SAMPLE

The Pedantic Professor

The Personality That Lectures to Feel Alive

Aiman Sterling

Free sample: Introduction & Chapter 1

putrabooks.github.io

Buy the full book:

Payhip
Carousell
Lulu

Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: The First Glance — the Pedantic Professor at a Party

Chapter 2: The Core — the Engine of the Lecture

Chapter 3: The Instrument — the Lecture, Taken Apart

Chapter 4: The Craft — the Practice Years

Chapter 5: The Honest Costs

Chapter 6: The Dark Side — the Shadow

Chapter 7: The Pedantic Professor at Work

Chapter 8: The Pedantic Professor in Love and Friendship

Chapter 9: The Matchups — Companions, Rivals, and the Other Types

Chapter 10: Teaching That Listens — From the Syllabus to the Person

Afterword

This free sample contains the Introduction and Chapter 1. The complete book contains the full contents above.

Introduction

Everyone knows one: the person who cannot hear a fact slightly wrong without fixing it; who answers a two-word question with a seminar; whose conversation has citations; whose love, strangely, arrives in the same envelope as a correction — and who is, underneath all of it and this book's entire subject, lonely in a way nobody has told them.

This is the portrait of the Pedantic Professor: the personality that lectures to feel alive. The induction scene is a home where knowing was the only currency of affection — where the child learned, early and for keeps, that being right was how one was loved. The correction reflex was born there: the unprompted explanation, the delivered lecture, the constant upgrading of other people's facts. What looks at a distance like arrogance is, read closely, something more touching and more costly: courtship. The lecture is the character's native love language — attention requested in the only grammar the induction ever certified — and the tragedy the casebook will trace is that the grammar works so badly at what it is trying to do: every audience the Professor wins is an audience, and almost none of them are a contact.

This book takes the character apart the way this series takes every character apart: the induction home and its economy of knowing; the engine — the correction as affection, the explanation as proof of existence; the instrument's honest range (it genuinely teaches, genuinely rescues projects, genuinely loves a teachable moment) and its honest limit (it cannot not-correct; it cannot read boredom; it crowds out the very contact it courts); the tally and the dark room, where condescension hardens and the room quietly stops asking questions at all; and the growth path, whose promise sounds to this character like professional ruin and is not: teaching that listens — the knowledge kept, the audience consulted, the syllabus finally distinguished from the self.

If you love one of these people, this book will teach you the register: how to survive the seminar, how to ask for the person behind the footnotes, and how to say the one sentence they have never heard. If you are one — and you knew before this sentence ended, and have already noted that the previous clause should technically have a comma — the book has one warning and one promise. The warning: this handbook will ask you to be wrong, out loud, in front of someone. The promise: you were never the syllabus. You were the one who knew things, and the one who knew things was always worth knowing.

Turn the page, and let the lecture begin — for once, about the lecturer.

Chapter 1: The First Glance — the Pedantic

Professor at a Party

The party tell is the footnote. Someone tells a story — a vacation anecdote, a bit of news, a fact picked up at another table — and it contains, as stories do, one small imprecision, and the Professor's face does something the casebook has learned to read frame by frame: a flicker of discomfort, quickly managed, and then, within seconds, the correction — offered warmly, helpfully, with genuine good intent, and unstoppably: "Actually, it's..." — and the story's owner is now a student, the anecdote is now a seminar, and the Professor has lit up in a way the room has watched a hundred times and never once decoded: the correction delivered is the character's joy — visible, innocent, almost childlike — and the room casebooks it under showing off. The casebook reads it differently, and the entire book hangs on the difference: the correction is not display. It is contact — the character's only certified way of reaching another human being.

The rest of the manner is the walking seminar: the answer with context, the sentence with citations, the genuine delight in anyone's teachable moment, and the social signature that wraps all of it — a warmth that the room experiences as confusing, because the delivery is pedantic and the intent is affectionate. The Professor is the person who corrects your pronunciation and then, an hour later, remembers your cousin's name from a conversation two years ago. The information flows constantly in one direction, and the caring flows, oddly, in the other.

The signature in the past is the home where knowing was the only currency of affection. The varieties are few and consistent: the household of a professional or academic parent where dinner-table competence was the passport to attention — the child noticed only when correct, interesting, or informed; the home of a struggling parent who prized education as the exit, and made the child's knowing a matter of family honor; and the rarer, sharper variety — the home of a cold parent, where the child tried everything to be loved and found exactly one door that opened: the right answer.

The economy was learned before the child could have named it: warmth, praise, and parental eye-contact were paid for in facts, and paid only in facts — the child who felt unlovable and found that being right felt like a version of being loved. And then the origin moment, which the casebook can predict with eerie accuracy: the first correction that landed — the child correcting an adult, or supplying the missing fact, and the room — a teacher, a parent, a dinner table — responding with delight. The laughter of approval. The child standing in it, warmed, and writing the constitution in a child's exact language: when I know things, they light up. Knowing is how I am loved. Know more. Correct

more. Never stop.

Open the album and the photos have a recurring prop: the book as accessory — the child holding one in half the frames, near the family, at the table, in the garden, the book functioning not as entertainment but as uniform: the child wearing their competence like other children wear their team shirt. The album's most telling feature is the pose the family photographer never caught: the child mid-lecture — explaining something to a grandparent, a cousin, a camera-shy dog — because the family's stories, told for decades, all have the same punchline: "and then, at six, he explained the entire canal system to us."

The adults called it adorable. The album's margin note, written by this book, reads differently: the six-year-old explaining the canal system was auditioning, every time, for the only role that had ever paid — and the pay, remember, was love. The photo that matters most is the one nobody took: the child arriving home with a wrong answer — a test failed, a fact confused, a spelling error in the school paper — and the temperature of the house, dropping. Not punished, usually; worse: unseen. The child learned the entire economy from that side of the tally too: to be wrong was not to be bad; it was to be nothing. And a child who has been nothing does not willingly return to the state. The constitution was signed the same week, and it has never once been amended.

Energy: Quick, verbal, mobilized — a system that idles at ready to explain, with the brightest output arriving at the moment of contact: the question heard, the error spotted, the teachable moment opening; the energy of a search engine that is also a golden retriever.

Ambition: Mastery-shaped — expertise as identity: the deepest knowledge in the room, the title, the field, the citation; the character's goals are always also credentials, because credentials are the induction's currency at institutional scale.

Vanity structure: Being right — the pride, unembarrassed and total, in the corrected ledger; and beneath it the professor's quiet wound: the character would rather be accurate than liked, and knows, with some grief, that the world keeps making them choose.

Loyalty: To the truth, first — the character will correct their own ally mid-argument, which has cost them allies and which the casebook honors as a rare integrity; and then, deeply, to the student: the person who genuinely wants to know, for whom the Professor will spend hours, gladly, asking nothing back.

Weakness: The correction reflex — the inability to let a wrongness stand, any wrongness, anywhere, at any cost to the moment; and the blindness that rides with it: the audience's boredom, read not as a signal to stop but as a

deficiency in the audience.

Unspoken need: To be loved without the citation — wanted as the person, not the syllabus; to be held on a day with no facts in it; to be, once, wrong in front of someone and kept.

At a party: the footnote; the seminar corner — one captive listener, glass empty, nodding at minute twenty of an answer to a question they did not ask; and the late-night scene the room never sees: the Professor driving home, replaying the corrections that landed, warmed by them, which is the casebook's most quietly devastating image: the person who was at a party full of people, receiving attention, and calling it — accurately, by the only grammar they were taught — love.

In a new job: the explainer — useful within a week, indispensable within a quarter, and managed carefully within a year: the character has corrected the boss's slide in week two, fixed the department head's statistic in month one, and been right both times, which is the problem. The casebook's honest conclusion: the Professor is the most competent person the org chart keeps at arm's length, and the arm's length is priced into the character's entire career.

Under sudden pressure: the crisis's reference desk — genuinely excellent here, and the casebook gives full credit: in the technical emergency, the person who actually knows the answer is worth their weight in gold, and the Professor, suddenly needed rather than tolerated, is fully alive, calm, and useful. The crisis is the one room where the induction's economy runs at its induction rate: competence equals warmth, in real time, from everyone.

In a boring meeting: the correction of the minor factual error — the wrong year on the slide, the misattributed statistic — offered at the worst possible handbook, publicly, at the worst possible moment, with the best possible intentions; and the follow-up signature: the fifteen-minute answer to a yes/ no question, delivered while the room's eyes go to their laps. The character has never once noticed the laps.

On holiday: the quizmaster — the family trivia invented, refereed, and slightly rigged; the recipe corrected mid-bake ("actually, baking powder and baking soda are not interchangeable"), the children's homework re- taught, over dinner, for an hour; and the review afterward, delivered with total sincerity: "a lovely break — I got so much reading done." The holiday, like everything else, was reformed into the induction's currency: knowing, and the display of knowing, and the small warm hope that somebody, somewhere, was impressed.

Not the Discerning Skeptic, the personality that audits — the confusion is

instant, because both characters question, test, and correct claims in public, and the rooms casebook them together under the same sigh. The hinge is the direction of the audit. The Skeptic's questions point inward first: the character audits its own beliefs hardest, hunts its own assumptions, and treats doubt as a private discipline that occasionally goes public; the correction of others is a byproduct, delivered with a shrug. The Professor's knowledge points outward only: the correction is the point — the reflex fires at other people's errors, and the character's own last admission of ignorance was in the previous decade.

Watch both at the same lecture: the Skeptic asks a question that challenges the speaker and admits uncertainty ("how would we test that?"); the Professor corrects the slide — and the difference between those two behaviors is the entire distance between a mind that lives in the question and a heart that lives for the answer. The Skeptic's book is about doubt as hygiene. This book is about certainty as courtship.

Not the Quiet Specialist, the personality that wins the long game — the confusion is subtler, because both are deep, learned, and genuinely expert. The hinge is what the depth is for. The Specialist's mastery is in service of the work: the craft improved, the field advanced, the decades deepening in a room with no audience required; the Specialist, alone at the bench, is complete. The Professor's mastery is in service of the room: the knowledge exists to be delivered, witnessed, corrected-with; without the audience, the character's expertise feels — the casebook uses the word carefully — unemployed. Watch both after a shared success: the Specialist goes home satisfied by the work; the Professor goes home replaying how the explanation landed. One of these people loves the field. The other is trying, still, to be loved through it — and the difference, invisible from across the room, is the entire architecture of this book.

And the party casebook closes with the refined field check the survey has saved the catalog's final word to deploy, because the walking seminar defeats every ordinary instrument — the character reads as charming at first contact and as exhausting by the second hour, and the line between the two has never been measured — and the refined check is run not at the lecture but at the listening: time the gap between the question asked and the syllabus resumed. The proctor's register of a recorded case: the character at forty-eight, the seminar certified at four decades — and the survey's simple instrument, deployed at one ordinary party: ask a personal question, then count. The conclusions, run across the evening: the personal question — "how's the year been, really?" — answered, on average, in nine seconds — and then the pivot, grammatical and total: "which connects to something you'd find interesting--" — and the syllabus, resumed, for eleven minutes.

The arithmetic, run across the entire evening: the character spoke roughly nine thousand words; received, on ledger, four questions; answered none of them past the ninth second — and the proctor's key observance, the one the supplement has saved the handbook's final pages to register: the pivot is not rude. That is the instrument's entire discovery: the pivot is delivered with warmth — genuine delight, the real pleasure of the teachable moment, the footnote offered like a gift — and the guests, the survey's exit interviews converge, cannot casebook it as rudeness because it doesn't feel like rudeness: it feels like being taught, and being taught by someone who is visibly happy to be doing it — and the cost, run at the party's end, is the check's one-line conclusion: nobody at the party knows anything about the character's year.

Not one guest could name a single thing the Professor had said about himself — the marriage, the health scare, the promotion, all unmentioned, all nine seconds from the surface, all unasked for — because the instrument, the survey certifies with its driest care, has no receiving function: the lecture was built as the only grammar for being loved, and the grammar does not run in reverse — and the party's warmest guest, asked at the door what she knew of the man she had talked with for two hours, delivered the field check's entire conclusion in one sentence, inscribed verbatim because it is the handbook's thesis before the handbook begins: "a great deal about Byzantine aqueducts. Nothing about him."

End of free sample. The full book is available at putrabooks.github.io

Read the rest

THE PEDANTIC PROFESSOR

The full book continues past this sample.

Get it here:
https://ko-fi.com/s/6ab6f6bae8

Pay what you want, S$1.90 or more. No account needed. Instant PDF + EPUB.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aiman Sterling is the author of The Archetype Series -- a library of personality portraits drawn the way literature draws characters: the great types of human temperament, recognized at a glance, understood in depth, and followed from childhood wound to mature strength.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aiman Sterling is the author of The Archetype Series -- a library of personality portraits drawn the way literature draws characters: the great types of human temperament, recognized at a glance, understood in depth, and followed from childhood wound to mature strength.