

EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY SIX - CAVE-IN

Original transcript edited by Theo and reviewed by Jenah

[BEGIN Episode 176.]

INTRO: Hey, guys, quick plugs. They are the usual plugs. I am still streaming every Sunday on Twitch over at twitch.tv/woebegonepod, where every Sunday I write that week's episode soundtracks, and then we hang out and play a video game. We just started *Nancy Drew and the Ghost Dogs of Moon Lake*. I'm definitely not pulling my hair out taking pictures of birds and picking up bugs, because I'm bald. But that's the only reason. So check that out at twitch.tv/woebegonepod. And if you'd like to support the show, you can do so on Patreon over at patreon.com/woe_begone, where you can get early access to ad-free episodes, instrumentals, soundtrack albums, Q&As, director's commentaries, Movies with Michael, postcards, corkboards, and more. Intermission XXIX was a selection of readings of the August postcards that actors wrote for the \$15-and-up patrons. But Intermission XXIX was only part of the story. 12 actors in total worked on this project, and if you would like to hear their stories, the other two parts are available for all paying patrons on Patreon. Again, that is patreon.com/woe_begone. Special thanks to my ten newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

[Warning: In this episode, a character eats a cracker. It's sorta gross. Listener discretion is advised.]

[Opening theme plays.]

[For the duration of this scene, MW pretends to be Mikey, dropping the cowboy voice and pitching his voice higher.]

MW: Panthy-poo, sweetie-kitten, snuggle-biscuit. Y-You're not– You're not really gonna let them do this to me, are you? Look at– Look at me. *[Pause.]* E-Edgar. Look at me. Really look at me. You know that I am who I say I am, right? Y-You of all people– I-I'm– I'm your Mikey Bear!

EDGAR: I want to believe you. But if you don't have anything to hide, then you don't have anything to worry about. Right, Bear?

MW: N-No!

EDGAR: We'll talk to Charlie. She will tell us that you're my Mikey Bear, and then we can leave.

CHANCE: Fat *chance* of that happening. If we can tell that he isn't Mikey, then Charlie can probably smell the imposter through the door.

[We hear Marissa fumble with keys.]

MARISSA: I'm home, babe! Better hide the bodies. I brought company over! A whole gaggle of stupid, stupid company.

CHARLIE *[other side of the door]*: You—! Company? Marissa, you should have texted me! I would have put the coffee on! ...Or— Or wait till you text me first. Come in, okay? Who is it? What's going on?

MARISSA: We were hoping you could tell us! It's a classic game of Three Card Mikey. Which iteration is it? We just don't know. All we know is that it ain't "Mikey Bear." You'll see for yourself in a second.

CHANCE: Marissa, are you living with Charlie now? Since when?

MARISSA: Oh, god, I don't know. Since, uh... forever? ...You didn't know? Well. It's not like I live-live here, I guess? I crash here after my shift most mornings, and I come over here for dinner before my shift every night. I was gonna come over here anyway after the meeting at Base was over. Thanks, by the way, to whoever had the bright idea of having a meeting at eight in the goddamn morning.

EDGAR: That was Mike's idea. He put it on the calendar yesterday afternoon.

MARISSA: And, boy, was it a stunning example of "this meeting could've been an email." Python? More like Pyth-yawn. What, Mike and Ty are "working on a trace" and are "waiting for results"? We have time travel. They could've gotten the results from the future and told us already! Don't make me picture Ty's face at eight in the morning if I don't have to.

[We hear the door open.]

MARISSA: And here we are: Château de Charlie. Shoes off, please.

CHANCE: *[Huffs.]* Do we— Do we have to? We're only gonna be here long enough for Charlie to look at the iteration.

MARISSA: Shoes. Off.

CHANCE: Fine.

CHARLIE: Hey, Sunshine! Good morning, everyone! Kind of bright and early for you, isn't it? Chris, Edgar, Mikey, good to see you again, it's been so long. Um, I would've put on some coffee for you already, but, uh... someone didn't text me that you guys were coming, so... it'll be a minute. *[Brief laugh.]* I really don't mind, though. Um. And, by the way, you don't have to take your shoes off. She's a little crazy about that, but, it's, you know, whatever makes you comfortable.

MARISSA: Yes, *they do*. And no coffee for me, thanks. I'm hopping in bed as soon as we are done using your services. Morning, bae.

[We hear Marissa give Charlie a quick kiss.]

CHARLIE: My services? *[Brief laugh.]* What is this? What's going on? Did something happen?

CHANCE: Quit hiding behind me, "Mikey." Or whoever you are. Why are you hiding from Charlie if you're who you say you are?

MW: I'm not hiding, and I am Mikey.

EDGAR: As you might already know, Mike's scheduled a meeting at Base this morning to discuss a project that he is working on. Mikey was supposed to attend, but this iteration showed up instead.

MW: Edgar, don't do this to me.

CHANCE: Marissa and I caught him snooping through Edgar's office after the meeting was done.

EDGAR: I don't think that he found what he was looking for, but I can't shake the feeling that he isn't my Mikey Bear. It doesn't feel like it's him.

MW: That's— That's not what happened— E-Edgar, help me.

EDGAR: I'd be happy to be proven wrong. I would love it if we were all worried over nothing and you're actually my Mikey Bear.

MW: Panther—... *[Huffs.]* F-Fine, I'll come clean, this is what happened. I haven't been keeping up on my paperwork, and I know how important that is to you, Panther. And you've been so lenient about it with me, but I know that I make you frustrated, so I very quietly got caught up on all my paperwork, and I was gonna sneak it in there with the rest of the files without anybody noticing, but I got caught. I was actually doing my job! I was being an upstanding member of Base for once!

EDGAR *[sort of snarkily]*: See what I mean?

CHANCE: That's how we know it's not Mikey. Mikey would never try to be an upstanding member of Base.

MARISSA: Mm-hmm. Not even to impress his boyfriend.

CHARLIE: *[Clicks tongue and scoffs.]* You guys! Come on. Don't be so mean to him. ...Uh— I-I will admit, though, that it *is* alarming, just a little bit. Mikey, *[Sighs.]* are you getting up to hijinks again?

MW: No, I'm not getting up to hijinks, I'm just me!

MARISSA: Yup! There we go. Red Flag Number Two. Mikey is always getting into hijinks.

MW: Not... literally always.

CHARLIE: *[Laughs.]* Okay. Come here, Mikey. Let me get a good look at you, alright?

MW: *[Huffs.]* Fine.

CHARLIE: I promise I won't bite... probably. Rather, I only bite rogue iterations, **[MW: Charlie...]** so as long as you're the real one, you're good to go. Okay. Don't move. Right there. Yeah, that's perfect. *[Pause.]* Let me see... Hmm... *[Pause.]* Yeah. Okay. Interesting...

MARISSA: What's the prognosis, doc? Give it to us straight. We can handle it.

CHARLIE: It's quite serious, I'm afraid. I fear that the three of you have come down with a case of mistaken identity.

MW: I told you!

CHARLIE: It might be fatal. The only possible cure is if you guys tell me why you think this iteration isn't Mikey. Is it only because you caught him sneaking around Edgar's office, or is there more to it than that?

MARISSA: Uh. *[Laughs.]* Sweetie. Sweetheart. Sweetness. Sugar. Babe. Sunshine. Darlin'. You know I love you more than the moon and the stars and shooting rocket launchers at decommissioned tanks (but maybe not more than shooting rocket launchers at presently-commissioned tanks). So, it is with a heart full of love that I ask you: what the frickity frack are you talkin' about? This *definitely* isn't Mikey. Right? It's not. Is it?

CHANCE: Don't look at me, I'm startin' to second-guess myself.

CHARLIE *[lightheartedly]:* Oh... Okay. I think I understand what's going on here. I follow. The three of you are testing me, aren't you? You wanted to make sure that I wouldn't give a false positive just because you guys say he's not Mikey. Well. I'll have you know that it would be a freezing cold day in hell before you stump me, especially you, Marissa. *[Brief giggle.]* That man right there is Mikey Walters, the one and only Mikey Walters, member and cofounder of Base, in the flesh. Look at you go. Hi, there, Mikey. How are you today?

MW: Hi, Charlie. I'm so sorry that they're putting us through this. They drug me all the way out here, and my alarm doesn't go off for another hour, so I'm not even supposed to be awake. I— I don't know what's gotten into them! Maybe everyone's just still rattled from Nobody, so they're seeing something malicious that isn't there.

CHANCE: Charlie. Seriously?

CHARLIE: [*Scoffs.*] Yeah, seriously. What is this, an audition? [*Gasps.*] Oh, my gosh, is this an audition? Are you guys auditioning me to be a full-time member of Base, finally!? Did I do it!? Am I in!? Oh, my gosh. I wanted to be a full-time member of Base for so long! Can I, please?

MARISSA: Charlie, darlin', we've talked about this, okay? If something ever happened to you, I would be going full scorched earth until the entire planet was enveloped in nuclear winter.

CHARLIE: [*Scoffs.*] I know, and that's very sweet, but I can handle myself! I wanna be a part of the group.

EDGAR: I don't doubt your abilities, Charlie. But I don't understand why we all think this *isn't* Mikey, but you think that he *is*.

CHARLIE: Hmm, um... Well, maybe it's because he smells different. [*Brief chuckle.*] Could that be it?

MW: Uh. I smell different?

CHARLIE: Uh, yeah, of course you do, silly. You had your first day back at O.V.E.R., right?

MW: Y-Yes, but I didn't do anything smelly.

CHARLIE: Yeah, okay, well. You were in a patrol cart the entire time. That's new for you, so... you smell like the night air at O.V.E.R., with maybe a hint of gasoline, dirt, cafeteria food, and— huh. [*Brief laugh.*] Kind of like Marissa, actually.

MARISSA: Girl, no, don't compare me to this dweeb.

CHANCE: All I smell is an imposter.

MW: I do not smell imposterly.

CHARLIE: Uh— [*Sighs.*] I'm sorry, but I don't know what to tell you. It's Mikey.

MW: Thank you for having common sense, Charlie. The rest of you owe me an apology.

EDGAR: I'm sorry, Bear. Maybe you're right. Maybe I'm still scared of Nobody. Maybe I let my emotions get the best of me.

MW: Well, I can't stay mad at you, Edgar.

MARISSA: Something... is going on here. I know it. I don't know what it is. But I don't like it. *[Yawns.]* But if this goes on any longer, *[Groans.]* I'm gonna fall asleep standing up.

CHARLIE: *[Sighs.]* Well, we wouldn't want that, would we? Go crawl into bed, Marissa. It should still be warm. I'll go put on some coffee, and Edgar, Chris, and Mikey can catch me up to speed on what's going on at Base, since it doesn't sound like I'll get to be a full member this time... Maybe I can help you guys figure out what's got your hackles up?

MARISSA: Okay, babe. *[Kisses Charlie.]* But you're not going full-time, ya hear? Remember, boys. If I wake up, and Charlie is suddenly being assigned solo missions, nuclear winter! Mm? Yeah?

EDGAR: There's nothing to worry about, Marissa. Nuclear winter postponed.

MARISSA: I should certainly fuckin' hope so. Good night, boys.

[We hear the bedroom door close.]

MW: And there she goes, so I guess she's not too worried about me.

CHARLIE: Now, *[Claps once.]* where were we? You guys mentioned that there was a meeting this morning at Base? Does someone wanna give me the rundown?

[Scene transition.]

[We hear the sound of wind and fire. A door chimes as Old Man, TXDawg, and MDawg enter the 24-Hour Diner.]

OLD MAN: Watch it. There's a step there, MDawg. *[The door closes, and the outdoor ambience ceases.]* You good?

MDAWG: Yeah, I— I'm okay. I need to sit down.

TXDAWG: Hello, is, uh, anyone in here? We saw the lights were on; we need a place to rest.

BRITCHES: Well, well. **[OLD MAN:** Britches.] I sure weren't expectin' a whole heapin' o' helpin' o' Mikes to wander into the 24-Hour Diner tonight. Funny seein' you lot here. State your business, please. I'm not goin' down without a fight, if that's why you're here. ...Not again. Not this time.

TXDAWG: O-Old Man, do you know what they're—?

BRITCHES: Technically, y'all aren't even allowed in the diner anymore. Latif's orders. You're banned from the premises. But, you know that.

OLD MAN: Banned? B-Britches, I— It's Old Man. Your— Your buddy. W-Why would I wanna fight you?

TXDAWG: Hi, Britches. I don't know if you've met MDawg before, but he is severely injured. He needs somewhere to lie down. Is there a place where we can make him comfortable?

BRITCHES: Eh. You can stick him in one of the booths. And you know damn well why I would wanna fight you, Old Man. I don't forgive and forget that easily, no matter how many corrections you pull outta your ass.

OLD MAN: I-I don't even know what you're talkin' about, Britches. I-I didn't do nothin'! We were blowin' shit up in the backyard and crackin' wise yesterday! You don't remember that? Robert got onto us for blowin' up that microwave too close to his chicken coop! ...This ain't about the chicken coop, is it? I-I made sure they were safe; they weren't in actual danger. Them stuntman uniforms I made for 'em were just for pretend.

BRITCHES: What? Yesterday? *[Realizing.]* Oh. No, Old Man. This ain't about no dang chickens. You ain't from here. You're from a long time ago, ain'tcha?

OLD MAN: I cain't say how long it's been, but you're right. We ain't from here.

TXDAWG: Britches, we are here because something has gone terribly wrong in our time period. Or, rather, something terrible is going to happen, resulting in this time period. We keep getting transported to this future where Oldbrush Valley is on fire? We didn't come here of our own volition. Someone sent us here without a way to get back.

BRITCHES: Well. Guess I cain't get revenge if you don't even know what you did.

TXDAWG: Maybe not revenge, but we could work through to an understanding? I'm an expert mediator. And medium, if we need to make amends with any ghosts, for instance. Uh, we— we could all start by holding hands in a circle—

BRITCHES: Ah, **[TXDAWG: No?]** there are definitely some ghosts y'all need to make amends with. A whole slew of 'em. But, I might be sayin' too much already. Y'all are ones that taught us about all that propagation crap. Things could always get worse if I tell y'all the wrong things.

TXDAWG: I think maybe Old Man and I got ahead of ourselves? Uh, we should explain why we're here. As I said, the three of us were transported suddenly and without warning. None of

us have Calculators or any other way of getting back home. And we keep getting sent here. MDawg and I have been to this fire timeline multiple times. That is how MDawg got hurt. He returned to us unconscious and with a note that said "take me back with you." Old Man and I are trying to figure out how to get back and who left the note. So, we were wondering if it was you. If it was, we will gladly take you back with us, just as soon as we figure out how to get ourselves back. And we're trying to prevent this future from happening entirely, so bringing you back might not be necessary if you're just worried about getting away from the fire, but we can also take you back anyway, as a sign of good faith. Uh, right, Old Man?

OLD MAN: We can, if'n we gotta. And if they stop starin' daggers at me. You write us any notes, Britches?

BRITCHES: That weren't me. I don't know nothin' bout no note, and I'm not lookin' for a ride outta here.

OLD MAN: Dang. So, you seen anything out here? 'Sides the fire, I mean? Like a Young Bluster, for instance? You seen him ride through here recently?

BRITCHES: Bluster? That's a name I ain't heard in a dog's age. Last I heard, Bluster shot down Tex in a duel down in Bluster's Grove. Eh, but that mighta been some kinda marketin' stunt.

OLD MAN: He don't got hands, Britches.

BRITCHES: Well, in my timeline, Tex definitely has hands. I don't know about your timeline, though.

TXDAWG: I suspect that you are correct about the viral TikTok video. I live with Tex, and he's had the idea of a duel to the death with Bluster for months now. He wants to die in the duel, and he wants me to correct it and bring him back, but I'm uncomfortable with doing that because I don't want to see his ghost. But, we aren't talking about the Bluster that you know. We are talking about Young Bluster. Young Bluster is a normal-sized horse from before Tex even met him down in Bluster's Grove.

BRITCHES: And ya seen this horse since ya been here? Where is he now?

OLD MAN: We got separated. That ain't important. We're tryin' to get the lay o' the land and then get the heck outta here. So, Britches, why are you at the Oldbrush Valley 24-Hour Diner in the middle of a fire?

BRITCHES: Where else would I be? The diner is safe. I come here durin' tornado warnings, floods, O.V.E.R. emergencies, you name it. Latif always says the diner is protected from harm. No matter what happens to the valley, the diner stays standin' and operational. We've got a generator, a sturdy foundation, and a well out back in case the water goes out.

TXDAWG: If Latif is the one that told you that the diner is safe, where is he?

BRITCHES: Beats me. I thought he'd be here. But, he ain't showed up yet. I'm sure he's fine wherever he is. You don't last long in Oldbrush Valley without bein' *[Brief chuckle.]* resourceful. ...Eh, he can take care of himself. And, if the three of you got him killed by startin' this whole fire mess, well, you can add that to your wanted poster.

TXDAWG: I can check the astral plane to see if I see Latif there. Even if he doesn't reciprocate contact with my soul, I should be able to tell if his spirit is still in contact with his body.

BRITCHES *[put off by this offer]:* I'll find Latif the old fashioned way, thank you kindly. Now. Do y'all need somethin', or you gonna be on your merry way?

TXDAWG: We can't go back out into the fire, Britches. It's too dangerous right now. MDawg is hurt.

OLD MAN: We're just lookin' for a way back home.

BRITCHES: Oh, I got a way back, if that's all you're lookin' for. You gotta work for it, though.

TXDAWG: You have a way back through time?

BRITCHES: Of course I do. Why wouldn't I?

OLD MAN: The house ain't very sophisticated from an organizational standpoint in the time we're from.

TXDAWG: Britches, we understand that we are going to do something in the future to hurt you, and we are so sorry for whatever transgressions we are going to commit. We will do everything in our power to prevent it from happening, or issue a correction, or whatever it is we need to do. We need to get back, so what can we do to earn your trust and get back to where we belong?

BRITCHES: Well... you could start by helpin' with some of these dishes.

[Scene transition.]

[We hear roaring wind and fire.]

[We hear Young Bluster slow down from a run. He snorts.]

TEX: Alright, Young Bluster. We can step into this cave for just a second, but we cain't stay here. We gotta figure this out 'fore the rest of 'em do.

[We hear the ambiance of a cave, reverb, water dripping.]

TEX: I'm tired, too, pilg. But we— we gotta keep goin'. It just ain't safe wanderin' around—

[We hear a balloon pop. Tex startles.]

TEX: I heard that! There's someone in here with us, Young Bluster. You better come out with your hands up! Bluster and I are both expert marksmen. You don't wanna get shot by a gigantic horse, do ya? And that's if you're lucky. You don't wanna see Young Bluster when he's mad. He may be young, but he's got some big hooves. So step out of the shadows with your hands up!

TROY *[sheepish]*: Lieutenant? Is it— Is that really you? I'm— I'm Troy! Please don't shoot me or do evil horse stuff to me! I'm not armed. ...I mean, I— I guess I've— I've only got these balloons. I could make them into a balloon gun if you want, but I don't have internet in here, and I need a tutorial, so if you let me out of the cave, I guess I can— I can go look up a tutorial on YouTube, and then I'll make a balloon gun, and then we can have a duel. Deal?

TEX: Troy. If you ain't noticed, it's dangerous out here. What are you doin' in this here cave?

TROY: Sir, sorry, sir! I— I know that you gave me orders everyday, "Don't go escapin'," but I didn't mean to escape, right? What happened was, I was in the breakroom, and I was minding my own business, not stealing a 144 of *anything*. And it was, like, all of a sudden, the walls were gone, and everyone was gone, and then the buildings were gone, too, so I just started walking, right? And then some other stuff happened, and I got lost, and then I was surrounded by this scary fire, so I ran and I ran until I found this cave, and I was like "aw, hey. Fires can't go in caves," so I ran into the cave, and you always told me that if I got lost, I should stay put and wait for help, and I didn't wanna stay put in the fire, right? 'Cause then I'd burn, but now I'm here, uh— in the cave, and now you're here with the horse, and you're gonna take me back, right? And then we'll be fine, and we'll go back to the buildings and the walls; you'll put the walls back up. Right?

TEX: You got a case of mistaken identity, pard. I ain't Lieutenant. I'm Tex. You remember me?

TROY: Sir, yes, sir! Or, I guess I don't have to say, "Sir, yes, sir!" if you aren't the Lieutenant, right? So, uh. Sorry, um. Tex. Uh, Tex, yes, Tex! Of course I remember you, Mr. Texas. You're the one that put me in that shed and gave me to the Lieutenant when he showed up to your house. I don't know if you know this about the Lieutenant, but he's really mean. I mean, really mean. Did you know they only have grape jelly inside of O-perose? They don't even have strawberry. But that's not your fault, I guess, you probably didn't even know that he was mean. Or that... Actually, did you know they only have grape jelly? They don't have— They don't have good jellies.

TEX: It's pronounced "Operose," Troy. And I guess that explains where ya came from. What was that sound you were makin'? Are you armed?

TROY: No, Mr. Texas, I don't have any extra arms. I don't have any anything. When all the walls fell down, I ran, and I never looked back. I didn't bring anything with me. I— Oh, okay, that's... Well, I guess I have a toothbrush. And I have a gold bar that— it's "five troy ounces," but that's— that's it. *[Starts eating and speaking with his mouth full.]* Oh! *[Chews.]* And I have these crackers that I found. But I guess I don't have them anymore, because I just ate one. What else do I got? Um... So, see, I was in the break room when it happened, *[Chews.]* and someone was havin' a birthday party in there earlier that day, so I stuffed my cargo shorts with balloons. Cargo shorts are awesome, by the way! So many pockets; so, anyway, I guess I also have 144 balloons. It was getting cold and wet in the cave, so I was tryin' to blow up the balloons and make a blanket so that I could go bedtime, but one of the balloons popped right when I laid down on it, and that's when you showed up, so I guess that's the explosion you heard. So, if you got an extra balloon I could borrow so I could finish making my bed, *or*, alternatively, if you got a blanket, that'd be super rad, because that'd be way better than a balloon blanket, but if you don't have a blanket, I can just make one with the balloons, but I think I need the extra balloon, because I don't have enough.

TEX: Young Bluster... I-I ain't mad, but... it's okay to say when ya get lost. You didn't mean to bring me to Troy, did ya? Not to O.I. Troy of all people.

[Young Bluster snorts.]

TEX: But why, pilg? Why would you—

[Young Bluster snorts as he grabs Troy's shirt.]

TROY: Whoa. Good horsey! Nice horsey! Please don't eat my shirt. Or— I— Okay, I guess you can eat it, but you have to promise to help me make a new shirt out of the balloons if you're gonna eat this one. Pinky promise me. We're gonna make a better shirt. A shiny, waterproof shirt. Or, alternatively, if you can help me string these balloons up onto the cave, I'm thinking I have enough we can make it float, and then I can find a pet dog in the sky.

TEX: Troy, that ain't just any horse. That there's Young Bluster. You remember him, don'tcha? We kept you locked up in his feed shed while we was keepin' an eye on ya.

TROY: He's that horse? No, but that horse was big, and mean, and always trying to eat my... shirt. Holy shit. You *are* that horse! How did you get so tiny? Did you get tiny to fit into the cave? That's— You coulda just called out, I coulda came out, you didn't even need to make yourself tiny like that, that's crazy.

TEX: Troy, this here's *Young Bluster*. He don't get big and mean till he's older. This is the first time he's met you. First time he's met me, too. He showed up with a note attached to him that said to follow 'im. I thought I was followin' him to who wrote the note. But, you're sayin' that ain't you?

TROY: Um, nope. Not me, I've been hiding in the cave the whole time.

TEX: Well, if you didn't write the note, pard, then who the hell did?

TROY: Naw, wasn't me. I don't like writing. If I need something written down, I ask Charlie super nicely, or I use my writing team sometimes that I keep on retainer. Or, if I'm in O-perose, I get one of the soldiers to write it down for me, and they only stab me sometimes.

TEX: And you didn't get no one to write no notes for ya? You didn't put a note in MDawg's pocket askin' him to take ya back with him?

TROY: Take me back where? To O.I.? Because no thank you. I'd rather sleep on a popping balloon mattress for the rest of my life than go back there. The bed that Lieutenant gave me isn't even adjustable. You know, I have a hospital bed in my bedroom at home, so then I can sit all the way up and I can watch *Garfield*.

TEX: Well, if you ain't writin' notes, then you ain't why we came here. I thought Bluster here was gonna help me figure out how to put the fire out in the valley. We're only gonna stay long enough to cool down a minute. Rest our legs. Then we're back out on the trail. And if you see any other iterations like me followin' in my tracks, I want you to take care of 'em, Troy. No more people make it down that path. Got it?

TROY: Okay. No more people, then. I get it.

[Tex huffs.]

TROY: Are you... okay, Tex?

TEX *[strained]:* Yes. *[Huffs.]*

TROY: You know, I can dial back the silliness about maybe ten percent, but after that, it's all Troy all the time, and there isn't much I can really do about that. *[Pause.]* Hello? Tex? ...Bluster, is Tex okay?

TEX: ...I-It's just, I-I thought that I was followin' directions. I thought I knew where I was goin'. Now I'm— I'm totally lost. The notes were supposed to lead us outta here! We were supposed to go where Young Bluster took us, and that was supposed to get us back.

TROY: I know that look. That's the face Charlie made when she thought that I accidentally ruined a nuclear arms treaty by not letting the prime minister through the gate. The president, I mean. We— We have a president, I guess.

TEX: *[Groans.]* Troy, please... I did everything wrong. I ruined everything... Goddamnit. I abandoned them for nothin', and now I'm lost...

TROY: I don't understand, but I usually don't, so that's fine. I can tell you're upset. Just don't worry so much; you and Bluster look tired. Maybe you should just stay here for the rest of the night. You can relax, and in the morning, maybe the fire will be gone, and we can hang out and have a midnight snack, and— Are— I guess— Did you bring any food? All I've got here are cave crickets, and they're too wriggly for my mouth. I guess there might be enough room on the balloon mattress *[We hear Troy grunt as he lays on the balloon mattress.]* for both of us, but maybe not for the horse—

TEX: Troy, get off of there!

[Young Bluster whinnies as the balloons start popping.]

TEX: Goddangit, get down! Cover your head! Younger Bluster!

[We hear an explosion, and then the sound of a rockslide that seals the entrance of the cave. The sound of popping balloons ceases.]

TEX *[breathing heavily]*: Goddamnit. Is everyone okay? Uh, Troy? Young Bluster?

[Young Bluster snorts.]

TROY: I'm okay! It's really dark in here now, though.

TEX: Yeah, no shit, it's dark. You caused a cave-in.

TROY: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to! I— *[Groaning.]* Oh, what do we do now?

TEX: I didn't bring no tools with me. So, Young Bluster's gonna have to dig us out. And that's gonna take a while. ...Goddamnit, Old Man.

TROY: That's okay, I wasn't goin' anywhere. Would you like a cave cricket?

[Closing theme starts playing.]

CREDITS: This has been WOE.BEGONE.

The voice of Edgar was Jeremy Enfinger. Check out his podcast [*The Storage Papers*](#).

The voice of Marissa Ng was Michelle Kan. Check them out on Twitter at [*fswrites*](#).

The voice of Chance was Taylor Michaels. Check him out in [*The Grotto*](#).

The voice of Charlie was Lyssa Jay. Check her out in [*400 Words A Horror*](#) or [*The Grotto*](#).

The voice of Britches was Cody Heath. Check out their band Elsewhere! (that's with an exclamation point), or you can hear them in The Grotto.

And the voice of Troy was Athan. Check out his podcast, and you're never going to believe this, The Grotto.

The Grotto and *WOE.BEGONE* just did a feed drop exchange, so you can listen to the first episode of *The Grotto* on this feed. And you should, because also I'm in it.

Thanks for playing.

[Closing theme plays out.]

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (LYSSA): Thinking about how in Edgar and Mike's relationship, it's always going to be a little bit... I don't know, there's something... very wholesome and a little fucked up about your partner not knowing who you are and there being too many versions of you? *[Laughs.]* Um. That's just a brainworm I'm gonna have now, um. So, that's cool, haha! Certainly, I don't have to worry about that with Charlissa! Ha, ha, *ha!* *[Breathes in.]* Ah—

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (LYSSA): Ready? Here we go. Real take, last take, one more— one more— one more take of real, genuine shock and awe and full-on excitement about full-time member of— Base Charlie member Base. M-Make— Make— Make Charlie a— a full-time member of Base 2K20— 2024. Uh—! D—!

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (LYSSA): All you smell is an imposter, a sussus among us!

BLOOPER (CHANCE): Amogus.

BLOOPER (LYSSA): *[Laughs.]* That's the real truth behind it, isn't it, *Chance?* Or can we even call you that, *Taylor Michaels!?* *[Brief laugh.]*

BLOOPER (CHARLIE): I'll put on some coffee, and Edgar, Chris, and Mikey can catch me up to speed on what's going on at Base... since I don't get to be a full member. *[Breaks character and laughs.]* I don't know if Charlie's as bitter about not being a full-time member of Base as I am. *[Laughs.]*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (MARISSA): And, by the way, thanks to whoever it was, ah— *[Babbles, then clears throat.]*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (MARISSA): *[Yawns.]* If this goes on any longer, I'm gonna fall asleep standing up. *[Sniffs, then breaks character.]* That was a real yawn. Thanks, Dylan. *[Laughs.]*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (CHANCE): If we can tell that he isn't Mikey, then Charlie can probably smell the imposter through the door. Amogus.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TAYLOR): This is slander; I feel like Chance is also a shoes-off household, but, you know.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (CHANCE): *[Amplified.]* Amogus.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TAYLOR): *[Clears throat several times, then Scooby Doo laughs.]*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (CHANCE): *[Amplified and staticky.]* Amogus.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

[END Episode 176.]