

SEMINAR EPISODE 111: BUZZING INTENSIFIES

{SEMINAR Intro Music 0:00-0:52}

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 as a new lifeform, the half-human, half-Zarrak survivor meets an organization of galactic species and accepts the job of continuing to teach about humanity. This time, not to other humans, but to aliens from every corner of the galaxy.

CREDITS ANNOUNCER: Seminar episode 1111: "Buzzing Intensifies."

{Seminar main theme 1:01-1:07}

WRAPPER #1 BY V.C. MORRISON

CLASSROOM

{Jazzy music}

[Soft hum of station systems]

NEW: Good morning, class! Looks like we're a person down today. Has anyone seen Hex?

[Hex whirs into room like loud, buzzing vacuum cleaner]

GRILL: Whoa! Hex! What's up? You okay in there?

HEX: (In robotic voice) Stand by. Colony H3X43Y21Z90's communication array is ... distracted.

NEW: Uh ... Anyone know what that means?

GRILL: Sounds like an error message.

HEX: Apologies. Communications array is back online.

NEW: Why was it ... offline? Or is that a personal question?

HEX: Internal conflicts are causing cognitive and limbic malfunctions.

NEW: Internal conflicts? Like programming?

LIMIN: Hex is a gestalt lifeform. Their species, The Order, travel as colonies: thousands of lifeforms acting as one brain. I'm guessing there's some civil unrest in the hive?

{Upbeat music}

HEX: Limin is correct. A conflict has arisen regarding the order of sensory input. The Acrinal Entertainment Quadrant has released episode six of "Thirty Descendants, One Ancestor." At the same time, quarter three of the Tri-planetary 4D Cube-Stacking Tournament has begun. This unit doesn't know which to watch first.

GRILL: Oof. Sounds like my family in front of the video receiver.

BOB JOHNSON: Yeah, that's a tough one.

GALOORM: Thirty Descendants? Is that the one with the zero-g bubble artist?

HEX: Galoorm is correct. Zadro's art is indisputably the highlight of the series.

NEW: Wait a minute! A whole colony of The Order can shut itself down because it doesn't know what TV show to watch first?

BOB JOHNSON: Yeah, it's a known vulnerability. I think that's how they lost the war.

HEX: Bob Johnson is incorrect! The Conflict of the Bottled Queen was lost due to a flood of conflicting commands from—

BOB JOHNSON: Well, who puts their queen in a bottle, anyway? It just seems tactically unsound, is all.

NEW: Okay, okay! That's just ... hard to wrap my head around.

GRILL: Eh ... Humans are guilty of the same thing.

NEW: What makes you say that Grill?

GRILL: I was poking around and found a story from the archive. It's called "Watch Party." Here, I'll cue it up.

NEW: Hold on. You can't just—

[Various beeps]

{Seminar segue music 3:32}

WATCH PARTY by Susan Bridges

[Television on quietly in the background]

TILLY: So, what do you want to watch?

SUSAN: Ugh, we have to pick a new thing already?

TILLY: Yeah, there's almost nothing left on the list.

SUSAN: So what else is still on it?

TILLY: Let's see, all that's left is "Rich White People Problems"

SUSAN: Didn't we watch that?

TILLY: No, that was a different show, also about Rich White People with Different Problems.

TILLY: Not on the list. Do you have something?

SUSAN: Let me check my list ... oh I heard about this new show called "My Dead Dad," it's by the same creators as "Depressing Animated Animals"

TILLY: Oh I really like those creators. Is it new?

SUSAN: Hmm, not sure, let me see ... oh, the first season came out in 2019.

TILLY: Wow, I guess we really missed it then.

SUSAN: But the second season came out in 2022. Because, y'know.

TILLY: Yeah. Everyone knows.

SUSAN: The whole WORLD knows. (beat) Okay, what else.

TILLY: I just remembered we haven't watched "Prestigious Sci-Fi Writer Show Based on Something You Never Read."

SUSAN: I've heard good things about that one. Add it to the list. Ooh, hey, what about "Dark Workplace Drama with a Twist."

TILLY: But we saw that one.

SUSAN: Yeah, but we could watch it again.

TILLY: But there're so many new things to watch! We probably shouldn't backtrack.

SUSAN: Yeah, we shouldn't backtrack. I mean, unless we REALLY backtrack. Like, 20 plus years kind of backtrack.

TILLY: Wait, why is that okay, and watching something more recent again isn't okay?

SUSAN: I don't know, I guess it doesn't feel like it takes up as much brainpower? I don't have a whole lot of critical thought while we're watching "Spaceship Trip to the Stars."

TILLY: BUT that show dealt with a lot of the issues of the day.

SUSAN: True! But they all have strict morals and attractive clothing, and everything's wrapped up in 45 minutes. That's comforting.

TILLY: Comfort shows are an entirely separate category though.

SUSAN: Yeah, and over time your comfort shows change. In fact, sometimes you wonder why you liked certain shows so much the first time around!

TILLY: This is about "Police Procedural with Aliens" isn't it.

SUSAN: I'm just saying, how can it be so gross? And there's so much fake blood! And the first season is like "Let's torture women for fun as often as possible!"

TILLY: You're right, going back does have its issues.

SUSAN: Oh, hey when's the next season of "Actor Assassin" come back?

TILLY: Not for a while yet.

SUSAN: Meh.

TILLY: (beat) So out of our options, what sounds the best to you?

SUSAN: I've already forgotten what the options are.

TILLY: Good thing I wrote them down! Okay so we've got ... the other "Rich White People with Problems" show, "My Dead Dad, or "Prestigious Sci-Fi Writer Show Based on Something You Never Read."

SUSAN: Ugh, I don't wanna decide tonight.

TILLY: So, you don't want to watch anything.

SUSAN: I just feel like a new show is just such a commitment.
(beat) Ooh I know, let's watch a movie!

TILLY: Okay...so what do you wanna watch?

SUSAN: Ugh, we have to pick a new thing already?

{Seminar segue music 7:09}

WRAPPER #2 BY V.C. MORRISON

CLASSROOM

{Acoustic guitar music}

GRILL: See? Totally the same thing!

NEW: Okay. I'll admit that. Humans definitely do the same thing.
(Lighthearted) Also, see me after class about hijacking the teaching equipment.

GRILL: Oops.

NEW: Anyway. That wasn't too far off from what I wanted to talk about today. Conflicts between humans can arise from deciding what media to consume, but also from slightly different interpretations of the same concept. Like love.

LIMIN: Ooooh, can we have a love story, pleeeeeeease?

GRILL: (Groans) Oh no ...

NEW: Grill, please do the honors and cue up "Denouement."

GRILL: Well played, professor.

{Seminar segue music 8:00}

Denouement By Tilly Bridges

{Mournful jazz music}

[Rainstorm in the city. Thunder. Footsteps walking through puddles toward something, then away]

JEANIE: (sigh)

[Banging on metal door, door opens]

JEANIE: Paula. I w-

PAULA: Lemme stop you right there. I don't wanna hear it.

JEANIE: Why'd you answer the door?

PAULA: I'm already askin' myself the same thing.

PAULA: (cont'd) What you did? Wasn't right.

JEANIE: If I could explain...

PAULA: But you can't.

JEANIE: No.

PAULA: An' even if you could, you wouldn't.

JEANIE: (sigh)

PAULA: You don't know what that does to a lady, Jeanie.

JEANIE: Sure, I do. I'm a lady, aren't I?

PAULA: But ain't that the problem? See I don't even need ya to explain anyway, 'cause I already know.

JEANIE: You think you do, but you don't.

PAULA: Oh, sure I do. Don't flatter yourself like you're goin' through somethin' nobody else's ever had to deal with. You think I ain't been through it? You think we all haven't?

JEANIE: It's not the same.

PAULA: I'm not done. See the problem with you is that you are a lady.

JEANIE: But you like ladies.

PAULA: Right, but like I said the problem ain't with me, it's with you. Because you wish you weren't a lady.

JEANIE: Nah, that's not it. I'm not an invert.

PAULA: Heaven forbid. Wouldn't wanna be like me.

JEANIE: That's not what I meant. It's just-

PAULA: You can't be like me and hide it? Like you can hide who you love?

JEANIE: You don't have to be cruel.

PAULA: I'm not, darlin'. You miss my meanin'. This world we live in? This madness we call life with rules that get dictated to us by white men from on high that we're supposed to treat like gospel? Well, the problem is that you do.

JEANIE: Laws are laws.

PAULA: Don't make 'em right. When a law's unjust the ethical thing to do is break it.

JEANIE: We could go to prison. I have a life, my business, my clients...

PAULA: All of which are more important to you than me.

JEANIE: That's not true.

PAULA: It is though. Because if it weren't, we wouldn't be havin' this conversation. I'd be bringing you inside and drying you off. Bringing you a coffee... helping you out of those wet clothes.

JEANIE: Paula-

PAULA: And we'd be gettin' real close right about now. I'd push the damp hair back from your face, you'd touch my cheek... our lips would start a fire that'd catch over our entire bodies and we'd be closer than we'd ever been before. And then we'd wake up in each other's arms in front of the fireplace.

JEANIE: (this hurts so bad) I want that. I want that more than anything.

PAULA: No, not more than anything. Not more than you want to let a bunch of uptight, holier-than-thou hypocrites tell you who you can and can't love.

JEANIE: There's too much to lose.

PAULA: And how much to gain? Not enough, I guess.

JEANIE: My heart's never going to recover from this.

PAULA: Your heart. Your business. Your clients. Never mind mine, huh?

JEANIE: It's not like that.

PAULA: Isn't it? You think this isn't killing me? I love you, Jeanie. More than I've ever loved the sun in the sky or the moon over the sea, deeper than I've ever loved anything or anyone before.

JEANIE: I-

PAULA: And that ain't enough for you. That ain't enough to take a chance on. That ain't enough to fight society for. Well baby, if I ain't worth fighting for you definitely ain't worth having. Look me up if you ever muster up the courage to fight for love rather than give in to the hate.

JEANIE: (heartbroken sigh)

[Door closes. Footsteps walking in puddles away from the door. Thunder. Quick footsteps back to the metal door. Pounding. Door opens]

PAULA: I told you-

JEANIE: Fuck hate. Fuck them all. You're worth it.

PAULA: An' so are you.

JEANIE: AND PAULA: (kissing)

[Door closes. Thunder in the distance.]

{Seminar segue music 12:20}

WRAPPER #3 BY V.C. MORRISON

CLASSROOM

{Upbeat music}

LIMIN: Aww! That was so sweet!

GRILL: Just sounded like a whole lot of nonsense to me. Love who you wanna love or don't! Don't make a big deal out of it.

GALOORM: Love isn't that simple.

LIMIN: Yeah. That's true of a lot of species.

NEW: And the society the lovers exist in is also a factor. Love doesn't happen in a vacuum. In this story, the society the characters live in don't approve of romance between two beings of the same gender.

GRILL: Ugh. Gender problems again.

NEW: Yeah, well gender was a big deal for Earth people at this point in history. Even some Earth languages assigned gender to inanimate objects.

GRILL: Wait. Who decides that? Like, someone looks at a chair and says, "That's male, but that desk is totally female?"

NEW: Yeah, pretty much.

GRILL: That's insane!

NEW: You know what else is insane? Essays.

GRILL: Huh?

NEW: I want a ten-page essay comparing human gender norms as highlighted in the stories we've heard to societal classification systems in two other species at any point in their history. Due next week!

GRILL: What?!

BOB JOHNSON: Aww, other species ...

GALOORM: Oh no!

[Hex's buzzing intensifies]

LIMIN: Oh, boy! I can hardly wait to get started!

NEW: Class dismissed!

{Seminar outro theme 13:53-15:00}

ANNOUNCER: Featuring the voice talents of: Bridget Guzewicz as New, Sarah Palmero as Limin, Brady Hendricks as Galoorm, Eric Valdes as Bob Johnson, Fae Holiday as Grill, and Em Smith as Hex.

In "Watch Party," Lauren Kong as Susan, Jillian Morgan as Tilly.
Written by Susan Bridges.

In "Denouement," April Kingrose as Paula, Marie Cheney as Jeanie.
Written by Tilly Bridges.

Directed by Adam Blanford. Shorts edited by Tilly Bridges. Wrapper written by V.C. Morrison.

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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