

{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 00:48-1:15}

SEMINAR #89: "For Every Season, A Time"
Script and Story by Kathryn Pryde

SEMINAR Wrapper #1 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE, MAIN HALL (BYZANTIUM)

ALICE: Zerash? Thomas?

[Sparking noises]

ALICE: Zerash? Bring the lights up! Zerash, answer me!

ZERASH: (stuttering) Kirash...rashi... mul ful...

ALICE: He scrambled you. I probably sound like gibberish to you now.

ZERASH: (Stutters again) Kirash...rashi... mul ful...

ALICE: If you can understand me, I need...lights. Anything!

[Lights powering up slowly]

ALICE: Oh, thank you! (pauses) Oh no, Thomas!

[Flick of switch]

ALICE: What did Alex do to you? Please don't be gone. Please stay with me. I'll get you back. Just hang on!

[Ratcheting noises]

[Beeps]

[Flick of switch]

THOMAS: P-p-power overload. A-attempting restoration.

ALICE: Yes! Hang in there, Thomas! C'mon, tick with me!

[Thomas blinks out]

ALICE: No! Thomas you have to stay with me or I'm going to die!
Please please please please please-

THOMAS: R-retrieving file: Anxiety.

{SEMINAR Segue music: 3:05}

Anxiety by Kaitlyn Kliman

TAYLOR'S OFFICE

[Typing on keyboard]

[Phones ringing in the background]

ANXIETY: You know I kind of think your boss hates you.

TAYLOR: Little busy here...

ANXIETY: Like, remember that time you were five minutes late because of traffic and your boss was like "Oh good, Taylor is here" but like, with a little bit of an attitude?

[Jordan walks up]

JORDAN: Heyyy Taylor!

ANXIETY: Oh Jordan DEFINITELY hates you.

TAYLOR: (muttered to Anxiety) Shut up. (speaking normally) Hey there Jordan. What's up?

ANXIETY: What's up? Wow, you're such a loser.

JORDAN: Hey everyone is gonna go to Blue's Pub around the corner at 5:30, wanna come?

TAYLOR: Oh. Uhmmm...

ANXIETY: They're just pretending to be nice. Ooh, or maybe it's a trap! You know like in those 80s movies, where the football captain asks out the nerdy girl to prom, and she gets aaaaall dressed up, waits outside, and then he drives by with his football buddies and throws eggs at her?! Maybe that'll happen.

TAYLOR: (sighs) I uhmm, have plans. Sorry.

JORDAN: Oh, no worries. (sincerely) Well, I hope I can see you at Blue's next time.

TAYLOR: Sure, yeah. Next time.

JORDAN: Oh before I forget, did you hear Shannon is leaving? They're going to be looking to promote someone soon. You should apply!

ANXIETY: Pfft, get out of here with that fake flattery!

TAYLOR: Oh...I don't know.

JORDAN: Just consider it. No one's a better analyst than you and I'm sure you'd be great at management.

ANXIETY: Management? Like with...people??? (laughs hysterically) Oh, that'll never work.

TAYLOR: (short and abrupt) I'll consider it. Thanks. Bye.

JORDAN: Oh, uhh okay. Bye.

ANXIETY: Real smooth.

TAYLOR: (sighs) It would have been nice to go out- OW!

ANXIETY: What? What is it?

TAYLOR: My chest kinda hurts.

Anxiety by Kaitlyn Kliman

ANXIETY: Oh no! That's a heart attack.

TAYLOR: No, I think it's just one of those weird pains that you get for no reason.

ANXIETY: You should go to the hospital.

TAYLOR: No, I think I'm okay. It's already going away.

ANXIETY: Good point, if you go to the hospital they might tell you something bad. Like, they'll send you into one of those claustrophobia tubes to look at your heart, but then they'll find a BIG 'OL wad of cancer.

TAYLOR: (groans)

ANXIETY: So it's obviously better if you don't go, you don't need that kind of stress in your life. But wait, then you'll probably die of the heart attack you're having...

TAYLOR: (groans louder)

ANXIETY: Wow, this is a conundrum. Honestly I think you're just gonna die either way. So the question is, do you want to know for a fact you're dying or just suffer through without a doctor confirming it?

TAYLOR: (fed up) UGH STOP STOP STOP! You are soooo insanely tiring! It's exhausting dealing with you. I wish you'd just go away!

[Jordan comes running over]

JORDAN: Taylor, are you okay? I heard yelling.

TAYLOR: Oh. Ummm, sorry about that. I'm fine.

JORDAN: (dubiously) Okay...

TAYLOR: Oh hey Jordan?

JORDAN: Yeah?

TAYLOR: My uh, plans seem to have changed. I'll see you at Blue's later.

JORDAN: Ooh awesome! I hoped you'd come. I'll see you later then.

TAYLOR: (excited) Yeah. Yeah! I will see you later!

BLUE'S PUB - MUCH LATER THAN 5:30

{Light jazzy music}

Background noise of people chatting]

JORDAN: Taylor! I was worried you wouldn't make it.

TAYLOR: Sorry, sorry! I had to finish up that report, you know how Dan is.

KYLE: Do my eyes deceive me? Did Little Taylor really make it out to socialize?

TAYLOR: (annoyed) Heyyy Kyle! Yeah, I...wanted to socialize! So here I am. Socializing.

KYLE: This is a monumental occasion. I'm getting a round of shots.

TAYLOR: Oh I don't think I'll...(pauses)

KYLE: Aww, no shots for Little Taylor?

TAYLOR: You know what, I will have a shot.

KYLE: YES! That's what I want to hear!

[Multiple shot glasses clinking on the bar]

TAYLOR: Okay, bottoms up!

[Taylor throws shot back, glass clinks on bar]

TAYLOR: WHOO-HOO-HOOO! Oh wow, that really hits ya. (deep breath) AGAIN!

Anxiety by Kaitlyn Kliman

KYLE: Hell yeah again! Little Taylor is here to party!

[Multiple shot glasses clinking on the bar]

JORDAN: Tay, is that a good idea?

TAYLOR: Uh, it's the best idea I've ever had.

[Shot glasses clink on the bar, Taylor takes another]

TAYLOR: Ohhhh yeah, that's the stuff! WHOO!

KYLE: Taylor, you wanna ditch this lame-ass pub and go to the new club on 51st?

JORDAN: Isn't that the neighborhood people keep getting mugged in?

TAYLOR: (slurring words) Ohhh it'll be fiiiiiiiiine ya buzzkill! Kyle, let's go!

51ST STREET - LATE AT NIGHT

[Click of shoes on sidewalk]

[Traffic noises]

TAYLOR: (very drunk) Are we there yet?? I just- I just want to dance! And I'm hungryyyyy-HEY is that a McDonald's bag?

{Dance music with bass}

[Crinkling bag as Taylor picks it up]

TAYLOR: Scoooooore, friiiiiies!

KYLE: (disgusted) Uh, Taylor? You don't know where those have been.

TAYLOR: (already eating) So? It's fiiiine. Stop being such a worrywart. Is that the club across the street?

KYLE: (disgusted noise) Um, yeah. Hey, hey wait a minutes!

[Taylor takes off across the street]

KYLE: Taylor! Taylor there's a car!

TAYLOR: There's a what?

[Squealing tires and a thud]

HOSPITAL

[Faint beeping from heartrate monitor]

TAYLOR: (startled) What the-

ANXIETY: Heyyyyyy buddy!

TAYLOR: (groans sarcastically) Oh good, you're back.

ANXIETY: Hey, I'm not exactly thrilled with you either!

TAYLOR: Where were you?

ANXIETY: You seemed like you needed some space so I left you alone for a bit. But look at you! It's been what, 12 hours and you got smashed on Jaeger, ate some street fries, and got hit by a truck!

TAYLOR: But I really wanted to go out and you convinced me not to! I want friends and that sucks to always worry they secretly hate me.

ANXIETY: Huh. Fair point. I suppose there's a middle ground between the ultimate safety of home and (shudders)...street fries.

TAYLOR: (sighs) This isn't working. Obviously.

[Footsteps as Nurse walks in]

NURSE: Hey there Taylor, glad you're awake! How are you feeling?

TAYLOR: (defeated) Oh, I'm alright. I guess.

Anxiety by Kaitlyn Kliman

NURSE: Well, considering you were hit by a pretty sizable truck, I'll take okay. Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable?

ANXIETY: She looks busy, better not bother her.

TAYLOR: Nah. (pauses) Well, actually...this is kind of unrelated but, do you know someone I could talk to about some...mental health stuff?

NURSE: Absolutely. Tell me a little bit about what's going on, so I can help figure out where best to send you.

ANXIETY: Uhhh, she wants us to talk about feelings? NOPE NOPE NOPE too scary!

TAYLOR: (deep breath) I...feel like I struggle with anxiety. A lot. It really negatively impacts my life and friendships...well, I don't have friends so I guess it can't impact what doesn't exist. I just feel like there's this constant push away from anything remotely scary and I'm just having a really hard time.

NURSE: Anxiety is tough. And you know what? So is asking for help. Seriously, you should be proud of yourself, I know that can't have been easy. Tell you what, I'll go chat with the doctor and they can get you a referral to go talk to a therapist. How does that sound?

TAYLOR: (relieved) That'd be great. Thank you.

TAYLOR'S OFFICE - WEEKS LATER

[Rustling paper, typing]

JORDAN: Taylor! I'm so glad to see you back in! How are you doing?

ANXIETY: Bah, Jordan's just trying to be polite.

[Creak of chair]

[Taylor breathes deeply]

ANXIETY: (softer volume) I mean, why would anyone here care? They all just pretend to be nice and...hey! Hey are you listening to me?

TAYLOR: (talking over Anxiety) I'm alright. I couldn't exactly come in with two broken legs so it's a good thing I had all that sick leave saved up.

JORDAN: Well, I'm happy you're back. Hey, would you like to go somewhere after work to celebrate? Not to Blue's. Unless you want? I just figured you'd wouldn't want to go back there.

ANXIETY: (softly) No! Don't do it! Socializing is scary, nooooo!

TAYLOR: How about ice cream?

JORDAN: I would LOVE ice cream. 5:30?

TAYLOR: It's a date! (embarrassed) Oh uhh, shoot sorry, you know the expression...it's obviously not a...unless- unless you want it to be?

JORDAN: It's a date.

[Jordan walks away]

ANXIETY: [Regular volume] Should I go ahead and start listing the ways that date is probably going to go wrong?

TAYLOR: (groans) Am I ever going to be rid of you?

ANXIETY: HMMMMMMMM- no. At least, probably not completely. Anyway, where was I? (softer) You'll probably say something stupid and embarrass yourself. You're such a klutz too, I bet you'll trip and fall on the way in. Oooh, or maybe you'll eat too much cheese, forget your lactaid pills, get super gassy and rip a big fart! Or maybe you'll just vomit...so many possibilities here.

TAYLOR: (talks over Anxiety) You know what? That's okay. I have a date. (sighs) Baby steps.

THE END

{Seminar Segue music 12:35}

SEMINAR Wrapper #2 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE, MAIN HALL (BYZANTIUM)

ALICE: (sighs) Ooooh...okay, oh that file's right. I have to- I need to calm down. I need to think. I cannot panic-

THOMAS: P-p-p-power at...fifteen percent. And falling. Restoration at...fifty...percent.

ALICE: You can't lose power while you're trying to restore. I could lose you completely!

[Sparking noises]

[Light thumping noise]

ALICE: This battery pack should work but...if I take it, I have no idea how long we'll have for the shutters. (pauses) To hell with it!

[Clicking noise, beeping]

THOMAS: Power levels...rising. Restoration at...seventy-five percent.

ALICE: I knew you had some life left in you! Okay, once we get you up and running-

[Sparking noise]

THOMAS: Query a-acknowledged.

ALICE: Wait, what?

THOMAS: Retrieving file: "Last Life."

{SEMINAR Segue music 13:32}

LAST LIFE by VC Morrison

Outside in the countryside. Sheep.

[Footsteps on gravel]

[Sheep noises, continues through scene]

[Birds chirping, continues through scene]

DURAND: There you are, Fournier. A sheep farmer? Really? I thought you'd outgrown these...peasant habits.

FOURNIER: One does not outgrow simplicity, Durand. Indeed, simplicity becomes more appealing later in life.

DURAND: I prefer the simplicity of a private jet and a credit card. You know why I'm here.

FOURNIER: Of course.

DURAND: Cutting it close this time. Unless...you're trying to bail. (pauses) Dammit, Fournier! Say something!

FOURNIER: I'm thinking about it.

DURAND: (sighs) How can I rid you of this foolish notion?

FOURNIER: Haven't you lived long enough, Durand? Have you not tasted all that life has to offer these past 1500 years?

DURAND: I daresay I have not. Mankind's getting to the point where space travel will become a reality. Don't you want to walk on Mars one day? Or be part of a colony on some other planet somewhere in the universe?

FOURNIER: (snorts) And what happens to our cabal then, hmm? Being scattered across the cosmos would certainly make it hard to renew the ritual every 50 years.

DURAND: Oh, I'm sure we'll manage. (chuckles) Remember the time Haggard died climbing Mount Kilimanjaro and was reborn 200 miles away in some backwards village? We had to hire mercenaries to comb that village and find the baby with the correct scar on his arm.

FOURNIER: None of us expected the baby to be a girl.

DURAND: Which is why it took so long! He...then she...was the first of us to change sexes in rebirth! (laughs) Oh, the point is, we were able to find her quickly and perform the ritual when it was time so all of us could keep living. Technology... keeps advancing.

FOURNIER: And yet, the human soul does not.

LAST LIFE by VC Morrison

DURAND: Is that it? You're tired of humanity?

FOURNIER: They will never change, Durand. We've seen war after war. Humanity making the same mistakes again and again.

DURAND: Why do you care? Just live your life.

FOURNIER: And *that* is why we've lived too long.

DURAND: What are you saying?

FOURNIER: *We* are human, Durand! Despite the dark forces to which we've given our souls, we are still a part of this species!

DURAND: And yet, we watch them grow and die around us, while we live on.

FOURNIER: We age as well.

DURAND: Oh, but not in the same way. And not terminally. Come! Let us get out of this stinking field and have a drink. I passed a pub about a mile back. My treat.

FOURNIER: You are avoiding my point. The mistakes of humanity are our mistakes as well. (sighs) I thought, when we began this journey that we would mature, evolve. Become as gods with the knowledge and experience we collect.

DURAND: And haven't we? All seven of us, save you, are masters in their field, or were at some point before retiring for a life of luxury.

FOURNIER: Luxury. That is the end goal for you, for the others.

DURAND: Is it not humanity's end goal? To live a life free of drudgery and boredom? To have endless entertainment? It is what we've seen cultures evolve to. We all have information and entertainment at our fingertips at all times.

FOURNIER: No, not all. You, with the wealth you've accumulated over centuries, can't imagine life without privilege. You can't imagine hunger.

DURAND: What happened to you, Fournier? You weren't always like this.

FOURNIER: (thoughtfully) In 1861, I was hunting big game in India and was killed. I was reborn as a Harijan. Do you remember that?

DURAND: Indeed. We had a devil of a time finding you before the ritual. No one bothered to keep track of Untouchables.

FOURNIER: For 30 years, I lived a life of poverty and ostracization. I knew what it meant to be human but not be treated as such.

DURAND: Oh, please...you forget I was reborn as a slave in the Americas.

FOURNIER: And you were found by us when you were still but a child and immediately brought into a world of wealth. Do you remember any of your time as a slave?

DURAND: I...have a single memory. My mother had dropped a dish and was struck across the face. I felt great anger, but was powerless. Years later I hunted down the man who had owned my mother and had him strung up by his ankles and whipped to death.

FOURNIER: So for you, lack of power was temporary. A...minor inconvenience in the grand scheme.

DURAND: Your point?

FOURNIER: The majority of humanity does not have the option to live in poverty or wealth.

DURAND: And that is a shame. But it is not our problem.

FOURNIER: It will be.

DURAND: Whatever can you mean by that?

FOURNIER: We're on the verge of another Dark Age.

DURAND: Bullshit. Conspiracist thinking.

FOURNIER: We do not learn, Durand. For all our knowledge and technology, humanity is trapped in its own cycle. We grow, we flower, we wither. And between...chaos.

DURAND: And you think we're withering? Really?

LAST LIFE by VC Morrison

FOURNIER: Those at the top do not notice the water rising.

DURAND: You're bringing climate change into this?

FOURNIER: The time of chaos will be upon us soon. I thought at one point we could do something about it.

DURAND: (laughs) Do what? We are but seven. Did you fancy us some sort of superheroes? That we could right wrongs with the pummeling of a "bad guy?"

FOURNIER: I believed our accumulated knowledge and wisdom could be used for the betterment of our species.

DURAND: And now?

FOURNIER: I believe only in the futility of the effort.

DURAND: To borrow a term in the current vernacular, "Sad story, bro." I feel your pain, Fournier, but--

FOURNIER: You were ever the bad liar, Durand.

DURAND: Oh, fine. I think this mode of thinking is absurd. You're depressed! I get it! But that's no reason to deprive the rest of us of our immortality!

FOURNIER: Where does it end, Durand? How far will we go? Will we watch humanity die out around us? Will we gaze in horror as a new sentient species rises? Will we eat popcorn as we watch them make the same mistakes as humanity, over and over?

DURAND: If you really feel this way, we could put you in a coma. Let you live your life asleep, only waking you to take part in the ritual.

FOURNIER: That seems...excessive.

DURAND: Do you have another solution that does not end in the termination of our group?

FOURNIER: (sighs) I wish we had never created that pact.

DURAND: I remind you that you had the option of backing out all those years ago. We were very explicit that there would be no turning back. All of us made a choice.

FOURNIER: A gruesome one. Eating the still-beating hearts of seven children on the night of the new moon. Do you ever dream about them, Durand? I do. I see their mournful faces staring up at me. I cannot hear them but I see them mouthing, "Why? Why? Why would you do this to us?" (chokes off sob)

DURAND: Oh, I've had enough.

[Thud as Durand strikes Fournier with a cudgel]

[Fournier hits the ground]

FOURNIER: [grunts]

DURAND: For goodness' sake. Such drama! Guess I'll have to drag you--what's that next to you, old friend? Why were you holding a pinecone? Where'd you even--oh, that's not a pinecone. Shit!

[Running footsteps]

[Explosion]

[Durand groans]

DURAND: (out of breath) Son of a bitch! He was holding a grenade the whole time! (laughs) Oh, that's a good one!

[Cell phone dialing]

DURAND: Yes, it's me. Yes, he went through with it. Dead man's switch. I know! Well played, I say! Do we have the teams ready? Yes, a 200 mile radius. That seems to be the maximum distance. Every child born within the next few hours must be checked. (pauses) And send a helicopter, would you? I don't feel like walking all the way back to town. No, no, I'll call the others, make sure they're ready for tomorrow night. (pauses) Oh, we'll find him. Don't fret. And we'll feed that chicken heart to his infant self, kicking and screaming. (laughs) Yes, it is a bit of fun, isn't it? He may be a pain in the ass, but Fournier does make immortality interesting! See you soon.

[Crunch of gravel as Durand walks]

[Durand whistles jauntily]

LAST LIFE by VC Morrison

THE END

{**SEMINAR Segue Music 22:58**}

SEMINAR Wrapper #3 by Kathryn Pryde

THE AURACH TEMPLE, MAIN HALL (BYZANTIUM)

THOMAS: Restoration at...eighty-five percent.

[Thudding noises on shutters]

ALICE: That story! That man...[thudding noises]...it sounds like what happened to Alex. Being reborn, having to learn it all again and then realizing what you are?

[Large thudding noise, creak of metal]

ALICE: No, no! Alex!

[Footsteps]

{**SEMINAR Theme music 23:37**}

CREDITS ANNOUNCER: Featuring the voice talents of Kathryn Pryde as Alice, Dan Foster as Alex and Thomas, and Adin Rudd as Zerash.

In "Anxiety," Amanda Friedlander was Taylor, Cindy Woods was Anxiety, Mike Thomas was Jordan, David Benson was Kyle, and Katie Milholland was Nurse. The story was written by Kaitlyn Kliman.

In "Last Life," Zoe Jenkins was Durand and Stewart Moyer was Fournier. The story was written by VC Morrison.

This episode was directed by VC Morrison. The wrapper script and story were written by Kathryn Pryde, and the shorts and wrapper were edited by Jeffrey Bridges. The music and Seminar theme were written by VC Morrison, produced by Pendant Productions.

Seminar co-created by Kathryn Pryde and Jeffrey Bridges. This production is copyright 2019, Pendant Productions.

For more information visit pendantaudio.com. Thanks for listening.

{Trailer music at 25:15}

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

MAN: The bunny slippers are a nice touch. Very professional. I'm sure it's what everyone's wearing to staff meetings these days.

WOMAN: Hey, who's Omega, remember? My product? The one you say I can never shut up about? My VR projection isn't being generated from my current clothes; it's a combination of my real-time movements and an avatar that was scanned on a day when I was wearing proper business-casual.

MAN: So you're cheating?

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: How true is the identity you share with the world? How much is the real you? And how much is created for appearance?

WOMAN: So, he and his team flew over to work out of our office for the week. And then, yesterday afternoon he just walked in through the door of my office unannounced.

MAN: And?

WOMAN: And I completely didn't recognize him! Total blank! He's all friendly and I'm thinking, "Who are you?" Thank god I stopped just short of saying that out loud before I figured out who he was. I'm still not sure I covered for it well enough. I think it was obvious I had no idea who he was.

MAN: But you see him every week! Using your product!

WOMAN: I've seen his Omega avatar every week!

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: What if you could change your identity at will, show the world only what you wanted them to see?

MAN #2: Yeah, one minute I'm at my desk, the next, I'm stuck in my head watching this smoky figure scare the bejeezus out of my cubemates! It did make for good office gossip, though!

MAN #3: Wait, how's that work exactly? The four of you in one body?

MAN #2: It's like being in a revolving door. Only one of us is outside at any one moment. The other three are stuck inside my head. From your perspective it kinda looks like a revolving door when we swap.

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: Which is the real you? And does it matter?

[Whirring noises]

[Groaning]

MAN #4: What the heck was that purple being?

WOMAN #2: That's the disintegration weapon, remember? Brett's gonna be toast! Better get him outta there!

MAN #4: Sidelined!

[Zapping noises]

MAN #5: Time to disarm the disintegrator ray! I'll focus on the battery pack!

MAN #6: What'd you pull me in for? I could've finished it!

MAN #4: No way! Look at you! Your mask is half-burned off and you took some heavy damage. Just stay in here for now.

MAN #6: Yeah, whatever...

TRAILER ANNOUNCER: Find yourself in stories written by Lisa N. Michaud and Joe J. Thomas in the next Seminar, coming December 18 2019, only at pendantaudio.com.