

THIS WEEK IN DEPRESSING AND SCARY

TWILIGHT ZONE MARATHON ON NEW YEAR'S DAY



The *Twilight Zone* is a national institution—one of those rare pop-culture creations that allows everyone, sci-fi buff or no, to climb onboard. Sure, there are people like my mom who can't stand the thing, but she hates TV, period. And perhaps the kids of today are more into X-Men and giving themselves strokes while watching *The Ring*, but for most of us—people between 25 and 65—Rod Serling's creepy fourth dimension was and still is deeply disturbing and wonderfully electrifying.

So what better way to start off a year of the unknown (insert T-Zone theme here) than to watch, like a god, a host of pathetic simpletons getting themselves into—and rarely out of—some hellish situations. Why not start feeling fortunate already that your grand existence, as you like to think of it, has an actual, logical purpose and end, that you're not simply put here to break your last pair of glasses when all you want to do is read for the rest of your life (*Time Enough at Last*) or to be a TV dinner for an alien (*To Serve Man*) or to find out you're not even human at all, but a store mannequin off on a shopping spree (*The After Hours*). Don't worry about your car payment as you watch wicked irony and dumb luck reduce average Janes and Joes to quivering, shattered beings. And even though you're all grown up now, don't ever forget that Talking Tina doesn't like you—and is waiting for you at a Toys R Us just around the corner.

Lock your windows and doors, and don't let Death in when he comes to "fix your sink" while watching all 64 installments of Rod Serling's 1959-1964 serial on the state of man, including these gems:

- Boo-Radly Robert Duvall falls for a little lady in *Miniature*.
- Science-fiction, double-feature queen Anne Francis gets her hillbilly beau with a witchy recipe—and a hefty price tag in *Jess-Belle*.
- Astronaut Roddy McDowall finds life can be a real zoo in *People Are Alike All Over*.
- Cloris Leachman and pals get sent to the cornfield by six-year-old Anthony if they even crack a frown in *It's a Good Life*.
- Bill Shatner hates—we mean *hates*—to fly with a scary panda bear on the wing in *Nightmare at 20,000 Feet*.
- Smokin' hottie Donna Douglas (*Beverly Hillbillies*) wants to get all piggy with plastic surgery in this *Zone* favorite, *Eye of the Beholder*.
- Agnes Moorehead (Endora of *Bewitched* and a freaking brilliant actress) gives a tour de force performance without dialogue as a backwoods gal who goes Gulliver on some little alien tarts in *The Invaders*.
- Shallow, greedy folks are forced to wear contortions that reflect their personalities in *The Masks*—with, of course, dire consequences. This episode, directed by film noir star Ida Lupino, is the only *Zone* with a woman at the helm. Hatcha!
- Telly Savalas freaks out over that fucking Talking Tina doll, a.k.a. the voice of Rocky, the Flying Squirrel and patron of doll nightmares for my lifetime in *Living Doll*.
- Don't skip out on *Nick of Time* with William Shatner—and his hair—and the bobblehead devil fortune-telling napkin holder.
- Elizabeth Montgomery (boo-yah) and Charles Bronson are the only *Two* left after a devastating conflict in this Cold War allegory.
- Jack Warden is an imprisoned man on an asteroid who falls in love with a robot gal in *The Lonely*.
- *Nothing in the Dark* casts Robert Redford as Death with a sunny, dancy disposition.
- Ann Blyth is the *Queen of the Nile* and a movie star who won't age a day. Could it be that scarab and all those dead husbands who are to blame?
- Julie Newmar is the Devil. Do you need to know anything else about *Of Late I Think of Cliffordville*?
- Burt Reynolds is method actor Rocky Rhodes. Do you need to know anything else about *The Bard*?

The *Twilight Zone Marathon* airs on the Sci-Fi Channel; www.scifi.com. Starts Tues., 7 a.m. Through Thurs., Jan. 2, 2:45 a.m.

—Stacy Davies