

[Seminar theme music]

ANNOUNCER

The last known remnants of Earth's people are adrift in space, aboard the Ark of Humanity. It's sole purpose; to instruct each generation in the history of human civilization. Confined and categorized, none could leave, but one made a daring escape. Cut loose from all she knew with a holographic student as her only companion, she crash-landed on a nearby planet. This planet holds the sleeping archive of a culture even more ancient and unique than Earth. And the planet itself might change them more than they expect. This is seminar.

[Seminar theme music]

ANNOUNCER

Seminar, Episode 100: "A Time to Gather Stones Together..."

[Seminar theme music]

[Distant explosion followed by a warning sound]

NEW

We need to move the Zarrak back.

[Running and banging followed by the sound of a system powering on]

NEW

Yes! The shuttle is still powered. Zerash did it! Now, we just have to get it ready for launch.

THOMAS

I believe I can take care of that!

[Whirring sounds and sounds of a system working]

THOMAS

I'm going to need a few minutes to calibrate the shuttle, make sure we're spatially oriented. Otherwise, we could launch off planet and have no idea where we're going.

NEW

Eh, sometimes that's half the fun.

THOMAS

I really appreciate the optimism, but I really think we should be more prepared here!

[Beeping sounds followed by more thumping sounds and distant explosions]

NEW

I don't think they care that we need a few minutes.

THOMAS

Yes, well, I'd rather be prepared. We can make it. I've done the calculations. I just need a few minutes.

NEW

Then... I hope you have something to distract me with. It's not like we have any weapons.

THOMAS

Hmm... As a matter of fact, I think I do. Accessing file... "Back to Work".

[Seminar music]

[Music]

[Car pulls up and stops. Car door opens]

MARK

G'morning!

[Someone settles into the car and puts on their seat belt]

MARK

(sighs) Thanks for offering to drive.

MICHELLE

(a little distracted) Oh, uh, n- no problem. I'm happy to have the company. Now, let me just get the address in...

MARK

(snorts) Do you really not remember how to drive to work? (light laughter) I know it's been a long time working from home, but you, uhh, might need to get that memory checked. (laughs)

MICHELLE

I remember. I just like to leave it on so it can reroute me around the traffic.

MARK

(scoffs) There won't be any traffic.

[Navigation beeps]

MAP VOICE

This route avoids traffic on I-eight-eighty. You are now on the fastest route.

MARK

(laughs) Okay, okay. Fair enough. (laughs)

[Car starts and drives off]

MARK

(breathes out awkwardly) So... (laughs lightly) How are you feeling about our first day back? I am so stoked to actually hang out with other humans on a regular basis again.

MICHELLE

I'm... uh, a little anxious, to be honest.

MARK

Why?

MICHELLE

Hmm... It's just hard to explain. I know it's supposed to be safe now, but it's just really hard not to be nervous when you're around a lot of people in a closed space.

MARK

I get it. Sometimes I get nervous too, but then I snap out of it. Just try to not worry so much.

MICHELLE

(annoyed but cordial) Yeah, I'll (snaps lips) try. Thanks.

[Signal sounds]

MARK

Oh, you have a big presentation today too, right?

MICHELLE

Sure do.

MARK

(deep breath in) I bet you're nervous about that too, huh?

MICHELLE

(sarcastically) Oh, I hadn't thought about it.

MARK

(laughs) Oh yeah, you're nervous. I'll never understand how people can get so worked up and anxious over the littlest stuff. Oh, have you tried meditation?

MICHELLE

I have.

MARK

Mmmm, you're clearly not doing it right if you're still anxious then. (laughs)

[Alert sound]

MAP VOICE

Widespread power outages in your area. Rerouting.

MARK

(groans) Again?

[Navigation beeps]

MAP VOICE

You are now on the fastest route.

MARK

I wonder if power is out at work.

MICHELLE

Guess they'll be on the backup generator if they are.

MARK

They have a backup generator?

MICHELLE

Yup.

MARK

How do you know that?

MICHELLE

Just like to look into stuff, you know, just to be prepared.

[Explosions in the distance]

MARK

What in the world...?

MICHELLE

What?

MARK

You didn't hear that explosion?

MICHELLE

Explosion? Huh, I mean, guess not. Maybe a transformer or something to do with the outages.

MARK

(dubious) I guess...

MICHELLE

Sorry, I'm just... uh, really in my head about this presentation today. I can't believe Susan would schedule a presentation where I need to talk in front of a bunch of people on the first day back.

MARK

Hmm... hmm. Oh, I've got it! I know what you need.

MICHELLE

What do I need?

MARK

Yoga.

MICHELLE

Yoga?

MARK

Yoga. My ex swore by it. She always came home from yoga in the best mood, and couldn't stop talking about how fantastic her instructor Fabio was.

MICHELLE

Fabio. Oh, that... that name sounds familiar. Uh, oh! Are they together now?

MARK

What?

MICHELLE

Yeah, yeah, I think that's it. She recently changed her Facebook status to "In a relationship" with some dude named Fabio.

MARK

No way.

MICHELLE

Uh, oh! Yes, way. Super ripped dude, long flowing blonde hair?

MARK

Yes. You looked through his pictures?

MICHELLE

Oh, quite closely.

[Alert sound]

MAP VOICE

Several roads are closed due to fires. Rerouting.

MARK

Uhhhh... fires?

[Navigation beeps]

MAP VOICE

You are now on the fastest route.

MICHELLE

Eh, probably related to the power outages.

MARK

Maybe...

[Signal sounds followed by more distant explosions]

MARK

Okay, something is seriously wrong.

MICHELLE

Yeah, we really need to hold the power company to account. Bury the lines already! How much more damage are we going to let them get away with?

MARK

(confused) What? No, no not the... the usual type of seriously wrong. I think something else is going on.

[Alarm sounds in the distance]

MICHELLE

You think I could just tell Susan I don't feel well?

MARK

I don't see what that has to do with the explosions. Wait, are you still going on about the presentation?

[Alert sound]

MAP VOICE

Zombie horde ahead. Recalculating.

MICHELLE

Yes, I'm still going on about the presentation!

[Navigation beeps]

MAP VOICE

You are now on the fastest route.

MICHELLE

I need a new job. I just can't handle the idea of talking in front of all those people. Oh, my God!

MARK

Did that just say zombie horde? Oh, my God!

MICHELLE

(sigh) Guess I'll just have to talk to her about it when I get there I guess. If I explain to her how I'm feeling, hmm... you know, maybe she'll understand.

MARK

Michelle!

MICHELLE

What?

MARK

What do you mean "what?"? Zombies, Michelle!

MICHELLE

Oh. (laughs) Alright, uh... you buckled up?

MARK

Yeah. Why do you ask? Ahhhh...!

[Car speeding sounds accompanied by gasps of fear and thinking sounds]

MICHELLE

Anyway, where were we?

MARK

Trying not to die!

MICHELLE

Ha! In a way, aren't we always just trying not to die?

MARK

I... guess? (gasp of fear)

MICHELLE

Oh! The presentation. Uh, hmm, you know what? I think I will talk to Susan when we get there.

MARK

Michelle I don't think there's going to be a presentation today.

MICHELLE

Oh ho ho, damn right. Not after I'm done talking to Susan about it.

MARK

No, Michelle- oh, hold on. Zombie coming on the left...

MICHELLE

Oh, good spot.

[Car speeding sounds and screeching tires]

MARK

I think you're a bit in denial about how this day is going.

MICHELLE

Uhh, no, I think you're in denial about how awful it is that they're already making us go back to work.

MARK

There... there probably isn't a work to go back to Michelle!

MICHELLE

Perhaps, but I am not getting written up again. If we get there, and Susan says go home, then I'll take you home.

MARK

You have gone completely bananas.

MICHELLE

Dang it! Ah, I forgot my banana. I am gonna be starving by lunch time.

[More car speeding sounds and screeching tires accompanied by zombie noises and gasps of fear]

MARK

Wow, you're... you're a really good driver.

MICHELLE

(flattered) Aw, (laughs) thanks! I was a really nervous driver in high school, so my dad paid for the extra-defensive driving lessons. Oh, it was really fun. They had a roll bar on the car and everything, which let me tell you, I definitely needed more than a few times. (laughs) Did wonders for my confidence in scary driving situations though.

MARK

Yeah, I can tell.

[Car slows down and stops followed by the navigation beep]

MAP VOICE

You have arrived at your destination. (voice breaking to a screechy creepy sing-song voice) Good luck.

MARK

Wait, what?

[Lots of zombie sounds followed by the sound of the car turning off]

MARK (cont'd)

Oh no! Michelle, they're literally blocking the entrance to the building. Can we please go home now?

MICHELLE

I told you, I am not getting written up again.

MARK

I really don't think she's going to write you up for not making it in "due to zombie horde."

MICHELLE

It's just... I didn't actually prepare anything for the presentation.

MARK

So?

MICHELLE

So, if I go home she'll just make me do it over Zoom anyway, and then everyone will find out there is no presentation. My only shot out of it is if I go in there and I talk to her in person. I have to get into that building.

MARK

That... only makes marginally more sense.

MICHELLE

Hey, um, hand me that shotgun behind your seat.

MARK

The what? You know what never mind. Of course, you have a shotgun in here.

[Sounds of a gun being lifted and handed over]

MARK

Here you go.

MICHELLE

(weirdly chipper) Thanks!

MARK

Hey, so, I'm gonna stay in here.

MICHELLE

Alright, suit yourself. (a bit grandiose) I'm going back to work.

[Gun cocking sound followed by the sound of footsteps departing. Zombie sounds intensify]

MARK

(gasps of fear) Uhhhh Michelle! Michelle, wait for me!

[Sounds of Mark leaving the car and running away]

[Seminar music]

[Music and electronic sounds]

NEW

I like the story. It makes me feel a lot better about all of the time you just took, but we are out of anymore spare minutes. Please tell me you are done.

THOMAS

Oh, I am! I'm sending the request to open the shuttle bay doors. We'll have to launch fast, but they won't be able to stop us once the engines are hot.

NEW

Great! (beat) Have you sent it?

THOMAS

(worried) Yes. I did, but... but, it's not responding! (sighs) I'm not sure what's wrong.

NEW

Uh, can you patch us through to Zerash? Maybe it'll know.

[Sound of communication channel opening]

THOMAS

Zerash, are you still there?

ZERASH

(in a distorted and slow voice) Permanent... power failure... imminent... If New and Thomas require... assistance, this Zerash... is limited.

THOMAS

The shuttle bay doors won't open. I've sent the request but it's not responding.

NEW

We are running out of time. I'm... I'm... I'm sorry to ask, Zerash, but if there is anything you can do for us, now is the time.

ZERASH

(more distorted and slower) Accessing diagnostics... Shuttle bay door locking mechanism... frozen. Initiating security reboot... Will require significant power draw... and permanent deactivation... of this Zerash...

NEW

(pang of guilt) Are you saying it'll kill you?

ZERASH

This Zerash is not alive. Deactivation is imminent and irreversible... There is nothing New can do to change this empirical fact...

NEW

But you took care of me... of... of us... This isn't what I wanted...

ZERASH

(slower still and even more distorted) Guilt is a human emotion that Zerash does not possess. Therefore, it is not required of New... Farewell, New and Thomas...

THOMAS

No!

[System sounds]

THOMAS

No, Zerash!

[System sounds]

ZERASH

Reboot in five... four... three... two... one...

[System powering down followed by beeping getting faster and faster. Strange electronic sounds]

NEW

What is going on?!

THOMAS

(Sighs and speaks frantically) The power from the reboot is... (sighs and speaks more levelly) The power from the reboot is scrambling the exterior sensors! It'll pass, but, I have no idea what's on the other side of that door right now.

NEW

If we can go, then we need to. Take off, now!

[Sounds of the shuttle powering up and taking off followed by strange animal-like sounds]

NEW

Byzantium... they're gonna destroy it all.

THOMAS

Zerash was the last of their kind.

[Console sounds]

THOMAS

We're out of the planet's orbit now. We're in open space.

NEW

Any... any sign of the Ark? It was in orbit, or- or close to it, when we left...

THOMAS

Oh, uh. The sensors are still scrambled. I don't know yet.

NEW

(scoffs) There's a lot we don't know.

THOMAS

I don't like this...

[Strange shuttle sounds]

THOMAS

(distorted voice) Ow!

NEW

Ow?

THOMAS

Errant series of commands from the shuttle. I think I'm ok. (Blurts out in distorted voice) Accessing file, "Future Proof".

[Seminar music]

[Electric buzzing and screeching. Opening of a metallic door]

JAMES

I can't believe I'm here. I made it.

[Footsteps moving around]

JAMES (cont'd)

My name is James Byrd. I've gone a hundred years into the past, utilizing technological schematics from that time period to build a time machine that would blend in, disappear. I cannot be noticed. Nothing is more important than preserving the past.

[Footsteps walking around]

JAMES (cont'd)

It's such a big risk to just be here, but there is no other way to gather the information we need. While I'm the first traveler, I won't be the last. We chose 1985 because it was a time of great invention and expansion of technology. So much was lost in our own technological wars that by the end, there was no one left to build on what came before. We need information. We need instructions to build on what came before. (beat) Wait, where are my glasses?

[Footsteps followed by a crunching sound]

JAMES (cont'd)

No, no, no, no!

[Tinkle of broken glass]

JAMES (cont'd)

Well, I can see out of one side, a little.

[Beep of a recorder]

JAMES (cont'd)

Important note: choose time travelers without corrective lenses for future missions. What an oversight on my part.

[Music]

JAMES (cont'd)

With the planet in the midst of a climate catastrophe, poverty, and global hunger, I probably won't be noticed. I'm currently on a high plateau. (beat) It looks man made, not natural. (beat) There are a few protrusions further down the face of it. I might be able to lower myself, if I'm careful. And, I can probably climb back up the same way.

[Beep of the recorder]

JAMES (cont'd)

Okay (sounds of exertion and heaving breathing). Whew. Whew.

[Beep of the recorder]

JAMES (cont'd)

I've made it to the bottom. The sun is reflecting off the sheer sides of the cliffs next to me. It's blinding, almost as if they're made of glass. Unfortunately, the sun is also reflecting off my remaining cracked eyeglass lens, restricting my vision further. (beat) There's an immense grove of tall pillars just in front of me, spaced out in almost equidistant pattern. I can't tell how high they go, but the canopy is very dark. The reflected sunlight is showing me a way through. I'll proceed slowly. The grove floor almost seems to be synthetic, with a regular pattern inscribed into it.

[Footsteps continue on]

JAMES (cont'd)

What kind of technology would be required to create something so massive, but without any overt technological sign? My own time machine has been the most advanced item nearby. (beat) Although, this synthetic grove could be technology for all I know. Maybe it's something I can't even conceive of. Are the regular patterns I see truly man-made? Is it a combination of nature and technology? I have no way to answer these questions.

[Deep growl]

JAMES (cont'd)

Oh no. (beat) (whispering) A predator has spotted me, I think. I can only see that it's very large. I can't see how megafauna could have existed in this time, but our records are so incomplete I can't rule out that it was merely overlooked. I'm heading back to the time machine, I hope I'll be safe there.

[Beep of the recorder following by footsteps running away]

JAMES (cont'd)

(sounds of exertion)

[Growling gets closer and louder]

JAMES (cont'd)

(heavy breathing)

[Beep of the recorder]

JAMES (cont'd)

(rapid and heavy breathing) I've taken cover in a small nook in the cliff face.

[Growling continues]

JAMES (cont'd)

There are regular rectangular stalagmites, but there are a few small spaces for me to hide in.

[Growling gets more aggressive]

JAMES (cont'd)

(rapid breathing) It knows I'm here. It must have a keen sense of smell.

[Growling sounds fade away]

JAMES (cont'd)

Okay. Okay. I think I'm safe for now. Proceeding up the cliff again. (sounds of exertion) There seem to be enormous letters inscribed into some of the stalagmites. Due to the danger, I don't have time to review this further. (beat) Wait! These are... books? But, they're enormous. The schematics we used must have reduced my size when I time-traveled. What does that mean for my return? This is really important. I have to get back!

[Loud growling followed by a scream and sounds of a creature chewing/eating]

KAYLA

Fluffy! What are you eating now? God, every time I turn around you're eating some piece of trash or something. Give me that!

RACHEL

Sorry Kayla, what did she get into now?

KAYLA

Your dumb cat was eating... uh, I don't know what. I found this little piece of plastic. Looks like a tiny little microphone.

RACHEL

Oh! Where was it?

KAYLA

Under the table, next to one of the chair legs.

RACHEL

Huh, where could she have gotten that?

KAYLA

Who knows.

RACHEL

Oh hey, that's really cool!

KAYLA

What is?

RACHEL

I didn't know you had a model DeLorean! When did you get it?

KAYLA

Huh. I guess I don't remember.

RACHEL

Come on, it didn't just magic itself on top of the bookshelf.

KAYLA

Ha ha. Very funny. I guess Fluffy must have opened the door on it somehow?

RACHEL

Weird. Hey, maybe if you dusted more often you'd remember what you had!

KAYLA

(laughs) Shut up!

[Seminar music]

[Electronic sounds]

THOMAS

(distorted voice) Rhubarb sassafras banana peel mind hammock.

NEW

(laughs) What?

THOMAS

Rhubarb sassafras banana peel mind-

[Glitchy sounds]

THOMAS (cont'd)

-activated subroutines I had no control over. (beat) Including my language processors for a moment. Sorry, I think I'm okay now. I'm going to stay disengaged from the shuttle for a little while.

NEW

Uh, probably not a bad idea. (beat) Thomas... does anything look out of the ordinary to you when you... when you look at the planet below?

THOMAS

Not that I... Wait... The revolutions on the planet, combined with its projected arc around its star... New, I don't think time passed the same on the planet as a standard year on the Ark. My chronometer thinks it's been... sixty years.

[Seminar theme music]

ANNOUNCER

Featuring the voice talents of:

Dan Foster as Thomas,
Briar Zachary as New, and
Adin Rudd as Zerash

In BACK TO WORK:

Max Newland as Map Voice,
Theo Holt-Bailey as Mark, and
Shannon Lancashire as Michelle

Written by Kaitlyn Kliman

In FUTURE PROOF:

Danny Spiller as James
Miranda Lennert as Kayla
Faye Holliday as Rachel

Written by Susan Bridges

Directed by Garan Fitzgerald
Shorts edited by Tilly Bridges
Wrapper written by Kathryn Pryde

Seminar theme by V C Morrison
All other music by Josh Molen at TheTunePeddler.com

Produced by Pendant Productions

Seminar co-created by Kathryn Pryde and Tilly Bridges
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[Seminar theme music]

ANNOUNCER

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