

THE LOOP

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - JOSHUA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JOSHUA (10), space-themed pyjamas, dark red birthmark on his neck, lies asleep in bed. A moon night light glows dimly on one wall and a lava lamp cascades brightly on the bedside table.

CREAK! Joshua's eyes fly open. His head remains still as his eyes flit to the ajar door.

A dark shape suddenly fills the gap. Joshua sees the glint of the lava lamp in an eye peering at him.

He sits bolt upright. His breath comes in short gasps. He takes a deep breath to scream--

MAN  
Ssssshhhhhh!

A MAN enters, pressing a finger to his lips, other hand outstretched in a calming manner. Similar features, same hair color, same eye color.

Same dark red birthmark on his neck.

Joshua subconsciously touches his own birthmark. OLDER JOSHUA (30s) does the same and nods.

JOSHUA  
(whisper)  
You look like...

OLDER JOSHUA  
(whisper)  
Like you?

JOSHUA  
No, like Dad. Sort of. Before he got sick.

OLDER JOSHUA  
Our eyes are Mom's.

JOSHUA  
You aren't me. You can't be.  
(panic)  
What are you doing in our house?

OLDER JOSHUA

Joshua, listen very carefully. I am you, or will be in about twenty-five years. See this?

Older Joshua holds up a device strapped to his left wrist, black components and mesh around a shiny black circle.

OLDER JOSHUA

This device lets me travel through time. Sort of. It's connected to the actual device. And one day, you're going to invent it.

Older Joshua touches the band. The circle lights up, casting a holographic display in the air above it. In it, Older Joshua smiles triumphantly under the caption "TIME TRAVEL SOLVED!"

Joshua's eyes grow wide as the display vanishes.

JOSHUA

Me? I invent time travel?

OLDER JOSHUA

That's right. And you save a lot of people with it. Millions.

Joshua smiles. The smile turns to trepidation when Older Joshua sits on the bed.

OLDER JOSHUA

But for that to happen, something else has to happen first.

Quick as a flash, Older Joshua's hand darts out and slaps onto Joshua's birthmark. Joshua recoils, hand going to the spot to find a thin, translucent patch stuck there. He peels it off and looks at it.

JOSHUA

What did you--

Joshua's eyelids droop. His head lolls. He sags onto the bed.

OLDER JOSHUA

(distant, warbled)  
It's going to be okay.

Older Joshua moves to the door. He looks back, tears in his eyes.

OLDER JOSHUA

I'm sorry.

Older Joshua leaves the room, closing the door shut.

Joshua fights to keep his eyes open. He breathes ragged gasps. He tries to rise but flops back to the bed.

A SCREAM pierces the quiet. Glass shatters somewhere in the house.

JOSHUA

(moan)  
Mom?

Something heavy falls. More glass shatters. Another scream.

Joshua forces himself to the edge of the bed and over, falling to the floor.

Joshua pulls himself across the floor towards the door.

MOM (O.S.)

(screaming)  
Please, don't kill me! Please! I  
have a son!

JOSHUA

Mom! Mom!

Joshua tries to reach the doorknob but can't. He gathers his feet under him and stands unsteadily.

CRASH! Joshua pulls the door open and steps out into--

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Joshua leans heavily against the wall, dragging his feet down the hallway.

His bare feet push through shards of broken glass.

LIVING ROOM

Joshua stumbles out of the hallway, falling heavily against the couch.

Shelves dangle broken on one wall. Beneath them are a jumble of broken picture frames, mostly of Joshua and MOM (30s).

A TV hangs askew on the wall, hit hard by something.

A dirty wine glass sits on the coffee table. Shards of the wine bottle litter the carpet.

The sound of sobbing comes from the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Joshua falls through the doorway onto the tile floor, landing in a pool of blood and broken glass.

Cutlery, kitchen knives, and more broken glass cover the floor. Blood spatter covers everything.

Older Joshua cradles Mom in his arms, sobbing. Mom's dead eyes stare up at the ceiling.

JOSHUA

Mom?

Older Joshua looks at him, covered in blood, face wet with tears.

OLDER JOSHUA

It was the only way.

JOSHUA

No. Mom!

OLDER JOSHUA

When Mom was killed, it tore me apart. No evidence except her body, and ten-year-old me, and I couldn't remember anything. Her murder was never solved.

Older Joshua lays Mom gently on the floor. Joshua sobs and pulls himself towards her.

OLDER JOSHUA

Then there was a breakthrough in quantum physics, and suddenly time travel was within reach. If I could go back in time, I could stop this.

JOSHUA

But you killed her!

OLDER JOSHUA

Five years ago, I came back. And I saw me, now, five minutes ago, just before I came into your room. I couldn't understand it. So I made a promise to myself that no matter what, I wouldn't do it. I could never do it.

Joshua puts his hand on his dead mother's face.

OLDER JOSHUA

I spent the next few years doing amazing things. Saving so many people. Making the world a better place.

He touches his wristband. The blood-splattered circle illuminates. The display depicts "WORLD PEACE!"

OLDER JOSHUA

You can achieve anything when you have all the time in the world. Except change the past.

The display vanishes.

OLDER JOSHUA

Mom's death is what drove me. If she didn't die, I would never have pursued time travel. All those people would never have been saved. I realized I had to do it. It was one life against--

Joshua stabs Older Joshua in his birthmark with a knife.

JOSHUA

She was our mother!

Older Joshua grabs his spurting neck, surprised. Blood spills from his mouth.

OLDER JOSHUA

I should have seen that coming.

Older Joshua grabs a dish towel and presses it to his neck.

OLDER JOSHUA

I don't remember this. You won't either, not really. It'll just be a bad dream for you.

Joshua slumps next to his mother and puts his arm around her.

OLDER JOSHUA

Sleep. It'll be okay. You'll be hurt and angry, and one day, you'll invent time travel and save the world.

Joshua can barely keep his eyes open.

JOSHUA

I don't want to. I just want Mom.

Older Joshua puts his hand on the wristband.

OLDER JOSHUA

Me too.

With a flash, he vanishes, leaving Joshua and his mom lying on the bloody kitchen floor, red and blue lights flashing through the windows.

FADE OUT.