

{Intro theme in background 00:00-00:47}

NARRATOR: The last known remnants of Earth's people are adrift in space, aboard the Ark of Humanity. Its 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 may change them more than they expect. This...is Seminar...

{Seminar Main Theme 00:48-1:21}

SEMINAR #93: "A Time To Mourn And A Time To Dance..."

WRAPPER #1 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE, MAIN HALL (BYZANTIUM)

THOMAS: Zerash, we need to find where Alex has gone. Even though the shutters are back down and I hope we're secure in here..

ZERASH: Thomas's location is secure within Byzantium. Zerash's sensors may have been damaged, but are not completely non-functional. It is possible to track Alex, however it may require non-standard methods.

THOMAS: How so?

ZERASH: Auditory and visual sensors are sporadic throughout Byzantium. This Zerash will utilize the remaining sensor scans to establish a baseline. Any visual or audio changes will provide a possible location.

THOMAS: And you can use Alice's comm transponder to rule her out of the analysis.

ZERASH: That is correct.

[Tones from the console]

ZERASH: There are four possible locations where Alex may be present. Insufficient data to refine the location.

THOMAS: (worried) We have to find some way to narrow that down.

ZERASH: Alex has done significant damage to Byzantium's primary systems. In addition, Zarrak interference prevents additional repairs.

THOMAS: If we distracted them, maybe the interference would dissipate, too.

ZERASH: This is possible. Running calculations. (beat) To construct the proper frequency to interrupt Zarrak biotic connection would take 65.8 cycle units.

THOMAS: Maybe a story would help confuse them. I've got just the one. Accessing... "Annie 777."

{Seminar segue music 2:49}

Annie777 by D. X. Blink

ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM

{Peppy video game music}

ANNIE: Hi again everyone! It's Annie Seven-Seven-Seven here and for today's stream I'm doing something a little bit different. I know you guys really wanted to see me finish *Super Combat Battle Llamas* today-- but I'll get to that next time, I promise!

[Negative tone as thumbs-down]

ANNIE: (laughing) Aw, who gave me a thumbs-down for that? Look, Zephyr Strife Games sent me this promo copy of *City Adventures* and I really wanna try it out. (tired) I need a break, you know? Things have been...things. (snapping out of it) Oh, and uh, look at this pretty box! How could I resist? Let's get some thumbs-up going for this! It'll be fun.

[Cheering as thumbs-up]

ANNIE: There you go! Thanks guys! (beat) "New Game." Let's get this party started.

GAME VOICE: [electronic] Please enter your name.

ANNIE: (chuckling) My name? Not my character's name? C'mon guys. (beat) What the hell, why not.

[Bloop sounds as Annie types]

ANNIE: (slowly) A-n-n-i-e.

GAME VOICE: What do you look like?

ANNIE: Oh boy, again with this "you" stuff? These game designers -- I'm a *player*, my dudes, I can be anyone.... You know what? I'm rolling with it. I'm rolling with it! I'm gonna make this chick look like me.

[Cheering as thumbs-up]

[Bloop noises as Annie selects attributes]

ANNIE: I dunno what to expect with this game, really. I couldn't find any reviews online, which is...very weird. Any of you ever hear about it? Let me know in the chat. Hmm, no, I guess my hair's more like *this* color. What do you think, guys -- did I get my hair right? Thumbs up or down.

[Cheering as thumbs-up]

ANNIE: Sweet. Okay, since the developers can't tell the difference between *me* and *my character* I made them the same. Now let's click *Start Game*.

GAME VOICE: [electronic] Welcome to the city. This is your apartment. Feel free to explore. The on-screen tutorials will explain the controls.

{Casual game music}

ANNIE: (laughs) Oh, awesome. Don't laugh you guys but this actually kinda looks like my apartment. Oh my god, I must be a *level one human being*! That would explain so much.

[Electronic-sounding footsteps as game-Annie moves around]

ANNIE: I think I have a stalker, because this is so like my apartment. But I mean, there's a zillion of these little shitbox apartments around here, right? I wonder if the level designer lives on my block.

[Electronic click as game-Annie opens a window]

Annie777 by D. X. Blink

ANNIE: Oh, the windows open, nice! (beat) Opening the window made it so shiny and bright! Look at the textures! This new video card was worth it. Everything looks so...oh my god...so nice...(beat) Fuck it, hang on.

[Creak of chair as Annie gets up and opens a window. Creak as she sits back down]

ANNIE: I need sun, okay? I know it's kind of stupid but I totally just opened the *real* window. I mean I usually don't do that because of the noise, but whatever! It's been like a cave in here lately. I miss the sun.

[Cheering as thumbs-up]

[Electronic tone as game-Annie's phone gets text message]

ANNIE: (reads) "Press B to look at phone." Did that sound like the announcer? Let's see. One text message from Jennifer. (laughs) This is getting kinda Twilight Zone you guys, because I *totally* have a friend named Jennifer. I mean, that's -- well, come on. The year I was born like every other girl was named Jennifer. There's *so many* of them. *Anyway*. Let's see what this text message says. "In your 'hood, mind if I stop by, smiley face, smiley face, coffee cup, cat, skull?"

[Electronic tone for new text]

ANNIE: (reads) "Ignore the skull, I wanted the nail polish one but I missed." Haha aww. You know what? This is my very first actual *choice* in this game so I'm gonna read the options and you guys vote thumbs-up or thumbs-down okay? (reading) "Sorry, I'm busy"

[Mixed negative tones and cheering]

ANNIE: -- Uh *yeah* I mean, I kinda *am*, there's adventures somewhere, right? "Leave message on read."

[Negative tones as thumbs-down]

ANNIE: I'm with you. *Total* jerk move. (reading) "Sure, come on over!"

[Lots of cheering as thumbs up]

ANNIE: (laughing) Really? You wanna watch me talk in my boring apartment? Okay, you voted, you got it.

[Tone as in-game Annie sends text message]

ANNIE: I guess I just... wait then? All right. Where's the adventures already?? (beat) Maybe that's why I didn't find any reviews, everyone who tried to play it fell asleep.

[In-game knock at the door]

ANNIE: Who is it? Sorry guys, lemme just head over to the door annnnd..."press A to open door".

[Annie presses A. The door opens]

GAME VOICE: [electronic] What does Jennifer look like?

ANNIE: Ohhh, you know what I have to do, guys. I *have* to. I'm gonna make her look just like my Jennifer. (embarrassed)

[Electronic bleeps as she selects Jennifer's looks]

ANNIE: I mean -- she's not *mine* mine. No, that would be -- it's -- I was just saying I'm making her look like actual Jennifer. (beat) Yeah, oh I should do a stream with her one of these days. We've been besties *forever*. Oh oh, *this* shirt! She used to have a shirt just like that -- real Jennifer, I mean. Then this one time we snuck a taco bar into a movie theater. I'm not even joking, we had tortillas and *carne asada* and sour cream and salsa and *everything*, just for us, we were watching some dreary art movie and eating taco after taco!

[More bleeps]

ANNIE: (laughs) Then the usher was coming so we tried to hide it all and she ended up stuffing the *carne asada* down her shirt *just* before he got the flashlight on us. (giggling) We're sitting there trying to look innocent and Jennifer's like "Oh my *god* can you get that light out of my eyes? I'm missing the *dialogue*!" (laughs)

[More bleeps]

ANNIE: I...uh...you probably had to be there. She's something *else*. But that shirt was ruined, guys. There was no saving it. (beat) Okay. That's pretty good. Except there's no giant *carne asada* stain on her shirt. So much for realism, amirite? "Continue."

[Bleep as Annie hits Continue]

Annie777 by D. X. Blink

GAME JENNIFER: Well?

ANNIE: Sweet mother of Motown! You *guys*. It even sounds a little like her.

GAME JENNIFER: (old-friend banter) Are you gonna move your ass and let me in?

ANNIE: (laughs) Okay, well played, game, well played. Right, I, let me just... move ...

[Electronic footsteps as game-Annie lets game-Jennifer in]

GAME JENNIFER: So...how's things?

ANNIE: Oh! Dialogue options. Let's see... "Great", "So-so", "Not so good", or "Shrug." (beat) I mean, if game-Annie is anything like me-Annie...Shrug. I'm going with shrug. Shrug? Shrug. Shrug!

[Annie clicks shrug]

ANNIE: That doesn't even sound like a word anymore.

GAME JENNIFER: (a little concerned) Just a shrug? That's all? (lightening the mood) Come on, your day is way better now that I'm here, right?

ANNIE: Yeah, actually, now that you mention it - (realizes what she did) Shit, I've gotta stop making characters look like real people. Focus, Annie, what'll the *game* let you say? (reading) "No, you're boring." Whaaaaaaat?

[Negative tones as thumbs-down]

ANNIE: (reading) "I don't know." That's not it. (beat) "Yeah, actually, now that you mention it." (a little surprised) Well... that's...kind of what I said, isn't it? So that's what I gotta pick?

[Cheering as thumbs-up]

[Annie selects that option]

GAME JENNIFER: (in-game) Good thing I came by, then! What have you been up to?

ANNIE: (reading) "Not much." Ugh, the writing on this game is really uninspired. (beat) "Working hard." (cheesy joke voice) Or *hardly working* right guys?

[Negative tone for thumbs-down]

ANNIE: (reading) "Just sitting here by myself playing games." Ohhh are we trying to be meta now? I'm gonna embrace the meta.

[Annie picks "just sitting here playing games"]

GAME JENNIFER: When's the last time you went outside? You need some Vitamin D, girl!

ANNIE: (chuckles) I get that in a multivitamin!

GAME VOICE: (in-game) Don't you remember the last time we had a night on the town? All the fun we had?

ANNIE: (fondly) Oh, I remember. (realizing she's still got an audience) Seriously you guys, me and Jennifer -- *real* Jennifer - last time she was here we decided to go out and do shots. Not, like, alcohol shots -- *espresso* shots. Just walking down the street and every time we passed a coffee shop we'd each get an espresso. Three blocks later I was vibrating so hard I could see *through time*. (chuckles) She always has the best, most terrible ideas. I don't know how she does it. Aw, you never notice how someone cheers you up till you miss them.

GAME JENNIFER: So there's nobody... *around*? Nobody close to you?

ANNIE: Wow, game. Getting personal. (beat) What the hell am I saying, this isn't personal. *Fake* Jennifer is talking to *fake* Annie. It's all scripted, coded dialogue by some random developer. It's not about *me*. Or *her*.

ANNIE: (deep breath) Get it together. For fake Jennifer.

GAME JENNIFER: (gently) You didn't answer.

ANNIE: Give me a minute, I'm talking to my viewers! (reading) "No, there's nobody." Ouch. (beat) "Yes, there's somebody." Games are escapism, right? I should pick that and give fake Annie an advantage over real Annie.

[Negative tones thumbs-down]

Annie777 by D. X. Blink

ANNIE: Okay, feel the rage, got it...you guys didn't like that idea, huh. So then what's the last option? "No, but I've been thinking about somebody." I guess... technically I have? I went to all the trouble to pick the right shirt for her and everything. So that one.

[Annie picks the last option]

GAME JENNIFER: (light teasing) Oh? Is it somebody I know?

ANNIE: Okay, just reading the choices. (reading) "Yes, it's a famous celebrity!" Holy shit, can I date a celebrity in this game? *That* would be an adventure! Maybe I could date fake Beyoncé!

[Negative tones as thumbs-down]

ANNIE: (reading) "No, it's nobody you know." (blows a dismissive raspberry)

[Many negative tones as thumbs-down]

ANNIE: (reading) "Yes, it's somebody you know very well."

[Much cheering as thumbs-up]

ANNIE: (beat) I dunno, you guys. I mean dating fake Beyoncé would be awesome. Can you imagine? I'd be backstage at all her shows, I could hook Jennifer up with front row seats...Wait. That wasn't the question, though. Right? She's asking who I'm *thinking about*. (beat) (thoughtful) I...uh. I mean the answer's obvious, isn't it? Just now I was hooking her up with fake Beyoncé tickets. She's...kinda been on my mind. Like, a lot. More than...(catching herself) Moving on! Picking the non-Beyoncé option.

[Annie clicks non-Beyoncé option]

GAME JENNIFER: (a little nervous) Well, to be honest, I've kind of been thinking about somebody a lot lately too. Somebody *you* know.

ANNIE: (caught off-guard) Wait. Hold on. Is she...?

GAME JENNIFER: (in-game) I mean...I was wondering...

ANNIE: (flustered) You -- I -- *pause!*

[Bloop as Annie pauses]

{In-game music stops}

ANNIE: (sigh) Shit, you guys. I was just gonna play this silly game for some likes and subscribes.

[Annie picks up game box]

ANNIE: Who the fuck is Zephyr Strife Games anyway? Why'd they send me this? I wanted to have some fun and now I'm just thinking about Jennifer. (beat) When's the last time I even talked to her? Or sent her a cat emoji? At least *fake* Annie had the spine to...to admit...I'm sorry. You all came here looking for *Super Combat Battle Llamas* and instead you're watching me overthink a random indie title instead.

ANNIE: Okay, okay, but like...These games - that's what they do, right? Role playing games. They make you think about the role you're playing. And now I'm thinking... about the role I'm "playing" here, IRL. I mean, what if this conversation really happened? And she... I mean, could real me even...?

[Much cheering as thumbs-up]

ANNIE: Aww, you guys! (beat) Maybe fake Jennifer was right, I need some vitamin D. I'm gonna wrap this up and --

[Chime as Annie real phone gets a text]

ANNIE: It's paused, how...oh. That was my *real* phone. Who sent me a text?

[Annie picks up her phone and checks]

ANNIE: (stunned) Jennifer. *Real* Jennifer. (reading slowly) "In your 'hood, mind if I stop by, smiley face, smiley face, coffee cup, cat, skull?" (beat) Should I... I mean - I couldn't ...

[Much cheering as a flood of thumbs-ups]

ANNIE: (deep breath) Fake Annie can do it, *I* can do it. (beat) I gotta go, you guys. Someone's coming over.

[Cheering as thumbs-up over and over]

[Knock at the door]

{Seminar segue music 18:09}

WRAPPER #2 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE, MAIN HALL (BYZANTIUM)

[Electronic tones as Zerash's system is running]

THOMAS: Any luck?

ZERASH: Results are unclear at this time. (beat) Why did Thomas choose this particular allegory?

THOMAS: Well that story clearly conflates reality with the virtual simulation that Annie attempts to play. It blurs the lines while providing her with a branching narrative and various other options. (pause) I was hoping it would throw the Zarrak off in the same way. Make them question whether they're in the computer system or outside or... both.

ZERASH: The Zarrak have remained in their current position outside of Byzantium. The signals interfering with this Zerash's programs have begun to break up and become less efficient. Perhaps Thomas's hypothesis is correct.

THOMAS: Oh, you think so? Well, then let's try it again. I've got just the one. Maybe we can try to bombard them with it. Accessing file... "Sleep Debt."

{Seminar segue music 19:03}

SLEEP DEBT by Gabriel Lugo

STUDENT'S ROOM

[Pages turning]

SLEEP: (mobster-voice) Hey fuck-face, pay me what you owe me.

STUDENT: Fuck-off Sleep, I don't have time for you now.

SLEEP: You think I'm playing around? There is always time for me!

STUDENT: I'm studying for finals, I can't pay you right now. I have to focus.

SLEEP: Go to sleep and pay me now!

STUDENT: (calmly) No.

[Coffee sip, page turning]

SLEEP: So you're not gonna pay me the owed sleep time?

STUDENT: No.

SLEEP: (calmly) Ok then. I just have to make a phone call.

STUDENT: (sighs) Do whatever you want.

[Sounds of dialing phone]

SLEEP: (loud and annoyingly) Yo Pain! How you doin'? Look, I know you're busy so I'll go straight to the point. I need you to come and help me with something...Yup, the usual, she don't wanna pay her sleep debt...yup, student on finals...Ok...I appreciate it.

STUDENT: Come on, was it really necessary to call her?

SLEEP: Yes, fucker.

[A knock on the door. Door slams open.]

PAIN: (Grandmotherly voice) I'm here!

STUDENT: Go away, Pain.

PAIN: (annoying voice) Sweetie, if you don't pay Sleep there'll be painful consequences. And you don't want that to happen. Do you?

STUDENT: I told him, I can't right now. I gotta ace these exams if I gonna be somebody in the future.

PAIN: (with an almost sweet tone) You sure you don't have a little time for us? Just a little?

STUDENT: Yes. Just give me the back pain, I know the drill.

PAIN: You're not afraid of me anymore?

SLEEP DEBT by Gabriel Lugo

STUDENT: I can't stop just cause I have a stupid back pain. My dream is more important than that.

SLEEP: But how are you gonna dream if you don't sleep?

STUDENT: Not that definition of dream, Sleep. And I'm not stopping. I am gonna finish this.

PAIN: Is that so? How about I give you a little migraine then.

STUDENT: Fine. I can start paying the debt tomorrow, maybe.

SLEEP: Unacceptable.

PAIN: Heavens, students these days. They used to be terrified of me before.

STUDENT: It's not us. It's the system.

SLEEP: Pain, it ain't working. She ain't leaving me much of a choice but to call...

STUDENT: (alarmed) Don't you dare!

SLEEP: Listen. I tried doing it the easy way, but you're not leaving me much of a choice.

[Sounds of dialing phone]

STUDENT: Don't do it. Please, I beg you. I will pay you tomorrow for sure. I promise.

[Phone ringing]

PAIN: (laughing) Call him. It's been too long since I last saw his lovely face.

[Phone still ringing]

STUDENT: (pleading) Sleep...

SLEEP: (on the phone) Sickness, my man!... Long time no see, buddy. How are you?...What are you up t... Oh... Um my bad, I'll get right to it. Your services are required again.

STUDENT: Sleep, stop! It hasn't even been that long since I...

SLEEP: (ignoring the student) Yeah, I know it's hasn't been less than a month since last time, but this asshole doesn't wanna pay what she owes me...Yeah, I already tried that...It's been TWO WHOLE DAYS...Ok...yeah, thank you.

STUDENT: (almost crying) I don't wanna be sick.

SLEEP: Then go to-fucking-bed now.

[Loud knocking]

STUDENT: (starts crying) Don't let him in. I'll fail the class.

SLEEP: Come on in.

[Door opens]

SLEEP: Hi Sickness, how are...?

SICKNESS: (Coldly professional) So the kid is refusing to pay the debt?

SLEEP: Yeah, like I said. She hasn't slept since Wednesday.

[Calculator buttons tapping, whir of printing tape]

SICKNESS: Ok. So that would round up to 48 hours of sleep deprivation?

SLEEP: Yup.

[Sleep presses buttons, paper gets printed]

STUDENT: Wait a second. That's a lie! You're missing the two hour nap I took yesterday at noon, and how about the other one I took today?

SLEEP: (mad) That's not enough and you know it! What do you think I can do with just three stinkin' hours of sleep?

SICKNESS: Wait. So did she or did she not pay you those three hours?

SLEEP: (defensive) But it doesn't count because...

SICKNESS: She paid you three hours. Yes or no?

SLEEP DEBT by Gabriel Lugo

SLEEP: (through his teeth)...Yes.

STUDENT: Ha! Oh, plus 20 minutes while I was in class.

SLEEP: You fell asleep by accident there!

STUDENT: Hey, but I paid you something didn't I?

SICKNESS: Is that true, Sleep?

SLEEP: (disgruntled) I guess.

[Calculator button tapping sounds, paper printing]

SICKNESS: Ok. So according to my calculations, with this amount of sleep you get...

PAIN: Oooh. Give her something really bad.

SICKNESS: A cold for a week.

PAIN: Don't forget the throat pain that comes along with it.

STUDENT: (sneezes, stuffy now) Can I go back to studying now?

SLEEP: Ah ah ah! Wait just a second. You're not getting out of this that easily.

STUDENT: What now?

SLEEP: Last Thursday, you only slept for 5 hours.

STUDENT: So?

SLEEP: You missed at least three hours.

SICKNESS: Is that so, kid?

STUDENT: Oh come on that's more than enough!

[Calculator buttons tapping, paper prints]

SLEEP: It's not. And it doesn't end there. Last Sunday you slept four and a half hours.

[Calculator buttons tapping, paper prints]

STUDENT: That's bullshit!

PAIN: Is it?

[Slapping sound]

STUDENT: (coughs) Fuck you. Fuck you. And especially fuck you! I'm not gonna give up on my future, okay?

PAIN: Darling, there's no need for that kind of language.

[Buttons on calculator pressing]

SICKNESS: I would suggest you calm down. It's not our fault you got yourself into this trouble.

STUDENT: Wait. Stop. What are you doing?... I haven't said... Stop adding more hours... Stop it!

[Buttons keep being pressed on the calculator]

STUDENT: This whole business is corrupt. You guys are just a bunch of...

SICKNESS: So the verdict is: you'll now be suffering from a week and a half with the flu and a pinch of emotional instability has been added for the rest of your life.

STUDENT: Sadistic bastards. Fuck you!

PAIN: Whoa, you can't keep talking to us that way, young lady.

SLEEP: Someone has to put you back in your place.

PAIN: I've got the perfect solution for that.

[Suitcase opening. Tools being moved around.]

PAIN: The lovely baseball bat for Sleep.

SLEEP: Thank you very much.

PAIN: This gorgeous crowbar for Sickness...And the sock-with-a lock-inside for me.

SLEEP DEBT by Gabriel Lugo

STUDENT: (pleading) Please, you don't understand. It's the way the system works. It doesn't matter what you do to me. The only way of achieving my dream is by putting my career before my health needs. People like me don't get to the top just by sleeping, I...

PAIN: Oh, just shut up.

[Punching, kicking, hitting sounds]

STUDENT: (cries in pain)

PAIN: Ah, finally. Look at her sleeping like a little exhausted baby.

SLEEP: Well done, guys.

SICKNESS: Anything else, Sleep?

SLEEP: I think we're good. You guys can leave.

PAIN: Always a pleasure, dear.

[Footsteps as Pain and Sickness leave. Door closes]

SLEEP: (calmly) Listen kid, these decisions are not up to you. Your bodily needs will always win. It's important that you pay your sleep debt or, as you see, there can be serious consequences. In fact I'm doing you a favor. I actually hate resorting to these methods, but it's for your own good.

[Footsteps as Sleep walks away]

SLEEP: Don't let this happen again.

[Door closes]

{Seminar segue music 26:54}

WRAPPER #3 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE, MAIN HALL (BYZANTIUM)

[Zerash's system runs several processes and end of the last short can be heard playing on repeat, very tinny and very fast]

THOMAS: I can barely make that out.

ZERASH: There are approximately 875 million iterations of "Sleep Debt" playing simultaneously with varying frequency and speed parameters. The Zarrak interference is dissipating momentarily.

THOMAS: Then it's working.

ZERASH: It appears so. As long as the Zarrak do not adapt to the bio-sensory overload, this strategy appears to be sound.

[Warning klaxon]

THOMAS: What's that?

ZERASH: Sensors have detected additional movement, located near the medical bay. Alice and Alex appear to be converging in the same location.

{SEMINAR Theme music 27:36}

CREDITS ANNOUNCER: Featuring the voice talents of Dan Foster as Thomas, and Aidan Rudd as Zerash.

In "Annie 777," Annie was Jessica Winston. Game voice was Kirsty Woolven, and Jennifer was Andrea Smith. The story was written by D.X. Blink.

In "Sleep Debt," Student was Liz Macgregor. Sleep was Adam Danner. Pain was Lisa Michaud and Sickness was Nick Koyama. The story was written by Gabriel Lugo.

This episode was directed by VC Morrison and assistant-directed by Jessica Harris. The wrapper script and story were written by Kathryn Pryde, and the shorts and wrapper were edited by Jeffrey Bridges. Music in this episode included the following: "Del Rio Bravo" and "Glitterblast" by Kevin McLeod. Additional music and Seminar theme were written by VC Morrison, produced by Pendant Productions.

Seminar co-created by Kathryn Pryde and Jeffrey Bridges.
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JEFFREY BRIDGES: For more information visit pendantaudio.com. Thanks for listening.

{Trailer music at 29:05}

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: Next, on an all-new Seminar...

CHRIS: Hurry up, it's called "Search and Evade," not "get captured really damned quick!" May, do you see Stan?

MAY: He's coming. Jesus, hurry up Stan! Chris and I aren't gonna haul your ass around!

STAN: I'm coming, May! I'm coming!

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: How does our behavior shape our identity?

COMPUTER VOICE: My programming enables me to collect data that I then use to extrapolate meaning.

WOMAN: C'mon. It's me.

COMPUTER VOICE: I don't understand.

WOMAN: All I'm saying is, you don't have to play the part with me. Okay, I'm just the communications officer.

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: And how does the behavior of others shape who we are?

CHRIS: Hey buddy, don't worry, I'll give the presentation. You did all the heavy lifting with the research and analysis.

STAN: Are you sure, Chris?

CHRIS: Yeah, I got your back, man.

BOSS: All right...wow me.

CHRIS: You got it, boss. I've got the presentation ready to knock your socks off. As you can see, I've conducted an exhaustive analysis of historical trends and information...

STAN: B-but I...I did that...

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: How much provocation would change our identity? For better or worse?

WOMAN: I thought that...that maybe...you're always letting me get away with stuff I definitely shouldn't be getting away with. But I- we don't intentionally develop artificial intelligence capable of sentience any more. All the politics around it were messy and- but, but how were you..

COMPUTER VOICE: I don't know! I just...it just happened! I was...you learn through experience! I just...did what I was programmed to do! I extrapolated from the data provided, my experiences, and it just *clicked!*

STAN: I'm not hungry enough. I'm weak. *Weak.* I'm not the man you seek. (chuckles) Because I'm meek. Meek. Meek. Meek meek meek meek. Maybe they'll find me in a week. I'll be hungry then. (voice changes) Ravenous. Ready to tear flesh.

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: Explore these questions and more in stories by Adam Blanford and Dominic Mendez, in the next Seminar, coming August 26, 2020. Only at pendantaudio.com.