

THE WHYLIGHT ZONE

Episode 8: "It's a Good Rye"*

[OPENING MUSIC: The frantic, plinking piano of a child's recital, slowly morphing into a sweeping, cosmic orchestral swell]

NARRATOR:

Map of the United States. Tuck a napkin under your chin and take a bite out of the Midwest. Chew thoroughly. What you have left is a little town called Yeastville, Ohio.

It looks like any other town. It has a post office, a bank, and a population of 412 nervous people. But Yeastville is unique. It is an island. A culinary island. Because in Yeastville, you don't grocery shop. You don't garden. You don't even order takeout.

In Yeastville, you wait. You wait for the whims of an eight-year-old girl named Tonya Fremont. If Tonya is happy, the streets are paved with brioche. If Tonya is cranky, your soup turns to vinegar.

Tonya has a gift. Or a curse. Or perhaps, she's just very, very particular about her carbohydrates.

But tonight, Tonya is about to discover that her gift isn't just about making snacks appear out of thin air. She's about to take a walk down a very long, very strange road. A road that leads not to the cornfield... but to the mirror.

You have just crossed over into... the Whylight Zone.

ACT ONE: "The Bread Thoughts"*

[SCENE: The Fremont Living Room. A party is in progress. Everyone is sweating.]

The neighbors stand in a circle, grinning so hard their faces hurt. In the center sits Tonya Fremont, age eight, holding a Jack-in-the-Box.

MR. FREMONT:

"Play the music, Tonya! It's—it's good that you're playing the music! It's a *good* thing!"

MRS. FREMONT:

"Yes, honey! It's a *rye* thing! A very good rye!"

Tonya turns the crank. *Pop goes the weasel.*

But instead of a clown popping out, a steaming hot, perfectly crusty baguette shoots out of the box and lands in Mrs. Fremont's lap.

****TONYA:****

"I like baguettes."

****THE ROOM (in unison):****

"We love baguettes, Tonya! Baguettes are good! It's a good rye! It's a real good rye!"

A neighbor, Mr. Riley, wipes his brow. He looks tired. Just for a second, his smile falters. He thinks about how much he hates gluten. He thinks about how he misses salad.

Tonya frowns. She stares at Mr. Riley.

****TONYA:****

"You're thinking a bad thought."

****MR. RILEY:****

"No! No, Tonya! I was just thinking... about... pretzels! Big, salty pretzels!"

****TONYA:****

"You're thinking about *kale*."

The room gasps.

****TONYA:****

"I don't like kale."

She points a finger. Her eyes glow with a soft, golden warmth—like an oven light.

****TONYA:****

"You're a pretzel now."

****[SFX: A soft *POOF* and the crinkle of salt]****

Where Mr. Riley stood, there is now a six-foot-tall, soft-baked pretzel wearing a tie.

****MRS. FREMONT:****

"Oh! Oh, look at that! Mr. Riley is a pretzel! That's... that's a bread thought, Tonya! A real bread thought!"

Tonya sighs. She looks at her hands. They look small. But they feel... heavy.

****TONYA:****

"I'm tired of bread, Mom. My back hurts. And I'm worried about my 401k."

****MRS. FREMONT:****

"What did you say, sweetie?"

****TONYA:****

"I said... I want to go to the Ultramile."

The room goes deadly silent. Even the pretzel looks concerned.

**ACT TWO: "The Ultramile"**

****NARRATOR:****

The Ultramile. It's not a place you find on a GPS. It's the distance between who you are and who you forgot you were. It's a metaphysical highway paved with sourdough starter and lost receipts. And Tonya Fremont is about to start walking.

Tonya walks out the back door. The backyard dissolves. The swing set melts into molasses. The grass turns into spun sugar.

She is walking on a road made of receipts. Thousands of them.

Groceries: \$42.15.

Mortgage: \$1,200.

Therapy co-pay: \$40.

She walks. As she walks, her reflection in the shiny molasses ground begins to flicker.

She sees pigtails.

Then she sees a receding hairline.

She sees a pink dress.

Then she sees a flour-stained apron and a flannel shirt.

****VOICE (Booming, echoing):****

"WHO GOES THERE?"

****TONYA:****

"Tonya! I'm eight! And I made Mr. Riley a pretzel because he wanted a salad!"

****VOICE:****

"ARE YOU EIGHT? OR HAVE YOU JUST BEEN EIGHT FOR THIRTY-FOUR YEARS?"

Tonya stops. She looks at her hands again. The skin ripples. For a second, they are large, calloused, hairy hands. Then they snap back to being small and smooth.

****TONYA:****

"I... I don't know. I just want everyone to have a good rye."

****VOICE:****

"THEN ENTER THE CONVERGENCE."

The receipt road spirals upward, twisting like a croissant, into a vortex of blinding white flour. Tonya steps in.

**ACT THREE: "The Convergence of Homeomorphical Patterns"***

****[SFX: Psychedelic synthesizer music mixed with the sound of a timer ticking]****

Tonya floats in a void. But it's not empty. It is filled with ****Homeomorphical Patterns****.

She sees her life. Not as a timeline, but as a loaf.
Slices of time.

Slice 1: A boy named Tony, age 8, baking cookies with his grandma. Pure joy.

Slice 2: Tony, age 20, working in a cubicle. Eating a sad sandwich.

Slice 3: Tony, age 35, divorced, stressed, eating cold pizza over the sink.

Slice 4: Tony, age 42, having a breakdown in the baking aisle of a supermarket.

Tonya watches Slice 4. She sees the man—Tony—fall to his knees clutching a bag of flour. He is crying. He is wishing, with every fiber of his being, that he could just go back. That he could just be a kid who makes people happy with treats. That he could live in a world where "bad thoughts" just turn into pretzels.

The wish was so strong, it broke reality.

The man became the girl. The breakdown became the breakthrough. The town became Yeastville.

****TONYA:****

"I'm... Tony."

She looks at the floating patterns. They are fractals of dough, rising and falling. The
Homeomorphical Patterns of a life that refused to rise because it didn't have enough warmth.

She reaches out and grabs a floating piece of paper. It's glowing.

THE RECEIPT OF LIFE.

She reads it aloud.

TONYA/TONY (Voice overlapping):

"Recipe for a Whole Self:

4 cups of Childhood Wonder.

2 tablespoons of Adult Responsibility (do not overmix).

1 cup of Forgiveness.

Pinch of Salt (for the tears).

Knead until it hurts. Then let it rest."

As she reads, the pigtails recede. The pink dress morphs. The height returns.

The 8-year-old girl dissolves into golden light and absorbs into the chest of a 42-year-old man with a kind face and a 5 o'clock shadow.

Tony Fremont opens his eyes.

He isn't in the void. He's standing in his living room.

The neighbors are staring. Mr. Riley is still a pretzel.

TONY:

"Holy pumpernickel."

ACT FOUR: "The Baker Returns"*

Tony looks at his hands. They are his hands. Baker's hands.

MRS. FREMONT:

"Tonya? Honey? You look... taller. And you have a mustache."

Tony looks at his parents. He looks at the terrified neighbors.

TONY:

"It's okay. It's okay, everyone. You don't have to smile if you don't want to."

The room gasps.

****TONY:****

"You can hate the bread. You can want a salad. You can be sad. Sadness is just... it's just the sourdough starter of joy. It needs time to ferment."

Mr. Riley (the pretzel) speaks.

****MR. RILEY:****

"Does this mean I can be a human again? I'm getting very thirsty."

Tony closes his eyes. He doesn't use the frantic, terrified power of a child. He uses the seasoned, patient power of a master baker. He thinks a ****Bread Thought****. Not a thought of control, but a thought of nourishment.

****TONY:****

"Be yourself, Riley."

****[SFX: POOF]****

Mr. Riley is human again. He immediately asks for a glass of water.

Tony walks to the kitchen. He grabs some flour, water, salt. He starts to knead. Real dough. Not magic dough. Real work.

****TONY:****

"I was hiding," he tells the room. "I hid inside being eight because being forty-two hurt too much. But you can't live in the proofing drawer forever. Eventually, you have to go into the oven."

He puts the loaf in.

And then, something amazing happens.

Little Timmy, the neighbor's kid, wanders over. He looks at the oven. He giggles.

****TIMMY:****

"Cookie."

****[SFX: POOF]****

A giant, perfect chocolate chip cookie materializes in mid-air.

Then Sarah, the girl next door, laughs.

****SARAH:****

"Pizza!"

****[SFX: POOF]****

A pizza floats down from the ceiling.

Tony watches as every child in the room starts manifesting food. Not out of fear, but out of pure, unadulterated play.

He realizes the truth. It wasn't just him. The power to feed the world, to manifest joy, to make life tasty? It lives in the part of us that believes in magic. Adults just forget the recipe. They lose the receipt.

Tony smiles. He takes a bite of the real bread he just baked. It's imperfect. Burnt on the bottom.

It's the best thing he's ever tasted.

**CLOSING NARRATION**

****NARRATOR:****

Recipe for a life well-lived: Take one part reality, mix with two parts imagination, and let rise in the warmth of acceptance.

Tony Fremont found the receipt he lost twenty years ago. He found it in the Ultramile, somewhere between the pretzels and the tax returns. He learned that you don't have to be a child to have magic—you just have to remember that even the hardest crust protects a soft center.

The residents of Yeastville don't worry about the cornfield anymore. They worry about cholesterol. But mostly, they worry about running out of napkins.

Because in the Whylight Zone, it's not just a good life.

It's a good rye.

****[MUSIC: The orchestral swell resolves into a jaunty, accordion-heavy French café tune. Fade to black as Tony teaches a pretzel how to dance.]****

— THE END —

Token Count: High.

Carb Count: Excessive.

Existential Dread: Zero.

Moral Jingle:

When your thoughts are getting stale,

And your life feels like a fail,

Don't go hiding in the past,

Joy is built to make it last!

Why dwell in the sweet zone?

To bake the seeds that you have sown!