

{Intro theme in background 0:00-1:08}

NARRATOR: 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 Zarrak.

Now, months later, a new lifeform, half human, half Zarrak bursts forth from the planet, escaping the hostile native lifeforms aboard a small shuttle. They have just made contact with a brand new species.

{Seminar main theme 1:09-1:55}

CREDITS ANNOUNCER: Seminar episode 102: "Initial Connection"

Wrapper #1 by V.C. Morrison

ABOARD THE SHUTTLE

[Various beeps as radio turns on]

{Energetic music}

K'TELERAN: [voice heard over comm system throughout] Greetings, little shuttle. You have the honor of beholding the great craft Sobelus. May we know the identities of whom we address? (pauses) Hello? Are you there? Am I speaking the correct language?

{Electronic music}

NEW: [Shifting in chair] Uh, uh, uh ... yes, yes! Hello! My name is ... My name is New. And my friend here is Thomas. Can ... can you help us?

K'TELERAN: If help is what you need, I believe we can provide it. We offer many services to beings we come across. But first may I ask, what species are you? What is your planet of origin? Because from our scans, you don't seem to originate from the planet below. And I stress "seem." Your physiology is quite curious, to say the least.

NEW: Uh, yeah. (chuckles nervously) Um ... That's ... that's a long story. I'm half human, half Zarrak.

K'TELERAN: Mmm. Zarrak. That would be the dominant species on the planet below. But human?

[New shifts in chair, various beeps and alarms from the shuttle's computer]

NEW: Uh ... what's happening?

THOMAS: Um ... perhaps they're checking their sensors?

K'TELERAN: Data from our downloads of your languages suggest your planet is called ... Earth? (pause) Or Terra?

NEW: Earth is fine.

K'TELERAN: And what is this ... fascinating archive we picked up as well?

[Various beeps from shuttle's computer]

THOMAS: (interjecting) "Picked up."

K'TELERAN (cont'd): An assortment of fictions?

[Various beeps and sirens from shuttle's computer]

THOMAS: Perhaps you mean "stole!" Or "forcibly copied," perhaps?

NEW: [Shifting in chair] Thomas!

THOMAS: Oh, sorry. I'm just ... (exhales) That wasn't a very nice feeling.

K'TELERAN: We apologize for the discomfort. It's not often databases we connect to are ... sentient.

[Beeps from computer]

K'TELERAN (cont'd): Now, as for the help you require?

[New shifts in chair]

NEW: Well, I was part of a colony of humans on a space station orbiting this planet, but the ... the station is no longer in orbit. Could you help us find it?

K'TELERAN: A lost space station? That does sound interesting. Why don't we bring you aboard so we can discuss it?

[New shifts in chair]

NEW: (whispering) Thomas. Mute.

[Beep from comm system, alien siren]

{Ominous music}

THOMAS: Communication muted. What's wrong?

NEW: Can we trust them? We know nothing about them.

THOMAS: Oh, New. I don't think we have a choice. What can we do? Wait for another ship to come by sometime in the next decade?

NEW: I just have a bad feeling, that's all.

THOMAS: Humans and Zarrak have an inherent fear of the unknown. The Zarrak even moreso. You may be experiencing a side effect of your amalgamation. Emotions your new form doesn't know how to process. [Beeps from computer system as Thomas finds story] Perhaps ... yes, listen to this.

{Seminar segue music 5:21}

{SEMINAR Segue Music 5:22}

THE NATURAL by TILLY BRIDGES AND SUSAN BRIDGES

HAUNTED HOUSE

[Wind howling, clock ticking. Chair creaking as Tom the ghost settles into his chair.]

[Eerie computer powerup noise. Typing on a keyboard. Staggering zombie footsteps as Lin approaches]

TOM: (Voice is eerie, ethereal) Shh, I'm working on my paper.

[Footsteps stop. More creaking, flies buzzing about]

LIN: I'll just stand back here and...not watch. {pause} Your entire premise is flawed, Tom.

[More typing]

TOM: It's due tomorrow! Now is not the time.

[Shambling footsteps from Lin]

LIN: I tried to tell you before but you wouldn't listen.

TOM: (sighs) There's no such thing as the natural, Lin.

LIN: There is! I've experienced it myself!

TOM: You and every other lunatic in the world.

LIN: Lunatic!? Don't lump me in with the werewolves. Harsh.

TOM: Look, I just-

LIN: You researched this?

TOM: Of course! I've scoured Boogle and, sure, there are thousands of reports of people experiencing the natural...they're all secondhand or circumstantial! Which I think only supports my thesis that the natural is nothing more than fantasy.

[Chains creaking, flies buzzing]

LIN: Oh it's real, I assure you.

TOM: Uh huh.

LIN: Did you try a different search engine?

TOM: Well I went to Yaboo! But...(laughs)

LIN: (laughs) Yeah, no. Of course. Nobody uses Yaboo anymore.

TOM: Right! And Spookipedia wasn't much help either, I mean you never know who's editing those things.

LIN: Yeah, you can't trust the mods there. Pretty sure they're all werewolves.

[Clock ticking]

TOM: I didn't know you were such a lycanthropist. Wow.

LIN: I'm NOT a lycanthropist! I just think they're um...er...lesser beings who can't be trusted.

TOM: Yikes.

LIN: Okay, I know how that sounds, but come on. The smell!

TOM: ...you're a zombie. Rotting flesh.

LIN: You go noseblind to it after a while. Or I do anyway.

TOM: You don't even HAVE a nose.

LIN: Neither do YOU, Mr. Ghostyghost. How do you even smell things?

TOM: Your stench is just that powerful.

LIN: Now who's a lycanthropist? Hm?

THE NATURAL by TILLY BRIDGES AND SUSAN BRIDGES

TOM: You're not a lycanthrope.

LIN: And THANK GOODNESS. But okay, so that makes you a...zombieist? Maybe?

TOM: We all have our flaws.

[More shambling from Lin]

LIN: Like not believing in the natural?

TOM: You don't quit, do you.

LIN: Fine, I'll prove it. I'll...(thinking)...I'll summon a natural spirit right now!

{Eerie music}

TOM: (scoffs) How?

LIN: Uhhh. Good question. I need things endemic to the natural world.

TOM: Like what?

LIN: Think back to the old lifestories our parents told us around the campfire as kids. What did every story have?

TOM: Uhhh...hm. Houseplants?

LIN: And paperclips!

TOM: Mail!

LIN: And the setting was always the creepiest place imaginable.

TOM: Where could we go that possibly fits all that criteria?

LIN: I have an idea. Let's go. You coming?

[Lin slowly starts staggering away]

TOM: (Chuckles) Yeah, I'll float over to the door as soon as you get there... ten minutes from now.

LIN: Snotty little specter!

TOM: Plodding little poltergeist!

[Door creaks open]

DESOLATE WORLD

{Tense music}

[Shambling, door creaking]

LIN: We're here.

TOM: Is this going to take long? This place creeps me out! I hate even BEING here.

LIN: What's so creepy about it? I thought you didn't believe in the natural?

TOM: I DON'T, okay? But there's something about this place... it's like I can feel the hundreds of souls that came here to die.

{Generic radio music}

LIN: There's a plant over by the window. Grab the mail by the door, I'm sure there's some paperclips around...somewhere.

TOM: Hurry!

[Rustle of mail as Tom picks it up]

[Lin shambles.rawer opening and a little rummaging, box of paperclips jingle]

LIN: Aha.

[Lin shambles over to Tom]

TOM: So what do we do?

LIN: Uhh... put the mail in the pot with the plant?

[Tom sticks the mail into the dirt around the plant]

TOM: And the paperclips?

LIN: Yeah.

[Lin opens the box of paperclips, dumps them into the dirt]

A beat.

TOM: Nothing's happening.

LIN: Well I'm not an expert.

THE NATURAL by TILLY BRIDGES AND SUSAN BRIDGES

TOM: You said-

LIN: Maybe if we shake it.

[Lin shakes the potted plant, leaves rustle]

[Footsteps as Jo approaches. Rustling as Jo looks in the plant]

JO: What the hell's going on? Okay, who put mail and paperclips in the plant? You know I brought that from home! As pranks go, that's not even funny!

{Eerie music}

TOM: (whispered) Oh my goodness!

LIN: (whispered) I told you!

TOM: (whispered) Can it see us?

LIN: (whispered) I don't know, I-

JO: Oh, hi. Are you my two o'clock?

[Jo removes a pen from a ceramic cup]

TOM: (terrified) Your... what?

JO: You're a little early, I wasn't quite ready. Let me finish up those expense reports really quick. I'll get 'em done in a jiffy if you know what I mean! (Laughs)

[Fast typing]

LIN: (terrified) Oh my god oh my god...

JO: (fake laugh) Been buried in corporate emails all day, you know how it is, right? I'll probably be trying to reach inbox zero for the next twenty years.

[Computer starts beeping erratically]

TOM: (scream of terror)

LIN: (scream of terror)

TOM: Run! Run!

LIN: I can't!

[Lin tries to run, a leg breaks off and she falls]

LIN: My leg snapped off! Go without me! Get out while you still can!

TOM: I'm not going without you! I'm sorry I ever doubted! Give me your hand!

LIN: But...my leg!

JO: Ooh, I can give you a copy of our newsletter to read while you wait. There's a GREAT story about maximizing and synergizing your flow charts, you're gonna love it!

TOM: Leave it!

LIN: Don't have to tell me twice! Go, go, go!

[Hurried rustling of paper. Interdimensional door creaks open, Tom and Lin leave]

JO: Wait! Come back! You won't BELIEVE how thorough our inventory system is! (Shouting, echoing) We have spreadsheets!

TOM: I'm sorry I ever doubted you!

LIN: Never speak of this horror again!

{Seminar Segue Music 15:08}

Wrapper #2 by V.C. Morrison

ABOARD THE SHUTTLE

{Dramatic music}

[Various beeps and sirens from comm system]

K'TELERAN: Marvelous! Simply amazing piece of fiction!

NEW: You ... you heard that?

[Scanning noises from computer]

K'TELERAN: Were we not supposed to? I thought you were giving us a gift for our offer of help, or perhaps relating a social meme with which to compare our situation. First contact encounters can be so confusing, don't you find?

THOMAS: Their database connection must have overridden the mute function. I'm sorry, New.

K'TELERAN: And now that we have preliminaries out of the way ...

[Sirens and shaking noises as ship vibrates]

{Ominous music}

NEW: Uh ... what's happening?

THOMAS: (shouting) We're being pulled towards the ship!

K'TELERAN: Remain calm! Our docking AI is the best in the fleet! At least that's what he keeps telling us.

[Mechanical wah wah sound as ship is scanned]

K'TELERAN (cont'd): Please enjoy a bit of my culture's colloquial music while we prepare for your arrival!

{Bizarre alien music}

NEW: Augh! Ugh, Thomas! Turn it off! Turn it off!

THOMAS: Off!

{Music stops}

[Siren noises continue]

NEW: This is all happening so fast! I'm feeling so ... agitated! And then they ... put us on hold with the worst hold music ever!

[New shifts in chair, various beeps and whirs continue]

THOMAS: Breathe, New. Just breathe. This is a new experience, but not a menacing one. I'm sure we'll get along very well with our new friends. Let's see ... [scanning noises as he searches for story] A story about camaraderie ... Ah, here!

{Seminar segue music 16:53}

{Seminar Segue Music 16:56}

ROLES by Lisa Michaud

WAREHOUSE AT NIGHT

{Energetic music}

[Crickets outside. Sounds of fighting, swords clashing, magical power sizzling. Bodies hitting the floor.]

VENCA: *(grunting with the thrust of a sword)*

[Sword strike, person grunts, falls to the ground. Silence.]

VENCA: *(breathing heavily)* Shit. We were supposed to leave one of them alive.

[Footsteps. Bladed weapon sheathed.]

MARTHINE: This one is - barely. I'm going to tie them up and maybe we can get some information out of them.

ZAFNE: Don't be subtle about it, Marthine. We need to know what's going on here.

MARTHINE: It will take some time for them to come around... if they don't bleed out thanks to Venca's handiwork.

VENCA: *(sorry, not sorry)* Yeah, sorry about that. But even if no one heard our little scuffle just now, a guard is bound to come by on patrol at some point. We don't have time to wait.

ZAFNE: *(enthusiastically)* I can give them a little shock, wake them right up.

VENCA: It doesn't work that way, Zafne. You'll just hurt them more.

MARTHINE: I don't think we have a choice - I'll use my last spell to heal them up, and just hope that we're done with the excitement for tonight. Here goes. *(she sings quietly and wordlessly, a little melody of - notes that repeats itself)*

[Over this tune, the sound equivalent of a growing, pulsing glow, which then recedes as the tune ends.]

ENEMY: *(coughing)* ...What the FUCK?!

[Light bladed weapon comes back out of its scabbard and presses against the enemy's neck.]

ENEMY: What - oh.

ROLES by Lisa Michaud

MARTHINE: Hello, there. I have a few questions for you.

ENEMY: I'm not going to tell you anything! Not with a blade to my throat.

MARTHINE: Strangely, I would think you'd talk to me precisely because I have a blade at your throat. Also, my friend Zafne over there-

[Magical crackling energy.]

MARTHINE: She really likes electrocuting people, and it has been at least a full minute since the last time she got the opportunity, so she is getting impatient.

INTERIOR: A dining room. TheDUNGEON MASTER: and players are seated around a table.

DUNGEON MASTER: Okay, Marthine, if you want to intimidate them, I'm going to need you to roll for that.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Oh, come ON! I've got a rapier at their throat and a warlock about to fry them to a crisp. How is that not automatically intimidating?

DUNGEON MASTER: I don't make the rules; I just run the game.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: (*sarcastically*) Yes, madam Dungeon Master! Can I at least roll with advantage, since Zafne's helping me?

DUNGEON MASTER: Sure. I'll allow it.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Thank you, Zafne!! OK, roll twice.. Be good to me today, dice.

[D rolling twice.]

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Ok, good. .

DUNGEON MASTER: Very nice. With that, you successfully intimidate them, and they are quite convinced that if they don't answer your questions, Zafne will turn them into toast.

INTERIOR: Back to the warehouse.

ENEMY: No, no, don't fry me! I'll talk!

MARTHINE: I'm glad we have reached an understanding. What were you guarding here? Where is the package?

ENEMY: *(laughing evilly)* There is no package! This was all a trap! And you fell for our brilliant plan to kill all of you!

MARTHINE: Except that... As I see it, there are four of your people dead on the floor... whereas we are all quite alive.

ZAFNE: *(chuckles)*

ENEMY: Um, yes. Well. That's true. But it was a brilliant plan!

MARTHINE: So, tell us - where is the package?

VENCA: I'm going to start dragging the bodies out of sight. I'll put them in that open container we saw.

[Bodies being dragged over the next few lines.]

VENCA: *(occasionally grunts and groans with the effort)*

MARTHINE: Please don't make me repeat my question. You may find that ...uncomfortable.

[Just a tiny bit of that magical crackling energy. Zafne's just reminding them of the threat.]

ENEMY: I don't know!! Somewhere in the capital. They were going to tell us where to meet up with them later!

MARTHINE: And how were they going to tell you? *(silence)* Search them! Search the others.

ROLES by Lisa Michaud

INTERIOR: Back to the dining room.

DUNGEON MASTER: Zafne, are you doing the search? Roll for investigation to see what you find.

[D rolling.]

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Nineteen.

DUNGEON MASTER: You find on them and the others...

[Dice rolling behind the DUNGEON MASTER's screen.]

DUNGEON MASTER: Three simple daggers, coppers, and a simple, round stone.

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: I hand all of it over to Marthine.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: *(sarcastically)* Oh, wow, coppers and a rock! That's some serious loot there. Is there at least something special about this rock?

DUNGEON MASTER: Roll an arcana check to see if you recognize what it is.

[D rolling.]

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Um... damn, not horrible, but not great. Fourteen.

DUNGEON MASTER: It appears to be a standard sending stone.

INTERIOR: Back to the warehouse.

MARTHINE: So, this is what they were going to use to let you know?

They were going to message you with the sending stone?

ENEMY: I'm not going to tell you anything else! You're just going to kill me, like you killed the others.

ZAFNE: (*enthusiastically*) Not quite like the others. We killed the others in a fight; you, we would be killing in cold blood. Quite different!

MARTHINE: You sound awfully eager to shed more blood today, Zafne.

ZAFNE: They don't leave blood on the floor when I fry them! Just... (*with a little too much glee*) ...little scorch marks.

[Text message notification.]

INTERIOR: Back to the dining room.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Don't look at it! You pick up that phone during a session, and your next roll is with disadvantage.

VENCA'S PLAYER: Yes, but - maybe something's up with the kids -

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Your husband has got it. This is your special time. Whatever it is, he can handle it.

[Text message notification.]

VENCA'S PLAYER: And his dad hasn't been well lately, either, so it could be -

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Don't do it! If it were an emergency, he'd have called the landline. He's at least got that much brains in his head. This is your night, and he can fuck off.

VENCA'S PLAYER: Okay, okay, okay. I'm sorry.

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Great job, you! I think you deserve... a little more wine.

[Wine pouring into a glass.]

INTERIOR: The warehouse.

ROLES by Lisa Michaud

MARTHINE: We don't have to kill him - we could leave him alive... Tie him up in the crate, maybe.

ZAFNE: With the dead bodies? And you think I'm the psycho one.

VENCA: *(laughing)* That would certainly make him rethink his life choices!

ZAFNE: Or he could escape and warn them. We can't afford to leave him alive.

[Magical crackling.]

MARTHINE: *(after a beat, resigned)* Fine. Do it. I think we've gotten what we can from him. Make it quick.

[Martine sheathes her light weapon and walks away. The crackling gets louder.]

ENEMY: No, wait! I could have -

[Zafne fries the enemy, abruptly cutting off his protests.]

INTERIOR: Dining room.

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Should I have rolled something for that attack?

DUNGEON MASTER: No, he was already mostly dead, and he was restrained. You killed him. Which one of you is standing nearest the door?

VENCA'S PLAYER: I'm dragging the body to the crate, I guess.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: I walked toward the door while Zafne offed him.

DUNGEON MASTER: What's your passive perception, Marthine?

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Um... Seventeen.

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Wow. You are really perceptive!

DUNGEON MASTER: You are, indeed. As you turn away from Zafne killing the lone survivor in cold blood, you can hear a pair of footsteps approaching.

INTERIOR: Back to the warehouse.

[Body is dragged, and then heaved up to and into a crate.]

VENCA: (*grunting as she heaves the body into the crate*)

MARTHINE: (*stage whisper*) Hurry up, Venca! I hear someone coming!

ZAFNE: We're trapped! That's the only door out of here!

[Crate is closed.]

VENCA: Okay, the bodies are hidden.

MARTHINE: Everyone, hide behind the boxes and the crates!

INTERIOR: The dining room.

DUNGEON MASTER: I'll need stealth checks from all of you to see if you hide successfully.

[Three Ds are rolled by three separate people, more or less around the same time.]

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Don't fuck with me today, dice... Seventeen!

VENCA'S PLAYER: Phew! Sixteen for me.

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Oh, man... I rolled a . Critical FAIL.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: That's it. We're screwed.

VENCA'S PLAYER: (*distressed*) No no no no no! (*beat*) Wait!! Did you do the thing this week?

ROLES by Lisa Michaud

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: What thing?

VENCA'S PLAYER: Your - your personal goal. Did you say "NO?"

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Oh. Yeah. I did! Yeah, at work on Tuesday, Bob asked me to take over one of his projects -

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: And you told him to go fuck himself? Good for you!

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Um... no. Not in so many words. But I did tell him where he could find the information he needed to complete the work himself. And then said that was all I could allocate to that project this week, unless we were going to de-prioritize one of my existing workstreams, because I didn't have time to do my workload and his as well, and...(beat) Does that count?

DUNGEON MASTER: Yes, yes it does. You may take your free re-roll for the session. Roll your dice again.

VENCA'S PLAYER: Yes!!! Rock star!!

[D rolling.]

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Okay, okay, okay... Let me do the math... fifteen.

[two D rolling behind the screen.]

DUNGEON MASTER: And the guards both roll badly on their perception, so they don't see you. All three of you successfully hide behind the crates as two guards on patrol come by the door. In the light of the lanterns they are carrying, you can see that one of them is a human and the other is a half-orc, and both of them are wearing the green and brown livery of the town guard. They step into the warehouse, hold the lanterns up long enough to sweep their eyes over the boxes... And they don't notice you. The lantern light recedes as they both leave.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Okay, we wait for a while, and then we get the fuck out of there.

DUNGEON MASTER: Where are you going?

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: The package is at the capital, right? We still need it, so we'll need to get back to the horses and head there.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: It's the middle of the night. We need a long rest before we go to the capital. I'm out of spells and you guys both got hurt and need to heal.

VENCA'S PLAYER: Oh, right. I forgot. Yeah, I'm kinda scary low on health. Let's take the horses back to the inn where we stayed last night.

DUNGEON MASTER: All right. Same arrangements as before? You're sharing a room?

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: We're too cheap for two rooms! We can snuggle.

DUNGEON MASTER: For six silver coins, you get a room with a bed that is just large enough for the three of you with little room to spare. You pass a mostly restful night. As the dawn comes in through the old curtains over the window, a new day begins... And that's where we will pick up next time.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER, ZAFNE'S PLAYER, VENCA'S PLAYER: *(sounds of protest, that eventually give way to the next lines)*

[Laptops and tablets being put away, dice being put into dice bags, over the next few lines.]

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Awesome game!

VENCA'S PLAYER: Yeah, that was great!

DUNGEON MASTER: Everyone's all set for next session? Two weeks? Who's hosting?

VENCA'S PLAYER: I am! And I'm going to make COOKIES!!

ROLES by Lisa Michaud

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: *(hesitantly)* I meant to tell you guys. We have a critical release that night, actually. Dammit, I want those cookies.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: But you're neither Tech Support nor Ops; those fuckers don't pay you to be there after hours and they don't need you to babysit that release.

VENCA'S PLAYER: We need you more than they do! And you need cookies!

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: I suppose...*(with more confidence)* I suppose that can be my next "Just Say No" moment. They - they don't don't need me to hold their hands.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Attagirl! You're getting the hang of this!

VENCA'S PLAYER: Oh, my god! Did - did you just say something SUPPORTIVE?

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Who, me?

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: *(teasingly)* Did someone level up when we weren't looking and get a boost to her CHARISMA?

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: *(menacingly)* Do NOT confuse me for my character.

VENCA'S PLAYER: Ooooh, I think I'm going to need a deception roll, here!

DUNGEON MASTER: All right, everyone. That's enough. I'll see you in two weeks.

VENCA'S PLAYER: Oh, wait for me; I'll walk out with you. I'd prefer... not to walk through the parking lot alone.

[They both walk out of the room; a front door opens and closes as they leave the house.]

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: *(after a beat)* Thanks.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: What for?

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: You WERE being supportive, and for what it's worth, I know that you do care. For all that you're abrasive -

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: (*interrupting*) Gee, thanks.

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: We all know that really, you have our backs. And we're all going through a lot of stuff right now, so it truly does matter. So..thanks.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: (*curmudgeonly grunt*)

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Be that way. I know the truth. You're not going to beat my insight check, so live with it.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: (*after a beat*) You're really going to stand up to them? Make certain those dickheads don't make you stay at work that night and miss the session?

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: Yeah. Yeah, I think I will.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Okay, then. I'll bring the good booze, the stuff you really like. But don't let me down, or I'll kick your ass.

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: No, you won't.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Damn you and your insight. Get out of my house.

ZAFNE'S PLAYER: See you in two weeks.

MARTHINE'S PLAYER: Or else.

{Seminar segue music 30:47}

Wrapper #3 by V.C. Morrison

ABOARD THE SHUTTLE

[A loud "ka-chunk" sound as the shuttle docks]

{Hopeful music}

NEW: Ooh, I guess we're here. What do we do now?

[Various whirs and scanning noises as Thomas scans]

THOMAS: I'm scanning the atmosphere in their ship now. Artificial gravity is 0.7 Earth gravity. Air pressure is 863 millibars. Mostly breathable. Though a bit ... aromatic.

NEW: "Mostly" breathable?

THOMAS: 16% oxygen. 82% nitrogen. Some ammonia, though not enough to be toxic. Just stinky. And a few other trace gases. If you were just human you'd be in trouble, but Zarrak require less oxygen than humans and have a higher tolerance for ammonia. Just breathe slowly and don't exert yourself too much and you should be fine.

[New shifts in chair]

NEW: (sighs) Well, this is it. First contact with a new species. How do I look?

[Beeps from comm system]

THOMAS: (beat) Like you've been on the run from rabid aliens and haven't had time to shower or change.

NEW: (beat) Right. Well, can't be helped. (takes a breath) Open the door, Thomas.

[Door opens, footsteps as New exits ship]

{Seminar theme music 32:21}

ANNOUNCER: Featuring the voice talents of: Bailey Wolfe as K'Teleran, Briar Zachary as New, and Dan Foster as Thomas

In "The Natural," Hannah Kolk as Lin, Thomas Charles Bailey as Tom, and Tim Don Tran as Jo. Written by Tilly Bridges and Susan Bridges

In "Roles," Asteyni H. as Marthine, Elizabeth Johnson as Zafne, Megan Scharlau as the DM, and Vicky Henness as Venca. Written by Lisa Michaud

Directed by Garan Fitzgerald. Shorts edited by Tilly Bridges. Wrapper written by V.C. Morrison. Seminar theme and outro by Garan Fitzgerald. All other music by Josh Molen at TheTunePeddler.com.

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{Seminar theme fades out}

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