

The Mad Diary of Michael Last episode 2

Last

[insert. Another diary entry hinting that the circumstances are worse than anyone knows.]

Ben

We are coming, Michael.

Last

[insert. This entry details the specific personal danger Michael is in.]

[as it plays, it transitions from the Institute to a large chamber. It gains a slight echo as it bounces off the walls]

Ben

Last year, at the Duala Symposium, I called for a push toward crossing over from our universe to the Last universe. Now the world knows why. Michael is in danger, his world at war. If he is as loved by us as his global popularity suggests, then we must rally together now. I have built a machine for a localized Brooks Gate, with your support we can save Michael at Last.

[worried murmurs grow into shouts and finally jeers. The noise grows overpoweringly loud.]

[transition noises. We're back at the lab]

Ben

Damn!

Scarfweather

Don't give up yet. They haven't even voted. And even if they don't support this project, there are other labs, institutes...this is a global issue, somewhere someone will fund us.

Ben

No, no. You heard them. The fear, the hate. You were wrong. I was wrong to break this. They'll never help me get to Michael. After this I won't even be able to finish my machine.

Scarfweather

That's good! You can't throw something like that together in 6 months, Ben. Not even you. It needs testing and peer review, safety checks.

Ben

There's no time for all that! We already know it works! I've just got to harness enough power to get the gate big enough for a Proxy-Naut rather than a minute radio signal.

Scarfweather

See that's exactly what I mean. Who knows what that will do? You turn that machine on before we're ready and you could turn everyone against you. Be patient, Ben.

Narrator

But Dr Brooks was right to fear the public opinion. Once word got out that the Last universe was in a highly destructive war, laws

were swiftly put in place barring travel between universes without government oversight. *[insert echoey senators shouting and gavels banging]* He was kicked out of the Institute for withholding scientific findings of great importance, and the Last Transmissions, *[angry crowds shouting]* were put under the purview of the diplomats.

[Soundscape as time passes. Reminiscent of the McCartney trials]

Senator

Dr Brooks, by your own admission, the Last universe is gripped with a dangerous and violent war. Why should we endeavor to open our nation to attack when we have cosmically domestic disputes that we are, to date, unequipped to deal with?

Ben

For the life of a man. For discovery! I can save him. I can safely bring him, and only him, into our universe. We could learn-

Senator

Doctor, you continue to claim that you can do this safely, yet repeatedly ask for public assistance and support to test your machine. Which is it, sir? You can achieve your goals, or you need our help to see them through?

Ben

Please...

[Soundscape as time passes.]

News anchor

The controversial "Last Amendment" has been passed in a majority vote today, preventing anyone from attempting to make contact with the Last Universe, and the D.A. Institute has been instructed to turn control of its Brooks Gate machine and research over to government officials...*[trails off]*

[Soundscape as time passes]

Ben

You've got to listen, PLEASE!

Scarfweather

Ben, we have to comply. The planet has decided it's too risky right now. You don't get to play God with the unversises.

Ben

I can help him!

Scarfweather

Not right now you can't. We have to wait

Ben

I met someone who can- Hold on.

[quick footsteps. A door closes. Ben speaks in hurried whispers]

Ben

I met someone who can help us. She's been getting us the components needed for a new machine, once we find the power we can take a team in!

Scarfweather
"getting us the components"? You mean black market, unregulated,
science.

Ben
I mean the work! Help us get to Michael!

Scarfweather
Ben, no. No no no. Whatever this is, it's not the way. Even through
the proper channels and methods, you were dangerously close to out of
control, what makes you think this ad-hoc machine is going to be
safer? The best case scenario here is you get arrested before you can
kill yourself or blow up half the planet.

Ben
You have to help me save him.

Scarfweather
This won't save him.

Ben
Doing nothing damns him.

Scarfweather
Calm down. Be reasonable.

Ben
You won't help me.

Scarfweather
I am helping you. I'm turning over the project to the federal
government so we can work together for what's best for both worlds.
I'm sorry, Dr Brooks.

Ben
I'm meeting my contact tomorrow. Is he safe, or are you going to turn
us in?

Scarfweather
I'm not going to put you in jail, Ben. (beat) But if anyone comes
asking me questions, I won't lie to protect you.

[Footsteps, ben leaves]

[footsteps, the door opens. The footsteps continue. Transition noises]

[sounds of children playing at a park. Footsteps.]

Charleston
Doctor.

Ben
Yes?

Charleston.
I'm Charleston.

Ben
Oh! At last we me-

Charleston
Sit back down on the bench, doctor. We don't want to attract attention.

Ben
Oh.

Charleston
Do you know why I asked to meet you here?

Ben
I assumed a public place was chosen for your safety. The equipment you've been getting me...well there is no quiet way to acquire some of these things legally.

Charleston
You know they say Einstein didn't know how to tie his shoes. Brain the size of a planet and he never bothered learning how to put his shoes on every day. He claimed it was to save his mind for more important things. Got shoes without laces. I think it was just an excuse. Couldn't figure out the day to day so he made it sound like part of the plan.

Ben
Most of the legends about Einstein are apocryphal. And I can tie my shoes just fine.

Charleston
You can tie your shoes okay, but you still think a black market felon wants to meet someone she's never met in a public park for her own safety.

Ben
Oh, I assure you, this isn't...if the authorities catch you then I will also be subject to breaking the law. You have nothing to fear from me.

Charleston
Unless you're working with "the authorities" to set me up.

Ben
No...no I just want to reach Michael.

Charleston
Yeah...Doctor I wanted to meet here so you could watch these kids while we talk. You pay well and on time. I don't understand much about what you're building, and frankly I don't think it'll work. But if it does, and what people say is true...you could open this planet up to a hell we can't imagine.

Ben
No no I...Michael is out there, waiting. He must be saved, if we can save him, we could learn so much-

Charleston
Right. So here's the deal. Your final payment went through. I understand you've been working with Hop as a lab assistant?

Ben
Yes.

Charleston
And he's agreed to go with you to the Last universe?

Ben
He has.

Charleston
Okay...this is gonna happen fast. Next week. The final components
and your power needs all get met. Are you ready?

Ben
Yes! I am! When do we-

Charleston
Easy doctor...just listen. Tonight I'm sending you a woman, call
her Lindy. She's going to take you the rest of the way. She's
going to sneak you, Hop, and the machine into the Institute-

Ben
The institute! We'll be found out! Arrested-

Charleston
You'll be fine. If your machine works like you say it will, you
just have to plug it in and be on your way. You'll only have a
small window, but...a plan this risky has to be this risky, you
know what I mean?

Ben
Lindy?

Charleston
She's a driver for Grable. She drives the trucks in every week
for whatever the hell experiments they gotta move around. She'll
come to your safehouse tonight, you have a week to plan. When
this doesn't work and you get arrested, they can't find me. So
don't bother trying to buy freedom by turning me in.

Ben
It will work.

Charleston
...if it does, are you absolutely certain our universe will be
safe?

Ben
I...as certain as I can be until it happens.

Charleston
I'm gonna go now doctor. Don't contact me again. I want you to
watch these children, and ask yourself if risking their future is
worth saving one man a universe away.

Ben
That's a touch saccharin, Charleston. I am a man of science, I
don't weigh one life against another. I believe each life is
precious, and should be saved if possible.

Charleston
And I'm the saccharin one.

*[footsteps as Charleston leaves. The children continue to play.
Transition noises]*

[Footsteps in an alley. A knock on a door. It opens.]

Ben
Yes?

Lindy
Dr Brooks?

Ben
Shh! Are you Lindy?

Lindy
I was told you still-

Ben
Are you Lindy?!

Lindy
Yes!

Ben
Come in.

[Lindy enters. Crude Sci-fi lab noises]

Ben
You drive the trucks for Grable Transport?

Lindy
I do.

Ben
Then you are who we need. Did Charleston explain everything?

Lindy
Some. Is this the machine?

Ben
No, no! That's a very crude receiver I made so I could listen in
on Michael.

Lindy
You can hear every transmission on this?

Ben
Yes. They don't keep many classified, to their credit. But the
ones they do keep to themselves are the most dire. Michael
doesn't have much time. Listen.

[He flicks a switch. A very rough transmission comes thru]

Last

[insert]

Lindy
How can I help?

Ben
You understand what we are attempting?

Lindy
To bring Michael home.

Ben
Michael is home. I want to bring him here, to us. We are close, but very desperate. Charleston says we can trust you, and we have no choice but to trust Charleston.

Lindy
She says you want me to smuggle you and your team into the D.A. Institute. I can and I will.

Ben
It will be dangerous. If they catch us, I can't guarantee they won't presume your innocence.

Lindy
You're planning on going to the Last universe?

Ben
If we plan carefully.

Lindy
I want to go with you.

Ben
If you can get me into the Institute, I'll take you the rest of the way.

Lindy
Where do we start?

Ben
You smuggle me in during next weeks material shipment. We find the last component parts of the machine, a Brooks Gate that will bring us to him, and then him to us.

Lindy
Sounds pretty easy.

Ben
Then you don't understand properly. You know my history with the institute?

Lindy
Yes, of course. I've been following you and Michael since the beginning. I'm not being paid to do this, Dr Brooks. I want to help him.

Ben
Next Thursday, we finish my machine, and with a little luck,
power it and enter, for the first time in human history, another
dimension.

Lindy
How do we power it without them immediately finding us or
shutting it down?

Ben
I have someone on the inside who I have some pull with. Or
least...I used to have.

[sci fi lab noises. We are back at the institute in new mexico]

Scarfweather *[manipulating a high pitched noise]*
Easy...easy...don't...want to...*[the high pitched noise goes flat and stops]*

Scarfweather
Damn!

[Door opens. The dean enters]

Dean
How are the trials going, Scarfweather?

Scarfweather
47 attempts, all unsuccessful.

Dean
Alright, put a pin in it for now. I need to talk to you about Dr
Brooks.

Scarfweather
What about him?

Dean
Have you seen him lately? Today? Here?

Scarfweather
Here? Today? No, he and I had a falling out.

Dean
Are you sure about that? I don't want anybody to get in trouble
here, but...if you've seen him you have a responsibility to tell
me.

Scarfweather
What's this all about? What responsibility?

Dean
There's been some...some equipment has gone missing this week. At
first we thought it was just a matter of scatterbrained
assistants misplacing things but today...some of these components,
assembled properly...it points to Bens "Brooks Gate" machine.

Scarfweather
You think he's here to build a new one?

Dean
We don't even know if it's him. That's why I'm looking into this personally. If you do see him OR notice any equipment missing, tell me immediately.

Scarfweather
Of course, sir.

[he leaves]

Scarfweather
Better watch it, Ben...

[high pitched noise begins again]

Ben *[a hissing whisper]*
Scarfweather!

[Scarfweather yelps and the high pitched noise shoots up and falls apart]

Scarfweather
Ben! You scared the sh...what are you doing? If the dean finds out he'll have you arrested!

Ben *[nervous half whisper]*
He won't have time. It's tonight Scarfweather! I've assembled a team. Two others who want to help Michael. But we need you!

Scarfweather
Whhaat?

Ben
I had to wait to get the key components from the institute, but my team is ready on the old satellite array.

Scarfweather
Oh man, you sound...kinda nuts Ben. You can't just open a gate here and walk thru, we need to test it first! We have no idea what the effects will be, on our universe and certainly not on whoever goes thru it!

Ben
Come with us! You started this project with me, it's only right you see it thru to the end!

Scarfweather
Ben, NO. This is crazy. This is dangerous. There are people and organizations already lobbying to overturn the trans-universe laws. We will get there, one day. This is not the way.

Ben
Then do me a favor. Don't let them turn the machine off. Once it's on they'll come running. You must convince them to leave it on so that we can come back through.

Scarfweather
They aren't going to listen to me Ben. If you manage to create a Brooks Gate here, everyone is going to be in a blind panic trying to shut it down.

Ben
You have to try! Just a few minutes! Promise me you'll try!

Scarfweather
Fine. I'll try Ben. But you know they won't-

Ben
Thank you, Scarfweather. You've been a great companion and friend to me all these years. Whatever happens, it's important that you know that.

Scarfweather
Goodbye, Dr Brooks.

[Transition noises. We are outside now. On a huge satellite. The machine makes crazy sci fi noises. There is the low bass of the power from the satellite. The wind blows. It's all very "The end of Back to the future"]

Lindy
Is she coming?

Ben
No, no. She's going to remain here to ensure we can get back. Has Hop connected us to the power scopes yet?

Lindy
Charged and read, Doctor.

[the machine whirrs to life with a clunk]

Lindy
They'll know where to find us soon!

[Hop climbs up from a steel ladder]

Hop
Ready on the ground, we ready up here?

Ben
The machine is locating Michael's transmitter, then the gate will open. Hopefully he will be there. We can bring him back with us before they cut the power.

Lindy
Hopefully?

Ben
The reward is a man's life, Lindy. The risk is no less than equal.

Hop
But if it works they'll probably make a movie about it.

Lindy
How long until it's ready?

Ben
Just a few moments. We are harnessing the full power of the
institute.

Hop
Look!

Lindy
Shit. Is that campus security?

Hop
Which means the cops are not far behind.

Ben
We're going.

*[suddenly, the machine's power gets a huge boost. Lots of sci fi
noises, heavy on electricity and bass]*

Hop
Whoa! Okay that's it! We got the power! We got the talent!

Security [megaphone]
**Dr Brooks and associates: Come down from there immediately. You
are trespassing and in violat-**

Dean *[wrestling the megaphone away]*
Give me that! **BEN YOU GET THE HELL OFF MY SATELLITE ARRAY AND TURN OFF
THAT MACHINE BEFORE YOU GET YOURSELF KILLED!**

Ben
Ready?

Hop
Ready.

Lindy
See you on the other side, Ben.

*[a heavy switch is thrown. The electricity goes nuts. So does the
machine. The brooks gate open!]*

Dean
Ben! Ben have you lost your mind?

Ben
My God.

*[The 3 proxy-nauts start screaming as they are whipped about in
the gate]*

*[the wind picks up. The gate picks up. Chaotic soundscape. Everything
builds to a crescendo.]*

*Mix in: transmissions from Michael Last
Mix in: credits from Theatre of Tomorrow
Mix in: Credits for Chet cosmos + snippets of lines
Mix in: other podcast clips?*

*Mix in: re record of the end credits for Theatre of Tomorrow, but
interrupted by the travelers]*

