Summary Dialogue on Distribution

Student: Well, that was quick. Too quick, in my opinion!
Professor: Yes, distributed systems are complicated and cool and well worth your study; just not in this book (or course).
Student: That’s too bad; I wanted to learn more! But I did learn a few things.
Professor: Like what?
Student: Well, everything can fail.
Professor: Good start.
Student: But by having lots of these things (whether disks, machines, or whatever), you can hide much of the failure that arises.
Professor: Keep going!
Student: Some basic techniques like retrying are really useful.
Professor: That’s true.
Student: And you have to think carefully about protocols: the exact bits that are exchanged between machines. Protocols can affect everything, including how systems respond to failure and how scalable they are.
Professor: You really are getting better at this learning stuff.
Student: Thanks! And you’re not a bad teacher yourself!
Professor: Well thank you very much too.
Student: So is this the end of the book?
Professor: I’m not sure. They don’t tell me anything.
Student: Me neither. Let’s get out of here.
Professor: OK.
Student: Go ahead.
Professor: No, after you.
Student: Please, professors first.
Professor: No, please, after you.
Student: (exasperated) Fine!
Professor: (waiting) ... so why haven’t you left?
Student: I don’t know how. Turns out, the only thing I can do is participate in these dialogues.
Professor: Me too. And now you’ve learned our final lesson...