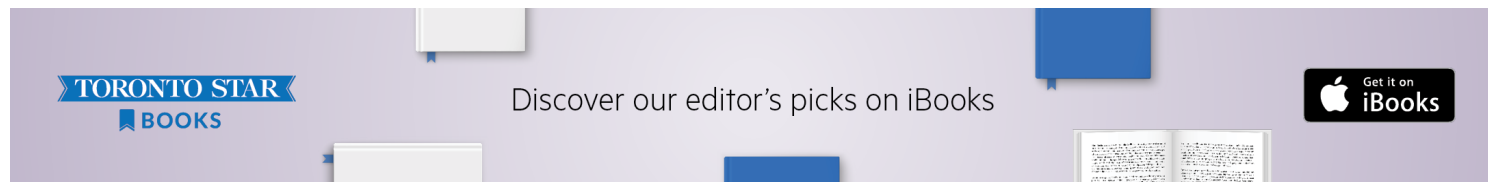




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# Stranger Things' second season sees adolescence turn our heroes Upside Down

By JOHANNA SCHNELLER Special to the Star  
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**The Show:** *Stranger Things*, Season 2, Episode 2

**The Moment:** The bad Halloween



Millie Bobby Brown as Eleven in Season 2 of Stranger Things. (NETFLIX)

For Mike (Finn Wolfhard), it's been a tough Halloween. Not only were he and his pals the only kids to wear costumes to school — “How does everyone but us know?” Dustin (Gaten Matarazzo) asks, speaking for every kid, ever — but Dustin and Lucas (Caleb McLaughlin) ruined trick-or-treat by including a new girl.

Mike misses Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown). Back home in his room, he flips on his walkie-talkie. “I had a bad day,” he tells the static. “I wish you were here. If you're out there, please give me a sign.”

He can't know it, but Eleven is there, floating next to him in a black space beyond his reality. For an instant, he feels her presence. “Eleven?” he asks. Just as she reaches out to touch him, he gives up and flips off the receiver.

The camera pulls back, the music comes up and we see Eleven alone in deep darkness.

How brilliant of showrunners Matt and Ross Duffer to do a sci-fi series about preteen protagonists. For early adolescents, life is the Upside Down. Everything once normal is suddenly weird, and you toggle crazily between childhood and maturity, one minute debating your top three candy bars; the next, desperately wondering if you'll ever be loved.

In this one-day arc, Mike goes to school as a child; goes trick-or-treating as a petulant preteen; and goes to bed flooded with adult emotions. The final scene is right out of *Romeo and Juliet*: the lovers in the lightless tomb, coming this close and then losing each other again. Lovely.

*Stranger Things streams on Netflix. Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She usually appears Monday through Thursday.*

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**Daniel Hope leads musical party at Koerner Hall**

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