

Chapter 24: Let's Get Technical: Scaffolding Form, Content, and Assessment of Audio Projects

By Jennifer Ware and Ashley Hall, Independent Scholars

2. "The Calming Method" by Anonymous

In "The Calming Method," when two scientists, Thaddeus and Anne, are unable to conceive a child, they'll go to any means to create one. But what consequences await them when they create a monster?

Transcript

[Low hum, computer beeps in regular light tones. Lots of electric activity this continues throughout the scene. A tape recorder clicks to start recording. Static can be heard underneath the tape recording.]

Thaddeus: Personal logs, number 1. Anne has finished construction on our child, while I have finished reprogramming the A.I chip. We are so excited to become a family, all that's left is to insert the final component and flip her on.

[tape recorder clicks to end recording]

[computer keyboard typing, with keys and buttons clicking]

Thaddeus: And . . . one . . . last . . . piece. There we go. Would you like to do the honors, Mom?

Anne: I can't believe you talked me into doing this.

Thaddeus: Honey, you're supposed to say, "Certainly, Dad."

Anne: We could have just adopted a child, Thaddeus. We're practically stealing the government's money with this!

Thaddeus: We're not stealing. We made an A.I. as promised. She's just not a soldier, she's our daughter. I'd say we made improvements.

Anne: *[sighs]* Alright, alright, I don't want to argue. Let's wake her up . . . Dad. We're so gonna get fired.

[A switch clicks. Computers hum and spin, click click click, whirrrrrr, pulse.]

[Computer beeps, the room hums with new electricity.]

Thaddeus: *[muffled, distorted voice]* Hello? Can you hear me?

[computer hum and click]

Very deep, low voice: Hello. My name is Devorah. Who are you?

Anne: Dear, couldn't you have done something about the voice modulator?

Thaddeus: What are you talking about? She's our daughter—she doesn't need to change for us.

Anne: But, isn't it—

[Clunks and crashes and clinks interrupt Anne. The machine is trying to move. CRASH!]

Thaddeus: Are you alright? You shouldn't walk around on your own. You could get hurt. Here, let daddy help you.

[Single, heavy stomps, like walking. Mechanical walking.]

Devorah: Daddy?

Thaddeus: That's right, I am your daddy, and that beautiful young lady over there is your mommy.

Devorah: Mommy.

Anne: That's right, Devorah, I am your mommy. All three of us, we're a family.

Devorah: Family. I . . . I love you mommy, daddy.

Anne and Thaddeus in unison: And we love you, Devorah.

[Big crash, metal clanking. Tape recorder click.]

[Scratchy tape-recording sounds and static hums. Low station buzzer underneath playing regularly.]

Thaddeus: Personal logs, number 22. It's been three weeks since we activated Devorah. This week we tested her reflexes by shining lights in her face. *[clears throat]* Unfortunately, we learned that some of the A.I. Soldier Program is still encoded into her. She—she pinned me to the wall by my neck, almost killed me. Luckily, Anne and I created a failsafe for such situations: a repetition of buzzer sounds to keep her calm.

Devorah: Mommy, Daddy. Can I go outside to play?

Anne: No, Devorah. We've gone over this. Ugh, it's like talking to your father. Look, we'll be back soon; we have to go meet with our boss.

[A low creak and a heavy, metal door closes. Anne and Thaddeus have left the lab.]

Devorah: Mommy. Daddy. I wanna go play.

[A low creak and a heavy, metal door closes. Devorah has left the lab. Her footsteps make a heavy clanking noise as she walks. Devorah walks onto a gritty path for a little bit. She comes across a town with cars driving by. Violin strings play as a music track, there's tension in the air.]

[An outdoor mall, people chatting, birds chirping. Heavy footsteps and a sliding door opens to let the heavy footsteps through.]

Devorah: Have you seen my mommy and daddy?

Male Person: Ahh! Police! Police!

[Sirens wail in the distance, getting louder. Coming closer. A scanner hum scans the area.]

Devorah: Firearm detected. Activating self defense.

[loud laser boom]

[A tape recorder click. Static. Low buzzer sound intermittent in the background.]

Thaddeus: Personal logs, number 412. It's been over a year since Devorah escaped the lab and . . . slaughtered the nearby town. By the time we got there, everyone was dead. She ran off somewhere north, and that was the last we ever saw of her. The government covered up the incident as terrorist actions, but Anne and I were let go. We—we've been maintaining this station, UVB-76, playing the failsafe in case Devorah might hear it.

Devorah, if you're out there, please come home. Hello? Can you hear me?

[a tape recorder click]