

[Seminar theme music]

ANNOUNCER

There was once a ship called The Ark of Humanity where the last known remnants of Earth's people were instructed 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: the planet of the Zarrack.

Now, months later, a new life form, half-human half-Zarrack, bursts forth from the planet, escaping the hostile native lifeforms aboard a small shuttle. A new life begins.

[Seminar theme music]

ANNOUNCER

Seminar, Episode 101: "Silence of the Void"

[Maintenance beeps interspersed with background shuttle noises]

THOMAS

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.

NEW

Sixty years? Are you sure?

THOMAS

If my chronometer is correct, yes.

NEW

How's that possible?

THOMAS

I'm not sure. Relative time dilation shouldn't be a factor. But the truth is, despite the months we've spent on this planet, we know so little about it that anything could be possible.

NEW

My friends... They would be so old now. Or... or dead.

THOMAS

We don't know that. Without knowing their whereabouts, we have no idea if they fell into the same sort of time dilation we did or... or... or any number of phenomena could have occurred!

NEW

Argh... Is the... Is the shuttle still searching for the Ark?

THOMAS

Sensors have descrambled. It will tell us when it finds something.

NEW

(beat) It... it shouldn't take this long, should it?

THOMAS

Well... Space is big.

NEW

Thomas...

THOMAS

[sighs] We should have detected something thirty seconds ago.

NEW

No. We can't be alone up here. We... I can't... (anxious breathing)

THOMAS

Maybe there's something wrong with the sensors. I'll send out a signal. A distress call.

[Interfacing sounds followed by regular signal beeping sounds]

THOMAS

There. If the Ark is in the area, it will hear us.

NEW

Thomas, what if this is it? What if... what if we are actually alone? Nothing but hostile aliens below and nothing but cold vacuum above.

THOMAS

Oh, New. Don't think like that. I'm sure it's just the shuttle's faulty sensors.

NEW

But if it's not... (sounds of distress) Thomas, play story: "Bits and Bobs".

[Seminar music]

[Music]

[Conveyor belt sound followed by robotic arm movement sound]

BITS

Nut and bolt acquired.

[Mechanical whirring as threads are carved into the nut and bolt]

BITS (cont'd)

Nut and bolt threaded.

[Nut spun onto bolt]

BITS (cont'd)

Nut and bolt joined.

[Metallic clanking as joined nut and bolt are tossed onto a pile of threaded nuts and bolts]

BITS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt added to completed pile.

[Computer beeping sounds]

BITS (cont'd)
Low battery warning.

[Robotic footsteps]

BOBS
Hmm, good midday zenith, Bits.

BITS
Good midday zenith, Bobs.

[Chirpy music]

BOBS
Don't forget to extend your solar panels, Bits.

BITS
Thank you.

[Mechanical sounds]

BITS (cont'd)
And, don't forget to retract your solar panels.

[Mechanical sounds]

BOBS
Thank you. Enjoy the sunlight.

[Beep]

BITS
I think I shall. Bobs, enjoy the work.

BOBS
(sigh) I doubt I shall. Good day, Bits.

BITS
Good day, Bobs.

[Robotic footsteps followed by the sound of the conveyor belt]

BOBS
(long, annoyed moan)

[Robotic arm movement sounds]

BOBS
Nut and bolt acquired.

[Mechanical whirring as threads are carved into the nut and bolt]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt threaded. Yoo hoo (with fake enthusiasm)

[Nut spun onto bolt]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt joined.

[Metallic clanking as joined nut and bolt are tossed onto a pile of threaded nuts and bolts]

BOBS (cont'd)
(annoyed grunt) Nut and bolt added to completed pile.

[Computer beeping sounds]

BOBS (cont'd)
Low battery warning, eh.

[Music with robotic footsteps]

BITS
Yo, Bobs! My best robo-buddy in all the world. Good midday zenith.

[Metallic sounds]

BOBS
Oh, yes. My best robo-buddy. Sure. Uh, good midday zenith, Bits.

BITS
Don't forget to extend those solar panels, Bobs.

BOBS
Thank you.

[Mechanical sounds]

BOBS (cont'd)
Do not forget to retract your solar panels.

BITS
Thank you.

[Mechanical sounds]

BITS (cont'd)
Enjoy the sunlight.

BOBS
I always do. Enjoy the work.

BITS
I always do. Good day, Bobs.

BOBS
Good day, Bits.

[Robotic footsteps followed by strange beeping]

BITS
Bobs?

BOBS
(sighs) Yes, Bits?

BITS
Midday zenith arrived earlier again today.

BOBS
Hmm, my sensors have noticed a sixteen percent reduction in daily sunlight.

[Strange mechanical sounds]

BITS
Why?

BOBS
(annoyed grunt) I don't know. But we have no one to ask.

BITS
But what should we do?

BOBS
(annoyed grunt) The only thing we can, I suppose. Keep at it.

BITS
Good day, Bobs.

BOBS
Good day, Bits.

[Factory sounds in the background, conveyor belt sound followed by robotic arm movement sound]

BOBS
Nut and bolt acquired.

[Mechanical whirring as threads are carved into the nut and bolt]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt threaded.

[Nut spun onto bolt]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt joined. (beat) Argh...

[Metallic clanking as joined nut and bolt are tossed onto a pile of threaded nuts and bolts as robotic footsteps approach]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt added to completed pile. Again.

[Robotic footsteps stop]

BOBS
Bits?

BITS
Why do you do it that way?

BOBS
It's the way.

BITS
But you thread them wrong.

BOBS
I thread them right.

BITS
But I thread them left.

BOBS
I'm not left-handed.

BITS
(beat) It's still dark out.

BOBS
I know.

BITS
It's dark most of the day now.

BOBS
Yep.

[Computer beeping sounds]

BITS
Low battery warning. I can't recharge until the sun is up.

BOBS
(grunts) What do we do?

BITS
I'll wait and recharge with you later. As long as I don't move too much my reserves should last.

BOBS
If we recharge at the same time, we'll work at the same time.

BITS
At least I'll have someone to talk to!

BOBS
(grunts in annoyance)

[Music with factory sounds in the background]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt acquired.

[Mechanical whirring as threads are carved into the nut and bolt]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt threaded.

[Nut spun onto bolt]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt joined.

[Metallic clanking as joined nut and bolt are tossed onto a pile of threaded nuts and bolts]

BOBS (cont'd)
Nut and bolt added to completed pile.

BITS
I love watching you work. You're very good at your job! Even if you do it backwards.

BOBS
(annoyed grunt)

[Computer beeping sounds]

BOBS (cont'd)
Well, low battery warning. Let's go.

[Robotic footsteps]

BITS
Is it okay if I hold your hand, Bobs?

BOBS
(annoyed grunt)

BITS
Thanks, Bobs.

[Robotic footsteps]

[Music with factory sounds in the background followed by the sound of a conveyor belt and robotic arm movement sounds]

BITS
Nut and bolt acquired.

BOBS
Nut and bolt acquired.

[Mechanical whirring as threads are carved into the nut and bolt]

BITS
Nut and bolt threaded.

BOBS
Nut and bolt threaded.

[Nut spun onto bolt]

BITS
Nut and bolt joined.

BOBS
Nut and bolt joined.

[Metallic clanking as joined nut and bolt are tossed onto a pile of threaded nuts and bolts]

BITS
Nut and bolt added to completed pile.

BOBS
Nut and bolt added to completed pile.

BITS

It's kind of fun working together! I love being with you. High five?

BOBS

(annoyed grunt)

[Robotic high-five]

BITS

Yeah! Nice to have a little happy, what with all the sad.

BOBS

What?

BITS

There's so much less sunlight each day. I haven't been able to fully recharge in weeks.

BOBS

(sigh) Me either.

[Computer beeping sounds]

BITS

I... don't have enough power to finish the shift.

[Computer beeping sounds]

BOBS

Hmm. Me either. We'll have to stop early. Then we can wait outside. Until the light comes back. As long as our solar panels are out, when the sun hits them we'll power back up. Let's go.

[Robotic footsteps]

BITS

Can I hold-

BOBS

(annoyed) Yes, yes, you can hold my hand.

[Robotic footsteps with factory sounds in the background]

[Slow robotic footsteps with factory sounds in the background]

BITS

The sun's not coming back, is it?

BOBS

No.

BITS

No more light. We're done?

BOBS

We're done.

BITS

Even if we have to stop, at least we won't be alone.

BOBS
(chuckles)

[Conveyor belt powers down]

BOBS (cont'd)
Do... you... want... my... hand?

BITS
Do... you want... mine?

BOBS
Yes.

BOBS (cont'd)
At least... we won't... be...

[Robot powering down sounds]

BITS
(warped) ...alone.

[Robot powering down sounds]

[Seminar music]

[Shuttle whirring and beeping sounds]

THOMAS
New?

NEW
Yes, Thomas?

THOMAS
If this is the end, I'm glad I'm here with you.

NEW
Same here.

[Steady console beeping changes to quicker strange beeping]

NEW
Uh, what's happening?

THOMAS
Something's responded!

NEW
(happy exclamation) The Ark! It found us!

[Sound of a ship warping in and the console beeping a proximity alert]

NEW

Where did that come from?

THOMAS

I... I don't think that's the Ark.

NEW

I... have no idea what that is.

[Strange sounds from Thomas]

THOMAS

Oh no! Ratchet lee graham. Something is probably my language crackers! I don't sequins how to birdhouse-

NEW

Disengage from the shuttle!

THOMAS

Thermometer can't! It's found the story custard! Accessing: "One More for the Road."

[Seminar music]

[Jazz music in the background as footsteps approach and open a door. Sound of glasses clinking]

OLD MAN

(light New Orleans accent) Am I in time for last call?

BARTENDER

(laughing) Just under the gun, old timer. Everyone else has cleared out, but I've got time for one last drink, for you.

[Footsteps and the sound of a barstool being dragged]

BARTENDER (cont'd)

What'll it be?

OLD MAN

Hmm, got a house speciality?

BARTENDER

Wine cocktails. Especially red wine cocktails.

OLD MAN

They make wine cocktails now?

BARTENDER

What do you think Sangria is?

OLD MAN

I don't drink much Sangria, but I suppose you're right. Funny, isn't it, how things that seem new can actually be old?

BARTENDER
I'm sorry?

OLD MAN
Well, like your wine cocktails. I hadn't heard of them before. I thought maybe it was something new that all the kids were drinking. Like an experiment, you know? But then, you pointed out Sangria. They've been drinking Sangria for hundreds of years. Things that seem new are actually old.

BARTENDER
Now, I thought you didn't drink Sangria.

OLD MAN
Oh, I didn't, but my wife did. Children too, actually. It's a funny story.

[Footsteps walk into the room]

OWNER
(french accent) Oh! I didn't realize we still had guests. I'm the owner.

OLD MAN
Pleasure to meet you, Mademoiselle.

OWNER
(to the bartender) Could I borrow you for a second?

BARTENDER
I'll be right back. Think about what you want, okay?

OLD MAN
That's right! I still haven't given you my order yet. Forgive me, you do go on at my age.

[Footsteps walk away]

OWNER
(authoritatively) I thought the bar was empty?

BARTENDER
It was. He stepped in just before closing time. He knows it's last call, just wants one more for the road. I figured, why not?

OWNER
Hmm, I suppose so. There's no harm in it, at any rate. Just make it for him and get him on his way quickly. My guests will be arriving soon.

BARTENDER
Hey, no problem.

OWNER
I'm sorry?

BARTENDER
Apologies, my lady. It will be done.

OWNER
That's better. I don't want to be harsh with you, but my kind does stand on ceremony. When you are one of us there will be those far less patient than I with such... familiarity.

BARTENDER
Of course, my lady.

OWNER
Now. The music?

BARTENDER
Queued up.

OWNER
Excellent. Decorations?

BARTENDER
Ready in the storeroom.

OWNER
And the special vintage?

BARTENDER
I decanted it an hour ago. It's aerating in the kitchen as we speak.

OWNER
Perfect. I don't know why I even bothered to check up on you. You'll be one of us before you even know it.

OLD MAN
(from the bar) Sonny, I think I know what drink I want!

OWNER
You should probably get back to him. Be sure to get him out of here quickly. But don't half-ass his cocktail. I won't have sloppy hospitality in my house.

BARTENDER
Now, am I permitted to be insulted at the suggestion that I would ever make a sloppy cocktail, my lady?

OWNER
(laughing) Bend down.

BARTENDER
Why?

OWNER
I can't kiss you on your forehead if you don't bend down.

[Sound of a kiss and a hug followed by footsteps]

BARTENDER
Sorry about that, but bar business to attend to.

OLD MAN
Oh, not at all, not at all. I'm the one who came in at the last minute asking for a final drink before last call. Well, don't worry, I'll have my drink and get about my business.

BARTENDER
Thanks, old timer. Now, what am I making you?

OLD MAN
Do you know how to make a Holy Joe?

BARTENDER
Think so. Let's see. Irish whiskey, uh, brandy, cynar, and sweet vermouth?

OLD MAN

That's the one! That's the exact one. You know your stuff.

BARTENDER

I don't think I've ever made one before, so I'll have to ask your forgiveness.

OLD MAN

What better test of your skills then? I look forward to seeing you battle a new foe.

[Sounds of liquids being poured, ice cubes rattling, bottles being put down on the bar, etc.]

BARTENDER

You were telling me a story about your wife and sangria, weren't you?

OLD MAN

Oh yes! Well, you have to understand that both me and my wife, well, our jobs had us working nights. Now, I'm not complaining. That's the career path we chose and, well, we're both night owls by nature.

BARTENDER

I can sympathize.

OLD MAN

Oh! Well, of course you can, can't you? You probably love the night yourself. Gets a bad rap, I think. But, I'm getting distracted. When we had kids, the kids didn't get to see us very much. We did our best. Family helped out. Always made sure they got to school on time. Always made sure they had a lunch. Made sure they had money for college. Saw them off to the prom.

BARTENDER

Just one second old timer.

[Sound of a drink being poured and a glass being put on the bar]

BARTENDER

There you go!

OLD MAN

Thank you, sir! Now, let's give this a taste and... Perfect. Perfect. Just what I wanted tonight. Couldn't have asked for anything better.

BARTENDER

An odd way of putting it, but it's my pleasure.

OLD MAN

Where was I? Oh, right! Until they were teenagers, the most time our kids got with us was when they woke up. Didn't matter how tired the job made us, we always made sure we were home in time, showered and cleaned up, so we could have a big breakfast with them.

BARTENDER

What kind of breakfast? I was raised on breakfast tacos myself. Chorizo, egg, a little hot salsa. Um, um, um! My mother would wrap them in aluminum foil for me to take to school.

OLD MAN

Awww, that's real sweet. No, we'd just do the full Southern; grits, breakfast sausage, fried eggs. Just the thing to fill you up and get you going.

BARTENDER

Sounds amazing, but I'm still waiting to hear how sangria factors into this.

[Sound of footsteps approaching]

OWNER
I'm sorry, can I borrow you again?

BARTENDER
Just one second.

[Footsteps leave the room]

OWNER
What the hell are you doing?

BARTENDER
Uh, showing good hospitality.

OWNER
I told you to make him a good cocktail, not to listen to his life story. Who cares what an old man this close to death thinks? My guests are coming soon.

BARTENDER
I don't see the harm in listening-

OWNER
Do you want to die?

BARTENDER
No.

OWNER
Then, you want to live eternal, navigate the ocean of time and blood and the night?

BARTENDER
Yes. So much.

OWNER
Yes...?

BARTENDER
Yes, my lady.

OWNER
Then get rid of him.

BARTENDER
What do you want me to do? Drag him out onto the street?

OWNER
Get. Rid. Of. Him.

[Footsteps walk away and a door swings as the bartender returns to the bar]

BARTENDER
Hey, I'm sorry old timer, but we're closing. You'll have to tell me this story another time.

OLD MAN
Oh, don't be like that. I'm not going to be out this way again. I promise you, you want to hear it.

BARTENDER
(loudly) I'm sorry old timer, but we're closed! Finish your drink and hit the bricks! (whispering)
Okay, but make it quick.

OLD MAN

Done. See, my wife always liked the taste of fresh fruit in the morning when she was a kid. And she liked a nightcap before going to bed. So one day, she made some sangria so she could have both. But our little daughter saw her mommy drinking her fruit and thought it was so beautiful she wanted to try it too. So my wife made her a virgin sangria.

BARTENDER

Fresh fruit and grape juice?

OLD MAN

Fresh fruit and grape juice. Now, when my boy was old enough, he started drinking it too. Drank it every morning of their lives. Now, just this morning, they shared one last drink with their mother before the cancer took her.

BARTENDER

Oh, Jesus. I'm sorry.

OLD MAN

It's okay. But, I was looking at my kids, drinking wine with their dying mother, and made me realize that at my age, I can't not see the little kid in every adult.

[Sound of drinking followed by a glass being set on the bar]

OLD MAN (cont'd)

Thank you for listening.

OWNER

I thought I told you-

[Sound of a thunk and a gasp of pain from the owner]

OWNER (cont'd)

(gurgles)

BARTENDER

What the hell is that?

OLD MAN

Crossbow. Only way to take the leeches down from a distance. 'Course, your aim's got to be true. Takes a lot of practice. A lifetime of practice.

[Footsteps]

OWNER

(gasping and hissing sounds)

OLD MAN (cont'd)

It's alright. It's okay. You don't need to be scared of death. I see the little girl in you, too. You'll get to rest now.

[sound of a blade being pulled out of its case and slashing sounds]

OWNER

(screams)

[Sounds of death and footsteps]

OLD MAN

You don't mind if I fix myself one last drink, do you?

BARTENDER
Who... what are you?

OLD MAN
Son, you're smarter than that. Want a drink?

BARTENDER
Y... yes, please. Make it a double.

[Sounds of pouring and drinking]

OLD MAN
Good, you can drink booze still. Means you're not one of them. Now, they only go for blood, you know. No good food or drink for them. That's actually kind of sad.

BARTENDER
Why? Why are you here? Why tonight?

OLD MAN
Well, she left us this morning. I held her hand as she went. I miss her too much already. The kids are grown. I thought, it'd be good to go out with a bang.

[Sound of something being put on the bar]

OLD MAN (cont'd)
Do the job right, you know?

[Sound of a zipper being opened]

This should be enough explosives to help the rest of those little kids in adult, undead bodies come home. And bring me home to my wife with them.

[Beeping sounds of a timer]

BARTENDER
What are you going to do to me?

OLD MAN
Guessing you wanted to be one. Thought you were being groomed for it. Though, I gotta tell ya, they never follow through on that. You killed anyone yet?

BARTENDER
No.

OLD MAN
Good. Then you're just a nice kid who fell in with a bad crowd for a little bit. You better get going before her guests arrive.

BARTENDER
No, I won't let you-

[Sound of a weapon being readied]

OLD MAN
I told you. Get going. You're a nice kid. You listened to an old man's story. I don't want to disappoint the mother who made those tacos.

[Footsteps leaving]

OLD MAN (cont'd)
(sighing) He'll be alright. One more for the road?

[Sound of a drink being poured]

OLD MAN (cont'd)
A sangria, darling.

[Beeping gets louder]

[Seminar music]

[Beeping sounds stop]

THOMAS
Whew! It's stopped.

NEW
Thomas, are you all right?

THOMAS
I think so. I just feel like I've been thoroughly probed.

NEW
Why did you play that story?

THOMAS
It wasn't me. That ship is trying to communicate with us, I think. It was accessing my language subroutines before it found the story archive.

NEW
And it chose to say hello in the most ominous way possible. That's-

[Radio crackles to life]

K'TELERAN
(cheerfully) Greetings, little shuttle! You have the honor of beholding the Great Craft Solbolus! May we know the identities of whom we address?

[Seminar theme music]

ANNOUNCER
Featuring the voice talents of:

Bailey Wolfe as K'Teleran,
Briar Zachary as New, and
Dan Foster as Thomas

In BITS AND BOBS:
Chris Bauso as Bits, and

Zack Serota as Bobs

Written by Tilly Bridges and Susan Bridges

In ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD:

Adam Blanford as the Bartender

George Worrall as Old Man

Jan Welch as the Owner

Written by Patrick Regan

Directed by Garan Fitzgerald

Shorts edited by Tilly Bridges

Wrapper written by V C Morrison

Seminar theme, "New Century", by Garan Fitzgerald

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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