

# [There Is No Third Impact: Episode Two](#)

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This year at Entropy we'll be rewatching the legendary *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Join us on this tremendous journey through one of the best television series ever made.

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We'll be watching the subtitled versions and discussing them here every week without spoilers.

Are you ready, Shinji-kun?

These simple words open the second episode of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Shinji Ikari's piloting his EVA and preparing to fight the Angel currently terrorising Tokyo-3.

Shinji takes his first step successfully and everyone cheers.

In most shows, we would see that our protagonist has a latent or natural genius for succeeding. We would not only see Shinji take his first step. We would see him successfully bring the fight to the EVA. And though it would be close and Shinji would take some injuries, he would come out victorious and confident in his ability. His father would congratulate him and a new found respect would cycle through NERV.

Instead, Shinji falls. When he falls, the Angel strikes. It breaks the EVA's arm and begins hammering through the EVA's head.

Shinji's not ready.



And then he wakes up in a hospital, alone, staring at an unfamiliar ceiling.

He's alive and the state of emergency is over. We can assume that the Angel was defeated.

The media discusses the state of emergency but completely ignores the fact that a giant mecha fought a giant monster. Media blackout. Possibly enforced by NERV or some other government organisation?

In a dark room, Commander Ikari listens to a council of men discuss how NERV and Ikari are wasting resources and money. The repairs on the two EVAs are apparently enough to bankrupt a country.

The resentment is clear. These men don't respect Ikari and they don't seem to trust him. Or, rather, they look at him as if he's a foolish man with a dream.

They mention a Human Enhancement Project and how that is Ikari's real goal and he should focus his efforts there.

Of course, those words mean nothing to us, but we can speculate, yes? Maybe something to do with the EVAs? That seems to be NERV's main thrust or expertise.

Anycase, it's all unclear. Hints of worldbuilding, of something grander than the current episode.

Misato and Ritsuko oversee the recovery of NERV resources and discuss what happened. Shinji, they're told, has some memory loss from the battle between himself and the Angel. Even just from her few brief hours with Shinji, she can sense his psychological pain. How fragile and hurt he is.

Misato collects Shinji from the hospital and takes him to find out where he'll be living. Silent and downcast, Shinji walks by her side, and the two run into his father. Commander Ikari stares down at his son. Cold. Emotionless. His face, in Shinji's eyes, is one of disgust, instilling in Shinji a deeper sense of failure.

Shinji's assigned to an apartment in the city by himself, but Misato balks at this. Seeing the pain and loneliness in Shinji, she chooses to take care of him, informing Ritsuko that Shinji will be living with her in her apartment.

On the way there Misato tries to lighten the mood but Shinji merely nods along with her. People in the city talk of fleeing.

The city may be a fortress but that's no guarantee of safety.

She stops at a ridge above the city to show Shinji what he's fighting for. The sky blushing and the city retracted into the earth. Shinji stares out and sees only emptiness. He describes the scene as lonely. But then the city grows from the earth. The buildings pushing through the surface and reaching back into the sky.

This is what they fight for. This is why they fight. Not just for humanity, but for their own city.



They arrive at Misato's apartment, Shinji's new home, and it's a mess. Beer and garbage and wrappers everywhere. Much of the ensuing scenes are mostly humorous. Shinji's shyness, Misato's brashness. She drinks beer and tries to make Shinji enjoy himself, or enjoy anything, even if only her company. She tries to beat it out of him in a playful way. But mostly she tries to make him feel at home. And, perhaps most importantly, there's a penguin named Pen Pen!

She's not a bad person.

But bad memories seem to find me in the bath.

Like my father.

And Ayanami Rei.

The images flash through his head. And then we cut to Commander Ikari telling Ritsuko that no one but these teenagers can pilot the EVAs. Why these enormous and incredibly expensive mechas can only be piloted by teenagers is pretty unclear, but that's all we know.

We also discover that Misato's real purpose, or at least a component of her duties. She's meant to ensure that Shinji can continue to pilot the EVA. When Misato expresses her concern about Shinji's psychological stability and his willingness to continue piloting, after the disaster of his first attempt, Ritsuko only reminds him that she needs to make sure he continues fighting.

Shinji lies alone in his room. Another unfamiliar ceiling. The memories he reportedly doesn't have plays before him.

The pain he feels while piloting the EVA. The terror of the Angel shattering through the EVA's head. Because Shinji is neurologically linked to the EVA, this shatters him and he snaps and loses control of the EVA, effectively shutting it down. The link is so broken that NERV cannot eject Shinji or do anything to protect him.

And then it activates itself, despite not being synced, and brings the battle to the Angel. It heals its broken arm, tears through the Angel's AT Field, and literally rips the Angel apart, roaring like a beast. In a last ditch effort, the Angel wraps itself round the EVA and self-destructs.

And EVA01 walks from the blast seemingly unscathed. NERV's shock and amazement is a silence as they stare at EVA's true form.

But what does that mean? Its true form.

And when Shinji sees the EVA without its armor, when it turns its eyes on Shinji, he screams in terror.

Only two episodes in and we're discovering a lot about the world of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. We know more about the characters and the world. The conflict—or at least some of the conflicts—become clearer.

There's a division within the military organisations and the governments. They don't trust Commander Ikari or NERV. They remember a cataclysm and none of them seem surprised by the Angels, but they're also not sold on the EVA program, even though conventional weapons have little to no effect on the Angels.

Our protagonist is a teenaged boy with potentially severe psychological damage. Abandoned by his father, perpetually alone, forced to pilot something he doesn't understand, something he can barely even fathom, possibly only so his father will accept him.

But Commander Ikari doesn't care. More than that, he seems derisive and cold towards his son. He doesn't seem to look at Shinji as a son, but as a tool to be harnessed and used for his own purposes.

Of course, his own purposes seem to be the salvation of humanity.

Is it worth it? What is one life weighed against a species?

When did Commander Ikari begin this plan? Did he abandon Shinji all those years ago in order to distance himself emotionally and physically from his

own son? Could this be his own coping mechanism started all those years ago, when he realised he would need to turn his son into a pilot, into a weapon?

Many of the motivations are unclear, but we see that they're at least complicated. Even Misato. Her job is to essentially control Shinji and make sure he continues to fight, but she also sees so much pain in him that she can't help but try to comfort him. I mean, she is a person. She's staring at an impossibly lonely boy dealing with severe abandonment issues with his father—her commander—and she's meant to treat him as a potential weapon.

And what of her life? She seems bubbly and happy on the surface. Her apartment, though, is full of garbage. She has no food, no family photographs, and she clearly drinks a great deal of beer, and, presumably alone, since she didn't know Shinji was going to be coming with her that night.

We discover a lot in this little battle as well. We discover that the EVAs are more than what they seem. They're not just mechas like we've seen before. There's something alive in there. Something with its own agency. Something full of rage. Something with a will to survive, to kill. A creature. Alive. A weapon. A weapon that Shinji needs to plug himself into in order to use.

And Shinji is terrified. And alone.

The only kindness he receives is at the very end of the episode. Misato makes a point to stop in his room and talk to him. Tell him the words he needs to hear. The words he wishes came from his father's mouth.

You did a very good job today. You should be proud of yourself.

Goodnight, Shinji-kun. Hang in there.

HISSING

