

HOME TIME

EPISODE 3: FAMILY THERAPY

Version 2

Written by

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INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

DAD (45) sits in an easy chair looking anything but at ease. He gently rocks, his eyes fixed on--

The glow of a PORCH LIGHT, whose ghastly glow creeps into the home through the still broken window.

DAD (V.O.)
That damn light should not be on
this late.

He leans forward and starts to PANT.

DAD
(whisper that slowly
rises)
That light should not be on this
late. Did I invite Pal over?

Dad rises and takes a few steps toward the door.

DAD (V.O.)
Maybe it's a sign. Maybe I've
heard.

Dad tenses at the sound of FOOTSTEPS. It's unclear if they come from outside or inside the home.

Dad picks up a COFFEE MUG from an end table. It's labeled -- THE SYSTEM: PURE ENERGY, ENERGY POWDER. A rigidly composed knight holds a triangular shield and wields a sword.

DINGDONG.

DAD (V.O.)
Is that the doorbell... or...

Dad clenches the coffee mug and readies himself for a fight.

A HERD of FOOTSTEPS is heard and in walks MOM (45), BRO (25) and SIS (20).

The trio encircles Dad and scrutinize him.

MOM
Aren't you going to answer the
door?

DAD
The door?

MOM
Yes, the door.

BRO
 Jeez, Dad, you're really stupid
 sometimes.

SIS
 No he's not. He's just... frail.

MOM
 Yes, frail and weak.

Dejected, Dad places the coffee mug back on the end table.

Mom crosses her arms and looks at him, annoyed.

MOM (CONT'D)
 Well? The door?

DAD
 You want me to get it?

MOM
 Get what?

DAD
 The door?

MOM
 I want you to answer it if that's
 what you mean.

DAD
 Yes. Sorry, I wasn't clear. May I
 ask, who it is at this time of
 night?

SIS
 Dad, you shouldn't press Mom.

Mom glowers at Dad.

MOM
 I had hoped your night with They
 would have brought ascension.
 Sadly, you've forced me to take
 another action.

Mom grabs Dad by the wrist and drags him to the door. She
 points to the doorknob.

Dad's hand trembles as it approaches it... turns... opens.

To reveal THERAPIST (35) on the other side. She's thin, some
 might say pretty and wearing big glasses.

Dad doesn't know what to do.

Bro looks up from doing something on his TABLET.

BRO
God! Let her in, Dad.

DAD
Um, would you like to come in?

MOM
Introduce yourself first.

Dad forces a smile and looks at Therapist.

DAD
I'm Dad.

He offers his hand and she kindly takes it and smiles. Dad relaxes a bit.

THERAPIST
I'm Therapist. I'd love to come in.

Therapist glides inside and looks around at the family.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Hello, you must be Bro and Sis.

Sis nods but Bro doesn't look up from his TABLET. Its case is covered with System iconography.

Mom walks to Therapist and puts a hand on her shoulder.

MOM
Dad, this is our family's Therapist. Don't think she's just yours and don't get any ideas.

Therapist looks a bit uncomfortable. Noticing, Dad swoops in and tries to reassure her.

DAD
Of course, Mom. She looks like a swell lady, certainly up to the task of helping us. Say... it is a bit odd that you make house calls. At night?

Dad tries to read her facial expression, but Mom cuts in front of him with an icy gaze.

MOM

Respect her. I am trying to help this family. And since you refuse to hear, you must try.

Dad slumps and nods, resigned to his fate.

INT. DAD'S ROOM - LATER

Dad lies on a couch while Therapist sits in an office chair.

She holds a clipboard and a pen that reads: LET THIS BE A TOOL OF YOUR MIND - THE SYSTEM.

THERAPIST

Now, let's start from the beginning.

DAD

Childhood?

THERAPIST

If you like.

DAD

Is that what you'd like?

THERAPIST

This is about you.

Dad sits up, uncertain.

DAD

Nothing is ever about me.

THERAPIST

Projection or reality?

DAD

Sorry?

THERAPIST

Is that a projection forged by deep seated insecurities, or objective reality?

DAD

Reality?

THERAPIST

The world or the state of things as they actually exist.

DAD
Actually?

THERAPIST
Actually.

DAD
Who's to say.

THERAPIST
Who's to say, indeed.

Dad glances up at Therapist and smiles a bit. She returns the favor.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Why don't you tell me about what's been going on.

DAD
My reality.

THERAPIST
The only one you know.

Dad's smile fades and he lies back down on the couch.

DAD
Oh, you know... life is life. I'm a family man.

THERAPIST
... I see.

INTERCUT VARIOUS THERAPIST SESSIONS WITH MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY IN THE LIVING ROOM.

BRO AND THERAPIST

Bro paces the room, his eyes glued to his TABLET. He licks the screen to remove some gunk, savors the taste.

Therapist seems slightly off-put but recovers.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Do you think Dad is a family man?

BRO
Whatever. You on Instagram?

THERAPIST
If you want my handle you'll need to answer my questions.

BRO
Handle this!

Bro licks his screen in sexual manner.

SIS AND THERAPIST

THERAPIST
Is Dad a family man?

Sis wrings her hands, clearly upset by the question.

SIS
Who's asking?

THERAPIST
I am.

SIS
But you aren't Dad or Mom.

THERAPIST
No, I'm therapist.

SIS
Pretend to be one of them.

THERAPIST
Therapy is a place for truth and honesty.

SIS
Whose truth?

THERAPIST
Yours.

SIS
... Please be Dad or Mom.

MOM AND THERAPIST

Mom and Therapist simply stare at one another or a long time.

Therapist jots down a note.

MOM
Scribble scrabble.

THERAPIST
Babble rabble.

MOM
Tit for tat.

THERAPIST
Rats in hats.

MOM
Love is blind.

THERAPIST
Not all the time.

MOM
All too true.

THERAPIST
Now what's it view?

SIS AND THERAPIST

Sis is sweating from panic. Therapist observes her with kindness.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Who are you?

SIS
I'm Sis.

THERAPIST
Who am I?

SIS
Therapist.

THERAPIST
Good. Now... the question.

SIS
Which?

THERAPIST
The one that needs answering.

SIS
There are so many questions and so many answers.

THERAPIST
I'm only interested in this one and yours.

SIS
I was born to Dad and Mom,
therefore they are my one true
love.

THERAPIST
Both?

SIS
Depending.

THERAPIST
On?

BRO AND THERAPIST

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Can you put that away?

BRO
Put yourself away.

THERAPIST
How so?

BRO
I don't know. Like in a pocket.

THERAPIST
Pockets hide things. I'm the
opposite of a pocket dweller.

BRO
Dwell on these nuts.

Therapist grimaces but keeps it together.

THERAPIST
Who are you talking to?

BRO
I'm trolling, not talking.

DAD AND THERAPIST

DAD
I feel like no one likes me here.

THERAPIST
But Mom brought me in. Doesn't
that show she cares?

Dad eyes Therapist, somewhat suspiciously.

DAD
Do you care?

THERAPIST
Of course. It's my job to be
empathetic and helpful.

Therapist smiles and clicks her PEN. Dad relaxes.

DAD
I made mistakes.

THERAPIST
Everyone does. Can we talk about
them?

Dad looks around the room. Is it bugged?

DAD
If you're the only one who's going
to hear.

THERAPIST
Who else would?

DAD
... They.

Therapist nods and jots down a note.

MOM AND THERAPIST

MOM
Do you think this is helping?

THERAPIST
In what way?

MOM
In any way.

THERAPIST
Possibly.

MOM
Not probably.

THERAPIST
More to say, more to do.

MOM
I'm glad you're here.

THERAPIST
I only want to help.

BRO AND THERAPIST

BRO
This guy is dead! GRRRR.

THERAPIST
Anger can be useful.

BRO
All in service of the system.

THERAPIST
The system? How so?

BRO
Ascension baby.

SIS AND THERAPIST

THERAPIST
Where is your mind?

SIS
With whoever needs me.

THERAPIST
Do you think Dad is happy?

SIS
I want him to be.

THERAPIST
That's not what I asked.

SIS
I can be happy. Oh so happy. If I
make them happy.

THERAPIST
Happiness comes from inside.

SIS
Where?

THERAPIST
Inside you.

SIS
But where exactly?

THERAPIST
Throughout, from within.

DAD AND THERAPIST

DAD

I feel like you, maybe, maybe can understand me.

THERAPIST

It must be hard.

DAD

Oh so hard.

THERAPIST

You have so much pressure.

DAD

Pressure and scorn, that's what makes this house go 'round.

THERAPIST

What if I told you there was a way to escape it all.

Dad leans toward Therapist, genuinely hopeful.

DAD

But... They... he knows all.

THERAPIST

They doesn't know me. Trust me.

Therapist reaches and takes Dad's hand. They smile at one another.

END INTERCUT

INT. MOM'S OTHERWORLD - WHO KNOWS

Mom stares into the camera, lost amidst the void. Her eyes are closed and she presses a finger against her forehead.

MOM

When will the next run in the ladder be climbed? Is this the path of the System, or another fool's errand. Guide me, They.

She gives the System salute and a glow casts across her face.

THEY (V.O.)

Seek thy own truth and be free.

MOM

But I'm a prisoner in my own home. Nothing helps him hear.

THEY (V.O.)
I showed him my undercarriage.
Hope is high, his calling is nigh.

MOM
When may I see your undercarriage.

THEY (V.O.)
When the stagecoach leaves the
station, you will rise.

MOM
Thank you, They.

The glow fades and Mom opens her eyes. She intensely stares into the camera.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sis and Bro loom once again over the bubbling pot of GOO. Sis mixes it but Bro is preoccupied with his TABLET.

BRO
This guy is so freaking dead.

SIS
You should help me. It must be prepared. Mom said so.

BRO
You got it. Besides, I'm serving the System right now.

Dad peaks inside the kitchen, braces himself, and walks in. He plasters on a fake smile. Sis smiles back, Bro doesn't acknowledge his presence.

DAD
Hey there, Bro, Sis.

SIS
Hi, Dad. How was your therapy session?

Dad squirms a bit.

DAD
Eh, it was therapy.

SIS
But how was it.

DAD

Good?

SIS

Is that a question?

BRO

Can you two shut up! You're making me have typos. Nothing is worse than coming at a troll with typos. You never hear the end of it.

DAD

Sorry.

(to Sis)

Do you need help with that?

Dad reaches for the other large spoon but Sis moves it away from his grasp.

SIS

Mom said me and Bro were supposed to do it.

DAD

But Bro is attacking trolls.

BRO

Just one Dad, just one.

DAD

Why not let me help?

SIS

Would... would it make you happy?

DAD

I won't know unless I try.

Reluctantly, Sis passes the large spoon to Dad; he stirs up the goo beside her.

Sis smiles, it's more genuine and relaxed.

SIS

I'm glad I could make you happy, Dad.

DAD

I suppose so.

SIS

Wait, you're not?

DAD
Hard to tell.

SIS
I've done something wrong.

DAD
No, no, you've done everything
right.

SIS
But still nothing gets better.

They stir in silence for a moment.

Mom walks in holding a pyramid shaped vase with dead flowers.

MOM
Sis, Bro, why is your dad preparing
the feast?

SIS
Sorry Mom, Bro was busy--

BRO
--System business! Jeez.

SIS
Dad asked to help so I thought
there wouldn't be much harm. I'll
tell him to stop this instant.

Sis yanks away the large spoon from Dad. He looks a tiny bit hurt.

Mom gets up in Dad's face.

MOM
Are you enjoying therapy?

DAD
Oh, you know, it's therapy.

SIS
He asked me if it was good.

MOM
You asked if your own therapy was
good?

DAD
Well, it's hard to tell with such
things. Besides, it's private.

Sis stops stirring the goo and Dad looks like he knows he's stepped in shit.

Mom nods at him, somewhere between menace and disappointment.

MOM

You've always valued your privacy
above all else.

DAD

Now, that's not what I meant--

Mom whirls around and leaves. Bro CACKLES.

BRO

Smooth, Dad, smooth.

SIS

Why don't you want to get better?

DAD

I do, I mean, I don't know. I
want... ugh, I need to see
Therapist.

Dad walks out.

INT. DAD'S ROOM - LATER

Dad sits upright on the couch and close to Therapist in his office chair.

He looks pensive and unsure.

DAD

I can trust you, right?

THERAPIST

I've requested your trust.

DAD

Is that the same thing?

THERAPIST

It seems to be.

Dad pauses, obviously thinking long and hard.

DAD

You mentioned a way to escape...
were you being serious?

THERAPIST

Of course, I know a way out of this hell you've been living in.

DAD

Oh, please show me! Show me! Take me away from all of this!

Dad grovels at Therapist's feet and takes her hands in his.

THERAPIST

Away? Where shall you go?

DAD

Anywhere, anywhere but here!

THERAPIST

Oh, Dad, that isn't the way to escape the trap you've set for yourself.

DAD

But... but you said you'd help me.

THERAPIST

And I will.

TRUMPETS BLARE and banners for THE SYSTEM, flush with their iconography fall from the ceiling.

Dad looks around perplexed and then back at Therapist.

Out of seemingly thin air, THEY appears behind Dad and gently caresses his ear.

Dad jumps up right and staggers back against the far wall.

Mom, Sis and Bro (still on his TABLET) enter the room. Mom looks livid and Sis saddened.

DAD

What, I don't understand. This is a private session.

MOM

This is family therapy.

They, with a creepy smile plastered on his face, stalks to Dad and rubs ones of his shoulders.

THEY

Therapist, you've done well to expose the liar in our midst.

Therapist stands and joins Mom, Sis and Bro.

THERAPIST

My pleasure, all in service of the
Omnihead.

Everyone but Dad makes the System salute.

DAD

You... you're with them.

MOM

Them? We are your family. You
should be with us too.

DAD

I am, I am, I just... I'm sorry. I
hear, I really do! I know now that
the way to escape is through the
System! Through the call!

No one is buying it, least of all Mom.

SIS

Oh Dad, lying will only make this
harder.

BRO

Yeah, Dad. We heard the whole
thing.

THEY

I believe a more pungent and
decisive treatment plan is in
order. A tried and true System
ritual.

MOM

Will he hear it then? Will he come
back to us and be one with the
System.

THEY

Let us find out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The large pot of GOO rests on a small table in the center of
the room.

Dad is bound to a chair, barechested, and surrounded by his
family, They and Therapist.

Sis stirs the goo, Bro types away on his TABLET and Mom stands, arms crossed, in silent judgement.

They and Therapist stand behind Dad, a hand on each shoulder.

THERAPIST

I had hoped you would understand,
but you only wanted to leave.

DAD

How can a lie lead to salvation?
Therapist, I trusted you.

MOM

You know all about lies. At least
this one was in service of
something good.

THEY

Yes. But fear not. The
purification tonic will help Dad
see the light and hear the call.

They motions to Sis who brings up the spoon to show off the thick, viscous GOO contained in the pot.

Dad looks repulsed by the site of it.

THEY (CONT'D)

A bigger spoon is needed.

They reaches behind him and produces a GIANT LADLE.

CLOSE UP of THEY.

THEY (CONT'D)

Only twenty-nine soul points with
special pricing for third tier
members.

They holds up the GIANT LADLE and squints.

BACK TO SCENE.

They scoops out a copious amount of the GOO from the pot and pours it over Dad's head.

It oozes and glides, with great difficulty, down Dad's face.

They and Therapist force the goo into Dad's mouth, nose and ears.

Dad squeals and gags, but he can't do anything to stop it.

THEY (CONT'D)
Come, join in the process.

Mom, Sis and Bro all take handfuls of the goo out of the pot and apply it to Dad's face, arms and torso.

He's lathered up in it, and it's thickness is making it hard for him to see, hear and breath.

They leans down, cheek to cheek with Dad.

THEY (CONT'D)
Do you hear it? The call?

DAD
(garbled)
Yes, yes, I hear it! Please stop this.

THERAPIST
He just wants this to stop. More extreme measures are needed.

They and Therapist pitch Dad forward in his chair and over the bubbling pot of GOO.

Before long, his head is completely submerged in the pot. He writhes and wriggles.

They jerks him out of the pot.

THEY
Now?!

They dunks him back in. Yanks him out.

THEY (CONT'D)
NOW?!

Again, in, out, in, out.

THEY (CONT'D)
DO YOU HEAR IT? DO YOU HEAR!

Dad is yanked out and openly begins to WEEP, although it sounds more like a dying walrus thanks to all the GOO that clutters and fills every orifice.

DAD
Yes, yes! By the System, I hear it. I hear the call.

Everyone scrutinizes Dad.

SIS

He hears it! We can stop this now!

BRO

Shut up!

MOM

I bet he's lying. They, where is the truth?

They gently runs a hand through the goo-riffic hair of Dad and licks his lips.

THEY

I cannot say. But I fear this treatment has done all it can at the present moment.

They nods to Therapist and they let go of the chair so Dad plummets to the ground.

DAD'S POV as he cranes his neck to look up at the others. The sound of their speech sounds like it's coming from underwater.

Dad passes out.

THEY (CONT'D)

I have channeled the System and it seems a getaway is in order for dear old Dad.

THERAPIST

To clear his head.

THEY

Yes, to clear his head.

MOM

To clear his head.

They thinks for a moment and then shines with something resembling hope.

THEY

We need to send him away.

MOM

Yes, away. Dad must go. Somewhere he can hear.

They looks down at Dad's limp body and then scoops some of the goo off his face.

He moves his hand toward Mom's mouth and she opens it, allowing him to rub the goo on the inside of her mouth.

Mom scoops out some of the goo from her mouth and rubs it on Sis and Bro's faces - purifying their bodies and minds.

FREEZE FRAME.

THE END