

Mad Diary of Michael Last 4

*[mix in chet cosmos. Brooks gate. Ben shouting. Sci fi noises etc.]*

*Ben falls out of the gate and onto the floor. It's very quiet.*

Narrator

Dr Benjamin Brooks and his team stepped through the Brooks Gate and were scattered through dimensions. Hop and Lindy are forever trapped in universes they can't comprehend. Only Dr Brooks, with the help of strange, space fairing humans with advanced technology, was able to make another attempted jump. We join him now as we arrives in what he hopes is the Last Universe.

Ben

Oof! Did it work? Am I here?? Chet? Can you hear me Chet? I can't tell if the transdimensional wrist communicator you gave me is working or not. I'm going to continue transmitting, hopefully you are receiving and relaying my words back to Scarfweather.

Looking around I don't know if this is the Last Universe or my own. It's nothing like your dimension, with its whimsy and amazing technology. I'm in a house, a basement. I don't think anyone else is here. This house feels empty. *[he walks up stairs]* I'm going outside. I must know which universe you've sent me too. *[a door creaks open]*

I was right. No one has lived here for some time. This house is a ruin. Looks like a fire got it long ago. Though there's no way to-I[HE GASPS. WIND BLOWS] My GOD! The living room, there-the...it looks like it's been blow up by a ballistic strike. The south wall is missing and...yes I can see out to the street. *[he walks thru debris]*

The entire neighborhood seems derelict. Houses sit in crumbled ruin. Shells of cars clog the street. I don't recognize the makes or models. The stars, the constellations are all in the right place, but everything else...feels wrong. You did it, Chet. You sent me to Michael. I wish I could repay you and your crew. Thank you.

Scarfweather, if you're hearing this that means I've succeeded. After we stepped through the Brooks Gate I found- *[hushed]* wait...I hear something. I think it's a car. *[he runs and scuffles. He hides in a bush]*

*[a car pulls up slowly and stops. The doors open and 2 people get out and start walking around]*

Polly Jack

He must've hid. I told you we should have walked the rest of the way.

Pokorney

It's not like he can get away. You're fine.

Polly Jack

I don't wanna poke around abandoned houses all night. Don't "you're fine" me! I'll kick your guts out.

Pokorney  
Will you relax?

Polly Jack  
TIME TO COME OUT NOW! WE KNOW YOU'RE HERE.  
Pokorney  
SHH!

Polly Jack  
*[sarcastically]* Shh! Shh!! COME ON OUT, IF WE FIND YOU CAUSE YOU'RE  
HIDING WE'LL JUST ASSUME YOUR OTHER-NATION AND KILL YA. WHICH MEANS I  
CAN GO HOME AND GO TO BED.

Pokorney  
Stop that, it could be a kid. WE'RE NOT GOING TO KILL YOU. COME ON OUT  
SLOWLY. WE JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT THOSE FLASHING LIGHTS WERE.

Ben  
Dr Pokorney?

Polly Jack  
That ain't a kid!

Ben *[getting up and running over]*  
Dr Pokorney! How did you find me? Has Scarfweather been receiving me??

Polly Jack *[cocking gun]*  
Whoa whoa there, vaquero. Erin, who is this guy?

Pokorney  
I have no idea.

Polly Jack  
How does he know your name?

Pokorney  
I don't know! Hey guy, how do you know my name?

Ben  
Oh dear. I think...you're not who you are.

Pokorney  
That clears that up, thanks.

Polly Jack  
What was all that flashing light stuff? There's no power to this grid,  
what's going on?

Ben  
Do you know Michael Last? I'm trying to find him.

Polly Jack  
Was it a weapon? Are you other-nation?

Ben  
Please! Michael Last, do you know him??

Pokorney  
We don't know him. I've never heard of Michael Last.

Ben  
*[broken]*  
Damn.

Pokorney

Why don't you come with us? You can tell us who you are and what that flash was? We have food.

Ben  
Yes, yes I have much to tell you. Do you have coffee as well?

Polly Jack  
We don't have any of your friends.

*[transition noises. Car driving]*

Ben  
Where are we going?

Pokorney  
Our bank is by the river. Not far. That's why we were here to quickly.

Ben  
You're...bank? I'm sorry I don't quite...

Polly Jack  
The Bank. BANK.

Ben  
We're going to...a bank? I haven't got any money here.

Polly Jack  
Money?? Where are you from?

Ben  
New Mexico.

Pokorney  
Where's that? I that in Columbia?

Ben  
No, it's in the United States. It's here, right here.

Polly Jack  
Listen guy, if you're other-nation, we're gonna kill you, you know that. You don't seem real nervous about it so I'm guessing you're not other-nation. But nothing you've said since we found you has made any sense. So you need to figure out what kind of crazy you are cause you're makin me real mad.

Pokorney  
What's the United States?

Ben  
The United States of America. That's where I'm from. It's right here. I've lived here for over 20 years.

Pokorney  
America?

Ben  
I'll explain once we get to uh..the bank. I assume that's some sort of commune for whoever has survived in this region?

Pokorney  
Yeah. Do you not live in the old banks in New Mexico?

Ben  
No. No we live in homes.

Polly Jack  
How do you survive the bombing?

Ben  
It's better if I explain to everyone together. I don't like repeating myself.

*[transition noises. Bank vault opening. Chain link fence rattles. Footsteps.]*

Polly Jack  
We'll take you to Autocrat Spender. He'll decide if you can stay with us at the Bank or I get to shoot you.

Ben  
Autocrat...is that his title? Is he the leader?

Polly Jack  
I really hope I get to shoot you.

Pokorney  
He's just a little spacey. Calm down.

*[knock on door.]*

Pokorney  
Autocrat, we found the source of the flash.

Scarfweather *[thru door]*  
Come in.

*[Door opens]*

Polly Jack  
We found this man near the flash, he claims-

Ben  
Scarfweather! Scarfweather my god man! You...is..is that you?

Scarfweather  
Did he just call me Scarfweather?

Polly Jack  
Yeah he says all kinds of crap. Erin thinks he's harmless, and so do I, but I still think we should shoot him.

Scarfweather  
What's your name?

Ben  
Ben. Dr Benjamin Brooks.

Scarfweather  
Hi Ben. I'm Autocrat Spender. I don't know Scarfweather. Have a seat. Thank you, ladies.

Polly Jack  
We'll be right outside.

*[footsteps, door opens, closes]*

Scarfweather

Okay Ben, why don't you start by telling me what the flash of light was.

Ben  
I think I should address the community. I don't like repeating myself.

Scarfweather  
Why don't you tell me who you are, and I'll decide if you get to meet "the community".

Ben  
I'm looking for Michael Last, do you know him? Is he here?

Scarfweather  
Dr Brooks. I need you focus. Take a moment to try and understand what's going on here. We don't know if you are other-nation, crazy, violent, or just lost. I have to consider the safety of the 247 people who live at this bank. You need to tell me what is going on so that I can determine if you are going to die in this room.

Ben  
9 years ago, I intercepted a transmission from a young man called Michael Last. It was his diary. He described a world at war. A war unlike I had ever heard of. My partner and I tracked the signal and found that it was coming from just a few miles away, but also somehow, at an unconceivable distance. We had somehow opened the door between our two dimensions, yours and mine. I wrenched that door open just enough to come through myself, to save Michael from this war. To bring him to my universe, and learn what we could from him.

Scarfweather  
That flash we saw, that was you coming here from another dimension?

Ben  
Correct.

Scarfweather  
mm-hmmm. You know how that sounds don't you?

Ben  
I do. I don't need you to believe me. All I want is to find Michael. I know he's very near this area. Help me find him, that's all I ask.

Scarfweather  
Michael Last...hm. Okay here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to take Polly Jack and Erin back where they found you. I'm going to poke around. There's no power going into that grid, so I'm gonna go find this machine of yours and see if your story adds up.

Ben  
Oh no, no you won't find anything. The machine is designed to open a gate only. It can only be opened from one side.

Scarfweather  
You're not making this easy for me, Ben. We're gonna go check out the area. If I find anything that doesn't fit your story, like weapons, or a camp, or an other-nations aircraft maybe, we're going to have to re-visit our options. If everything checks out, then we're gonna find this Michael Last and get some answers.

Ben  
Then you will help me??

Scarfweather

No, I'm helping me and everyone I'm supposed to keep safe. I don't know what you are and I don't like not knowing. I also don't love the idea of just killing you because you're crazy. Sit tight, Ben.

*[he rises. Footsteps, door opens]*

Scarfweather  
Why did you call me Scarfweather?

Ben  
that's your name in my Universe. You and I discovered the Last universe together.

Scarfweather  
Hmpf.

*[door closes]*

Ben  
Scarfweather, if this transmission is reaching you, do not turn the machine on yet. I haven't located Michael. This war is worse than we ever imagined. The military state Michael hinted at doesn't seem to be here. The class system, none of it. This world is a wrecked husk. From what I can tell, communities of people have splintered off and live huddled in old banks. The banks here are vast, the vault they took me into is the size of a hotel lobby. These people don't trust me, Scarfweather. I hope you're out there, listening.

*[transition noises. Car driving. Crunching footsteps]*

Scarfweather  
You find anything.

Pokorney  
No.

Scarfweather *[shouting a distance]*  
Polly Jack! You find anything!

Polly Jack *[distant]*  
Yeah I found a whole bunch of smashed up houses! Can we go already?

Scarfweather  
What do you think about this guy?

Pokorney  
Just another loosey nut looking for a bank that'll take him.

Scarfweather  
He's doesn't talk like any loosey I've ever met. He doesn't seem to want shelter for a night, much less his whole life.

Pokorney  
Okay so he's crazier than you're used to. Doesn't take much to drive someone crazy trying to make it on your own out there.

Polly Jack *[distant]*  
You girls can have this conversation in the car I'm sure!

Scarfweather  
You ever heard of Michael Last?

Pokorney  
No.

Scarfweather  
Me neither. Let's get back. Give Ben some food and a bunk somewhere  
Polly Jack can keep an eye on him. Tomorrow we'll start looking for  
Michael. Maybe he'll know what to do with this guy.

*[transition noises. Car starts and drives off/metal door creaking open]*

Ben  
Spender, did...what have you decided?

Scarfweather  
I haven't yet. But today's your lucky day. I'm gonna help you find  
Michael Last.

Ben  
Thank you! Thank you, we have to hurry.

Scarfweather  
Come on, I'll introduce you to our bank. Maybe someone here knows who  
or where Michael is.

*[transition noises. Doors opening. Bell tone. Bank vault sound. Crowd chattering]*

Scarfweather  
Alright...alright! Pipe down people.

*[the crowd shushes itself quiet]*

Scarfweather  
Thank you.

Voice from crowd  
Did you find out what the flash was?

Voice  
Who is that?

Voice  
Has there been another invasion?

*[overlapping questions]*

Scarfweather  
Hold on! Hold on! No, there's been no invasion. Everything is fine.  
Able- is Able here?

Able  
Here!

Scarfweather  
Able will you please act as community rep?

Able  
Sure, Spender.

Scarfweather  
Great. Okay first thing's first: This is Dr Benjamin Brooks. He says  
he comes to us from an alternate universe. Last night's flash of light  
was some kinda portal, that's how he says he got here.

*[crowd murmurs]*

Able  
Autocrat...are you saying this man is actually from another universe?

Scarfweather  
I'm saying that's his story and so far we can't disprove it and he doesn't seem to be lying.

Ben  
I'm not lying! Please, I know it sounds strange, you don't have to believe me, I'm ju-

Scarfweather  
Easy Ben, easy. He's looking for a man called Michael Last. Does anyone here know that name?

[crowd murmur]

Scarfweather  
Able, will you ask around, let me know if anyone comes up with anything. [to ben] What do you know about this guy? Where he lives or anything?

Ben  
We don't know much. We know he lives within a few miles of here, or at least that's where the transmissions are sent from. He lives with his parents and has no siblings. He often goes to the bread lines for his family. They're second class citizens and are often-

Scarfweather  
Bread lines? That...I'm confused. When did you start getting these diary entries?

Ben  
Just a few years ago.

Scarfweather  
A few years ago. And he says he's a second class citizen? His family?

Ben  
Yes.

Able  
Spender...

Scarfweather  
Hold on a minute Able. [to ben] Did Michael mention any names or dates in his diary?

Ben  
Not really. An occasional first name, but the context was always distant. What's going on? What are you thinking?

Scarfweather  
There haven't been breadlines in decades. Caste system citizenship ended when my parents were teenagers. Ben...

Able  
Spender, Malwich Goody knew the Lasts.

Scarfweather  
Okay...okay Malwich, come on up. What can you tell us?

Malwich [older]

Before I came here I lived in a town a few miles from here, on the other side of the hills called St. Bodega Mills. My neighbor was Brea Last, her uncle's name was Michael.

Ben  
You must take me to St. Bodega Mills! If we..if-if...father? Michael doesn't...

Malwich  
It's not there anymore sir. It was destroyed in the Second Invasion. We got out okay but I never saw Brea. She told me though that her entire family died during the Great Invasion.

Ben  
The what? I don't understand.

Scarfweather  
Ben, the other-nations invaded on Christmas Eve and blew the country apart. It put an end to the Federalist Lists and we all...Ben it's what ended the bread lines, the second class citizens, the tanks and jeeps at night. If Michael stood in a bread line then he did it nearly 60 years ago.

Ben  
No...no! No no no! No I can't be too late! You're wrong! You must be wrong! No! Michael! Michael!!

*[echos off. Transition noises. Back in the lab in Universe A]*

Scarfweather  
Lab 47 implementing attempt 237 to make contact, search pattern 6.  
*[recording clicks off. Lab noises]*  
Come on Benny, talk to me buddy.

*[door opens. Footsteps]*

Dean  
Morning, Scarfweather.

Scarfweather  
Dean Yaeger.

Dean  
How's the Signal Expansion work coming?

Scarfweather  
Good. We should be ready for another test sometime next week, if we can get dish access.

Dean  
I'll make sure you get time on the dish, don't worry about it.

Scarfweather  
Thank you.

Dean  
Any luck with Ben?

Scarfweather  
None at all. Probing into the universe we went too is a lot harder than getting into the Last universe.

Dean  
What if there's no one there to respond?

Scarfweather  
It's a big Universe, Thom. Someone's there. Can't give up on Ben. He  
didn't give up on Micheal.

Dean  
How is Michael doing?

Scarfweather  
This was yesterday's transmission. *[click]*

Last  
[insert. Mention that Christmas is next week. Dun dun dunnnn]

Narrator  
At a University in New Mexico, one man tried to probe blindly into the  
wrong universe looking for his friend. In another universe, a young  
man looks forward to his last Christmas, at that same moment, many  
decades later, Dr Brooks knows he has failed. Trapped in a universe at  
war, his team scattered only god knows where, and Michael Last, Dr  
Brook's hope and obsession, died a bloody death decades before he was  
born. He howls at nothing. A man driven mad by a diary.