

EPISODE TWO HUNDRED AND TEN - THE VIRGIN

Original transcript edited by Mercury and Ari and reviewed by Jenah

[BEGIN Episode 210.]

INTRO: Hey guys, quick plugs. Welcome to the season 18 mid-season finale. I hope you've been enjoying the season so far and I hope you're excited to see how all of these different threads weave together in the second half of this season. This one is a little bit silly but I hope that you enjoy it all the same. There will be an intermission next week, but I will still be streaming 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. Last stream we started playing Yoshi's Island, which I'm good at. What a relief, why do I ever do difficult things on stream, I have no idea. So if you wanna come watch me play that next week that's 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'll get early access to ad-free episodes, instrumentals, soundtrack albums, Q&As, director's commentaries, Movies with Michael, postcards, corkboards, and mor- *[Cut.]* -boards. The August postcards are nigh upon us if that's how you use the word "nigh." I like to do something special for the anniversary postcards and these turned out great. I'm excited to share the story and the design and maybe a little something extra with you in August. So sign up at the 15 dollar and up level if you want a postcard. And special thanks to my ten newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

[Opening Theme Plays.]

Z: So, there I was, on my first ever shaduke hunt. A was there, of course, watching over the whole thing cause it was the during the festival. I was the only Virgin Michael in the village that year, so all eyes were on me to bag a shaduke. But, believe me, I didn't want to kill one of these critters. I seen those drawings what G put up in the town square for the festival. Them shadukes are as cute as a button. But they say they're the tastiest meat in all of Slovenia and possibly the world and by god I was gonna eat one and make the whole village proud. So I sat there with A in the blind and waited for 'em to start showing up. And then, just when I was getting so bored sitting there I was about to fall asleep, a shaduke walked right into my sights. And it was cuter and bigger than I ever coulda imagined. Like a big cartoon rat mixed with a big cartoon bear. A got all excited and started whispering to me "there he is! That's the shaduke! Shoot it, Z!" He knew I saw it too and he knew I was a good shot. That's how I ended up here in the first place. You know how soldiers in wartime will sometimes miss on purpose because they don't wanna shoot no one? That weren't gonna work. A'd know what I was doin'. And I didn't wanna look soft in front of A after everything he'd done for me that year, so I lined up the big beautiful bastard in my sights... But before I could pull the dang trigger, I felt this sting on the back of my ankle. I swatted at it, thinking it was a mosquito, but it stung again and I cried out in pain, "Ah!" and I turned around and it was another shaduke! One of his buddies had snuck up on us from the other direction. Climbed the ladder to the blind and everything! And he's biting and biting me and I'm yelling "get offa me you dang shaduke!" and thrashing about while A is helpless to get the thing off of me because it's latched in with its teeth at that point. And I'm rolling around in the blind trying to swat it away and I roll off the blind and land on the forest floor below me, right on

my back. So I'm winded and I'm still under attack, A is still up in the blind yellin' the shaduke was getting away but I cain't do nothin'. And then a bunch of the critters scurry up outta nowhere and they're all over me. There's too many of 'em. They're holdin' me down in the dirt and I see one of 'em come up close to my head. And I could feel its claws on my neck and their claws are huge compared to the rest of 'em. A lot bigger than I thought they'd be. And I could feel this'n pressing his claws right into my soft neck. Like he knew he was getting revenge. There was nothin' I could do. My gun was all the way up the tree. And then, with one swift swipe of its claws, the shaduke—

[Time travel noise.]

C: What in sam hell is that?

Z: Looks like we got another virgin in time for the festival, C.

[M comes running up.]

MICHAEL: Ugh? Huh? *[Coughs up water.]* What's goin' on? Where am I?

C: M! Get your ass over here [**M:** I'm coming, I'm coming]. We got a visitor! Are you responsible for this? A ain't gonna be happy, I don't reckon. We're out of letters.

M: A will understand. I'll explain it to him at the town hall. I didn't got no goddang choice. I had to bring him. You alright Michael? Sounded like you were choking there.

MICHAEL: I was drinkin' a glass of water when I got transported. Who the hell are you folks? I was mindin' my own business in my own apartment. Can't get no peace and quiet, nosir. Are y'all with Beaumont? Because I ain't tellin' ya where Mike is. He's on his own business and it ain't got nothin' to do with work. That's his prerogative.

M: Slow down there, pard. We ain't with Beaumont or no one else for that matter. The name's M.

MICHAEL: M for Michael, I take it?

M: No sir. These are my fellow villagers C and Z. I was workin' in the Orderliness Complex and picked up on a stability threat in Latvia. Had to get ya out of there as quick as we could. Weren't even time for you to swallow your drink or tell A what was goin' on for that matter. So I brought you here.

C: M, he cain't join the village, there ain't no letters left. 'Cept for H, but A won't let us name no one that.

M: Don't quote protocol at me, C. We'll figure all that out at the town hall. Like I said, I didn't have no choice, I had to act.

MICHAEL: You're saying you did a correction to me? What the hell you'd correct, pard? someone get into the apartment? I coulda took care of em.

M: I ain't allowed to discuss maneuvers outside of the Orderliness Complex, pard. Sorry. Propagation and all that.

MICHAEL: Well I ain't a fan of need to know. I'm Michael, by the way.

C: M, is he saying that he's the Michael? Like, the Michael with Primacy? A's gonna have a conniption about this.

M: A is gonna thank me when we still exist tomorrow.

Z: Well we'd better exist tomorrow. That's when the shaduke festival starts.

MICHAEL: What the hell is this place? I ain't gotta stay here, do I? Because I was kinda in the middle of somethin', that somethin' bein' livin' my damn life.

C: Well, you ain't exactly allowed to leave, now that you've seen us. There are stipulations, if'n ya catch my drift.

MICHAEL: But I've got a job to get back to.

M: We'll discuss everything in due time. We got a democratic process for ironing out all of the particulars. Welcome to the Michaels of Orderliness village, Michael. M.O.O. is happy to have you in our little bucolic hideout here in the Slovenian wilderness.

Z: C's right, we're out of letters. We could give him a number, I reckon. He could be "one." Like, the Prime Michael.

C: That ain't a very good idea, Z. That's been tried before. You don't know about numbers.

MICHAEL: So y'all brought me here, and it's twenty-five of y'all living out in a little village in the forest in Slovenia.

M: Everything we've got we've built with our own two hands, including the tech we used to save your hide, pard. Now, if you'll be patient, we'll explain anything and everything. Everyone's gonna be happy to see ya. After I explain why you're here, o' course.

Z: Maybe A won't be too cross with ya, M. This means we got a virgin for the Shaduke Festival. We weren't gonna have one fore' now. I was here last year.

MICHAEL: Virgin? I've seen Rocky Horror Picture Show, if that's what's going on. But it's summer, that's a Halloween festivity.

M: He means the Shaduke Festival. It starts tomorrow. We'd love to have you participate.

MICHAEL: What the hell is a shaduke, pard?

C: Are you saying they don't got shaduki in Latvia? Y'know, the shaduke, like the woodland critter. Big rat, tastes better than even the finest steak.

MICHAEL: No sir. There ain't a critter in Latvia I ain't seen at this point. And I ate most of them too. And even if I hadn't, Boris would have a story. I ain't heard of no shaduke.

[We hear a rustling in the forest behind them.]

Z: Shit, hear that? There's one behind ya, Michael! Don't get cut, they've got big ol' claws.

C: You got your gun, M? I left mine back in the cottage.

M: Hold your horses, both of ya. The season don't start till tomorrow.

[We hear the rustling come to a stop.]

LIEUTENANT: Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I ain't a critter! I'm one of you, I'm an iteration!

C: M? Did you rescue two Michaels this morning in the name of Orderliness? Cause now I'm sure A's gonna be cross with ya.

MICHAEL: He didn't come with me, I ain't got no clue who he is.

M: I only grabbed Michael, this ain't an Orderliness correction. What's your name, fella?

LIEUTENANT: I... I don't know... I was somewhere else, I think? And then I was here... but I don't remember nothin'. My head is killing me... I don't know how I got here... or even where I am. Please don't hurt me.

M: We ain't gonna hurt ya, friend. Don't worry. We're the Michaels of Orderliness, at your service. Wherever ya came from, we'll figure it out in a couple of days. The Shaduke Festival is this weekend so no one's workin'. But you'll both stay here, eat, drink, and be merry while we get this all figured out. Welcome to Slovenia. We're happy to have ya.

[Scene transition]

[We hear the bustle of the village town hall. The letters are chanting "HORSES! HORSES!"]

A: Order! Order! This meeting of the Michaels Of Orderliness will come to order!

G: You'll have order when we got horses, A.

A: Look, I know y'all want horses! It's all we ever talk about at the damn town hall! We ain't got no place to keep horses, G. And we ain't got no one to clean up after em' on the streets, neither, unless one of y'all wants to volunteer.

R: I say we make the new fella do it!

A: We ain't puttin' our guests to work shovelin' horse shit, R. They just got here for god's sake. That's what we're here to talk about, by the way, not horses. Now, as the first iteration of the village and the head of the Welcome Committee, I've prepared a short presentation to bring our guests up to speed. So y'all tune out for a minute if'n ya want.

[A clears his throat.]

A: Okay! We are the Michaels of Orderliness (M.O.O.), not to be confused with the Order of Michaels, that's different. I founded this here village after a series of very unstable timelines made it clear that one of us gotta lend a guiding hand to the situation. And that's what we do here. The Orderliness Complex, built under this very town hall, is a sophisticated system for monitoring iterations and organizations, as well as providing corrective measures using up-to-the-minute accurate interpolations of backwards propagation data. We do all of this without a single organization or group of iterations knowing we exist. This action at a distance is where we derive our power.

G: Yeah, we correct bad behavior for everyone 'cept Tex and his ilk for some reason. We never correct them no matter what kinda cockamamie scheme they're up to...

C: Slow your roll, G. We're doin' exactly what we need to be doin' with Tex. A light touch is necessary. Now, I used to be one of his Numbers 'fore A recruited me. And I'm the only Letter here what used to be a Number. And I don't hold no fondness for Tex or nothing like that or his "ilk" like you called 'em. But he upholds his order in his own way, however shameful that is. Tex don't know it but he's working with us, not against us. I mean, he used to be a letter, after all. The Michaels of Orderliness and Tex's Posse got the same origin.

Z: What? Tex was a letter? Ain't that bad, though? Folks ain't supposed to know about us.

C: He don't remember us, Z. M took his memories from him when he shipped him off to Texas. He's part of the anonymous council under us. He don't know the arrangement.

A: Thanks for clearing that up, C. I hope this ain't too confusin' for ya, Michael. And uh.... I'm sorry, have we got a name for you yet, friend?

LIEUTENANT: Someone said something about calling me "H."

A: I don't think callin' anyone H is a very good idea. So, we'll keep brainstorming. We've been doin' good work out here for a long time and made great lives for ourselves out here through hard work and perseverance. We're happy to have both of ya here. This weekend actually marks 10 full years of operations here in the village. Folks come and go, but I've been here the whole time. So this upcoming Shaduke Festival is a special one for me and everyone else here. I'm sure y'all got lots of questions, but I'll leave it there for now. M, I believe you wanted to explain your operations to the group? Maybe explain how we got here?

M: Yup. Hey y'all. So, there are new Michaels in the village, as ya already know. One of them is the result of an Orderliness Complex maneuver that I took this morning. Michael was the subject of an orderliness correction in order to preserve him and his stability within the timeline. Readings indicated that decisive action was necessary because of Michael's primacy and his connectivity to Base. Allowing him to fall into unknown hands could have devastating consequences not just for our little village, but everyone connected. Following the festival, we in the Orderliness Complex plan to do our damndest to figure out who launched this attack, what they want with the Prime Michael, and what we can do to stop it. Once we get our shaduki in a row, Michael will be reincorporated as part of the anonymous council, which will have lasting positive effects for the project and the village. The other iteration has no memories and no known provenance as of yet, so we will take it upon ourselves to trace his origins and return him or incorporate him here if that is not possible. I have submitted all of this in a report to A for his approval, but cannot say more due to propagation containment. Thank you for your time.

A: Excellent work as usual, M, and an excellent reminder of why you were elected to your post. Thank you for bringing these Michaels into the fold. As head of the Welcome Committee, I will make sure they are treated like special guests during the Shaduke Festival. Since they are technically "virgins" to the Shaduke Festival, I will be accompanying them on the traditional shaduke hunt tomorrow morning. Regarding the festival, R wanted to speak about the upcoming festivities and what we can expect. R?

R: Thank you, A. As you alluded to, there is plenty of festivity to go around and we are excited to welcome our new guests. As in previous years, the festival will begin with the morning shaduke hunt. Members with Calculators will be tasked with transporting shadukes to the kitchen for the evening feast. During the day, we'll have food, drink, games, and live music from G and his band. All work is on hold for the weekend, except for group cleanup sweeps that will happen in the middle and end of every day. The schedule will be posted on a big sign in the middle of town.

A: Great work as always, R. The shaduke festival gets bigger and better every year. Now, 'fore we go are there any questions or concerns 'fore we adjourn?

G: I got one, A.

A: Go right ahead, G.

G: I just wanted to address some concerns about last year's pin-the-tail-on-the-shaduke tournament. Folks complained that we promised to use a real shaduke tail but ended up just usin' a piece of rope. We were out of shaduke tails and no one was able to provide one, so we did the best we could. Furthermore, I received complaints that some folks were peeking out from under their blindfolds, but the folks complaining were also peeking from under their blindfolds. In fact, everyone who played last year was peeking. So, my proposal for this year's pin-the-tail-on-the-shaduke is that I carry around this here hot poker with me and if I catch ya peekin', I'm gonna jab your sorry ass in the eye with it. This is an extreme measure, I know, but I

am willing to work with M in order to issue corrective measures in the case I blind one of you idiots what deserves it. I rest my case, your honor.

A: I ain't not a judge, G, I just got a gavel. But, your hot poker idea is approved.

[A bangs the gavel excessively.]

[Scene Transition]

[We hear the bustle of a street fair, more boisterous than expected. A band is playing in the background.]

A: Well, fellas, sorry y'all didn't bag a shaduke this year. Maybe next year. But it was fun sittin' out there in the woods, weren't it? I know I said it a thousand times already, but we're honored to have both of y'all here. Enjoy the festival! Get some food, play pin-the-tail-on-the-shaduke, have some fun! We're usin' a fake shaduke tail again this year. Can't seem to find a real one... alright I'm gonna go, I'll let y'all mingle, go meet the rest of the Letters. Happy Shaduke Festival. See y'all, boys!

LIEUTENANT: Yep, happy shaduke festival to you too, A.

MICHAEL: This place is gonna take some gettin' used to, I swear.

LIEUTENANT: I can't say I'm a fan of sitting in a hunting blind, waiting for a fictional animal to show up. Shaduke ain't real, you know? Ain't seen one dead or alive since we got here. And I reckon we ain't gonna see one.

MICHAEL: Yeah, I figured it was some kinda initiation. Like a snipe hunt.

LIEUTENANT: And here I was hopin' I'd get to kill somethin' this mornin'. Oh well. They made the meat sound good, too. I've been living off stale crab meat, I could go for some shaduke steak.

MICHAEL: Who are you, pilgrim?

LIEUTENANT: I ain't no one compared to the Prime Michael, your highness.

MICHAEL: I was watching you in the tree stand, pard. You had your eyes on A's calculator the whole trip. Waitin' for him to slip up. Who are you and how did you end up here? I saw you walk outta the woods. M didn't save ya. You didn't transport. You found this place and came here.

LIEUTENANT: Little ol' me? I don't remember nothin' before I walked outta that bush, pilgrim. But I'm all alone in the world. I already told ya.

MICHAEL: I don't know how you're foolin' them. Maybe its 'cause M reckons he's got eyes on every iteration in this timeline. But you ain't foolin' me. I seen enough to know that you're hidin' somethin'. And as soon as this festival is over, they're gonna get to the bottom of it.

LIEUTENANT: Oh, are they now? I had better work fast, then.

MICHAEL: What do you want from them, pilgrim?

LIEUTENANT: Dumb little furry animals, what can't see what's right in front of 'em get trapped easily. I'm just making a meal out of a shaduke is all, since I can't try the real thing.

MICHAEL: I'm watching you.

LIEUTENANT: I'm not worried. You're a shaduke, too, Michael. But I gotta go, I'm gonna play pin-the-tail-on-the-shaduke. Nice huntin' with ya this morning, Michael.

MICHAEL: Hey... wait... *[Pause, Michael sighs.]* Might as well get a corndog.

[Barely Noticed plays.]

I barely noticed You sprang the dark of the forest If I hadn't moved my head I surely would be dead! And I would have barely noticed.

I barely noticed The sharp of your fangs on my throat and If I hadn't lost my step There would be nothing left And I would have barely noticed.

I barely even noticed That control lost the war to focus If you let me catch my breath I would have inhaled my death And I would have barely even noticed.

I barely even noticed Your claws were retracted on purpose If you never caught my eye The spell would never die And I would And I'd barely even notice.

[Closing theme plays.]

BLOOPER (THE LETTERS): We want some damn horses! HORSES, HORSES, HORSES, HORSES!

[Brief start/stop of the closing theme]

BLOOPER (A): Folks come and go, join anonymous councils, but I've been here THE WHOLE TIME *[Mic peaks, laughs]*, I wasn't even thinking it when I wrote it, I can't help myself! I'm cursed, I'm cursed! I can't, I can't write a script, I have to write "I've been here the whole time." It's- I'm cursed, I'm cursed!

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (SNAKE OIL SALESMAN LETTER): Snake oil! Get your snake oil here. It don't work, it's fake as shit, rub it on your bald fucking head you idiots. Yeah! Snake oil! No one else selling snake oil, I squeezed it fresh out of 'em snakes. It won't make ya feel any better, but I got to squeeze some snakes. Hey uh maybe- hey, instead of the snake oil, I'll go back and I'll get the snakes and I'll bring 'em. And then y'all can squeeze the oil out of the snakes cause that's

way better, way better than the snake oil itself. Ya'll can sell the snake oil. 'Cept we can't leave, so y'all can only sell the snake oil to each other so it's like a multi level marketing scheme based around squeezing snakes.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

[END Episode 210.]