway, steady as ever. Though her right palm is swaddled in a bloody dish rag and her left is tucked around her midsection... warding off the chill of a breeze that should be outside.

(grim)

It is in here... the breeze... because between Denson and Ma, the floor is littered with broken window glass. Big jagged chunks, like icicles, and a dusty spray--like frost. And at the center of that winter wonderland... is a rusty red brick. Like a film noir corpse on Christmas Eve, just waiting for a chalk outline.

Back in the scene--

MYRA (CONT'D)

Ma... you're bleeding.

BRENDA

Just a scrape.

MYRA

Let me look at it.

BRENDA

I'm fine.

DENSON MCDOUGAL

She was cleaning it up when I got here... that's how she cut her hand. I told her to leave it. Told her... you'd want it undisturbed.

LIAM

Yeah. Alright good.

BRENDA

Sorry Sheriff. I can never resist a bit of... *drudgery*.

(then)

I'm going to wash up. Here Myra. Guess you'll know what to do with this.

We hear a flutter-crinkle of plastic, passed from Brenda's hand to Myra's. Then footsteps away. A door closes. Not slammed. But close enough.

LIAM

What's that she gave you?

We hear Myra turn it over in her hand.

MYRA

Just an old shower curtain.

A WHOOOOSH of reverse wind carries us back to--

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. JENKINS PHARMACY - AFTERNOON - AUGUST 4, 1997

Automatic doors open, a cart trundles across uneven asphalt.

MYRA

(narration)

Mr. Jenkins told me to take the caterpillar shower curtain, no charge-- that day in '97. Told me to fill up a cart with whatever I needed, actually.

(considering)

Maybe that was kindness... or maybe he just didn't want to look me in the eye at the register. But I raced around the store collecting Ding-Dongs and frozen pizzas anyway... I thought I knew what a cart full of groceries could mean to Ma that week. I thought...

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

here was something a favorite child
would pull off.

(let down)

But when I came out... Ma wasn't
looking. She was turned to the
passenger window. Conversing in
hushed tones... with Oscar
Stillwell.

The cart trundles to a stop. We overhear--

BRENDA

(barely above whisper)

--the public defender wants him to
confess.

OSCAR

He didn't do anything wrong--

BRENDA

(harshly)

Don't you think I know that?

(softening)

Sorry.

OSCAR

I'm gonna go to the station. Say we
were out huntin' when it happened.

BRENDA

No. No! Absolutely not.

OSCAR

Why not?

BRENDA

You'll cause nothing but trouble
for him... stumbling in there half-
drunk... spouting fake alibis--

OSCAR

I'll jus' say we were together.
Can't disprove that.

BRENDA

No. But you could forgive them for
wondering why your friend's been in
jail for two weeks and you only
just now remembered.

Almost an accusation. Oscar replies with ashamed silence.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Somebody threw a brick through our window.

OSCAR
...didja report it?

BRENDA
No.
(then)
Donnelly'll say it was just kids. A prank.

OSCAR
Is that what you think?

Brenda emits a disgusted chuckle.

BRENDA
No. I think it was him.

OSCAR
Donnelly?

BRENDA
No, him. Whoever killed Annie.

A grim, hopeless note of score. Myra seizes the moment to strike ahead, trying to cheer Brenda up.

YOUNG MYRA
Ma. Ma, look! I got groceries! Mr. Jenkins said to fill up the cart.

It falls tragically flat. Brenda doesn't answer. Nobody answers. The cart trundles to an uneasy stop.

OSCAR
Hey Myra.

YOUNG MYRA
(dwindling enthusiasm)
... they were free.

BRENDA
Myra. Get in the car.

YOUNG MYRA
But... just look...

BRENDA
Leave them. Get in the car.

OSCAR

Brenda... let me help--

BRENDA

Wanna guess how many people called to help, when word got out Annie was dead? How many helped, when they heard Ed had been rounded up? I'll tell you. None. *Not even you.*

(low and bitter)

I thought that was why people moved to towns like this... tiny little places where everybody knows everyone. To feel safe? To be surrounded by people you can depend on? It's a fraud, Oscar. It all blows over in the first gust of wind.

Brenda starts the car.

OSCAR

Tell me what I can do.

BRENDA

You can leave us alone. We'd rather have our dignity than your pity.

The car pulls away. As sounds of the motor fade--

OSCAR

Brenda!

MYRA

(narration)

Ma left Tim's milk curdling in the sun. But I managed to smuggle the caterpillar shower curtain. And the Ding-Dongs.

(musing)

Parents can't help but compare their kids. And kids... they can't help but compare their parents.

(then)

Pa was never the same after we lost Annie. Broken, listless, sad-- he retreated into himself. Ma... she was sad too. But she was *never broken*. After Annie she became a force of nature... this iron-willed, towering version of herself. And the worse things got, the stronger she became.

(struggling with an idea)

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

Or... or was it the stronger she acted? That's not the sort of thought you have, when you're eleven years old. When your world is upside down, and your mother is the only thing you're holding onto. When somebody has just thrown a brick through your window.

(a taste of sarcasm)

But then... life has a funny way of giving you second chances.

A WHOOOOSH carries us to--

END FLASHBACK

INT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

MYRA

Ma? It's me.

Without an answer, Myra twists the door cautiously open.

BRENDA

(sulky)

If you've come to decide if I need stitches, you should remember I've lived on a farm for forty years.

MYRA

No. I uh... I wanted to say I'm sorry. About the laundry.

Brenda stews on this for a long moment before replying--

BRENDA

It wasn't about the laundry.

MYRA

I know.

(struggling to explain)

You always seem fine. Somehow, you always keep going. I think that makes it easy for me to ignore that you had to go through all of it, the same as I did. And not just drift through it, like a kid-- like me. You had to bear the full weight of it. When I couldn't. And Pa couldn't.

The score plays cathartic consolation. Low. But heartfelt.

BRENDA

... I'm sorry I took your clothes
without asking.

MYRA

It's fine, Ma, I--

BRENDA

No, I--

(sighs)

You grew up all at once. Not like
the cliché... one day you were
eleven, and Annie was seven... and
the next day you had to be a grown
up, and Annie... was gone. I didn't
get eased out of having kids. I
didn't learn boundaries. I don't
know how to be a mother to someone
who doesn't need me.

(means it)

Sorry.

MYRA

(narration)

We study the wood paneling in
silence... because that's what you
do, when you live in a no-crying
farmhouse. And I realize-- I'm
looking at pieces of God's
Toothpick. The sliced up husk of a
supposedly strong, eternal thing,
that in the end was leveled by a
breeze.

(then)

I recall how Ma embraced me at the
foot of Pa's coffin. As if the
years and ugly sentiments passed
between us had never happened. As
if I was the one that deserved to
be comforted-- when she had lost a
husband, and I had lost... what? A
father I barely knew?

(genuinely amazed)

I'm struck, *really struck*, by how
gravely I've misunderstood her. How
all this bearing up and soldiering
on since Annie's death is little
more than a coping mechanism.
Diametrically opposed to Pa's...
and yet borne from the same aches.
She's always been my tree.
Towering. Steadfast.

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

But trees are not eternal. And we must remind ourselves, occasionally... that surviving the last storm doesn't guarantee they'll survive the next one.

(then)

So I repay the coffin side embrace. And I mean a lot more than laundry when I say:

MYRA (CONT'D)

I do still need you, Ma.

The moment lingers.

LIAM

I'm uh... sorry to interrupt. Could anybody point Denson towards a broom?

Brenda takes a hard breath and composes herself instantly.

BRENDA

Yeah. Yeah. This way.

They exit, *voices recede*:

DENSON MCDOUGAL

I can zip you up to Doc Smith in the cruiser... if you want someone to take a look at that hand...

BRENDA

Ah it's just a scratch...

When they're out of earshot:

LIAM

... I had a look around.

MYRA

What do you think?

LIAM

(unconvinced)

Could be kids. A dare.

MYRA

(narration)

I feel myself slowly nod my head. But I know-- I can feel from Liam's glance that he knows too-- this is no dare. It's a warning. Or worse... a taunt.

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

(grave)

I have this feeling... that we've been sleeping in the shadow of God's Toothpick. And the wind is beginning to howl.

Score building now-- something adjacent to the oscillating mystery of our theme, but with heightened danger.

LIAM

(very low)

You still think your dad's death was an accident?

Myra consider.

MYRA

I don't know. But I don't think this was.

SILENCE

The song "One Eye Open" by Andrea Parés and Payden Widner begins to play.

PODCAST SPOKESPERSON

"Two Dead Girls in Jubeliene" was written, directed, and produced by Ethan Wellin. It stars Emily Goss as Myra. Zachary Cantrell as Liam and Denson. Susan Harmon as Brenda. Michael McShane as Ed. Marcelo Tubert as Berto. John Allee as Oscar. Hayley Keown as Maisie. Kerry Gutierrez as Young Myra. Mark Jacobson as Ronny. Don Green as Mr. Jenkins. Original Score by Kevin Hutchens Associate Producer Emily Goss. Associate Producer Zachary Cantrell. "One Eye Open" was written and recorded by Andrea Parés and Payden Widner. Thanks to Cat, Ron, the Evans, Monisha, Jack, David, and Tyler- without whom there could be no Jubeliene.

(then)

If you enjoyed listening, please rate and review on Apple Podcasts. Or tell a friend. For cast bios, episode transcripts, and more, find our little town on Instagram. @2deadgirlspod. That's "at" the number "2" dead girls pod. Thanks.

(then)

(MORE)

PODCAST SPOKESPERSON (CONT'D)

"Two Dead Girls in Jubeliene" is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to real events, or to persons living or dead, is purely coincidental.

END OF EPISODE