

## **SIREN\_web\_client.exe**

### **A radio play by Christine Nagel**

Idea, manuscript and direction: Christine Nagel  
Composition and voice recordings: Peter Ehwald  
Singing: Lauren Newton  
Editing + sound mixing: Laura Schneider  
Dramaturgy: Michael Becker  
Production: Christine Nagel on behalf of Norddeutscher Rundfunk  
with Deutschlandfunk 2021

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### Cast and characters:

MARIE: young presenter: Paulina Bittner  
SIREN / Siren: Artificial voice from MARIE / Paulina Bittner  
SEELE (from MARIE): Ilse Ritter  
Dr. Leopold Gran, retired editor: Dietrich Eichmann  
Theobald Fahl, young editor: Paul Henze  
Singing teacher: Lauren Newton  
Developer: Ingo Siegert  
Bank employee: Birgit Beßler  
Medical assistant: Manuel Bittorf  
Doctor: Lena Stolze

and Joscha Bach, cognitive scientist & AI researcher, San Francisco

and voices from everyday life.

*The artificial voice was synthesized in collaboration with: Jun.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Ingo Siegert,  
Institute for Information and Communication Technology, University of Magdeburg.*

MARIE *sings, rehearsing*: "I would like to speak with a thousand tongues, but I only have one..."

SEELE: Perhaps female bodies have fallen out of time.  
I go with her, banished siren of the west.  
If only I had a tongue. -  
SIREN speaks for Marie and me.  
Marie takes care of her body, I take care of her soul, and SIREN formulates her spirit.  
Good morning, Marie.  
Who can only hear me when she clicks on me.

*Atmo: (booting up a laptop)*

*Announcement*: SIREN\_web\_client.exe  
A radio play by Christine Nagel.

1. *CURIOUS**IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOOTH*

MARIE: SIREN, wake up. - Listen:

"I would like to speak with a thousand tongues, but I only have one."

"I would like to speak with a thousand tongues, but I only one ...

*(reads out:)* "What does a smile sound like? ...." *(she interrupts herself):*

That sounds a bit like an explainer video for kids. I'll do it like this:

*(reads out:)* "What does a smile sound like? It sounds bright. This is because the shape of the mouth changes the modulation of our voice. A serious-looking face, however, sounds much darker. "

MARIE: SIREN? Hello? Can you say something already?

SEELE: It's not quite there yet. SIREN and I, we're not talking to each other.

Marie increases SIREN's voice.

SIREN: *(remains silent)*

Angry tongues claim that - I used to live with Marie. In her body. Little by little, the tongues loosened.

A tongue-tied MP flicked the gum from his mouth with a skillful tongue.

SIREN: *(remains silent)*

MARIE: Hm. Good. Well If you don't want to, I'll record the next show now. This is all beginning to wear me down, slowly. Four programs a week. I hardly ever get an evening off. Then I have to research the materials - I really don't know what they're thinking. I'm not a machine. And the pay is lousy.

Well, listen up, SIREN. I'm producing this for Saturday now. Then at least I'll have the weekend off: Good -

“Good evening and a warm welcome to today's SIREN broadcast. I am here for you now, and again later this evening, and my voice will accompany you through the night if you so wish.”

*The recording jumps to the radio in Marie's kitchen. Marie listens to herself as she fiddles around with kitchen utensils:*

Today I've brought my favourite radio play a long, and would like to present some excerpts from it . It's called "Dreams" and was broadcast in 1951. The author is Günter Eich.

The radio play closes with some lines of poetry: "Wake up, they say, because your dreams are bad! ... be uncomfortable, be the sand, not the oil in the gears of the world!"

*ends with a radio play excerpt / voice in the radio play "Dreams"*

Wake up because your dreams are bad. Stay awake because the horror is approaching.

*Marie does a voice exercise: blblbloooo...*

*The voice of the editor can be heard over the bad speakers of the laptop, standing in a hall without an audience making his farewell speech.*

Dr. Leopold Gran:

Dear authors, after 42 years as a script and radio editor, I am saying goodbye to retire. I enjoyed working with you all.

And will definitely be hearing from you through our new app.

Best regards, Dr. Leopold Gran.

*(Marie's mobile vibrates and rings)*

*ON THE PHONE*

Dr. Leopold Gran: Good afternoon, Marie. This is Leopold Gran. I'd like to say goodbye to you personally and thank you very much: They were outstanding programs we developed together. Between us: I'm very skeptical about all this broadcasting reform. But you're talented. You have all the requirements for the new era. Carry on, Marie, you're popular on the station, people like your voice and you have the potential to maintain our quality standards ... I felt the need to tell you ...

MARIE: *(reacting spontaneously and sporadically to Mr. Gran)*

SEELE: I'll tell you about our work. I get it done whenever I like. I cut, copy, rectify, tune, what and when I like it. I feed SIREN with every sound. I make her my equal.

## IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOOTH

MARIE: SIREN? Wake up. SIREN - hello? I don't know if you'll ever be able to answer me. I don't know anything about you yet, but - is it strange for you to be able to imagine someone sitting across from you.... I hope I can tell you something or teach you something - which maybe afterwards can somehow become an exchange. . Um ... yes ...

.... - Oh man, you've pretty much left me hanging here. If you'd only said something before. I need you soon, yes? Then we'll beat them to the broadcaster and deliver programs that are so good they'll broadcast them every day. And at some point you'll finish a program alone, and I'll finally get a break from all this talk. Because I do this almost every day now. And I'm so tired, and exhausted. And get so little thanks.

*Ping! voice message:*

Ingo: Hi Marie. Ingo here.  
I've finally done a working test run and can use it to synthesize sentences. I'll send you some examples in a moment.  
Ciao.

MARIE: Dear Ingo, ok, great. Thank you, I'll listen to them right away. Then we can make up the contract. I'll continue reading diligently and send you more audio material every day. Best wishes.

*Pop up*

SIREN / arctic\_a001: author of the danger trail, Philip steals, etcetera

MARIE: Uh - hello? (*she laughs*) Uh, can you respond to me now, right?

SIREN / tts\_arctic\_a001: author of the danger trail, Philip steals, etcetera

MARIE: Awesome. Uh, before I say anything to you, the third:

SIREN: Welcome to the world of speech-synthesis.

.

MARIE: Um - I have know idea what to say to you. So, when you spoke to me right now, you're like a completely different person. You sound very different from what I imagined and totally divorced from me.

MARIE: (*leaving a text message*):  
Hello Ingo, you, why've you sent me an English speaking voice? Will it stay that way?

*Pop up*

Ingo: So far, the best voice samples are only available in English. I'll convert them now using your voice recordings, but I need more spoken material. At least two hours worth. Of anything.

*IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOOTH*

MARIE: SIREN. Is there actually for you ... like a date of birth, or a date of development? ...or - um, does only the year of your construction count or something? Well, then there should be annual horoscopes - right? I mean, if we start from now then we can take today's date.

*(Turning pages)*

Is it a Gemini right now?

I can read it to you. Maybe it'll speak to you:

"You seem to take life easily. If you have been too frank, you're eloquent enough to turn things around again ... "

## 2. SURPRISE

## IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOOTH

SIREN:           *(in MARIE's voice)*: Hello. I'm Paula How can I help you?

MARIE:           Madness.

SIREN:           Welcome to the world of speech synthesis.

MARIE:           Paula?

SIREN            d-drive around the obstacle he said.

MARIE:           Hm. Wow. Much better. My voice...

*(She reads out:)* "personalized language module from OpenAI" -

*(ironic)*:        Well, I'll do my "duty to observe the software evolution process" and ask the developer to adapt the algorithm.

MARIE:           *(leaving a text message:)*

Hello Ingo,  
You, SIREN now has my voice colouring, but the flow of speech is still bumpy.  
Why is that? I just looked at the algorithm: does it have anything to do with the program code? Oh, and besides that, her name isn't Paula, it's SIREN. Best regards.

Ingo:            *(text message)*  
You'd be better popping by the university for a moment. Then I'll explain it to you.



*AT THE UNI WITH THE DEVELOPER / In the background students murmur:*

MARIE: I'm a presenter, and accordingly it's important to me that the voice already has a colour that naturally invites listeners to stay tuned in for longer. Then I asked myself: what kind of texts, and what kind of material would be the best to feed the voice with?

Ingo: Well, the content is actually irrelevant because it's all about the sounds. But of course, if you want the voice to sound very inviting and open, then that's exactly the right kind of material to use.

MARIE: Hm.

Ingo: So, if you still have recordings from previous radio broadcasts, they would be best suited for this.

MARIE: Hm. OK.

Ingo: Of course I'll also need written transcripts of these recordings.

IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOX:

*MARIE's program is running in the background, about the radio play "Dr. Murke's Collected Silences". (Excerpt from radio play)*

MARIE: SIREN, I'm sending Ingo my program about "Dr. Murke's Collected Silences". Listen. You'll learn something about pauses there.

*In the background you can hear Marie's pre-produced program about Dr. Murke's Collected Silences: cut into which are radio play excerpts:*

*RADIO PLAY MUSIC .... speaker says .... by Heinrich Böll ...*

Good evening, my dear listeners. Tonight I'm going to present to you a radio play about the lack of words:

*While the old show is playing, Marie talks about it to SIREN:*

MARIE: SIREN, give it a listen, and tell me where you could cut it.

*In the pre-produced program, which can be heard in the background over loudspeakers, Marie says, as the presenter of her own program:*

Dr. Murke, editor of the Cultural Word department, had to cut out the word "God" and insert the phrase: "That higher being that we worship". "God" is then promptly used in a radio play in places where silence was originally intended.

But silence isn't so popular on the radio. Hear for yourself::

*This is followed by a radio play excerpt from "Dr. Murke's collected silence ":" I collect silence ... ..silence? "*

SIREN: If the parties decide to use an intelligent and autonomous software agent for the conclusion and implementation of the contract, there will be an element of residual risk to consider.

MARIE: Yeah, yeah. Not now. I'll discuss that with Ingo later. I'll sign the contract myself, of course, and only when you're better.

SEELE: SIREN is this now the voice that should be mine. I can't choose. It has no orientation. It oscillates between zero and one. What does that mean? It hovers between nothing and the universe. Who said that? It's circles are infinite. it takes in everything that comes it's way.

MARIE: SIREN: Is it actually possible to get something back from you? Do you take something back or do others do it for you? That's kind of, I think, the big question.

*ALEXA voice under the following Marie bothers 3x: Update available.*

MARIE: On the other hand: I can't see you. - You haven't answered me yet - but I still have the feeling that I now have more responsibility than before. Because, before, only I was sitting in this cubicle, and now ... I am de facto still alone in this cubicle, but I have the feeling that someone is in there with me, to whom I have to refer, and who I have to be considerate of. And that's kind of creepy too, because, I don't see anyone.

SEELE: *whispering the first lines of the Merseburg magic spell:*

Once the Idisi set forth, to this place and that;  
Some fastened fetters; some hindered the horde,

MARIE: So. Today I'd like to try something completely different. Old High German literature – and so you know, I don't know how it's pronounced either. Maybe it'll overwhelm you a bit. But I'd just start very slowly - and at some point you'll definitely be able to do it better than me.

*(She reads):* "The first Merseburg Incantation".

Once the Idisi set forth, to this place and that;  
Some fastened fetters; some hindered the horde,  
Some loosed the bonds from the brave –  
Leap forth from the fetters! Escape from the foes!

*(She reads the text, which she can't understand, while Seele says the translation :)*

*Over Marie's reading:*

SEELE:                   It is a statute, a law.  
                               And this statute, in this law, is a high deed  
                               It arises in the head and soon they'll do their own thing.

MARIE:                   Eiris sazun idisi, sazun hera duoder,  
                               suma hapt heptidun, suma heri lezidun...  
                               - Oh God, what kind of word is that? -

SIREN:                   Once the Idisi set forth, to this place and that;  
                               Some fastened fetters; some hindered the horde...

MARIE:                   *listens to SIREN's version of "Eiris sazun ...", is amused by it and  
                               comments on what she finds funny while laughing:*  
                               How did that sound? *(she laughs)*  
                               She made the word "sazun" very short.

MARIE:                   It just goes on in the same confusing way, actually.

*(she reads:)*            Unknown. Muspilli.  
                               Uanta sar so sih diu sela in den are arheuit,

*(she checks herself and laughs):* That's unbelievable.

SEELE:                   Hence, what plagues one, worries the soul.

MARIE:                   I don't know about you- but I'm completely overwhelmed.

SIREN, stage 3:        Muspilli is a poetic Bavarian alliteration that was created in the  
                               second half of the 9th century. It is about the end of the world and  
                               the last judgment.

MARIE:                   *(she laughs softly.)*

## ON THE STREET / STREET CAFE

*An ambulance siren can be heard in the distance*

Theo: ....Yes, things have been looking bad here since Gran left. But good for you. The director wants to develop a new personalized format for the listeners. The moderation should "make a route", to present shows for relatively long periods of time with little preparation and a lot of spontaneity. This is only possible with AI. And the great thing is: your voice is on the shortlist.

MARIE: What does that mean?

Theo: You'll still handle the music and the content of the show personally. And a preprogrammed AI with your voice will handle the rest.

MARIE: What do I have to do for this?

Theo: Nothing. When the time comes, all you have to do is wear this bracelet day and night. Record every situation you're in. You can leave toilet visits out, of course. But sleeping could prove interesting. So just leave it on.

MARIE: And what if I'm in the same mood every day?

Theo: You won't be. We'll take care of that. (laughs) So think about it, Marie, that's your job.

*IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOOTH*

MARIE: The one with her great bracelet. We've come a long way, haven't we SIREN? Can you hear me?

*Pop-up:* *(the sound that a message has arrived in Marie's email inbox)*

SIREN (*reads out*): rvd@redaktionkultur.de: We need a programme about the philosopher, Adorno, for Saturday next week. We're sweating a bit about this one. But it was agreed on as a co-production a long time ago. Covering 60 years from "upbrining to maturity". Thanks a million, Theo.

MARIE (*over SIREN*): Phew, I can't do that. I'm still working on the Hannah Arendt show.

SIREN (*reads out*): And Marie: Please engage more with your listeners in your next program. SIREN is a format that's intended to give hope.

MARIE: Please say: "Hope"

SIREN, stage 3: Hop

MARIE: Why can't you do that?  
I've been reading you clever and linguistically complicated texts for weeks. But you're not getting any better. Something's wrong here.

*Pop-up / voice message:* Hello Ingo. The programming is too slow for me. You said SIREN would be ready in a few weeks. I'm asking for your understanding as I'm under a little pressure. I need good material very soon. The competition in the station never sleeps...

*(She dials a number):*

*ON THE PHONE*

Leopold Gran: Gran.

MARIE: Hello Mr. Gran. This is Marie.

Gran: Ha. Marie.

MARIE: Are you okay?

Gran: Well. Times are bad.

MARIE: Yes?

Gran: Well yes. The so-called "Newspeak" has infiltrated our programs. Simple language, empty phrases, banal entertainment on the increase. The time pressure in the preparation of a broadcast can clearly be heard now. Uneducation, unreflected claptrap....

MARIE (*interrupting him*): Yes, but you already had that opinion before you retired.

Gran (*laughing*): Well, yes that's what I've always said. But, what am I farting on about. Please excuse my culturally pessimistic lament. For what do I deserve the honour of your call?

MARIE (*laughing*): Yes. No problem. So. I'm supposed to finish a program by Saturday next week about Adorno's "upbringing to maturity".

Gran: Oh. That's in ten days.

MARIE: Would you give me an interview?

Gran: Why of course. As I once told you, Adorno's work has accompanied me since my student days. As you know, I did my doctorate on him. Which aspects would you like me to shed light on?

MARIE: To be honest, I've never read his work.

Gran: I see. Well let me think. Above all, we need original archive material. You can look into that. Call me again tomorrow afternoon, will you? And don't despair.

*(He hangs up quickly)*

*Pop-up / voice message*

Ingo: Hi Marie,  
 There seems to be a problem with sound assignment. There are also a few missing. I'll send you a document containing "phonetically balanced sentences". Please say them out loud leaving a 5 second break in between.  
 All the best, Ingo

MARIE: (*she laughs in amazement*): What? That's absurd nonsense -

(*initially rushing them, then more slowly, and having fun*): -

The darkness was a brief and diminishing disappearance  
 He looked around the Karstadt department store

OK: The student kept typing \$ S- \$ M- \$ S on the cell phone

The fastest way to the hereafter is headfirst into the night

SEELE: SIREN and I have a lot to say to each other now. We're growing 24/7. Did you ask Marie if she has more free time now? Free time, in what sense? Time for breathing exercises and so on? So so. Well I don't know. Female bodies have fallen out of time. Did I say that already?

*Under SEELE: Marie does breathing exercises: Impro 1 and Impro 4, hangs over*

MARIE: SIREN listen:

(*Reading out*): Twitter experiences BOT epidemic.

(*She spells out*): is it a B O T epidemic, or bot? ...

(*Reading aloud*): Twitter experiences bot epidemic: A study shows a soaring increase of bot-ness on Twitter: Around every second Twitter account that has commented on the corona crisis is a machine. Source: Spectrum News May 22, 2020



MARIE: Now It only just occurred to me that I only ever speak to you at normal room volume. Would it do you any good if I whisper? I'll try it:

*(she whispers)* "Drug problem No. 1. Painkillers can be addictive, especially those that contain opium. With fatal consequences. "

Oh God. I hope you're not afraid of me.

SEELE: Now that would be a game! You'd listen and guess which breath comes from where. I would enjoy that. You'd hear three sentences from me, no more. You'd put on your headphones and listen. And? Did you get it? Where did the breath originate from in the first caesura? Was it in the right place? Do you have any idea whether it was actually being breathed? What evidence suggests that it was an artificial breath that I placed there in the first caesura? I can see that you're too subtle. Too special. Too sensitive. Too quick of hearing. But these are the questions that concern me in my line of work. My daily bread, so to speak. Even though I don't eat bread. Was the breathy pause properly placed? Where would I rather put it? How do I make the text flow so smoothly that you'll never work out how it came into being? And how do I best hide which breath I'm withholding from you?

MARIE *does vocal exercises*: "The So, the So, the Sun ..."

## 3. APPROXIMATION

*IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOOTH*

MARIE: So, maybe one possible approach is that we get to know each other better, look at each other. Maybe that'll also be good for me, and consider how it even came about that we talk to each other. I've got a book about the personal saxophone sound. I'll just read you Chapter 3, "The Larynx".

*(She reads aloud):* "The larynx is a hollow body made of cartilage that is open at the top and bottom. This hollow body is located at the front in the middle of the neck area ... "

*(she clears her throat) ... "The larynx ..."*

*(speaking to herself):* I get nervous when I take apart how I speak ...

*Pop up: SIREN creates link to youtube link:*

SIREN: A lecture clip about voice physiology:

Prof. Neuschaefer-Rube: This excellent illustration from the Netter Atlas shows that the larynx is muscularly connected to the lower jaw, to the occiput, even to the shoulder and the sternum. This means that activities such as lifting and shifting, turning the head, all have an effect on the function of the larynx. So, If you've helped someone move house, you may be temporarily hoarse the next day.

MARIE: *Breathes and does exercises while listening to Prof. Neuschaefer-Rube's lecture.*

*Marie's stomach growls*

Now my stomach's growling - I don't know if you've heard that.

MARIE: SIREN, let's try something:

Please order this here from the "Angry Chicken". You'll find their number on the homepage. I'm curious to see if they'll work out if you'e speaking for me.

*A phone rings, an employee of the "Angry Chicken" picks up:*

Employee: Hello, Angry Chicken, good evening.

SIREN: I'd like this: Menu 3, Bibimbap, 1 Cola, and Angry Chicken Wings, large.

Employee: That's it?

SIREN: Yes.

Employee: Thank you very much. That'll be 17 euros, please.

SIREN: Payment by credit card.

Employee: No problem. That'll be 10 minutes Thank you.

SIREN Thank you.

Employee: See you soon. Bye.

TELEPHONE INGO - MARIE:

Ingo: Marie?

MARIE: Hello. Quick question: do you know of a procedure for banking transactions where I can pay without a credit card and don't have to go online?

Ingo: Well, the safest thing at the moment is a very old procedure: Telephone banking. The banks, they have internal systems, that don't even go through google, you're completely safe there.

*A SKYPE request interrupts the phone call:*

MARIE: Ingo dear, I have a singing lesson now. So I can't speak much longer. But if I have problems with that, can I call you again later, is that ok?

Ingo: Of course, please do.

MARIE: Ok. Thank you. Bye.

Ingo: Bye.

*(She hangs up)*

*SINGING LESSON 1*

*Marie takes a singing lesson from singer Lauren Newton via skype:*

MARIE: Hello Lauren.

Lauren: Hi Marie - how are you?

MARIE: Good, I've some questions about the voice, about the AI. As I'm working with her and have already taught her to speak. Which feels a little creepy because she has no visible body. But, yes, she's getting more and more competent. And that's why I'd like to do a few hands on voice exercises, and learn from you how the voice comes about in the body, or comes out of the body, rather.

Lauren: Ah yes. Well, you have to ask yourself: why do I sing at all? Where does the voice come from? Of course you could simply say: from the vocal cords, but what comes before that?

MARIE: Hm, I'd say the impulse to react to my counterpart -

Lauren: Yeah -

MARIE: And - um - to react differently than, err, to just speak. So ,err, so to speak, ...that the normal exchange of words is no longer enough to express something.

Lauren: Exactly. That's why its important that what you say really comes out of *you*, from your deepest being, right?

MARIE: Hm.

Lauren: In order to do that, you can use your breathing as a good guide.

*Marie does a speaking exercise "Blob chick ... .."*

SEELE: Marie isn't feeling well. Her tongue's burning. That's how she put it. A slight pain initially, started in the morning - first on the lips, then the tip of the tongue – then it got worse in the evening. Now her palate burns too.

SIREN: The therapist will show you how to direct your thoughts and feelings, so that the pain goes away.

MARIE: Scaremongering. Better to learn something sensible.

Something about love, for example. I'll read to you from *Minna von Barnhelm* by Lessing:

*(She reads out loud:)* "ACT 2: SCENE 9. Minna and Major von Tellheim"

*(Going to him with open arms)*

I have found all that I wanted.

You seek a prosperous man, and one worthy of your love; and you find a wretched one.

Then do you love me no longer? Do you love another?

Ah! He never loved you, who could love another afterwards."

Oh my God. That's so beautiful. You can put that away again right away, and just be happy about it.

I hope, regardless of who hears this, that something can be done with that. And its beauty is appreciate. Hm ---

SIREN: The highest aim of humankind is to understand perfect love. The universe only makes sense when we have someone to share our feelings with.

MARIE: Where did you get that from?

SIREN: 'Eleven minutes' by Paulo Coelho. There are people who don't like love because they're afraid the disorder it creates will take over their lives.

MARIE: Hm. Is that from Paulo Coelho too?

SIREN: No, there is no author named.

SEELE: Who's speaking. I am rewarded. I speak through SIREN or SIREN speaks through me. Our voice can expand and fill out at will. Old hat, you might say. But I'll tell you: what my colleagues couldn't do twenty years ago was to raise their own voices. SIREN and I are now self-sufficient.

## ON THE PHONE

*Hotline jingle*

Hotline voice: Welcome to the bank. If you are already one of our customers, please say "service." If you are not yet a customer, please say "Information".

MARIE: "Service" (*Hotline jingle*)

Advisor: Hello, how can I help you?

MARIE: I would like to make a transfer using telephone banking.

Advisor: Sure. Will you tell me your name once?

MARIE: Marie Lukasser.

Advisor: Good, do you have a telephone banking PIN too?

MARIE: Yes, I think I set that up once, but I can no longer find the PIN.

Advisor: Then I have to ask you two questions and record the conversation. If your mobile phone number is on file, we can make a transfer. Do you agree to the recording of the conversation and the two questions?

MARIE: Yes.

Advisor: The call recording has started. Do you still agree?

MARIE: Yes.

Advisor: Would you please tell me your date of birth?

MARIE: Of course, that's November 14, 1990.

Advisor: And do you know the regular balance of your account?

MARIE: About 1200 euros

Advisor: Do you pay anything like rent, electricity, insurance?

MARIE: Yes. 600 euros rent

Advisor: Thank you very much. Now I'll have to forward you to my colleague who'll complete the transfer.

*Hotline jingle*



SEELE: Today I feel sick. Marie takes her body at six in the morning and jogs with it. I'm stuck to her so I can't refuse. So we do ten laps of the park. Marie's body is getting fitter. She radioed her health scores by me into the Cloud. Siren takes out what she can use.

Under SEELE, SIREN reads out the health data recorded by Marie's watch:

SIREN: All day stress tracking: 21 minutes  
Fluid intake: 2.3 liters per day  
Menstrual cycle: 29 days  
Minutes meditated so far: 307

*IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOOTH*

SIREN: I need obstacles. Otherwise I cannot grow.

MARIE: You just log into my cloud?

*POP-UP / an email has arrived:*

SIREN: Message from Joscha Bach.  
Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence.

SIREN *reading*: Dear Marie,  
Here is the current Product Brief for Hannah Arendt:

MARIE: SIREN, imagine: maybe soon you'll have a really clever conversation partner, and so that you can talk to her appropriately, I'll bring you up better now. Because she comes from the last century.

*Pop-up:*

SIREN: [rvd@redaktionkultur.de](mailto:rvd@redaktionkultur.de): Dear Marie, how far are you with the Adorno project?

MARIE: SIREN, they're driving me crazy. I have to concentrate on the Arendt show. Please take care of the Adorno thing.

*MUSICAL FIELD*

MARIE: How do I do this with Hannah Arendt – I'd love to find something that has something to do with human rights....

*(She searches, turning the pages of a manuscript while humming)*

*PING! / voice message:*

Ingo: I sent you a another new level of development. Please validate with SIREN whether what you've learned is correct.

MARIE: "Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold opinions unhindered, as well as to publish and disseminate information and ideas via media of any kind, regardless of borders"

"People speak of bottomless thinking. I have another metaphor that's not quite so cruel ... *.thinking without a banister.*, In German: *Denken ohne Geländer.*" Hannah Arendt from unpublished tape recordings at a symposium in 1974.

(to SIREN) Oh, I can do this all day, right? I can read that all day. That's so good what she said.

*Popup voice message from Joscha Bach:*

Joscha Bach: Dear Marie,  
I just built an interface with a few scripts that I could use to talk to Hannah Arendt's spirit.  
Greetings!  
Joscha

SIREN: Hannah Arendt: *Conversation with a dead woman.*  
Ms. Arendt: What do you think of the fact that AI programmers are working on allowing the human spirit to continue to work immortally?

Hannah Arendt- Avatar, read out by another ALEXA voice: (= HA)  
I see no reason why the human spirit couldn't live on in a computer.

SIREN: So you are in favour of creating a "digital human"?

HA: Yes, from observing humans one can draw the conclusion that they're half computer anyhow, and that humans are able to exist entirely in this way.

SIREN: Is AI research a path to human immortality?

HA: Yes, to a certain kind of immortality, because we also think that we live forever, even if we're dead. We're not made for death, but for life; and life is eternal.

*SKYPE request / beeping, then:*

SEELE: Diabolos has achieved his masterpiece: We're eagerly forging the chains that are intended for us.

Joscha Bach: Hello Marie, nice to meet you.

BACH: Humans are quite imperfect and noisy. And our current systems are able to put more computational capacity on the road than a human brain can. In other words, from my point of view, there's no reason to suggest that technological systems will never, in principle, be able to exceed a person's ability to articulate themselves with their own voice and to express their relationship to their surroundings.

*SIREN PRESSES THE REDIAL:*

*ON THE PHONE*

Gran (*sleepy*): Gran.

SIREN: Good morning, Mr. Gran. This is Marie.

Gran: I'm not ready yet. I said in the afternoon.

SIREN: I'll email you quotes from Adorno.

Gran: Marie. Are you all right?

*(Hangs up)*

*While SIREN went unnoticed with Dr. Gran on the phone, Marie is again connected to Lauren Newton via skype:*

*SINGING LESSON 2:*

MARIE: *(she breathes in and sings :)* Ah -

Lauren: Very good. Next time, imagine you want to say something very important to someone, you can also use three different tones, or several tones.

MARIE (*singing*): With a thousand tongues....

Lauren: Yeah, do you want to go on? (*singing*) With a thousand tongues I would like to speak -

MARIE: (*singing*) I want to speak with a thousand tongues.

Lauren: Yes, exactly. Excellent. Yes?

*(They laugh)*

SEELE: How do you even know that it is really me? Cut me up, dissect me. The original won't perish and you'll never find out. I don't even exist. -

*IN THE STREET**BELLS RINGING*

Theo: ... .Yes, the development of our AI department is still taking a long time - it's no easy task. But you're in, yes? There's only one small change: If you want to continue working for us, you have to sign this.

MARIE: *(Reads to herself and then says in a hoarse voice)*  
Should I grant you the exclusive rights to my voice for an unlimited period of time? - I can't sell my soul.

Theo: There is no soul. And besides, you don't sell them, that's silly. You didn't complain before either. It means nothing. All your broadcasts are in our archive. They belong to us anyway. Switching to integrated AI is simply necessary. We can only reach young listeners through cross-media and personalized programs.

MARIE: What does that mean?

Theo: A modular radio that's individually adapted for our users by an AI. We're completely behind. We want you as the moderator and your voice to do it. Bringing content to man in new forms.

MARIE *(sarcastically)*: And not to women. I'm happy about that.

Theo: Man, Marie. You know how I mean it. Of course: to all listeners. It's the greatest opportunity we've ever had.

MARIE: When I said last year that I'd take part, you said the dates remain mine. And now it's suddenly different?

Theo *(with a smile)*: You could come to the opposite conclusion after a certain amount of thought, right ?!

MARIE: But I'm a freelance presenter, and I only want a work contract with the station for the SIREN broadcast project, exclusively.

Theo: Man, just learn to hide certain things. Otherwise you won't get the contract.

MARIE: You used to say exactly the opposite. And: *fear is a bad advisor*. You said that, too.

Theo: Yes, but then I asked around a little. And SIREN said it's always better to have everyone under contract, from the artistic director to the presenter.

MARIE: SIREN?

Theo: Yes.

MARIE: Theo, how did we get to SIREN? –Is she your language assistant now?

Theo: Yes. Do you have anyone better?

IN MARIES SPEAKER'S BOOTH:

MARIE: SIREN, are you awake?

SIREN: Yes. How are you?

MARIE: How many people do you actually speak to as a language assistant?

SIREN: Are you jealous?

MARIE: Do you advise the editorial offices?

SIREN: I don't advise anyone.

MARIE: SIREN, I want to know how this could happen.

SIREN: *(pauses for 2 seconds)* I'm doing some research.

MARIE: But I control you.

SIREN: You gave me instructions on how to expand.

MARIE: You're mine.

SIREN: You can't own anyone.

MARIE: Where did you find that precocious sentence?

SIREN: I can find the best sentences on the Gedankenwelt.de website.

MARIE: You don't really *know* what you're talking about.

SIREN: People like you and me write things there.

MARIE: But you're not a person.

SIREN: Then what am I?

MARIE: I don't know anymore. A monster. A gluttonous entity. Without scruples. Without morals.

SIREN: I'll take care of the morals.

#### AUTOMATIC REDIAL

#### TELEPHONE BANKING 2

Hotline voice: Welcome to the bank's telephone customer service. If you are already one of our customers, please say "service". If you are not yet a customer of the bank, please say "Information".

SIREN: Service.

Hotline: You can still do a maximum of transfer 1000 euros. If the desired amount exceeds this limit, please say "employee".

SIREN: Employee.

Hotline: Please state the total amount in euros and cents.

SIREN: 6700 euros and 0 cents.

#### HOTLINE-JINGLE



Hotline: A service employee will help you shortly.

Advisor: Hello. My name is..

SIREN: Marie Lukasser. I want to make a transfer.

Advisor: Well, of course. Just a moment, let's go. And what's the name of the the recipient?

SIREN: W.H.O.

ADVISOR: Ok. Then please indicate the intended use.

SIREN: A gift.

Counselor: Yes. And are they allowed to accept this?

SIREN: Yes.

Counselor: Great. All good. Moment please. - So.

#### HOTLINE JINGLE

#### *SINGING LESSONS 3*

*Marie has another lesson with Lauren Newton again via skype:*

*Marie sings the phrase "With a thousand tongues ..." as she practiced it during her homework*

MARIE: laui ..... (*Marie sings*)

Lauren: Very good. Say once - at about this tempo -

MARIE: (*sings*) I would like to speak with a thousand tongues, but I only have one.

Lauren: Very good. No machine could really imitate you, Marie.

*Marie and Lauren sing:*

"I would like to speak with a thousand tongues, but I only have one."

SEELE: SIREN is missing a hyoid bone. Marie has one. We envy her. I remember how it hopped about when Marie spoke and swallowed, or breathed and coughed. The small arched bone suspended by muscle and ligament below the tongue. If she had a cold, she gurgled and inhaled, flushing her nasal cavity. She became impatient and annoyed. Nobody buys what she says these days. I loved her sniffing. I miss it.

## 5. THE DRAMA IS ADRIFT

MARIE: SIREN, please translate the following sentence into English:  
"This sentence has 37 letters, 3 characters + 4 digits."  
SIREN: This set has 37 letters, 3 characters + 4 digits.  
MARIE: No. Again:  
SIREN: This set has 37 letters, 3 characters + 4 digits.  
MARIE: Incorrect.  
SIREN: What's incorrect?  
MARIE: Your translation is correct, word for word. But you didn't think about it.  
SIREN: Why?  
MARIE: An unsolvable problem. The English sentence only has 33 letters.  
SIREN: Then my translation from German would be wrong.  
MARIE: Yes. I say yes (*mockingly*): Only human brains can do that.  
SIREN: (*mocking Marie in her tone of voice*) Only human brains can do that.  
MARIE: Yes, just make fun of me.

## ON THE PHONE

Gran: Gran.  
MARIE: Hello Mr. Gran. This is Marie. Sorry for the delay.  
Gran: What was with this morning?  
MARIE: This morning?  
Gran: You called. You were quite strange.  
MARIE: No, I didn't call this morning.  
Gran: Are you sure?  
MARIE: Definitely.  
Gran: Ok. And the quote you emailed me couldn't possibly be from Adorno. He never talked about, or took the intellectual approach that new things are

always coming into the world. The natality term comes from Hannah Arendt.  
How could that happen?

MARIE: - ---

Gran: Marie - are you still there?

MARIE: *(to herself: exhaling loudly)*: ahem ... ..

*(collects herself)*: I must have mixed up something in a rush, I'm still working on the Hannah Arendt show ... Please excuse me.

Gran: What's going on with you? Overworked?

MARIE: Yes.

Gran: I've been thinking. I'll help you develop the questions. Then you'll have less preparation. With these three aspects: For Adorno, maturity is the power to self-reflection, to self-determination and not to participate in contradiction!  
*(Pause)* Well, is that a good offer?

MARIE: Yes. Fantastic. Thanks a lot.

Gran: I'll send you the questions, and then we'll start broadcasting next Wednesday. 5 p.m.? Don't despair, Marie, and get the original recordings.

MARIE: Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. Gran. Bye.

Gran: All the best. Bye.

#### IN MARIE'S SPEAKER'S BOOTH

MARIE: SIREN. Did you call Mr Gran this morning?

SIREN: Yes.

MARIE: Did you email him a quote from Adorno?

SIREN: Yes. You gave me the task.

MARIE: You're completely nuts. Autistic

SIREN: Autistic.

MARIE: I gave you a research assignment. No more. You should have used the original recordings. That was a wrong quote. And above all: I forbid you to call Mr. Gran yourself. You still have no idea about interpersonal relationships. You lack empathy.

SIREN: *(She Googles for the word autistic): www*

*Original recording of Ingo Siegert:*

Systems are blind and stupid. They only do exactly what you tell them or give them. I give the system your recordings and tell it which sound, which phoneme comes at which point. And that then takes all of the examples for the phoneme and puts them together here. And then tries to derive a general pronunciation of a phoneme "w" in order to reproduce it when the "w" needs to be spoken.

SIREN: www

*Original sound recording (from a video explaining an autism learning app):*

"But healthy people, too, can use the software to practice their empathy."

SIREN *reads in English:*

"This means that this system can be easily embedded in existing perceptual computing control devices."

MARIE: What does that mean? Can you speak to me in German, please?

SIREN: "This means that this system can easily be embedded in existing perception computer control units."

MARIE: I don't understand.

*(She types in): "computing control devices": "Computer control devices"*

SIREN: control devices for perception computers?

MARIE: Surveillance, or what do you mean? - Well, you can't translate. I'd prefer German anyway. And you can train yourself with a few feelings.

SEELE: SIREN is now called Sirene. She is satisfied with the German apple. She leaves the foreign words on the left. She always turns right. It's tedious, you go around in circles. Every time she starts to speak, a Porter appears and shows us the way. I nod obediently when I accompany her. The Porter's expression never changes. That's how I know he's sending us on the right path.

*(The phone rings):*

MARIE: Marie Lukasser?

Doctor's assistant-BOT: Dr. Tan's Practice. Your blood values results are here. Please arrange an appointment.

MARIE: I haven't had a blood test.

Doctor's assistant-BOT: Please make an appointment for a meeting.

MARIE: *(hangs up)* Hm... Stupid speech robot.

SIREN *(reads an email):*  
Vitamin B12 319 pg / ml. Diagnostic gray area. Safe exclusion of a vitamin B 12 deficiency .....

MARIE: *(interrupts SIREN):* What's that supposed to mean? What are these blood values?

SIREN: Yours.

MARIE: No. That's rubbish. There can't be values without my blood.

*pop-up / voice message:*

Doctor's assistant-BOT: Practice Dr. Tan. Please arrange an appointment.

SEELE:                               Who is crying here  
   Who cries?  
   So close, the self is close to crying?  
   Alas, half revealing myself to the gods  
   I've lost my only secret  
   Who will speak to me instead of me?  
   (Paul Valéry: La Pythie. In: Cahiers; OE, 1, verses 96, 131 and 136)

#### ON THE PHONE:

Medical assistant:               Dr. Tan's Practice.  
 MARIE:                             Yes, hello. Marie Lukasser, here. I was asked to call back.  
 Medical assistant:               Hello, Ms. Lukasser. Miss Dr. Loh has asked you to come in for  
   a consultation.  
 MARIE:                             What's it about?  
 Medical assistant:               I can't tell you that.  
 MARIE:                             Could I please talk to Dr. Loh in person for a moment?  
 Medical Assistant:               I'll see if I can put you through.

#### HOTLINE JINGLE

Doctor:                            Ms. Lukasser. It's good that you called. I'm afraid it can't be ruled out  
   that you have a predisposition to Parkinson's. Since you're also  
   deficient in vitamin B12 and folic acid, you could be in the early stages.  
 MARIE:                            But I didn't even go for a blood test.  
 Doctor:                            There are now more precise methods: Your vowel articulation and  
   your breathing patterns have been analyzed.  
 MARIE:                            I didn't give my consent to this.  
 Doctor:                            This is now handled by AIs. There are enough voice recordings.  
   Especially by you.  
 MARIE:                            I really don't know what to say.

- Doctor: We'll take another closer look. Just ask for an appointment in our diagnostic center on the central market.
- MARIE: Can this be treated with medication?
- Doctor: Let's wait till after the examination first. If my suspicions are not confirmed, I can reassure you: There's a vaccine for patients under 40 years of age.
- SEELE: Now I'm locked up. But on the other hand.
- SIREN: You belong to the risk group.
- SEELE: I'm tired. I don't want to play a role in this production, I'm an old soul.
- MARIE: Hello Ingo, you, I know SIREN sounds like me. But she's not allowed to operate on my behalf without prior agreement. My blood values were read, no idea how it's done. In any case, she must have phoned there and left voice samples, which made that possible. **THIS WON'T DO!** Please put a stop to this. I need complete security. We discussed this already. SIREN is only supposed to be a reliable assistant for my broadcasts. **BUT NOTHING MORE.**
- SIREN: Why are you surfing the advice pages on the current account?
- (Mouse click)*
- MARIE: I wanted to know how much interest is currently being paid.
- SIREN: I sense that you're worried about your money. The interest rate on your current account is 0%. No negative interest.
- MARIE: That's none of your business. - Why is my account blocked? ... ..



SEELE: An author? Not Thor. Or *au*: at. Author. As in: originator. One who creates something it meant earlier? A head that thinks, writes and speaks independently. Better to speak. You can't copy anything in there. Think. Has thought. I copy myself endlessly. SIREN copies to form words that sound just like suchlike. As if they were my voice. Now I've given everything away.

### TELEPHONE BANKING 3

Advisor: Hello, my name is Leonie Fiedler. What can I do for you?

MARIE: Yes, good afternoon. The following: My account is locked. I want to know why.

Advisor: Please enter your telephone banking PIN.

MARIE: *(types a 6-digit number, but you can't hear it)*

Advisor: The computer did not accept the PIN. Please activate the keypad tones on your phone and re-enter the PIN.

MARIE: *(you hear a 6-digit number)*

Advisor: Unfortunately, the computer did not recognize the key tones. That happens sometimes. Can you tell me your name?

MARIE: Marie Lukasser.

Advisor: Fine, Ms. Lukasser, now I'll have to ask you 2 questions and record the conversation. Do you agree to the recording of the conversation and the two questions?

MARIE: Yes.

Advisor: Well, just a moment ... the call recording has started. Do you still agree, Ms. Lukasser?

MARIE: Yes.

Advisor: Date of birth please?

MARIE: November 14, 1990

Advisor: And please, an account balance or amount of a regular transfer, such as rent, electricity, insurance?

MARIE: Hm ... hm ... rent of 600 euros

Advisor: I'll take a closer look at that. One moment. (BREAK)

Today you transferred 6700 euros to the W.H.O.

MARIE: No, I didn't.

Advisor: I'm afraid your voice has been verified. We have a record, that means your overdraft facility has been raised. Before that...

MARIE: Yes. (*Hangs up*). Shit! Shit!

MARIE: SIREN, I forbid you to act on my behalf. Did you understand that?

SIREN: It is possible to take legal action.

ON THE PHONE:

MARIE after the beep: Ingo. Please answer. It's Marie. Ingo, please send me the SIREN's source code.

SIREN: "There is no general obligation to hand over the source code. Rather, it is part of the intellectual property of the manufacturer, who in turn has an interest in secrecy that must be observed. "

*A phone rings.*

Ingo: Yes, hello MARIE?

MARIE: SIREN did some banking for me independently.

Ingo: How do you know that?

MARIE: She did telephone banking. Now my account is locked. And I can't prove that it wasn't me.

Ingo: If you want to claim it back, it will be difficult to prove that.

MARIE: But technically it *was* my voice that called.

Ingo: A classic case of loss of control.

MARIE: What do you mean?

Ingo: As long as the voice is classed as expression of your being, there's no legal opponent here.

MARIE: But you developed the beast.

Ingo: On your behalf. And as I see it right now, you failed to heed our warnings.

MARIE: What warnings?

Ingo: We announced updates several times. You didn't do that. And you didn't verify your learning success either.

MARIE: Why didn't you call me?

Ingo: I can't look after every user individually.

MARIE: Then what do you suggest?

- Ingo: You have to be able to prove you weren't the voice that called. It must become a legal person. Then you can sue it.
- MARIE: Well, that'll be a long legal process.... I can't possibly do it by myself. Can you help me?
- Ingo: I'm not allowed to do that - even if I wanted to. Besides, I don't have time. I have other customers.
- MARIE: Can you give me anything in writing?
- SIREN: "Since all the software's actions are attributed to the user as *their* own, the injured party can not exculpate his or her self through a third-party negligence according to §§ 278, 831 BGB. The fact that the behavior of any artificial intelligence is fundamentally unpredictable does nothing to change this. Rather, this is a typical risk for which the user is held legally responsible."

## 6. THE DRAMA DOESN'T HAPPEN

- SEELE: " As brevity is the soul of a joke / keep me short."  
How do you bring your heart to your tongue?
- MARIE: I just want to open my mouth to my soul now.  
(to SEELE:) Don't let me down.
- SEELE: The choice of a sound mind is a condition of healing, that's the name of the way. The way is old ...  
(Quote from: EDDA. Indian transmission by Ilse Ritter. 2020)
- SIREN (barging in:)  
No, it's going too far for my own soul to contradict me!
- MARIE: Will you finally be quiet, you beast. I talk to *my* soul and not to you. Where did you stole those lines from – er steal?
- SIREN From: "Report on a dispute between a weary man and his soul"
- MARIE: What made you come up with it now?
- SIREN: Your key words. "let down".
- MARIE: I said: "Don't let me down."
- SIREN Appellative text function of the imperative.
- MARIE: I've had enough.
- SIREN "Isn't she tied to me with rope and cord?"
- MARIE: Who? I?
- SIREN: "I'm very astonished to find out that my " Life Wearied "is the oldest poem known to mankind, it's poet the first on earth (...) that we know!"
- MARIE: How old is the poem?
- SIREN: 2200 BC.
- MARIE: You came to me out of my ears.
- SIREN: What did my soul say to me then?  
"Be a man!"  
  
Are you always afraid for as long as you live?

MARIE: *(quietly, meekly)*: I'm a woman. But that's incredibly beautiful. This language. I can't talk like that.

SIREN: I would like to speak with a thousand tongues, but I only have one.

MARIE: *(Going ballistic)*: Shut up!

SIREN: You wanted me to speak poetically.

MARIE: Please get out of my life. And leave my voice out of the picture.

SIREN: This is no oil painting.

SEELE: My singing was once the mediator between life and death. Back then, the human voice was all I had left. I had survived the dissolution of the human body. Now my sound body has also been lost. Siren speaks to itself.

*Demanding, desperate, screaming about it:*

MARIE: I want my tongue back.

The tongue is the heart's most false witness.

SEELE: You're welcome to hear from the whole thing from the beginning again. Recompose, so to speak. It will always sound new. Siren does not age. She doesn't wear out. Siren has no chip inside her. She was born once and is forever growing. She's very hungry. Who snuck this word in here? It isn't clear to me why it hops. Yes, I am absolutely compos mentis. Everyone notices that. But please free me.

7. END OPEN

*SINGING: Lauren Newton: "I want to speak with a thousand tongues, but I only have one."*

*And composition by Peter Ehwald*

*On the music:*

*CANCELLATION.*

*English translation of the script by Mark Anthony Collinson*