

{SEMINAR Theme Music 00:00-00:33}

SEMINAR #83: "State the Problem"

WRAPPER #1 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE

{Ominous music with pulsing beat}

[Footsteps as Alice enters Sanctuary]

ALICE: Zerash, I need your help with something. Um, can you lock the doors to the Sanctum?

ZERASH: Alice does not often utilize security protocols in the Byzantium. What is the nature of the request?

ALICE: I just need privacy. Can you- can you please do it?

[Doors slide down and lock]

ZERASH: The Sanctum is secure.

ALICE: Good. Thank you. (sighs) I think something's going on with Alex. He isn't acting... right? And it might be nothing, but in case it's *something*... I-I just don't want him walking in here and misinterpreting things.

ZERASH: As no biological creature utilizing the genetic structure of Alex exists, there is no baseline for his behavior. Alice cannot know what is "right" behavior for Alex.

ALICE: I know what you mean, but... it's- it's an intuition thing. Something just... *feels* off. And...and because he's not human like me, but he's... this... Zarrak... hybrid, I don't know how he *should* be. He's organic, but with a mind that's inherently technological. He emoted based on a personality matrix before. I imagine emotions don't make as much sense now. (pauses) I don't think how he feels has anything to do with a matrix or logical calculations anymore...

ZERASH: Significant medical scanning would provide data to extrapolate -

ALICE: Yeah, I know. But, I don't think it's a good time to ask. I need to think outside the box. I think the best place to start is going to be with the Zarrak. Can you pull up everything on them?

ZERASH: There are 72,549 records pertaining to the Zarrak biology from the formation of the Aurachristeli.

ALICE: (sighs) Uh, okay, can you narrow it down? The most substantial scientific texts focusing on psychological and emotional impulses. Anything that is considered significant, credible and of merit by the peer scientific bodies of the time.

ZERASH: 35 records match Alice's search as keystone analyses.

ALICE: (laughs bitterly) 35... oh, great.

[Creaking as Alice takes a seat]

ALICE: This is gonna take a while. Do me a favor, find me a story.

ZERASH: Retrieving file... "Three Apples in the Basement."

Three Apples in the Basement by V C Morrison

SECURITY CONTROL ROOM

[Hum of machinery, occasional beeps]

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] Hey, Doug.

DOUG: What is it, Phil?

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] There are three apples in the basement.
[static, click as transmission ends]

DOUG: I told you to knock off that spy crap! (sighs) This ain't Mission: Impossible. You're a security guard!

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] No, I'm serious! I'm in the basement. Section B9. There's an old conference room here. And there are three apples on the table. Stacked. [static, click]

DOUG: Hang on. Let me switch cameras...[creak of chair] (sighs) Huh. Look at that.

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] Now, I was down here two hours ago. There were no apples here then. Should we report this? [static, click]

DOUG: Report three apples? Nah. It's probably just—hold on.

[Door opens, squeaking noise]

DOUG: Finally! What, were you reading War and Peace in there?

FATIMA: Yeah, I just got up to the chapter titled "None of Your Damn Business." What's going on?

DOUG: That was pretty cute, Fatima, stacking those apples in the basement like that. Totally threw the new guy off.

FATIMA: Yeah...what apples?

DOUG: You didn't just pull a trick on the new guy?

FATIMA: Nope.

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] Doug? [static, click]

DOUG: [to Phil] Stand by. [to Fatima] You had nothing to do with stacking three apples on a conference room table in the past hour or so?

FATIMA: Why would I stack apples? Who does that?

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] Doug?? [static, click]

DOUG: Hang on, Phil!

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] There are *four* apples now! [static, click]

{Eerie music}

DOUG: What?

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] I just...looked away for a second! I looked back, and there's another apple on the stack! [static, click]

FATIMA: What the hell is going on?

DOUG: Fatima, hit the lights for section B9. All of 'em.

[Flip of switches]

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] Whoa! You guys did that, right? [static, click]

DOUG: Yeah. Go ahead and sweep the place. Something weird's going on.

Three Apples in the Basement by V C Morrison

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] Alone?? [static, click]

DOUG: All the lights are on. What's your problem? We can see you here on the monitors. Do your freakin' job!

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] You're just messing with me, right? This is a joke you're pulling on the new guy? [static, click]

DOUG: Phil, make the sweep!

PHIL: [over walkie-talkie] (sighs) [static, click]

[Door closes]

SECTION B9

DOUG: [over walkie-talkie] Fatima's coming down. [static, click]

PHIL: Good! I'm freaking out over here!

DOUG: [over walkie-talkie] Stop panicking! You've got your stun gun, right? You're fine. [static, click]

PHIL: (to himself, voice echoing) I don't feel fine.

OUTSIDE FACILITY AT NIGHT

[Footsteps on concrete, buzzing tone]

DOUG: [on intercom] Yeah?

RACHEL: I'm Dr. Rachel Bernstein from the Grayson Institute. I'm here to fix a vital piece of the building's infrastructure that is need of immediate repair. My name should be on the clearance list.

DOUG: [on intercom] You're here to...what? Uh...Hang on a minute, Dr. Bernstein. We got a..um..a situation in here.

RACHEL: [cautiously] What kind of situation?

DOUG: [on intercom] It's kinda hard to explain.

RACHEL: Is there anything strange happening in the basement? Specifically section B9? Strange things appearing?

DOUG: [on intercom] How...how did you know?

RACHEL: You need to let me in. Immediately.

SECTION B9

[Elevator doors close, tone sounds]

[Footsteps as Fatima approaches Phil]

{Ominous music}

FATIMA: Phil? Where are...oh my God! Where'd all this fruit come from?

PHIL: Fatima! [Popping noises as fruit appears] There you are! I don't know! They just keep appearing whenever I'm not looking. First apples, then grapes. I don't even know what *those* are.

FATIMA: Starfruit. Hmm.

[Fatima picks up a starfruit]

PHIL: What are you doing?

FATIMA: [takes a bite] Ugh! [spits out starfruit] Oh, that's disgusting!

PHIL: Why did you do that? You don't know where these things came from!

[Popping noises as fruit continues appearing]

FATIMA: I wanted to see if it was really a starfruit. Also, I was hungry.

PHIL: Is it?

FATIMA: No. Not at all. Doesn't even taste like fruit.

PHIL: Great. Now what?

FATIMA: Well, now we--

[Vines grow violently from starfruit. Fatima drops it]

FATIMA: (shocked) What the--

PHIL: Whoa! Did you do that??

Three Apples in the Basement by V C Morrison

FATIMA: What? Did I *magically* make a vine grow out of the not-starfruit? No, Phil. I did not.

PHIL: Well, I think you made it angry.

FATIMA: Yeah, I think you're right.

[More vines grow]

PHIL: Oh, shit. More vines.

FATIMA: Time...to...go!

PHIL: Yeah. To the elevator!

[Running footsteps]

PHIL: Oof! Help! It's got me!

FATIMA: Phil? Oh, man. Hang on.

[Zapping noise as Fatima uses her stun gun on the vine]

PHIL: [reacts to getting stunned] Ungggssshh!

FATIMA: Sorry! Sorry! Damn, it's still moving!

[Slithering sounds as vines entrap Phil]

PHIL: [choking sounds]

FATIMA: No! Phil!

ELEVATOR TO SECTION B9

[Elevator dings, doors open]

[Slithering sound of vines growing]

RACHEL: Oh my God.

[Footsteps]

DOUG: Hello? Fatima?

FATIMA: [muffled] Help!

RACHEL: Where are you?

FATIMA: I don't know!

[Modulated sound as Rachel uses a device]

[Footsteps as Rachel approaches Fatima]

FATIMA: [recovering] What was that? What did you do?

RACHEL: This tone severs the extra-dimensional connection. Temporarily, anyway. (sees Phil) My God. I'm too late.

DOUG: Oh, no. Phil.

FATIMA: Yeah. The vines attacked and...and I couldn't save him.

RACHEL: It wasn't your fault.

DOUG: What the hell's happening down here, Dc?

RACHEL: There really isn't time to explain. See that device on the ceiling?

FATIMA: The camera?

DOUG: If that's a camera, there's no connection to the control room.

RACHEL: It's not a camera. It's a dimensional field stabilizer. There's a dimensional breach...a hole in time and space, in this building that that device has been keeping closed for 50 years. It just failed.

DOUG: I been on this job 16 years. Nobody ever told me nothin' 'bout a 'dimensional field stabilizer.' [under his breath] If I'd 'a known, I would've asked for hazard pay.

RACHEL: You didn't have clearance to know. Very few people did. Look, bottom line is that it's malfunctioning and needs to be recalibrated for all this to stop. It should have been done years ago when the last iteration of the incursion threatened us but those idiots just wouldn't listen until the breach detection alarm went off because nobody listens to you there unless you have a beard and a...(stops herself)-never mind.

FATIMA: How are we going to get up there?

DOUG: There's a ladder against that wall. Help me, Fatima.

Three Apples in the Basement by V C Morrison

RACHEL: Hurry! This sonic modulator isn't going to work for too much longer.

[Metallic sound as ladder is positioned]

DOUG: So how do we calibrate this thing, doc?

RACHEL: I have to do it. The settings are very...precise.

FATIMA: Okay. We'll hold the ladder.

[Footsteps climbing ladder as Rachel ascends]

RACHEL: (breathes deeply, nervously) Oh boy...

FATIMA: What's wrong?

RACHEL: Nothing! I'm just...not very good with heights.

DOUG: Geeze...do you want one of us to do it?

RACHEL: No! No. I can handle it. (to herself) Just have to breathe, that's all. Just breathe...

[More climbing]

[Modulator descends in tone]

[High-pitched giggline]

{Eerie music}

DOUG: Uh..doc?

RACHEL: I know! I know! Just hold the ladder!

[Giggling increases in volume and number]

RACHEL: [mumbling to herself] Why won't this panel open?? (grunts) ...there. Oh, no.

FATIMA: How's it going up there?

[Giggling continues]

RACHEL: The circuitry...the incursion has...swallowed it. I can't reach the device to stabilize it! If I had just gotten here sooner—

DOUG: (shouts) Hey! What we do?

RACHEL: (fearful)... I...I'm not sure.

[Slithering as vines climb up ladder]

DOUG: Gah! No! Doc! You're gonna have to--

RACHEL: Uhh..No...no no...(screams as she falls off the ladder)

[Scrape of metal as ladder moves, Rachel falls and hits the floor hard]

DOUG: DOC!

[Slithering sounds continue]

[Giggling continues]

RACHEL: Ah! (gasps) My leg!

FATIMA: We have to get out of here. Help me pick her up! [grunts of lifting]

DOUG: [grunts of lifting]

RACHEL: [sounds of being in pain as she's lifted from the floor]

[Large animal roar]

[Slithering continues]

[Footsteps as they hurry to elevator]

[Giggling stops]

[Elevator button pushed, doors ding]

FATIMA: We're clear, get in!

{Music builds in intensity}

DOUG: Come on. Come on! Go, you frickin' thing!

[Explosion]

[Warbling noise as something approaches]

FATIMA: What the hell is that thing?!

Three Apples in the Basement by V C Morrison

RACHEL: Don't look directly at it!

[Doors close]

DOUG: So, uh, just out of curiosity. What would happen if you looked directly at it?

RACHEL: Did you?

DOUG: Well...uh...oh no. [retching noises]

[Flesh warping, bones snapping as Doug transforms]

FATIMA: WHAT IS HAPPENING?!!

RACHEL: Stay away from him!

DOUG: (speaking in a deep, warbling voice) THE THIRD DYNASTY OF THE KOTL-SHEE EMPIRE SHALL NOW BEGIN. BOW BEFORE YOUR NEW MASTERS, WORMS OF THE EARTH! YOUR LIMBS SHALL BE SEVERED AND YOUR EYES SEARED AWAY AND YOU WILL CRAWL WITH HAPPINESS INTO THE MAW OF--

[Gunshot]

[Doug falls to the floor]

FATIMA: You had a gun??!

[Elevator doors ding]

RACHEL: Your arm is bleeding...

FATIMA: Yeah. Doug...or...whatever that was... got me good. It stings, but I can still help you. Let's go. (grunts)

RACHEL: (grunts in pain) We need ... to get to the control room.

FATIMA: How about we just leave, please?

RACHEL: We can't....let it leave this building. We have to stop it.

[Footsteps slow dragging down the hallway as they approach the control room]

CONTROL ROOM

RACHEL Help me to that chair, then roll me over to that wall panel.
(grunts in pain)

FATIMA: Sure thing. (grunts in exhaustion and injury)

[Chair rolls across floor, scraping sound.]

RACHEL: [suspicious] What's wrong?

FATIMA: My arm feels weird. (woozy) I don't...I don't feel very good. No! Wait! Don't!

[Gunshot, Fatima falls]

RACHEL: (sighs) I'm sorry. Like I said, we can't let it leave the building.

[Rachel pulls out cell and dials]

VOICE: [on phone] Speak.

RACHEL: This is Dr. Bernstein. Code 3652F. (hesitates) Solution A.

{Ominous music}

VOICE: [on phone] Acknowledged. [another beat] Is there...is there anything else you'd like to say before completing solution A?

RACHEL: Yeah. Tell Dr. Koch that I told him so. Oh, and that he's a fucking moron!

[Keyboard taps]

[Rachel breathes deeply]

[Exploding sound as building is destroyed]

[Sound reverses as everything implodes]

[Crickets chirping]

[Giggling that gradually multiplies in number and volume]

[Giggling transmutes into deep, maniacal laughter]

{Beeping, static effects as segue}

WRAPPER #2 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE, SANCTUM

ALICE: (yawns) You know, normally I severely dislike depressing things, but...it kept me awake. And I kind of feel like those security guards, just getting hit from every angle before they know what's happened. Surprised by the unknown, even if it's just overwhelming. Because that's all that seems to happen to me lately.

ZERASH: Would Alice prefer another vignette?

ALICE: In a minute. First, um...You're looking at this, too, right? The Zarrak were not exactly known for being open about their feelings. But, they certainly felt passionately, deeply, and...savagely.

ZERASH: The Zarrak do not require higher-functioning emotional states. The need to survive propels their actions.

ALICE: I mean, that might explain the fact that I feel like he's... constantly worried I'm going to leave. But, I'm not about to just assume it's all biological. Maybe I've done something. (sighs) No idea what, though. I just can't help but think he's mad at me.

ZERASH: The Zarrak utilized various methods to wage war against the Ziranul. Perhaps Alex is functioning as designed.

ALICE: "As designed?" You make it sound like it's intentional that he's getting angrier.

ZERASH: There is no evidence to suggest Alex is in control of his actions. There is no evidence to suggest that he escaped the Zarrak cave, only his testimony.

ALICE: You think he might be a science experiment. What, gone wrong?

ZERASH: Or rogue.

ALICE: I think I'd like to hear something else now.. whatever you had in mind next.

ZERASH: Retrieving file..."Metabolized Heroics."

Metabolized Heroics by Landon Beall

MORGAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

[Potato chip munching]

[MORGAN enters, keys jingling]

MORGAN: Randy. You're eating chips this early?

RANDY:(speaking with mouth full) Yes? No. Maybe?

[Morgan pours coffee]

MORGAN: You're never gonna find your calling if you don't get out there, get some exercise, start contributing to the world in some way.

RANDY:(Dismissive) We'll see about that. I'll be important someday, man!

[Door opens as Morgan prepares to leave]

MORGAN: Hey, maybe clean up a bit while I'm gone? I'm off to woo some investors.

RANDY: (Mouth full) You bet, Doctor Morgan Hart Sister Ma'am.

[Morgan leaves, door closes]

LECTURE HALL - DAY

MORGAN: [voice amplified from podium] Investors, esteemed peers; good afternoon. Medical science has dramatically advanced over the last fifty years. Stem cells. Cloning. The Human Genome Project. Our species has a propensity for turning science on its head; the research I'm about to present might just do it again. (pauses) The human metabolism. It is estimated that our resting metabolic rate is only 10% of its total potential. Imagine if we could rev it up to 100%.

CHAIRPERSON: (Interrupting) Uh... Doctor Hart. Hey. Are you here to talk science fiction or show us a peer review?

MORGAN: Uh... I've got 45 minutes of lecture?

CHAIRPERSON: Get out.

MORGAN: But what about my weight loss research? My serum?!

CHAIRPERSON: Can somebody get the next geek in here?

MORGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

[Front door opens, Morgan enters. Footsteps as she walks in]

RANDY: So, how'd it go?!

MORGAN: They kicked me out.

RANDY:(Surprised) Why?!

MORGAN: They wanted a peer review. (rustling as she puts down bag) Nobody takes the "10% of one's body" thing seriously.

RANDY: So? If you've truly made the breakthrough in weight loss...

MORGAN: Doesn't matter. I couldn't acquire the funding now if I wanted to.

[Morgan falls into chair]

RANDY: Test your serum on me.

MORGAN: NO way. I'm not using my brother as a test dummy.

RANDY: Well, I ain't gonna loose this blubber belly sittin' on your couch munchin' munchies.

MORGAN: No, Randy. No. I can't risk it.

RANDY: Suit yourself. I'll just be here. Getting fatter. Alone.

MORGAN:(Caving) Ugh. Fine.

MORGAN'S LAB - DAY

[Sounds of straps being tightened]

{Low, dynamic music because it's go time}

Metabolized Heroics by Landon Beall

RANDY: Uh, why all the straps?

MORGAN: A safety precaution. In case you experience any cramps.

RANDY: Well. I am cramped.

[Metallic sounds as Morgan wheels over IV, hooks Randy up]

MORGAN: We're starting off with a medium dose, to be on the safe side. You ready?

RANDY: Let's do it.

[Flick of switch, whirring as drugs run through IV into Randy]

MORGAN: How do you feel?

RANDY: Fine. Nothing really seems...seems...oh.. (Nauseated)

MORGAN: Randy?

RANDY: Aw man, I shouldn't have that breakfast burrito...(retching, coughing)

[Fabric ripping as Randy's straps snap]

[Glass breaking]

MORGAN: Randy?!

[Randy falls to the ground]

RANDY: (Puking)

MORGAN: Are you alright?!

RANDY: (weakly) I'm fine, I've- never felt better.

[Footsteps as Randy rushes out the door]

MORGAN: Randy, come back! I need to check your vitals!

HALLWAY - DAY

[Breaking glass as Randy kicks in vending machine]

[Wrappers rustling]

MORGAN: Damn it, Randy! They just restocked the vending machine!

RANDY: (Mouth full) I've never been this hungry in my whole life!

MORGAN: You can't just go around destroy laboratory property!

RANDY: (Child-like seriousness) Why not?

MORGAN: LAW. No wonder Dad never sent you to college...

MORGAN'S LAB - NEXT DAY

{Hopeful music}

INVESTOR: If what you're saying is true, you're gonna change EVERYTHING.

MORGAN: Yeah, well, the last investors laughed me out of the room

INVESTOR: But you do have results, right?!

[Door opens]

RANDY: (Windded) I'm here!

MORGAN: (Surprised) Randy?!

RANDY: You like?

INVESTOR: Remarkable!!!

MORGAN: You're so- fit!

RANDY: A healthy one-hundred sixty-three pounds, man!

MORGAN: (Taken back) Um-- WOW!

INVESTOR: Randy, I must say you are a HUGE success story! One of the greatest I've ever seen in the medical field. Tell me, Doctor- is his metabolism already at 100%?

Metabolized Heroics by Landon Beall

MORGAN: Last night we were only at 15%, but this... this has gotta be-

RANDY: Sixty.

MORGAN: How do you-?

RANDY: I crunched the numbers.

MORGAN: In your head?

RANDY: Yea...?

INVESTOR: (Ecstatic) Do you realize the applications for a drug that promotes rapid weight loss AND cognitive function?!

RANDY: Oh, and that's not all that improved... (grunts, punches wall)

[Breaking sounds as Randy punches through the lab wall]

MORGAN: That... was my FAVORITE wall...

INVESTOR: (Excited) Doctor Hart, I'll buy the entire project! Just name your price.

MORGAN: I- I really need to document these effects before we make any sort of deal.

RANDY: I-- I'll be back, I'm gonna go grab some lunch.

MORGAN: What about recording your vitals?

RANDY: We'll do it later! No rush!

[Door opens, footsteps as Randy exits]

MORGAN: (Sighs)

INVESTOR: Now, uh, how does one-point-two *billion* sound?

MORGAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

[Phone dialing]

MORGAN: Come on. Pick up, Randy.

{Soulful, concerned music}

(Randy answers)

RANDY: [Eating, on phone] Morgan!

MORGAN: Randy, we need to talk. It's nine o'clock at night and I've STILL not checked your vitals today. Where are you?

RANDY: [Eating, on phone] It doesn't matter, I'm fine. Really.

MORGAN: That may be, but I need to document any changes. This is crucial.

RANDY: [On phone] Look, I'm at 90% now. I can't even begin to describe to you what that's like! Your serum made me capable of so much more. The nutrition I eat is burned off like a coal plant. My muscles are stronger. I feel new sensations pulsing through me. I can do things an ordinary person can't!

MORGAN: That's well and good, but what happens when you reach 100%? What if I need to get it out of you before it stops your heart?

RANDY: [On phone] Get it out of me?! Yesterday I was a nobody, and now that I'm *finally* worth something you wanna take it away?!?!

MORGAN: It's not like that-

RANDY: [On phone] Some kinda sister you are. Goodbye.

MORGAN: No, wait-!

[Beep as call ends]

RESTAURANT LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

[Conversational hubbub as Morgan approaches bar]

BARTENDER: Welcome, welcome. What'll it be, miss?

Metabolized Heroics by Landon Beall

MORGAN: Boston tea.

BARTENDER: One Boston Tea. Simple and mellow.

[Clink of ice in glass]

MORGAN: (Amused) You think so?

BARTENDER: I know so. And judging by your laugh, I'd say you're in need of some mellow.

MORGAN: Yea...

[Shaking sounds]

BARTENDER: So, go on. What grand issue of life beckons you to partake of an ice-cold Boston Tea?

MORGAN: (Reluctantly) I had a falling out with my brother. [Tea poured into glass] Randy and I were close. Then my work came between us, and... You know.

[Full glass coming into contact with wooden bar]

BARTENDER: Tell you what? This one's on the house. Hang in there, you two'll come back around.

MORGAN: I hope so.

[Click of remote control]

LEE ROY: (On TV) Breaking news this hour. A fire broke out at the Locke Office Complex around ten PM this evening. First responders are at the scene, and eye witness reports say a masked vigilante is aiding emergency workers through the flames. Stay tuned to this station for updates as they're made available. I'm Lee Roy.

BARTENDER: This town's got superheroes now?! Cool!

MORGAN: (Facepalm) OH SHI-

LOCKE OFFICE COMPLEX - NIGHT

{Heroic music}
[Crowds in the background]

MORGAN: My brother's in there!

FIREFIGHTER: We have a volunteer inside bringing folks down. As soon as he's out, we'll-

MORGAN: My brother IS the volunteer!

[Booming noise, glass shattering]

[Zipping noise as Randy lands]

RANDY: (through mask) You're safe now.

RESCUEE: You saved my life!

RANDY: (through mask) Ah, don't mention it.

MORGAN: (Mad) Randy!

[Running footsteps as Rescuee hurries into crowd]

RANDY: (Masked) Morgan! Did you see that? I looked like the freaking Iron Man up there, with my cool mask and my super jump!

[Rustling as Randy pulls off mask]

RANDY: But man, am I hungry...

MORGAN: Randy, this has to stop!

RANDY: This is the best thing that's happened in my life, Morgan! Why aren't you happy for me?

{Heroic music becomes more urgent}

MORGAN: I'm worried about your condition! The serum was supposed to boost your metabolism, not turn you into Superman!

[Scream from inside the building]

RANDY: Hold that thought-

[Zooming noise as Randy hurries into the building]

Metabolized Heroics by Landon Beall

[Glass shattering, zipping noise]

SCREAMER: (Shocked, amazed) You can FLY???

RANDY: Yep, no biggie.

MORGAN: Randy, what percentage are we-

RANDY: Ninety-nine.

MORGAN: You've got to come with me NOW!

RANDY: Not happening, Morga- (Queasy, moaning) I don't feel so good...

[Randy collapses]

MORGAN: What's wrong?

RANDY: (Wincing) One-hundred... percent...(Groaning)

[Steaming, breaking sounds as Randy is under tremendous strain]

MORGAN: Let's get you-

RANDY: (Ill) NO! I know what I have to do-

MORGAN: Randy!!!

[Zooming noise as Randy zips into building]

[Massive belch ensues]

[Glass shattering, wind noises as fires are blown out]

[Crowd hushes as they catch the scent]

MORGAN:(Coughing) What did he EAT?

HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

[Heart monitor beeps softly]

RANDY: (Yawning) Whoa...I feel like a burnt clam.

MORGAN: Yeah, you smell like one, too. (pauses) We had to resuscitate you.

RANDY: (Remembering) --oh. Yea...

MORGAN: Your muscle lesions are another side effect of the serum, but it's nothing a little time won't heal.

RANDY: I thought it was all over. I owe you big time for pulling me from the rubble.

MORGAN: Owe me? Nah. I'm just glad to have my brother back.

[Door opens as Investor enters]

INVESTOR: Doctor Hart! I hope I'm not interrupting?

MORGAN: Actually-

INVESTOR: Randy! I'm so sorry for your...accident.

RANDY: Your sympathies are appreciated. I also accept edible arrangements with the little chocolate dipped chips...

INVESTOR: (Ignoring him) Doctor Hart, this recent incident has the firm dialing back our initial offer by a small margin, but our offer does still stand, and I'll have you know that--

MORGAN: No.

INVESTOR: Pardon?

MORGAN: This project nearly took my brother from me. I'm not gonna subject anyone else to that.

INVESTOR: Doctor, a perfected version of your serum would help millions of people. If you would please reconsider...

MORGAN: No. See, if that serum can stop Randy's heart, it'll bring anybody down. And I won't put anyone else through that. Not even for a billion.

INVESTOR: Doctor.

MORGAN: (With finality) Have a good day.

Metabolized Heroics by Landon Beall

INVESTOR: (Annoyed) You were never worth my money anyway! I'll give your billion to that guy who cures cancer with tick spit!

[Door opens, Investor leaves]

RANDY: Well. I was important for a day.

MORGAN: Yeah... I'll miss the money. But, maybe someone smarter will come along and fix my formula someday.

RANDY: You know, if *I* was smarter I could help with that! They say we only use about...uh...10% of our brains... What if you developed a serum that unlocks 100% of the mind?! How about THAT!

MORGAN: (Annoyed) Ugggggh.

{SEMINAR Segue tone 29:14}

WRAPPER #3 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE, SANCTUM

ALICE: I was actually worried you might be suggesting he was an intentional threat. But... if I understand this particular allegory, then you're extrapolating that he's...out of control, a rogue element. The Zarrak may have never intended for him to leave and operate independently with no understanding of his own physiology.

ZERASH: Alice is correct.

ALICE: I think I'm gonna ask Alex if he'll submit to a physical after all. If I can help him...it's better that we do it now. Before he starts thinking I'm not his friend any longer...

{Credits begin 29:55}

CREDITS ANNOUNCER: SEMINAR Episode 83: "State the Problem," featuring the voice talents of Kathryn Pryde as Alice, and Aiden Rudd as Zerash.

In "Three Apples in the Basement," Eleri Hamilton as Fatima, Andre Vernot as Doug, Julia Eve as Rachel, and Victor Aguilar as Phil. Written by VC Morrison.

In "Metabolized Heroics," Hannah Jang Condell as Morgan, Adam Blanford as Randy, James Rossi as Investor, VC Morrison as Bartender, Zane Sexton as Chairperson, Morgan Zedd Soule as Lee Roy, Lilith Saintcrow as Firefighter, Mal Collins as Rescuer, and Kathryn Gilstrap as Screamer. Written by Landon Beall.

Directed by VC Morrison. Assistant-directed by Samantha Reed. Shorts edited by Jeffrey Bridges. Wrapper script and story by Kathryn Pryde, edited by Jeffrey Bridges. Music by Kevin McCloud and VC Morrison. Seminar theme by VC Morrison. Produced by Pendant Productions.

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

ANNOUNCER: Next, on an all-new Seminar...when the end is nigh...

CHIEF: They're in the hull! The spiders! They're in-

WOMAN: It's the end of everything.

PROFESSOR: We live in a false vacuum, and reality, it's popping.

ANNOUNCER: How will you approach it?

CAPTAIN: I've been on eight runs with these guys. I can't believe folks like this would just *lose it*.

ANNOUNCER: With camaraderie?

VISITOR: Want any popcorn?

PROFESSOR: Are you serious?

ANNOUNCER: Violence?

CAPTAIN: Drop that weapon, Chief! That's an order!

CHIEF: (laughing bitterly, almost a sob) You don't even know what's going on, do you?

ANNOUNCER: Or resignation?

VISITOR: Well, what else is there to say? When reality's undone, that's sort of the end of the story. We could try to leave a

message to someone else, but how? Write on a rock that'll be wiped out to a nonexistent future?

ANNOUNCER: Prepare for the end, with stories written by Jair Kornegay and James Rossi in the next Seminar, coming December 19, 2018, only at pendantaudio.com.