

STRANGER THINGS
EPISODE 3:
ONE OF THOSE FACES

By
EARL NEWTON
(StrangerThings.tv)

Based on the original short story
"Rami Temporales" by Gary Braunbeck
(GaryBraunbeck.com)

Second Draft

This file contains additional director's notes concerning the
evolution of the script from page to frame.

Find this episode and more at StrangerThings.tv
The world's first science fiction series shot and released in high
definition on the Internet.

Earl Newton
Earl@strangerthings.tv

INT. CAFE



Joanna sits, eating a cheeseburger and reading a book. A WOMAN stops by her table.

WOMAN
Excuse me, do you have the time?

JOANNA
(checks) 
Half-past two.

WOMAN
Thank you.

She hesitates.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Is it all right if I sit down?

JOANNA
Okay.

CUT TO:

The woman talking.

WOMAN
She's been sick for so long. The doctors don't know what to do. I just watch her, she's so lonely, and getting sicker all the time...I want to help but I don't know what to do.

As she speaks, Joanna speaks in voiceover. She's very somber, very quiet.

JOANNA
(VO)
This happens to me, all the time.

She watches the woman talk.



JOANNA (CONT'D)
(VO)
She reminded me so much of the first one who spoke to me...only....no, that girl had just had an abortion for the third time. She was a little younger.
(beat)
I was twelve.

WOMAN

She doesn't have anyone...

JOANNA

(interrupts)

She has you, right?

WOMAN

Yeah...I guess she does.

(checks cellphone)

Oh my goodness. I'm so sorry to bother,
you've been so kind -

JOANNA

- It's okay -

WOMAN

I guess you just have one those faces,
huh?



The woman leaves, and JoAnna watches her go.

JOANNA

(VO)

This is how it always is. I'm the one
they ask for directions. I'm the one
they tell their stories to. I'm the one
they stop to-

As she stands to leave -

VOICE

Sit down, please.

JOANNA

What?

This is the metered voice of LISTEN, the character we are
about to meet. But for the moment, we only hear him.

LISTEN

Don't turn around yet.

JOANNA

Is this a robbery?

Joanna looks toward the cash register, there's no one to
help her.

LISTEN

No. Please sit down.

Joanna slowly sits. Listen's voice is very soft and reassuring.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

What I'm about to tell you is going to be very unsettling, but I can tell you that it is not a threat, it is the truth. I mean you no harm by telling you. And I would rather let you have this moment in private.

JOANNA

Who are -

LISTEN

Don't look around. Please watch the television.

Joanna looks up at the television suspended from the ceiling.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

In two minutes you're going to get a phone call from Cedar Hill Memorial Hospital. It'll be your sister Amy.

Joanna begins to turn.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

Please watch the television.

Joanna turns back, looks up. Inexplicably, there's a coffin on the screen.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

She'll be calling to tell you the doctors have determined your eight-year-old nephew's brain cancer is inoperable, and unfortunately, terminal.

JOANNA

That's not true - he's just got headaches - the EEG is coming back today, the doctors are sure -

LISTEN

They were wrong. Please watch the television.

Onscreen, Joanna's sister Amy sits at a table, alone in a darkened room.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

Four months after their son's death, your
brother-in-law will divorce your sister.

On the screen, Amy sets a round bottle of pills on the
table.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

Three months after that, your sister will
commit suicide.

Joanna's voice catches in her throat.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

There is nothing I can do to change this.
But there is something you can do.

JOANNA

What?

Joanna looks up as Listen slides in across the table from
her. Listen is a calm fellow of indeterminate age, but
there is something youthful in his looks.

LISTEN

It's not something I can explain here.
Will you come with me?

JOANNA

(flabbergasted)

No!

It's funny when she says that, but Listen doesn't think
so. In fact, Listen doesn't do anything but look at her
for a long while. Then he nods.

LISTEN

That's your choice.

He gets up and leaves.

JOANNA

Hey...hey wait!

EXT. RESTAURANT

Listen strides quickly down the stairs.

JOANNA

Wait! Wait!

Joanna's phone starts ringing. She stops short, pulls it open. It says "AMY."

Listen's hand closes around the phone.

LISTEN

If you answer that, you're going to set things into motion that I can not change. Or, you can ignore the call, and listen to me for five minutes.

Listen's eyes flick from the cellphone to Joanna.

The "INCOMING -> AMY" blinks to "MISSED CALL".

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Listen walks quickly down the sidewalk, Joanna keeping step all the way.

LISTEN

I have to speak quickly because I can only hold things in stasis for so long. There are specific rules we have to follow.



JOANNA

Like what?

LISTEN

Like something for something. I can help your nephew, but only if you help me first. I can't make changes on my own.

JOANNA

What do I have to do?

LISTEN

God created Man in His own image. Yes?

JOANNA

Yes...

LISTEN

It's more than that. God gave Man a piece of Himself. You'd call it His face. It's more complex than that, but suffice to say: it was broken into 72 pieces and divided amongst the world.

JOANNA

His face?

LISTEN

We know what Jesus looks like, we know what Buddha looked like. There were no cameras in China, no painters in Jerusalem. We even know what the Devil looks like. But what does God look like?

JOANNA

Uh...

LISTEN

This way, hurry!

They rush down a side alley.



INT. ALLEY - DAY

LISTEN

Since you were a child, people have been telling you their stories. Did you ever wonder why?

JOANNA

I don't know, I guess I have one of those faces -

She realizes what she's about to say. Listen picks up on this.

LISTEN

Life is full of its little linguistic ironies.



JOANNA

Where are we?

LISTEN

We need a place of power. The sacred places of the earth don't disappear just because you redecorate.

(looks around)

This looks right. I'll be right back.

And like that: he's gone.

JOANNA

Hello? Hello? What about my nephew?!
Hello?!

Sound of skittering bottle.

Joanna turns sharply. There's a bum on the sidewalk. Shuffling slowly toward her.

Joanna slowly takes a step back.

The bum stops.

BUM
You want a drink?

IN THE ALLEY

BUM
She was so beautiful.

Joanna tips the wine bottle up, but she is careful to keep her thumb over the mouth, so she never actually drinks.

When the Bum speaks, he's really talking to himself, or "She". Joanna is, for the most part, incidental.

BUM (CONT'D)
So beautiful it hurts me just to think about it. Because...how could...how could she really like me? There had to be something wrong with her. We were going to have a baby...but I was...too stupid. Too young. Same thing, I guess. No offense.

Joanna shakes her head.

BUM (CONT'D)
And when I saw her tonight...(he is lost in the moment, staring) Her eyes...I can't forget her eyes.

JOANNA
Why?

BUM
Because...she didn't recognize me. She didn't...recognize me. How do I...how do you go on...after something like that?

JOANNA
But you don't remember her either.

BUM
Yeah, I do.

JOANNA

You remember the good things about her.
But you don't remember everything...and
it was the everything that made you split
up. You didn't break up with her because
she was beautiful, right?

BUM

Yeah...

JOANNA

Maybe you just need to give yourself some
time to think about it.

BUM

Maybe.

(swig)

You know, I feel better. Thank you.
You're a really good listener. Can I get
you something, for your time?

JOANNA

(shrugs)

Nah, it's okay.

BUM

Here.

(hands bottle)

Thanks again.

The bum struggles to his feet, slowly walks away.

JOANNA

(watching him go)

Bye.

Listen appears after a moment, briefcase in hand.

LISTEN

Joanna, you are an exceptionally good
person.

JOANNA

Do you know what's going to happen to
him? Will he be okay?

LISTEN

The chance of being "okay" died for him a
long time ago...but he will be better.

Joanna stands up.

JOANNA

Are there a lot of people like you?

LISTEN

Like what?

JOANNA

All-knowing people. Omniscient.

LISTEN

I'm not omniscient, I'm just very well-researched. If you'd been working the same job for ten thousand years, you'd seem all-knowing too. Do you know how many people you've listened to?

JOANNA

No.

LISTEN

Seven hundred and twelve, if you include that man. Do you know what you are, Joanna? You're a safety valve. People see you, and they know they can trust you with their pain. Do you think it helps them?

JOANNA

I don't know.

LISTEN

In twenty-four years, you've prevented forty-three rapes, one hundred and twelve suicides, thirty-three divorces, ninety-eight murders, and so many cases of spousal abuse I stopped writing them down. Do you know why?

Joanna goes to answer, nods her head softly.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

Do you know why I want the piece back?

JOANNA

To put it back together again, I guess.

LISTEN

Yes. Right now, the world is lost. It doesn't know where to look to. But once the pieces are reassembled...

JOANNA

Things will be better?

LISTEN

 Not immediately. Not soon. But yes. Better. It also means that, from now on...no one will tell you their stories anymore. You won't be a safety valve for anyone anymore.

JOANNA

What happens to those people?

LISTEN

They just...do the best they can.

JOANNA

What does that mean?

Listen looks at her, says nothing. But the meaning is clear.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

But my nephew...

LISTEN

If you help me, I can help you. Those are the rules.

JOANNA

My nephew. Seven hundred and twelve people?

Listen nods. Joanna doesn't say anything for a moment.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I guess seven thirteen is a good number to go out on.

THE ALLEY GROUND

Joanna slowly reclines on the ground. Listen opens the bag, withdrawing a thick wrap of black silk. He starts unfolding it, and we see a piece of a white mask. He unfolds another part: another mask.

Like a Rubix cube, as he folds and unfolds, he exposes more and more masks from within the folds of the cloth.

We cannot see what he's doing with the masks, but a soft glow appears from them.

He brings a glowing, single mask, missing a few edges and part of a cheek. As he places it on Joanna's face, Joanna winces and reaches for the mask -

LISTEN
(harshly)
Don't touch it! You'll lose your hand.

Joanna gives up, and lets the glowing mask overcome her.

FADE TO WHITE

INT. THE RESTAURANT FROM EARLIER

Same restaurant, except now:

A young boy sits in one of the booths, happily eating a hamburger.

AMY
And when the doctor said it was benign, I
just started crying right then.

Joanna sits across from her sister Amy as she talks. But she doesn't seem to be paying attention.

AMY (CONT'D)
I told them don't wait, don't risk it,
take it out as fast as you can. The
operation is in a week, but they say
everything should go great. They gave
him some medicine to help with the
headaches, Tommy says it makes him feel
"shiny". Isn't that amazing?

As Amy talks, we realize Joanna is truly not paying attention at all. Her eyes have wandered past Amy to a woman at another table.

THE WOMAN

sits quietly, writing in a journal.

Joanna watches.

The woman is lost in her own private world, writing something. Her lip trembles, dangerous. She looks like she's about to cry.

Joanna cannot stop watching.

The woman suddenly realizes she is in public. She closes up her notebook, takes a quick look around, and locks eyes with Joanna.

Joanna looks back, unflinching. Almost yearning.
And she walks right by her.

AMY
Are you okay? You've been looking tired lately.

JOANNA
No, I'm okay.

AMY
You sure?

JOANNA
Yeah.

AMY
I always worry about you. I guess you have one of those faces, huh?

JOANNA
Yeah.

Joanna looks back. The woman is leaving.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The woman exits, clutching her notebook.

JOANNA
Excuse me!

She turns. Joanna is standing there.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
Um...

Joanna is totally lost for words. This is unfamiliar water.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
Uh...do you have the time?



WOMAN
No.

Joanna is out of ideas. The silence holds, uncomfortably, and the woman turns away.

JOANNA
My name's Joanna.

Joanna's eyes fervently try to make a connection.

The woman relaxes.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I never do this, but I saw you
there, and...

The sounds of her explanation are lost as we sweep away
from Joanna, to another figure walking in the opposite
direction.

It's Listen, carrying his briefcase.

LISTEN

Seven hundred and fourteen.

He smiles and slides a black silk-wrapped package into
his briefcase.

LISTEN (CONT'D)

And still counting.

He walks off-screen.

THE END