

EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY SEVEN - ORGAN GRINDER

Original transcript edited by Theo and reviewed by Jenah

[BEGIN Episode 177.]

INTRO: Hey, guys, quick plugs. We are in full swing of spooky season, and I've been streaming every Sunday on Twitch over at twitch.tv/woebegonepod, where every week I write that week's episode soundtrack, and then we hang out and play a video game. Because it is October, we're playing some of the spookier Nancy Drew games. We are partway through *Nancy Drew and the Ghost Dogs of Moon Lake*, and so far the most horrifying thing about it is the bug hunt where I spent what felt like my entire life looking for 12 bugs. So if you would like to see me struggle, that is twitch.tv/woebegonepod. And if you'd like to support the show, you can do so on Patreon over at patreon.com/woebegone, 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. If you are looking to get into the spooky mood, I just did a director's commentary for *The Diary of Aliza Schultz* "Halloween Special 2023: 'Aletheia.'" And there are commentaries for other spooky projects that I've worked on, like my Phonic Fiction Fest entry, "Flesh To Add To Its Own," the 2022 "WOE.BEGONE Halloween Campfire" special, and the 2022 *Diary of Aliza Schultz* "Halloween Special: 'A Single Night in Wolford.'" So check that out at the \$10-and-up level if you're looking for some commentary on some spooky stories that I've written. Special thanks to my ten newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

[Warning: This episode contains a depiction of injury. Listener discretion is advised.]

[We hear cave ambience, dripping water, and reverberant rock surfaces. Young Bluster is digging out the entrance. We hear Troy grunt as he tries to help.]

TROY *[exerting himself]*: You better be careful, Bluster. Stay outta my way, and let the human do the work. That's me. I know what I'm doin', so just— just stay back. I'm gonna push this boulder *[Grunts.]* over, but I don't know which way it'll go, and— I-I don't wanna make sure you— *[Grunts.]* I wanna make sure you don't get smooshed by it and turn into an even smaller, younger Bluster. Alright. *[Takes a breath.]* Here we go in three— Ah! *[Slips on a wet rock.]* Fuck, ow! ...Ah, I slipped! The rocks are slippery! I think I twisted my ankle... Uh, be careful, you have so many more ankles than I do.

TEX: Troy, sit your ass down, and get outta Young Bluster's way, goddangit! Ya ain't gonna dig us outta here. You ain't no excavator. Young Bluster is a master of all terrain. Only way outta here is through his hooves. Ain't that right, Young Bluster?

[Young Bluster snorts.]

TROY: I don't think you're being fair, Mr. Texas. I know you said earlier that I'm not allowed to be a member of Base because I'm not pointy enough—

TEX: What I said is you're "pointless."

TROY: That's what I said, but I'm not pointless. It's been a long time since you've seen me, I think. That was before Lieutenant found me in Bluster's shed and took me to Operose, okay? Operose is like boot camp. Lieutenant is scary and mean to me, and that means that I am a soldier now. That means that I'm tough! And that I'm not afraid of these rocks, and I'm not even the littlest bit upset that I really hurt my ankle just now.

TEX: You are gonna sit right here beside me till Bluster can dig us out. I don't want you walkin' around on that ankle. And ya ain't no soldier, Troy. I don't care what they did to you in there. Makin' you into a soldier would be like makin' me into... I don't know, uh— uh, a witch or a pirate. A not-cowboy. It ain't never gonna happen.

TROY: *[Groans.]* I am, though! I am a soldier! Counterpoint: if I weren't a soldier, then would I be able to yell *[Loudly.]* "sir, yes, sir!" *[We hear the rocks shift.]* like a soldier? All loud like that?

TEX: Hush, Troy. *Hush. ["Hush" from The Grotto briefly plays.]* You're gonna start another dang cave-in, and Bluster'll have to start all over again. And that's if we're lucky and it don't kill us. So sit down and hush up. There ain't nothin' we can do 'cept wait and see. Consider that an order from your commandin' officer, soldier.

TROY: Sir— *[Pauses, then whispers.]* Sir, yes, sir, Lieutenant.

TEX: You ain't gonna call me Lieutenant. I'm Tex, ya hear?

TROY: Yes, sir, Mr. Texas, that's okay. I don't like Lieutenant, anyway. He's mean to me, did I mention that? I mean, everyone's mean in Operose, so I understand why he's mean to them, but I haven't done anything to make him mean to me. It's— It's not fair.

TEX: What was he doin' with you in Operose, anyway? Did they have you goin' out on missions? Were they raisin' an army o' Troy's to take over Base? S— Why were you in there?

TROY: No, no army. I was the only Troy in there. The army of one, as far as I know. They treated me like a soldier, though. They made me eat icky food even, and it made me strong, and I had to do 25 whole pushups every single day, even on days when my arms were sore. I didn't do any army stuff like go into battle or hold a gun, but they did send me to O.V.E.R. to do my regular job sometimes. I had to make sure that the other Troy didn't know that I was working his shift for him, but that was easy, because I usually forget when I'm supposed to work unless Charlie reminds me, anyway.

TEX: Troy, you got a gun *at* your regular job. But, they were sendin' you to the gate? I guess that's where Mikey and Charlie found ya. Uh, did they keep sendin' ya after that? What were they lookin' for?

TROY: Oh, yeah. I went back loads of times. So, I would take pictures of the log book that Charlie writes in whenever someone goes inside, and I would— also... That— That's most of what I did. Oh, they also asked me to keep track of what shirt Mikey was wearing. And— Oh! They did send me to Hunter's cabin to get tater tot hot dot. Well, they didn't tell me to get tater tot hot dot, but I showed up, and he said I had just been there, and that's probably why I came back, so I said yes, and I got tater tot hot dot, and it was really tasty. And then the last time they sent me, they were looking for Nobody, and I didn't find anybody, so I guess I did a good job!

TEX: I don't reckon they said nothin' bout this whole mess, did they? Did they talk about a— a fire, did they know this was gonna happen?

TROY: I don't think so. Lieutenant said something about going to work with him sometime soon. I didn't know what he meant by that, but I thought maybe I would get to be a soldier and hold a gun, and then I never saw him again. And that's when all the walls fell down, and I started running until I ended up here.

TEX: Troy, I got a gun if ya wanna hold one so bad. Uh—... You ain't seen no one else from O.I. while you been out here, have ya?

TROY: I haven't seen *anybody*. Except for you and Young Bluster.

TEX: Well, if Eagle and Lieutenant's out here, I'd like to know about it.

[We hear Young Bluster whinny as he breaks through the entrance.]

TEX: Young Bluster! Ya did it!

TROY: We're free? Great job, Young Bluster! And— And me. I helped.

TEX: Alright, Troy. Up and at 'em. I cain't stand bein' in here no longer. I'm a cowboy. I'm made for the wide open.

[We hear Young Bluster whinny as he starts sealing them back in.]

TEX: Young Bluster?

TROY: Uh, what is he doing?

TEX: I don't know, but he's gonna get us trapped back in here. Whoa, Young Bluster! Whoa, there, buddy. Did you get carried away? Quit horsin' around. We need to get outta here.

TROY: Uh, what's going on? Is he— Is he mad at us? I think he's sealing the cave shut again.

TEX: He wouldn't just leave us here. Young Bluster, this ain't funny. Get us outta here this instant. We got places to be, and we got people to beat there! Uh— Young Bluster. ...Young Bluster!

TROY: Bluster, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I did not pets you enough, and I'm sorry that I did not love you again.

TEX: ...Goddamnit. Goddamnit!

TROY: I don't hear him anymore.

TEX: *[Huffs.]* No, he's sealed us in here!

TROY: Why would he do that?

TEX *[realizing]:* ...'Cause he's doin' what he was told to do.

TROY *[voice quivering]:* ...Is this because I tried to help him?

TEX: No, Troy. *[Sighs.]* This is 'cause I thought I knew what what goin' on, and I was wrong. *[Head in hands.]* So now we're completely fucked.

TROY: You can't give up hope, Tex! We— We could still find another way out. There's— There's a tiny opening over there. See? That's where the cave crickets came out of. If we got tiny like Bluster and crawl through, there might be more cave on the other side, and eventually it might come out somewhere. I didn't tell you before because I didn't wanna go into the place the crickets were coming out of, but we've gotta try at least, right?

TEX: It might not even come out somewhere, Troy. ...Young Bluster brought me here to seal me off from the world. *[Sighs.]* I got tricked.

TROY: Well, Tex. You can sit here and complain about it, or you can get back in the saddle and get us out of this cave! I personally vote that we try to get outta here, because my ankle really hurts, and I want my adjustable bed and pillows from home, so p-please?

TEX: *[Sighs.]* Fine, Troy. It ain't fair leavin' you in here. So, we'll squeeze through and look for another dang exit. And if I ever see that lowly horse again, I'm gonna make Nobody look like a dang saint.

[Opening theme plays.]

[We hear cave ambience, dripping water, and reverberant rock surfaces.]

TEX: Hurry up, Troy! It's just a little bit further. I think I see some moonlight up there! Yup, I can smell that night air already. We're almost there, buddy. You were right! This was a way out! Troy, you're a dang genius.

TROY: People say that about me *all* the time. Do you think that we can make it through there, though? It seems like a really tight fit.

TEX: Hell, we squeezed through tighter to get here. Just gotta suck in that gut, is all. All I know is I ain't stickin' around here any longer. My claustrophobia is gettin' worse. I'm goin' in. Wish me luck, Troy.

[We hear Tex grunt as he squeezes through the rocks.]

TEX *[strained]*: Almost there.

[Eventually, Tex is free. We hear the night air and crickets around him.]

TROY: I can't see you anymore! Did you— Did you make it through? You'll know you're through, because there'll be a *lotta* crickets!

TEX *[taking big, relieved breaths]*: I'm out, Troy! Oh, it feels great out here. Your turn.

TROY: Sir, yes, sir! *[We hear the rocks shift in response.]* I'm on my way, Mr. Texas!

TEX: Troy, what did I tell you about yellin' "sir, yes, sir"?

TROY: *[Yells in pain.]* Ah, Tex! Ah, my foot! *[Breathes heavily.]* The rocks moved, and... ah, my foot's wedged in there, I can't— I can't move it, I can't get my... ah, I can't get my foot out! Help!

[We hear him slip and fall down trying to get free.]

TEX: Troy!

TROY *[panicked and in pain]*: *[Yells.]* It's all twisted up! Ah, it was twisted earlier, and now it's— it's double twisted! ...Ah, Tex, are you still there? I can't— I can't see you.

TEX: *[Sighs.]* ...I'm still here, Troy.

TROY: You're gonna— You're gonna pull me out, right, Tex? You're gonna— You're gonna pull me out, right? Just grab my arm, just— just pull me out. Just...

TEX: I don't think I can pull ya out, son. It's too tight in there. I ain't got no leverage.

TROY: What are you—? What are you talk—? What are you talking about? Just come back and grab my arm and *pull!* Just pull me out! What are you talking about!?

TEX: I cain't just pull, Troy. Your foot's stuck. We'd have to get it free first.

TROY: Can't you cut it off, or something!? Charlie said you're always cutting off body parts and shit! Maybe just cut my foot off, and we could fix it later with time travel?

TEX: Cut it off with what, Troy? Nevermind, it don't matter, 'cause I sure as hell ain't cuttin' your dang foot off to getcha outta the cave. You'd die before I get you to help.

TROY: Oh, good. I was scared you'd actually do it. Okay, what's the plan, then? What are we gonna do?

TEX: Well. I made it out. I can see the valley down there. It's all on fire, but I'm gonna go down there and look for help. I don't know how many folks are left, but I think I know a couple that are out there somewhere. I'll find someone that can help ya as quick as I can. And I might kill a young horse on the way.

TROY *[seriously]*: Mr. Texas? Can I be honest with you for a second?

TEX: *[Sighs.]* What is it, Troy?

TROY *[seriously]*: I can see something dark inside of you. I mean, I can't see you right now, because you're outside the cave and I'm unfortunately the one inside, but I can "see" it. Like when MDawg says that he can see something in the shadow realm. It's like a metaphor. I can see you with the heart of the cards. But who I actually see is Lieutenant. I can see him telling me that individual soldiers are expendable for an important cause. You think that you're doing something important right now, don't you, *Tex*? You're willing to sacrifice anybody to get what you want. I got unlucky. You're the important cause. You're gonna walk away from this cave and never look back. Am I right about that, *Tex*?

TEX: *[Groans.]* I told ya not to call me Lieutenant. I'll be back with help just as soon as I can. All I got's my promise.

TROY: Maybe there is a good reason that Young Bluster trapped you in here. Don't worry, though, *Tex*. I'll see you soon.

[Scene transition.]

[We hear Mikey wriggle himself free from the ties that MW put on him.]

MIKEY: And... *[Grunts.]* got it. *[Light chuckle.]* Oh, MW, you *are* a cowbaby. I have spent too many years getting tied up by iterations to not know how to get my hands free. You can't keep

me here, you *fool*. So, you better enjoy running around posing as me, because it's gonna be the last freedom you ever get, buddy. ...At least, if you're doing what I think you're doing. Hell, Marissa might kill you before anyone else gets a chance. What do you mean, Charlie's been "taken care of"? What did you do to her, you freak? *[Huffs.]* MW, I swear if this is another Mustardseed thing, I'm gonna be so mad. We can't do that again! I'm so tired of double-dipping in evil-betrayal scenarios.

[Mikey searches for his phone.]

MIKEY: Fuck. He took my phone, how am I gonna get home? I wasn't even thinking about that when he took my phone. How am I gonna get home without a phone? *[Snaps fingers.]* Ooh, I bet Michael's room still has that landline phone. He only ever used it to talk to Boris on his landline phone, and it might just be a tin can on a string for all I know, but it— it's worth a shot. Boris is better than no one. Maybe he can point me towards a real phone so that I can go call Edgar.

[We hear him walk to the back room and shut the door.]

MIKEY: Oh, good, it's still in here. ...Fuck, it's a rotary phone? Michael, when did you learn to use a rotary phone? I feel like I've seen a rotary phone used once, and I didn't catch how to use it. If you're gonna be an old man, then w— get one of the old phones from the 80s that's shaped like Garfield, or a hamburger, or something. You weren't even around when rotary phones were popular, you hipster. I guess a Garfield phone doesn't match the cowboy aesthetic?

...So, I put my finger here, uh, on the number, uh, and then *[Stammers.]* I move it. Uh... I— I guess? ...Shit, who am I even calling? Is there, like, a— a redial button? Uh, to— to call Boris? The only number I know is mine, and if I call that, MW's gonna see it, and he'll know I'm free. Uh. I know Matt's number from when we were kids. So, I guess if his parents wanna come to Latvia and drive me home like they used to do for soccer practice, that might work. If they've still got that landline.

[Time travel noise.]

TY *[from the other room]: [Sing-songy.]* I'm back!

MIKEY *[overlapping Ty]:* Shit, Ty? Fuck. Fuck, fuck! Uh, what— what am I gonna do, what am I gonna do? Uh, I gotta hide somewhere. Uh. Uh... Uh, the— the— the closet. Uh, lemme... *[Shuffles through the clothes.]* Ugh, why does he have so many jackets? Fuck! *[Struggles.]* Fuck. Fuck. Fuck! Fuck. Ugh. Uh, Ty's here. What do I do, what do I do, what do I do, what do I do, what do I do. What do I do. Uh, oh... Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck. *[Hums nervously.]* At least I closed the door, I guess. *[Hums and groans for a moment.]* Okay, um. Think. Think, Mikey, think. Um. Uh. *[Pause.]* Uh, um... I'll just, uh, I'll just, uh, I'll just, uh. I don't know, I don't *know*. They don't have fire escapes in Europe. *[Nervous laugh, then takes a moment to compose himself.]* Okay. It's okay. It's okay. It's gonna be okay.

TY *[muffled, overlapping Mikey]:* Emdubya? Where did you go? I swear that I left you in the living room a few minutes ago. You weren't supposed to move around. Oh, no, you didn't find that Monopoly board, did you? I have returned with some good news and some bad news. Oh, of equal weight, I assure you. The good news is that I'm back with some of Felix's famous biscuits and gravy! All for you, of course. I don't care for it, but I know that you love it dearly. I think he's tried a few different things; there's some jammy dodgers in there, as well. I'm— I'm not entirely sure how well it goes with the Bisto, but, well, it's for you to try. *[Sighs.]* I felt dreadful leaving you here alone after Mike showed up and gave you such a fright. And I know that you feel terrible deceiving the other duplicates, even if you know that it's for a good cause. I thought maybe a, uh, "delicious" meal might cheer you right up. I was surprised that it was still in the fridge at the Compound. Can you believe no one else wanted it? Uh... Maybe Felix iterated it; that's possibly how it keeps on being fresh. Oh, well. Ah. A home-cooked meal should get us back on track. Right, pard-ner!? Hmm? This will all be sorted and filed away as another moment in history soon enough, just as sure as my name is Ty Careful Betteridge.

MIKEY: *[Calling out.]* I know that "Careful" isn't literally your middle name, Ty! *[To self.]* Shitshitshitshit, Ty's here. What the fuck is Ty doing here? Uh. Fuck, I'm in my clothes. Uh... I— I— Michael's closet, I guess. Uh, I know that's not technically MW's clothes, but, uh, what's the difference? Okay, just pick... *[Shuffles through the clothes.]* somethin' at random. Okay. Get it on. *[Grunts as he puts on the clothes.]* Alright. This'll have to do. Uh. Can I do... the voice? *[Puts on a cowboy voice and lowers his pitch.]* I— I guess I-I gotta, pard. Um. I-I'm— I'm Em— I'm Emdubya. Uh. Howdy, Ty. Uh, it's Emdubya. Welcome back, pardner. Uh. What— What's goin' on? Remind me again what's— what's goin' on with the iterations? Uh... Alright, I guess I gotta do this.

[We hear Mikey open the door. He continues pretending to be MW.]

MIKEY: Uh, hey, there, Ty. U-Uh... Welcome back.

TY: Ah! There's the Duplicate Of The Hour! You can't hide from me, MW! I'll always find a way to track you down. *[Brief chuckle.]* Right. I have returned from the Compound with "news from the front," as it were! And some delectable snacks to boot. *[Pause.]* Why were you in Michael's room, and why was the door closed? Is everything okay in there? Did anything happen while I was gone?

MIKEY *[slipping in and out of the cowboy voice]:* Uh, nothing worth m-mentionin'. Uh, I was checkin' to make sure that n-nothin' was in there. A-After the— what— what happened, I mean. Uh— Y-You know how it is sometimes, livin' alone. Uh, I— I thought I heard somethin', so I— I got up to investigate, and it w— it weren't nothin'. Uh, just apartment noises.

TY: Oh, I know how exactly it is living alone. But, that's why I have so many iterations of myself. So much fun! And makes Saturday nights go with a bang! Well, no one else should be popping

in, if that's what you're getting at. All of the duplicates should be quite preoccupied, except for one notable troublemaker...

MIKEY: [*Pitch raised.*] ...What? Uh— [*Lowers pitch.*] W-What are you lookin' at?

TY: MW, I just noticed that's a different flannel shirt than the one you had on when I left. [*Teasing.*] You don't have to get all dressed up just to get my attention. Isn't that Michael's shirt? Hmm. ...Yeah, you wear it well. You'll certainly grow into it. I thought you might be shying away from a cowboy lifestyle, given recent events.

MIKEY: I— I just saw it while I was rummagin' around in there. W-Why would I... shy away from bein' a cowboy, though?

TY: I don't suppose you have to. It's up to you, of course. Cowboyification comes for everyone. Although not me. I couldn't see myself, but, uh, most other people. Uh, it doesn't have to be a gradual thing, it could be all at once. And that's assuming you've made up your mind, which I assure you, Michael is wrong when he says that you have to.

MIKEY: Well, who cares what Michael thinks? Uh, we won't be seein' him again, barrin' a correction, so he ain't gonna miss the shirt.

TY: Oh! I was referring to the Michael who's working on this "handoff" protocol, not your Michael. Though I can see why you could get confused; being outside of the time period has stopped Michael from having a useful nickname in times like these. Honestly. Him and nicknames is absolutely...

MIKEY: Uh... are you thinkin' o' "interminable"?

TY: Yes! Yes, that's the word. After all, I— I'm sure I've heard things like "Tex" and "Old Man" and "Michael" and this and that and the other, and it's— it's all terribly confusing. If only someone could draw me a graph. Oh, remind me, I have to talk to Felix about that.

MIKEY: I reckon I shoulda guessed that you meant a Michael that was alive.

TY: Oh, don't misunderstand. Cowboy Michael is part of this grand scheme, of course, just as much as Old Man or Mikey or Tex. That's what this is all about anyway, isn't it? Who gets to be Mike, and who gets to be Michael. This process is meant to preserve the duplicates (well, the important ones), Michael included. What is important is the state in which they are preserved.

MIKEY: Uh, well, then. Uh, regardless, uh, the jacket's stayin' on.

TY: Good, because you don't have time to change clothes again. This isn't *America's Next Top Mikey*. We have business to attend to.

MIKEY: Alright, then. Lay it on me, Ty. What is the business, specifically?

TY: The Mike business, of course. It is obvious that he suspects us of foul play, or rather, he suspects you. It is unclear what he knows about me. Either way, it simply will not do. He's going to assume the worst about what you're up to, and he's going to get in our way and his both. From what I've ascertained, he's incredibly frustrated with the future organizations, because he wants a say in this whole "handoff" debacle, as if there weren't far too many cooks in the kitchen already.

MIKEY: So, M-Mike, uh— The— There's, uh, the handoff... and Mike don't wanna hand it off?

TY: Oh—! Oh, no—! Um—! I thought that you understood. He can't be the one to hand it off, because he *is* the handoff, in a manner of speaking. But, of course, he can't participate. It would be a propagation nightmare. We have to keep him preoccupied. That's why we threw a spanner in the whole Python business. We need him running around playing Scooby-Doo. Right now, he thinks that he is "waiting on Tracing" for some results. I told Tracing to put a hold on any informations he might uncover. They could have told him what he wanted to know the moment he put in the request, but I need him to take his sweet time figuring the whole thing out. We need to keep him moving. It's like I always say: "An idle Mike is the devil's plaything. Or Scrappy-Doo."

MIKEY: Well, Mike's not—... ain't. Mike ain't bein' kept busy by the whole Python thing. Uh, not busy enough, 'cause he showed up here and told me some long, ramblin' story about the boar's head on the wall.

TY: Oh, did he? Heh... A veiled threat, if ever I heard one. Which means we may need to take a more hands-on approach to distracting him.

MIKEY: Uh. Hands on what, exactly, Ty?

TY: Well, I, for one, would like to put him in Storage, but I've been preemptively stopped from doing so. It seems the higher-ups don't feel great about putting assets in Storage until they can make sure another Nobody situation cannot happen.

MIKEY: Can— Can you, uh, keep him busy? Like, meddle in the— the Python situation somehow. Give Scrappy-Doo somethin' to investigate.

TY: Oh, that was part of my plan, as you know. But I feel like as long as we have to factor in the other, um, "unpredictable" members of that household, we will always be walking on eggshells. We can't play around in Python's origin story as much as we would like, because the Compound needs Skuzz to set that bomb off inside O.I. ...Oh, you understand. I'd hate to bring everyone back to the Dome. There's far too many twinks. And Marissa! Oh! She may say that she takes off her shoes at the front door, but believe me, I have seen her shoes and her shoe prints all over the pantry.

MIKEY: Oh, that was Michael playin' a prank on her. He was in trouble at Base, and he was tryin' to get the heat off of him, and Marissa found out, and that's why he don't got a toenail on his big toe no more. But, uh, I guess what I'm wonderin' is what are we doin'? Like, maybe this is a sign we shouldn't interfere any further? Mike's onto us; uh, if we do somethin', we might just attract heat. And I reckon the people we attract heat from would want more than our big toenails.

TY: I suppose that it comes down to this: do you want to be Mike, or not?

MIKEY: [*Clears throat.*] Uh, um. Uh— W-Wha— What do you mean, "do I—... I wanna be Mike, or not"?

TY: Oh, come off it, I've seen the tape, too. [**MIKEY:** The tape?] Surely you know that by now! We've both seen the tape addressed to you from Michael. What you don't know, however, is that Michael from that time period has a whole slew of tapes out there in the world, and some of them contradict one another. I know that your tape instructed you that you were going to become Mike during the handoff, but that presupposes a great deal of things. Namely, that you want to be Mike. You do realize how important consent is to me. Nothing is set in stone. Michael said it himself: things do not have to be a closed loop. If anything, even having this discussion makes it less likely. If it were inevitable, we wouldn't be putting on this whole production. This whole pantomime.

MIKEY: [*Pitch raised.*] Uh, does that... work out, though? Like, does that— [*Lowers pitch.*] does that— does that close the— the loop? Um— Me, uh, MW, uh, as Mike?

TY: It's a bit late to be wondering that, isn't it? Anything will work out, but the consequences will be different depending on each choice! Which means that it's like any other choice, really. This choice could alter the most important moments of your life in profound ways, though I guess forgetting to brush your teeth one morning could also do that, theoretically. You have seen the film *The Butterfly Effect*, haven't you? I'm going to have a few things to recommend to Michael when he next does his *Movies With Michael* podcast.

MIKEY: We've all seen *The Butterfly Effect*. Uh, let's pretend that I am sure. I— I, MW, wanna be Mike. Now, you said we got work to do, so what do we do now?

TY: Ah, yes, well, that's where the bad news comes in. Mike is meddling in our plans. He's going to interfere. Compound doesn't want us to put him in Storage. He doesn't have a safe track in the fire scenario. We're going to have to kill him, I'm afraid.

MIKEY: [*Sputters, pitch raised.*] Uh— We're—... You— [*Lowers pitch.*] You want to kill Mike?

TY: Oh! Temporarily, of course. That could be your future that we're tampering with, after all.

MIKEY: Please tell me that that's the bad news you came with, 'cause I don't think I can handle somethin' worse.

TY: That was the bad news, yes.

MIKEY: And that bad news is supposed to be equal weight to the good news, which is you brought me biscuits and gravy.

TY: Ah. Felix's famous biscuits and gravy. Would you like some? It's still cold from being in the fridge in the Compound, but it should heat back up just fine. Eh... *[Sniffs the air.]* Is that smell coming from your microwave?

MIKEY: *[Pitch raised.]* You know what? Let's just, uh, *[Lowers pitch.]* let's get out of the apartment. Okay? Let's— Let's— Fine, let's go kill Mike already.

TY: Oh, goody! How should we do it this time?

[Scene transition.]

[We hear a knock on a door.]

TY: Felix?

[The knocking continues.]

TY: Oh, look— Felix, just— What are you knocking for? Just open the door.

[The knocking stops. We hear the door open.]

SAMANTHA: Good morning, Mr. Betteridge.

TY: Ah. Samantha. U-Uh. How lovely to see you, I do look forward to our little... Wait, uh— Did you just... "Mr. Betteridge"? What's happened?

SAMANTHA: I thought it important to report to you that there has been a serious security breach **[TY:** What's happened? Is anybody hurt?] in the Compound. It appears—

TY *[panicked]:* Wait! *[We hear Ty push an intercom button. Samantha huffs.]* Felix? Felix, are you alright, are you injured!? Where are you, I need a situation report! Sa— Samantha says we're under attack, we're in grave danger!

SAMANTHA: Felix, if you can hear me, stand down. I said nothing of the sort.

TY: Uh, but—!

SAMANTHA: I *said* there had been a serious security breach. I did not say that we are under any form of attack.

TY: *[Pushes the intercom button again.]* Felix, stand down.

FELIX *[through the intercom]:* Samantha already told me to stand down.

TY: Samantha is not your line manager.

FELIX *[through the intercom]:* Though it seemed relatively sensible to listen to her in the—

[The intercom ends abruptly.]

TY: ...He tries his best.

SAMANTHA: Mr. Betteridge. *[Sighs.]* There has been a serious security breach within the Compound.

TY: Yes, you— y-you already mentioned that. Uh, what's going on?

SAMANTHA: My lunch... has been stolen.

TY: Your—... what?

SAMANTHA: My lunch has been stolen.

TY: *[Chuckles, then quietly laughs.]* Your— Your lunch. *[Laughing louder.]* That's marvelous. *[Claps once.]* Oh, I thought you were being serious. Oh, very, very good. Now, what can I really do for you?

SAMANTHA: I'm being entirely serious. My lunch has been *stolen*. You know I am not normally one to make a fuss, but this is very important to me.

TY: "Very important"... Oh, my god. You are serious. Which means this is serious. *[Urgently pushes the intercom button.]* Felix, it's serious, it's really serious, this time, I mean it, *[Samantha sighs.]* something serious has happened! I don't know what it is, of course, why would I, w— it doesn't make any sense, but Samantha is serious about this, and she has that serious face, which makes me worry, and so I'm being serious, and we must *[Takes a breath.]* all take this very sve— very seriously! I have absolutely no idea what is happening, but Kaz is going to find a way to blame me for it! *[Exhales nervously.]* Perhaps I'll blame Felix if it's too serious.

SAMANTHA: *[Sighs.]* Mr. Be—

TY: Unless you want to take the blame, Samantha? No, no, no, of course not, you're the problem, well— well, you're not— you're not *the* problem, well, not the problem, why would you steal your own lunch? It doesn't make sense, is it even possible to steal your own lunch?
[Samantha growls.] No, no, let's just blame Felix, that'll do it.

FELIX *[through the intercom]:* Ty? You do know your finger is still on the intercom button. And I have absolutely no intention of being blamed for this.

SAMANTHA: *[Sighs.]* No one is blaming you, Felix.

[The intercom ends.]

SAMANTHA: I already know exactly who did it.

TY: What!? Who!?

SAMANTHA: It was Samantha.

TY: I knew it!

SAMANTHA: *[Sighs.]* Please calm down. It wasn't me, it was another Samantha. I have checked the event with our internal cameras and also via tracing, and there is no doubt at all that it was a Samantha. The problem is, however, that, aside from me, we have 16 Samanthas within the Compound at the moment. And if any one of them has suddenly gone rogue, we could all be in very serious trouble.

TY: ...What do you suggest?

SAMANTHA: We need to kill them all.

[Closing theme starts playing.]

CREDITS: This has been WOE.BEGONE.

The voice of Troy was Athan. Check out his podcast [The Grotto](#), and check him out on Twitch at [twitch.tv/athansmusic](https://www.twitch.tv/athansmusic).

The voice of Felix was Ben Rowe.

The voice of Samantha was Fay Roberts.

[Rapping.] And the voice of Ty Betteridge was David Ault. Check out his podcast [Shadows At The Door](#), or go to davidault.co.uk for more. *[Stops rapping.]*

Thanks for playing.

[Closing theme plays out.]

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TY): Did anything, uh, happen while I was gone? ...Should I check the secret, hidden cameras? *[Laughs.]* I only wanted to see the look on your face when I said that! *[Laughs.]* Oh, i— it wasn't that kind of guilty want, I— I know you weren't doing anything untoward.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TY): As if there weren't far too many cooks in the kitchen already. Did you ever see that Adult Swim video of "Too Many Cooks"? Now that, *that*, was what YouTube was invented for.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TY): Oh, temporarily, of course! Come on. You should know this podcast by now, everyone gets a get out of death free card.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TROY): *[Yelling.]* Sir, yes, sir! *[Yelling louder.]* Sir, yes, sir! *[Yelling even louder.]* Sir, yes, sir! *[Normal volume.]* Sir, yes, sir!

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TROY): Tater tot hot dot? Well, they didn't tell me to get hater— *[Laughs and breaks character.]* Dylan, *why—!?*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TROY): Well, Tex, you can sit here and bitch about it, *[Laughing.]* or you could— *[Breaks character.]* Nah, that doesn't work.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

[END Episode 177.]