Lost in translation (a be-tentacled romance)

by Ravager_Zero

Summary

When a strange object falls from the sky, Vani Harrison goes to investigate, and what she finds will take more than a little getting used to.  
(Very vaguely inspired by both Arrival and the Cthulhu Mythos; but mostly this is the the fault of /r/Consentacles. Thanks guys.)
Landfall

Several dozen feet in the air, above a bland field of dying grass, the sky shimmered and fractured in an iridescent rainbow, like shards of prismatic glass. Out of this fracture fell the thing. It had mind enough to know that it had made a minor miscalculation, and that it would need to adapt its current ogive transformation into a simple delta planform to sustain minimum damage. But not none. With the mental equivalent of a heavy sigh, the thing rippled, the pointed nose splaying out into rippling pseudopods and a quartet of powerful, spade-ended tentacles. The pseudopods sprawled sideways and muscular contractions raced down them, flattening its body. The tentacles then formed a rough canard. Its body now above any impact area, the thing relaxed, gliding as capably as was possible with its weight in the thin atmosphere.

The landing was hard, bruising most of its lower surface, contusions that would take precious time to heal, but it left little trace of its presence in the field. Pulling its bruised appendages inwards, the creature curled into a ball, and with an odd rippling of its skin, shot off towards the nearby scrub. Anything large enough to shelter in from the surprisingly hot sun. There it lay until nightfall, biding its time, able to tell night from day only by the gradual decrease in its surface temperature. The next phase of its task was now beginning, finding a suitable host or mate with acceptable genetic robustness to begin the conquest of this realm. All things considered, it was going well.

That was when one of the local creatures began sniffing around its tightly coiled base, a damp breathing organ nuzzling into it. A tongue spreading acidic saliva across its skin. The thing recoiled in disgust. The beast clamped its jaws around a pseudopod and bit down hard. The beast’s growl reverberated through the thing’s entire substance, momentarily freezing it. Then the thing lashed out with a tentacle, trying to dislodge the attacker. It worked. Slamming the other three tentacles down gave a sudden sharp relief of beast attacking it—long and narrow, with a rear pseudopod for balance, and four bone filled columns holding it up against gravity. The muzzle was the most shocking, triangular, and instead of a beak, it had rows of angular protrusions—teeth. The thing had not fought a boned, toothed beast for a long time.

Further away, blurred with distant interference patterns, was another creature, easily three times as large as the first, and with only two bone filled columns holding it against gravity. The dynamic stability of such a creature would be an incredible boon. Just as soon as the first one was killed. But the smaller beast had backed off, standing between the thing and the larger creature. As the thing moved, so did the beast, always angling to intercept any move towards the larger creature. Intriguing—the possibility that the larger creature controlled the smaller beast mentally could not be ignored. Which, unfortunately, meant killing the smaller beast might damage the linked mind. Only after it had parsed all this data did the thing realise it had flattened out in its normal defensive posture, tentacles beating the ground to give it some semblance of vision. Its injured pseudopod had already been drawn back into its body, but blue-white blood dripped across the field. Well, half of its injured pseudopod, that other half dangled limply from the beast’s jaws. Regeneration would take a not inconsiderable amount of energy.

Looking down at the limp… thing… hanging from her dog’s mouth, Vani sighed. “Bossco, do you gotta try to eat everything we find out here?”

The german shepherd at her side barked and jogged around her ankles, almost tripping her.

“Y’know, you better hope whatever that is ain’t poisonous, ya dopey mutt.”
Bossco’s reply was to swallow the chunk of weird meat in a single bite.

“Well, I guess we’ll find out tomorrow, won’t we boy?” Bosco jumped at her side, nuzzling her waist. “Yeah, yeah. Down. I wanna find out what this thing actually is.”

Bossco stood back, growling softly as Vani strode forward to investigate the thing she’d seen falling in the afternoon on the far side of her land. It looked somewhat like an octopus, but with too many arms, and then some squid-like tentacles too, and it had blue blood. It couldn’t be any clearer if there was a flashing red sign on top of it saying ‘alien’. It was also hurt, thanks to Bossco, and had withdrawn at least one of its several too many arms into its main body. Vani knelt down to touch the thing. It was soft; it rippled like a waterbed when she touched it—it was also smooth. So smooth it felt wet, but her hands came away bone dry.

“What are you, little one?” She had no idea if it could even hear. It seemed to, though, rolling up into a tight ball. She tried picking it up. “Heavy is what you are. How the hell can you weigh that much?”

Giving the rolled up thing a hard shove, Vani managed to get it moving, Bossco trotting along next to her, occasionally darting forward to sniff suspiciously at the thing. It wasn’t too hard getting it back to the house—it seemed able to move somewhat under its own power, if slowly. It was hard to reconcile that with the graceful glider she’d seen in the early afternoon, popping into the clear blue sky right out of nowhere. And maybe just as well it had been her land; old Frank down the road was likely as not to have filled it with buckshot, and the Anderson kids… well. Vani shrugged. The thing rippled itself up the stairs onto the porch.

“Looks like you ain’t hurt too bad then,” Vani paused with the door open. “But I wouldn’t know the first thing abo—Bossco, get out of it!—about fixing you up. Like, do you eat? Drink? Can you even hear me? Understand what I’m saying? Hell, are you even smart enough not to let Bossco try an’ eat you again?”

The thing had no idea of what was being said, only a very slight vibration against the surface of its skin. Clearly the taller creature was the far more intelligent, and it seemed to be making repeated attempts at communication while guiding the thing around. Every so often the thing would slap down the broad end of a tentacle, building a vague picture of its current location. Built from some local fibro-cellulose based material, with the lower ground contact portion covered in hide and fur. So the taller creature had its own dwelling, with seemingly unique spaces within; another clear sign of intellect superior to that of the aggressive—and hungry—beast it seemed to control.

The creature was now carefully pressing against the thing’s flank, attempting—it assumed—to uncover the injured pseudopod. Slowly, carefully, the thing unrolled the injured pseudopod. That was when it felt the tentacles of the creature cradling it, pressing against it—somewhat painfully—and otherwise manipulating the broken appendage. The range of motion on those tentacles seemed sharply limited, and when it extended another pseudopod to investigate why, those tentacles stopped moving. The thing had a moment to consider whether it might have accidentally triggered a fear response before the tentacles began to manipulate the pseudopod, moving back and forth between it and the injured one.

Tactile comparative analysis. There was one more simple test, and so the thing held out a single tentacle, uncoiling it slowly so it could meet the tentacles of the other. The pads and suckers on the thing’s tentacle wrapped over the tentacles of the creature and suddenly it understood. Those tentacles had rigid bone supports, four seemed normal—as far as the creature’s range of motion
was concerned—and one seemed specialised, being both smaller and mutually opposable to the others. The tips of those tentacles also seemed to have two surfaces—a fleshy lower plate, and a hard, smooth, protective upper plate. A truly fascinating biomorphic design. It needed more data.

The thing slowly extended its remaining tentacles and pseudopods towards the tall creature, which right now was moving slowly away, and no longer touching it at all. The thing let its appendages fall limp. The tall creature stayed put. The thing extended a single tentacle towards it, sucker side up. The tall creature didn’t move forward, but the thing felt one of the creature’s tentacles stroke around its suckers. Success. It raised another tentacle. The creature met it with one of its own. A third tentacle, further away. The creature shuffled forward, one tentacle leaving the first the thing had raised and touching the newly raised tentacle. The thing lowered its first tentacle, pressing it gently against one of the flesh and bone columns supporting the tall creature, and felt an odd ripple pass through the creature’s flesh.

Vani stood stock still, her left hand pressing against the further tentacle of the thing, wishing it had eyes. She had just figured out that the only way for it to ‘see’ was to actually touch things—or do that odd ground thump every now and then. She couldn’t hide a vague sense of revulsion as two of those broad, strong tentacles explored her legs. She had no idea what it was that made it so unsettling, it just was. Then again, maybe it was the weird stickiness of the suckers alternating with the oily smoothness of its skin—but neither of those left a single trace on her own skin.

A firm slap pushed first one, then another tentacle away from the top of her thighs—and if they tried pushing any higher, well, she was in the kitchen. Putting that thought aside, Vani was glad she was wearing clothes, the tentacles seemingly able to make the distinction and stay on the outside of them. It was still uncomfortable though, as one wrapped her torso, making it hard to breathe, while another pressed experimentally into her left breast. With an annoyed huff she broke free, holding all four tentacles at arms length. The thing seemed to understand that there were places she didn’t want to be touched. Still, they needed a better method of communication than the purely tactile.

The thing didn’t have eyes, seemed to lack ears, and if it had a nose or a mouth she had yet to see any evidence of them. That was when the smaller tentacles started moving, twining up her legs. When they got high enough—where she’d slapped the larger ones away—they moved around the outside of her body, up her waist. More small tentacles joined them, spreading across her stomach and up her back, avoiding her breasts as they wrapped around her front and down her arms. They were loose enough that she could still move fairly freely. Then one wrapped around her neck. She clawed at it in sudden panic. If this thing was planning on eating her, she was going to put up a fight.

It wasn’t, but the tentacle remained around her neck, looser than before. More climbed the side of her head, covering her eyes and ears, tracing the loose tail of her hair. It truly did see by touch alone—and using so many little tentacles meant it was trying to get the best picture of her possible.

“You are a strange little thing, aren’t you?” The thing made no response, although the tentacle at her throat twitched when she spoke. “If you had eyes—or ears—it’d make this a whole lot easier.”

The thing withdrew all its pseudopods from the tall creature. A fascinating skeletal design, in theory terribly unstable and injury prone in such gravity, but in evident practice a graceful combination of dynamic stability and muscular robustness. It was also still trying to communicate. An experiment then. The thing spread out as many of its pseudopods as possible, flattening them out, raising them, and forming a parabola that centered on its main body.
“You look like a satellite dish buddy.” The sounds were not quite concise, the breaks uneven, but even so that thing knew that this would likely be the tall creature’s primary mode of communication. The only problem would be deciphering it. “Still wish you had eyes.” The variation in pitch and tone suggested a different intent than the first string. There would be an easy way to work out what a negative communication felt/sounded like. The thing reached for the upper, protruding muscles on the creature’s upper body. One of the creature’s bony tentacles slapped it away, followed by a single, firm, sound/note. “No.”

The thing gently moved a tentacle towards the meeting point of the flesh and bone support columns. The same sound, but stronger. Definite negative note. Satisfied, the thing lay its tentacles against the floor. Figuring out an affirmative would be more difficult, as with only one mutually understandable statement little effective communication could be conducted. A vague idea forming, it held up the injured pseudopod separately.

“Does it hurt?” The tone was very different to any previous.

The thing held up an unhurt pseudopod. “What are you trying to do?” Another different tone/sequence. It held up a third pseudopod, then a tentacle. The third pseudopod pointed to each in turn, in slow sequence. The tall creature moved closer, touching each in turn as it spoke. “So this one is hurt? Okay, and this one is normal; right. And then this one, it’s not like one of those other ones. So, why?” If the thing had known what a facepalm was, it would have. There was such a thing as being too successful.

Vani looked at the thing—resembling nothing more than a satellite dish and a bunch of antennae right now—and knew it was trying to communicate with her. It was going to be difficult to establish a shared lexicon if all she could do was talk, and all it could was touch, and point—but if it could point, that meant it had some vague sense of vision. Maybe there was hope yet. Even just a name would be helpful—assuming it had a name. Pointing to herself, and feeling vaguely ridiculous, Vani spoke loud and clear. “Vani.”

Then she pointed to the thing. “You?”

No response.

“Yeah, I should’ve expected that. You only understand ‘no’ right now. Kinda like Bossco as a puppy, really.”

The thing couldn’t parse what was being said any better than before, though it had at least managed to establish that the creature it was attempting to communicate with used the self-designation ‘Vani’. A possibly meaningless noise, but the creature had been purposefully indicating itself while speaking the word. Then it had pointed at the thing—and asked what it called itself. The thing trembled with excitement. That meant the Vani-creature was both self-aware—the most definite sign of true intelligence—and had a theory of mind, asking how another saw itself. This left the problem of the thing not having an individual self-identifying label. It held up its tentacles letting them wave idly while it thought on the matter.

“‘course, I could always just call you Tentacles, on account of you're made of ‘em.” There was a pause as the Vani-creature thought over the statement. “Tentacles.” A significant pause. “Yeah, I think Tentacles sounds right.”

The thing parsed that sound carefully, if the tall creature was to respond to the sound ‘Vani’, then it expected the thing to respond to ‘Tentacles’. It was better than nothing, and as the thing had started
with nothing, it had no complaints. Perhaps it was lucky and the name was descriptive.
Vani sighed, looking down at Tentacles, long having given up on even attempting to classify the thing. As far as she could tell it had four large tentacles, twelve smaller tentacles, and a bulbous—almost spherical—central body. It also lacked eyes and ears, though it seemed capable of listening when it did the dish thing with its smaller tentacles. It couldn’t speak, and so far understood perhaps three words—it’s ‘name’, her name, and ‘no’. Once again it came back to the only sense they shared—touch. How could touch be turned into a language?

There were other, pressing, questions nagging at the back of her mind. What did it eat? How? Did it need to drink? Was it aquatic, and thus needed to return to the water at some point? It was definitely alien though. Maybe not from space, but from somewhere else for sure. Which led to more questions. Why was it here? Had it got lost? Been exiled? Suffered some kind of accident? What plans did it have? Did she need to inform some authority she was keeping a weird tentacled thing in her house? Only if she wanted to be locked up and sent to the loony bin. There were still other methods of communication to try. It seemed to have a highly developed tactile sense, after all.

Feeling somewhat foolish, Vani wandered through the house, collecting an old box of crayons and a few sheets of paper from the printer. Maybe if she tried treating it like a three year old they could make some progress. She tore the paper into smaller sections, drawing basic shapes on each. Circle, square, triangle, cross. Tearing up another sheet, she repeated the process. Then she placed the circle in front of Tentacles, and guided one of the smaller tentacles towards it.

The thing—Tentacles—felt Vani guiding its pseudopod towards the ground. Not quite the ground—there was a thin material between its pseudopod and the fibre-cellulose layer. Two edges were smooth and regular, two were rough, with many very fine protruding fibres. On top of the thin sheet there were two textures, the slight roughness of the material, and then a waxy smoothness. Tentacles extended several more of its pseudopods to investigate, tracing the outline of the wax very carefully.

Then Vani took the sheet away and replaced it with another. The rough edges were different, aligned strangely, but simple spatial reasoning told Tentacles that this was simply another translation of the first sheet. The symbol on top, however, was different. No longer a single outline traced in wax. This one terminated at three sharp points, with unnaturally straight sides. Yes, it was different—but why? What did Vani hope to achieve by showing it different symbols. A third symbol was presented to it. Straight edged again, with four sharp points. A fourth symbol. Two straight edges that met in the middle.

Then Vani presented it with two symbols, and Tentacles understood—Vani was trying to establish if it had pattern recognition. Pseudopods raced out and traced the symbols. Both matched the second symbol—straight lines with three sharp points. Tentacles lifted the sheets and placed them together. Two more sheets. The first and fourth symbols. Tentacles pushed them away. Third and fourth. Away. Fourth and second. Tentacles thought for a moment, tracing them carefully, then pushed them away again. First and first. Tentacles placed the sheets together. This was now very promising, Vani was attempting new methods of communication.

Then Tentacles had an idea. With one pseudopod touching the sheets of the second symbol it extended a second pseudopod vertically, attempting to kink it to match the sharp angles of the symbol. A sudden slight pressure wave from Vani’s direction washed over its being, a strange yet
pleasant sensation. Using its pseudopods, Tentacles began to mimic the other symbols. The first was the easiest, the last—the meeting lines—required two pseudopods to form correctly. A ripple of light pressure waves came from Vani, then speech. Tentacles expanded its improvised tympanic system as Vani took hold of one of its major tentacles.

Guiding the tentacle to the musculature on Vani’s upper body—the part that had previously drawn the negative association—Vani spoke, and used a free hand to press the two line symbol into Tentacles. It suddenly understood the meaning of the symbols—a form for mutual communication. Four symbols would be far better than one. It filed the two lines meeting symbol as a negative response, then waited patiently for Vani to perform another action. Moving the tentacle lower, around the midsection, Vani spoke a different word, firmly, clearly, and handed Tentacles the first symbol—the single, continuous line. An affirmative response. Tentacles practised making the symbols several times, as rapidly as it could.

Vani smiled, placing the heavier tentacle on the floor. Yes/no was the beginning of language; a mutual understanding could be established, and further communication would develop from that. Then she realised that she couldn’t just ask Tentacles to form the dish thing. Kneeling down next to the thing, she began toying with its smaller tentacles, trying to pull them out like the thing had done before, and after a few false starts she was staring at the dish again.

“Can you hear me?”

Circle. Yes. Though it probably didn’t understand the meaning of those words. Vani sat next to it, on the floor. She pointed to herself.

“Vani.”

Yes.

She pointed to Tentacles. “Vani?”

Crossed tentacles. No.

She kept pointing at Tentacles. “Tentacles?”

Yes.

She pointed at herself again. “Tentacles?”

No.

At least it could recognise names—or whatever passed for names in its language. It could also establish and recognise patterns. She laid the papers on the floor. “Vani or Tentacles?”

A long pause, with several smaller tentacles shuffling the papers. No. Yes. Both. All four symbols.

Vani sighed, giving the thing a gentle pat. “We’ll get there buddy, somehow.”

Rising slowly, Vani walked to the sink and grabbed a glass of water, draining it without taking a breath. Then she grabbed a bowl from the other cupboard and drew some water into it, placing it on the floor in front of Tentacles. One smaller tentacle wormed around the bowl, gripping it loosely, water sloshing from side to side and over the floor. Then a second smaller tentacle joined
the first, dipping below the surface. The water vanished in a split second. Vani grabbed the bowl and refilled it, placing it down once again. The water drained more slowly this time. Tentacles lifted the bowl, presenting it to her. She had a feeling the bowl wouldn’t be enough.

“Stay there, I’ll get you something.”

She was back moments later with an old laundry bucket, and half-filled it with water. Once again Tentacles felt around the new object before sending its tentacles down into the water. It drank thirstily, but didn’t empty the bucket. Maybe it was semi-aquatic after all. Knowing it could drink water was one thing—how was another. What it might be able to eat was the third important unknown. While being wrapped in oily tentacles had been frightening, Vani realised that trying to eat her would have been… ambitious… for the thing. She couldn’t even see a mouth, after all. Still, there were a few things in the fridge, and it probably wouldn’t hurt to try some of them.

Tentacles waited patiently as Vani set yet more containers down on the ground. Exploratory probing showed that none of these contained significant amounts of liquid, though some did have a higher than usual moisture content. Three of the five items were well below the current atmospheric temperature, implying Vani had either control over local atmospheric effects—unlikely, though possible—or that Vani used technology of some sort to temporarily reduce the temperature of them items. As its pseudopods felt around the inside of the containers, Tentacles marvelled at the variety of textures, substances, and acidity levels. If this was what Vani could safely ingest then it had a remarkably robust digestive system.

Drawing closer to each of the containers in turn, Tentacles unfurled its main body, allowing its beak to protrude into the first of the containers. Bland, chewy. Another, warmer, rich in fibre compounds and interesting protein matrices. The third tasted of home—a place lost long ago, beyond the deluge—fleshy, with a hint of salt, made of muscle fibres and scaly skin. It knew the taste well, but this had other notes, and had somehow altered the structure without damaging the flavour excessively. Tentacles pulled the container with that food closer, attempting to hide it under a fold of rubbery skin. Vani took it back and placed it in line with the others. With the mental equivalent of a shrug, Tentacles moved onto the next two containers. Another fleshy, yet crisp and moist meal. Strange, but appetising. The fifth container held a strange liquid, with chunks of flesh and soft, fibrous strands.

Vani pushed the first container towards it. “Tofu.” Tentacles tried another bite, but found it too bland to be appetising.

The second container was proffered as the first was pulled away. “Muesli.” The flakes had a satisfying crunch, and the small pellets were rich in protein chains and several compounds useful for regeneration.

The third container was pushed forward. “Fish.” Tentacles restrained itself to taking a single bite, knowing that Vani was trying to both educate it, and establish what it could safely eat—and whether it might have any preference.

“Apple.” That was the fourth container.

“Beef stew, with noodles.” Number five.

Tentacles waited several moments as Vani rested on the floor, her support columns crossed beneath her main body. Such an interesting amount of flexibility for a bone-filled creature. Vani made no moves, so Tentacles retrieved the third and fourth containers—Fish, and Apple. The fish was
almost like a drug, taking Tentacles back to a piece of racial memory not felt for many, many generations. The apple was something new, clearly a kind of fruit, native to this realm. It also contained many compounds useful to the regeneration process.

Regeneration also required a period of enforced somnolence. Vani had been more than helpful, and Tentacles considered its current location safe enough—provided Vani’s beast/companion did not attempt to eat it again. Tentacles began preparing for the regeneration, spreading its pseudopods and tentacles out in a spiral, curling back to almost touch its main body. It felt Vani’s gentle caress as its sensory capacity fell below conscious levels. Then it slept.

“Sleep then, little one.” Vani patted Tentacles one more time, still surprised her hand came away dry, then headed upstairs to her own bed. It had been a most… intriguing night. It also reminded her that out here in the country she was far lonelier than she had been while studying in the city. It meant friends with benefits were harder to come by. Most of the other people nearby were fairly conservative, if fond of government related conspiracy theories. But Vani preferred the country, the wide open space, the stars at night, the quiet. She could be as loud as she wanted, and nobody would care.

Throwing off her shirt, Vani worried at the scar halfway down her left side. It still itched, but it had healed fine, just a fine white line of slightly raised flesh. Another matched it, lower, on her back. An unsupported load—a piece of rebar—had flown off the back of a truck and punched through her windscreen, lung, driver’s seat, and the firewall at the back of the car. It had been the most legitimately terrifying moment of her life, and a large part of what had prompted her to move back out here after finishing her studies.

She had kept more than a few souvenirs from the city however, most of them more adult in nature. Some of her favourite things, in actual fact. The question was which one to play with tonight. Or two. Or maybe even three. It had been a long time since she’d fucked anyone. One hand was already past the waist of her jeans, feeling at the soft tangle of hairs above her entrance. She practically tore the jeans off, throwing them across the room. Her hand ground at her pelvis through the fabric of her briefs. She threw herself backwards onto the bed. Tonight was going to be a good one, followed by a hella steamy shower if she could stay awake long enough.

The fingers of her left hand traced the line of her labia through the fabric of her briefs, playfully pinching at a few special points. Her right hand scrabbled around in the top drawer of her nightstand, feeling for the right selection of toys. Yes. Yes. No, too hard. No, too soft. Oh, the other lube—Aha, gotcha. Vani placed the toys on top of the nightstand, both hands now rubbing up and down the length of her entrance, the cloth of her briefs more tormenting than tantalising now. Vani slid her briefs down, her right hand teasing left and right of her entrance while her left hand pressed gently at the tiny hood above. A shake of her legs threw the briefs half off, and that would have to do.

With a sigh of relief Vani ran the medium dildo up and down the length of her labia before driving it in full force. The sudden eruption of sensation took her breath away. Always—always when she did it that way. Her breath came in short, sharp gasps. She could feel it filling her, but as she tried to push it deeper there was resistance—the moulded balls stopped it cold. The resistance, the delicious frustration, the sense of being not quite filled—that was what she craved, and what drove her to find new ways to deepen her pleasure. But one little thrust couldn’t hurt. Or another. Or—Vani caught herself, ramming the dildo back in with a quiet gasp. She had many more ways to get pleasure tonight.

The nipple clamps, for example, held with a fine steel chain. The pinch, just on that weird border
between intense pleasure and pain. She shivered from head to toe, one hand keeping the dildo firmly inside her. There was another dildo, shorter, slimmer—she preferred it for other things, coating it in gel lube and giving the dildo already inside her a few good thrusts. Vani toyed with the second dildo for a little while, pressing it gently around her ass, sliding the lubed head just inside. She had to be more careful with this hole, take things slowly, gently, to get the most out of it. But inside she could almost feel both dildos rubbing together.

Unfortunately, holding two dildos in—and thrusting with them—left her a hand short of being able to play with her clit at the same time. Her breath now ragged and uneven with spikes of pleasure, Vani abandoned one of the dildos long enough to take the clamp from her left nipple. She sucked in a sharp breath as she attached the clamp over her clit. It was too much to take, and so she clamped her nipple again. Sometimes she could do that, just not tonight. Instead, her hands began a rhythmic thrusting. Top. Bottom. Top, top, bottom, top. Bottom, top, top. Together. Top. It was getting hard to hold it together, her body shuddering in delight, but still she wasn’t quite there.

Thrusting hard with the larger dildo, her pussy used to the size now, Vani arched her back and clenched her thighs. So close… she felt so damn close. She could feel it building deep inside her, a sensation of joy and utter satiation spreading from just below her stomach. A long, slow thrust with the dildo in her ass. The feeling of completion; of being filled past her bursting point. Two sharp thrusts grinding hard into her labia, trying to press the dildo against her clit. A single spark to bridge the gap between action and feeling. Her whole body tensed, her ass clenching the smaller dildo. She tried in vain to take another breath.

The quiver rippled from her scalp to her toes in an instant, and a great sense of relief flowed through her body. Tensed muscles relaxed, and she fell back on the sheets, panting heavily with exertion. With some reluctance she pulled out the dildos, wishing she could simply enjoy such a languorous moment—but if she didn’t move soon, the whole bed would be the wet spot. Moving slowly, deliberately, on slightly shaky legs, Vani grabbed her toys and made her way to the bathroom. Cleaning afterwards was such a chore.

That left the shower—hot and steamy—and idle hands with which to play. She tried, but it was still a little too sensitive from before. It didn’t quite hurt, but it wasn’t comfortable either. An overload of sensation. More would have to wait.
It only occurred to Vani, after waking up, that Tentacles had some limited facility for vision. It had, after all, known whether she was pointing at it, or herself. It had also been able to wallop Bossco, and was able to avoid her as she walked around. Its larger tentacles would occasionally beat against the floor. Is it some kind of echolocation? She couldn’t be sure, but it was a decent hypothesis. First up, however, she would have to feed Bossco—assuming he hadn’t keeled over from trying to eat part of Tentacles the previous night.

Not even bothering with clothes, Vani padded down the stairs, stepping past Tentacles in the kitchen to get Bossco’s food. The morning air was crisp, not quite cold. Vani felt it raise goosebumps up and down her arms and legs, and everything between. A delightful shiver raced up her spine. One hand pressed between her legs while the other opened the cupboards. She wanted to, one finger sliding slowly, tantalisingly up her entrance and towards her stomach. So badly—but now was not the time. Not with Bossco to feed and Tentacles to try and communicate with. A frustrated huff escaped her lips as she scooped some meat into a dish for Bossco.

Her faithful companion was sitting at the back door, looking expectantly up at her. Nothing seemed wrong with him, none-the-worse for wear after eating a weird alien tentacle the previous night. She set the dish down, the meat vanishing in about two seconds. Vani gave him an admonishing look. Bossco just wagged his tail.

“You don’t even taste it.”

Bossco just sat, wagging his tail, trying to look pathetic. He rolled over, looking up expectantly.

“Oh, okay, I’ll give you the bellyrubs. Oh yes, you like the bellyrubs don’t you, don’t you?” Bossco woofed playfully, his back leg frantically scratching the air. Vani patted him twice on the stomach. “Okay you, get lost. You’ve got the whole place to yourself.”

So of course he sat next to the door, lazing in the low morning sun. Vani stood and stretched, yawning widely. Naked under the sun—not something she could do too often when she’d lived in the city. She revelled in the freedom this place gave her. Turning to go back inside, her mind turned to the problem of communicating with Tentacles. They still only had yes, no, and two unused symbols. It was also probably a good idea to get a bra and briefs while training Tentacles, because well… Vani frowned, turning the odd lack of disquiet around in her head. Surely it had to just be horniness carrying over from last night. It wasn’t like Tentacles had anything even vaguely approaching a penis anyway.

At least, not that she knew of.

Vani cursed, scrambling up the stairs. But as she dressed it wasn’t her willingness to experiment that sat foremost in her mind; no, it was the yes/no duality. Something about it was percolating in the back of her mind. Something about language. Something that could be used with pretty much any sense, if she put enough thought into it. It was driving her mad as she prepared breakfast, placing an apple next to Tentacles. It had seemed to quite enjoy the apple last night.

“Damn it!” Vani cursed, throwing the wrapper from her muesli bar in the bin. The language idea was driving her mad.
**Wait, why was the bin important?**

It took a few moments before it clicked.

_Goddamn. Binary. Off and On; True and False; Yes and No. The simplest fucking language there is._ Unfortunately, that still left how to gain a mutual understanding somewhat hazy. How did you teach words to something that couldn’t speak or hear? Would it even know what words were? Once again Vani hurried upstairs, grabbing her laptop, and an assortment of random items from around her room. And tape. Masking tape.

It took some time, but eventually she laid out a simple grid, eight by seventeen. Then she set to work on the laptop, looking up binary tables. Probably best to start with simple math. She hoped Tentacles wouldn’t find it condescending. She set to creating the first sequence, using taller blocks and objects for 1’s, and shorter things for 0’s.

As Tentacles awoke it beat its larger tentacles against the ground, rapidly building up a picture of its immediate surroundings. It recalled safety and contentment, along with confusion before it had undergone the necessary somnolence for regeneration. Immediately in front of it was a small, irregular orb. The surface was smooth, and firm. Slowly it drew the object to its beak, tasting it, memory recall informing it that this was, indeed, an apple, as Vani had given it last night. Vani merely neglected the container this time. Further, in the next major area of the dwelling, sat Vani, a hard, bent object of metal in front of her. Vani’s lower support columns were folded beneath the lower body, while the bony tentacles raced across the surface of the object in front of Vani. Between them was minor discontinuity, and with the help of several pseudopods, Tentacles surmised that an array had been added to the ground, some thin substance forming the third symbol from the previous night.

But the symbol was wrong, the lines overlapping the vertices—and something lay within most of the symbols of the array. Tentacles felt around the symbols, the size of the array, and understanding began to dawn. Vani was seeking more pattern matching—testing for intelligence, which was a clear sign of Vani’s intelligence. After assessing the possible patterns, and the strange objects used to create them, Tentacles began rearranging pairs to match. Two of its pseudopods were suddenly gripped by Vani’s. It heard the negative response, and withdrew its pseudopods, confused. Vani re-set the patterns.

Walking along the patterns, Vani made a noise, slightly different for each, stopping at the tenth. Vani then repeated the sequence, and drew several pseudopods over to study it. Tentacles was now beginning to understand, as each time it indicated a particular row of symbols in the array, Vani made the corresponding sound—only then came the flash of insight about the connection of the symbols and the objects. Vani had _improvised_ a solution that both allowed Vani to see and Tentacles to feel the language being used, and it was _so simple._

Vani was trying to teach it binary notation. Tentacles felt its body rippling with laughter at the thought. For all the great advances its species had made, in memory, art, conquest, and transcendence, it was stuck here trying to communicate with this strange visual being using binary. On the evidence to hand—and from the previous night—Vani could only be a visually oriented being; nothing else could explain both its navigational accuracy and difficulty at tactile/chemical communication—especially given the clear level of displayed intelligence.

Moreover, should Vani be teaching binary, then this array would have to correlate to mathematical symbols. But should Vani leave those rows past ten empty? Slowly, carefully, Tentacles wrapped its pseudopods around Vani’s smaller, bony, tentacles. Vani had ten of them, and had a further ten
—shorter and stubbier—on the pads at the bottom of its support columns, though none of those
were apparently opposable. The physical format of Vani’s body was incredibly intriguing for a
creature living on a world with this gravity, something inherently unstable and prone to damage,
and yet incredibly agile and dextrous because of it. Any offspring from this pairing would be an
incredibly potent force in the future.

Returning to the task at hand, Tentacles quickly memorised each sequence of code, then raised
eight of its pseudopods, ready to show that it had learned these numbers and that Vani could
advance through more complex topics. Tentacles began to repeat the sequences by raising and
lowering the appropriate pseudopods, hopefully moving slowly enough that Vani could track and
follow it. Then, with deliberate intent, it began performing basic mathematical operations—despite
not knowing the binary combinations for the operators. After a handful of repetitions Vani seemed
to understand, replicating the patterns in the array on the ground, replacing the blank with the
operator sequence. Tentacles was suddenly thankful that Vani was such an intelligent specimen—
but knew no way of showing it that Vani was likely to understand.

Vani frowned, after going through basic math, Tentacles was approaching her, the rubbery mass
of its body pressing against her calves. Two of the smaller tentacles wound up her left leg, wrapping
around her stomach with a gentle squeeze before Tentacles drew back and resumed its place next to
the grid. Had it just tried to thank her? Walking over to where it sat, Vani gently pulled on the
small tentacles, wrapping them around her in roughly the same way at the same time as Tentacles
began to form the dish.

“Thank you,” Vani found her voice softer than normal.

Then she cleared the junk from the floor and looked up the binary table, setting it up as quickly as
possible to spell out what she’d just said. Of course, Tentacles might just think it was more math,
but as she watched it studying the sequence she became more and more convinced that it knew it
wasn’t just another set of numbers. Then it did something strange. It flashed the circle symbol with
one small tentacle, and the binary for ‘1’ with the rest of them; then it flashed the square, and the
message she had just written. The implication struck her like a thunderbolt. It wants to know if I
understood.

“I understand,” and she changed the grid to read that, prefacing it with a square.

Grabbing three apples, Vani placed one at the top of the grid, and the other about halfway down.
Then she filled the grid, prefacing numbers and letters with circles and squares. 1 Apple. 2 Apple.
She extended the grid with some more tape, and placed six apples at the bottom of the grid. Then
she watched in fascination as Tentacles set to work, all twelve of the smaller tentacles reading the
grid and position blocks and objects, while the four largest tentacles—those with rings of suckers
on them—began to manipulate the apples.

3 Apple.

2 Apple + 1 Apple = 3 Apple.

5 Apple x 2 Apple = 20 Apple.

4 Apple ÷ 2 Apple = 1 Apple.

1 Apple ÷ 2 Apple = 0.5 Apple. Vani smiled, gently moving blocks aside to insert the code for a
decimal point. Tentacles held up its smaller tentacles, quickly signing thank you. Vani clapped for
it, stepping back, trying to figure out how best to expand their respective vocabularies—and how
she could best learn to read binary faster. It was Tentacles that came up with the solution to the
former, placing its beak next to an apple, writing apple in the grid, then leaving another tentacle
pointing at the next blank space. Vani filled in the blanks, spelling out ‘Hungry’. When Tentacles
began to eat the apple she changed it to ‘Eat’.

There had to be a better way to communicate—Tentacles was flashing binary so fast it was hard to
read individual letters. Of course, Tentacles had replicated the symbols from the previous night, so
letters might be possible—if it knew what they meant. She cleared the grid, expanding it even
further—26 letters. Then she added a ninth block to each, grabbing crayons and paper again,
drawing large block capitals on each.

Tentacles was intrigued by the sudden rush of activity, Vani now doing something with flat sheets
similar to the previous time. Vani had cleared the array, expanding it in both horizontal directions,
a ninth block spaced slightly apart from the first eight, and an extension out to 26 rows. Then a flat
sheet went in the first space of the ninth column, and Tentacles sent out three pseudopods to
investigate, feeling the familiar waxy surface. It was similar to the second symbol from before—but
the angle was sharper, and the baseline about a third of the way up. The second row’s symbol
was a combination, a vertical line, and attached to that two halves of the first symbol from the
previous time. The third row was an incomplete version of the affirmation/positive symbol.

It understood now. Vani was showing it both binary, and corresponding non-number symbols—the
sounds Vani made for each nowhere near those made while counting—which meant that Vani’s
species used a phonemic glyphic language for communication. More pseudopods crept out,
scanning each of the glyphs in exquisite detail. Most would be fairly easy to replicate, though it
knew it would be limited to displaying a maximum of twelve at any one time. Even the simple
Apple Hungry combination would press it dangerously close to its limit, but it least it was sure
Vani knew how to construct sentences and combine language structurally to obtain specific
meaning.

Tentacles used one of its actual tentacles to take one of the wax rods Vani used to mark the sheets,
then took one of those sheets for good measure. Vani understood mimicry—so it should also
understand seeing its designation in glyphic form. Tentacles set to work, one tentacle drawing the
glyphs—rather haphazardly—with two pseudopods tracking the shapes and trail the wax rod was
leaving on the sheet. It held up its work.

VANE

Vani laughed. Tentacles was confused. Vani took another sheet, then copied the glyphs—
modifying the last one.

VANI

Frustration coursed through its body, making its pseudopods waver in their tasks. The glyphs could
stand for more than one phoneme, making this form of communication even more difficult—if
only it could show Vani its language of chemicals and pheromones, the subtlety of textures and
what they meant. It just had no way of knowing if Vani had the capacity to understand chemical
memory. It could only try. Opening the tripartite flap at the tip of a single pseudopod, Tentacles
forced through a simple memory & test combination, dribbling it onto one of the flat sheets, then it
held up its pseudopods to spell VANI EAT.

Vani swallowed, suddenly unsure of herself. Was Tentacles trying to feed her? Had it just dumped
something on that paper? Was it some weird alien sex ritual? She gave the substance an experimental sniff. Vanilla, and something otherwordly, with hints of pine and tree sap. It was thick, like custard. She picked up the paper dubiously—but it seemed unlikely to be poison, given how Bossco had eaten some of Tentacles last night and hadn’t been harmed—and after a moment, tipped the sludge back down her throat. It tasted of salt and oil, and as it went down she suddenly felt light-headed and like her body didn’t have nearly enough limbs. The feeling passed and she sat up again. Tentacles was holding up the four symbols from the previous night. She touched the two it had used for confusion.

Thank you. No. Minus.

Vani blinked. What was it trying to say? What had it tried to do?

“It’s okay,” Vani stroked its main body. “I guess something didn’t work.” Had it been trying to apologise for something failing? She wrote the words on another piece of paper, following them with ‘sorry’. She still wondered about why whatever it was Tentacles had fed her had caused her to think her body was wrong, and small, and had too few limbs. That would require a much deeper understanding of language.

Their experiments and attempts at mutual communication continued for much of the day, ending only when Vani was too tired to continue. As she made her way up the stairs Tentacles began to follow her, sliding into her room behind her. She was just too tired to say no—trying to communicate, and actually having it work, though exciting, was incredibly tiring. All she did was push various tentacles away as she undressed, climbing wearily into bed. Tentacles signed for her, staying on the floor.

Vani must sleep?

“Yeah, I’m tired.”

Vani confused.

“No, tired. I have to sleep.”

Yes. Vani sleep. Tentacles wake. Talk when Vani wake.

“No touch while sleep.”

Understand.
So, there would be at least one downside to breeding with Vani, but for Tentacles that wasn’t going to dissuade it from implementing its plan to enhance its offsprings’ genome with Vani’s. Certainly the requirement for somnolence with respect to the cycle of the planet about its axis was annoying, but the advantages seemed to far outweigh the drawbacks. The biggest advantage being Vani’s ability to see—though Tentacles had yet to truly test it, the simple questions it had managed told it much. At close distances Vani could easily distinguish each pseudopod—more than that, Vani could identify the tripartite flap that closed the tip of each pseudopod.

As for the resolution in time of Vani’s visual sense, Tentacles hadn’t yet managed to make a sequence of glyphs that was unable to be understood in more than two attempts. The implications for parallel cognitive processing were immense, especially if that region of the psyche were co-opted for something other than visual processing. Just another piece of gene coding it could load into the first egg for Vani. Assuming first that Vani would be willing to breed with it; and second that both Vani and the egg would remain unharmed by the breeding and birthing process. It would do no good to have the breeder die before any offspring entered adulthood.

Lowering a significant portion of its mind into somnolence allowed Tentacles to pass the time without thought while remaining alert to changes or dangers. It also allowed for greater mental capacity to be devoted to subconscious processing and intuitive construction. Vani wasn’t the only being it had encountered capable of improvisation, though Vani was one of the most versatile. Tentacles’s thoughts returned to itself, collating and extrapolating all it had learned so far of Vani’s language glyphs and phonemes. It wondered if there was a way to convert one to the other via some technological solution.

The folding steel case Vani had been attending to during the language lessons.

Tentacles flicked its pseudopods in frustration. Using the case required visual senses—more than just echolocation—as Vani had quite often kept her visual organs fixed on the flat, featureless upper section of the device. The lower section had been textured with semi-uniform squares that served as inputs. There were also the wax rods Vani had used—and allowed it to use—the previous day cycle. It also wished it could touch Vani while she slept—Vani had removed the small cloth covering the ‘no’ places before climbing onto the sleeping platform, and Tentacles wanted to know why such places were so important. Or perhaps they were more sensitive? That was one reason they might be covered.

Marking the rising of the single local star, Tentacles had pinpointed the planet’s day/night cycle to within a second. Whether axial tilt and orbital eccentricity came into play would be questions for later—especially if there were extremes of either that might pose a risk to Vani—or even itself. Such places did exist, after all, and in shifting planes it was hard to pinpoint exactly where it might land. Growing restless, Tentacles slid around Vani’s personal area in the dwelling, enjoying the strange texture of fluffy hoops against its underside. The next area was once again smooth, and a sudden shock transmitted through the ground told it Vani had awakened.

Vani stood, stretching, catching a glimpse of Tentacles over her shoulder. She padded over to the bathroom, shooing Tentacles out while she relieved herself. The thing was waiting behind the door when she opened it again.

Hello Vani. Language onwards?
“Morning Tentacles. Lemme get something to eat first.”

Eat hungry? Tentacles eat also?

“Yeah, I’ll see what I’ve got. Gotta feed Bosco too.”

What Bosko?

“My dog. He tried to eat you.”

Bosko friend animal. Understand. Bosko need eat and sleep?

“Yeah,” Vani frowned. “I’m guessing you don’t normally sleep?”

Tentacles only sleep to repair.

“Huh, well. You are a weird little monster.”

Rummaging through the cupboards, Vani poured a bowl of cereal, then went outside and filled Bosco’s dish with his favourite biscuits. She hadn’t bothered getting dressed, despite Tentacles’s closeness and weirdness. She wasn’t just testing herself though—she was testing to see how Tentacles would react, to see if it could resist the temptation to touch everything. She peeled an orange for it, and as Tentacles ate it wrapped one of its smaller tentacles loosely around her ankle. It was almost like it was trying to show affection.

After breakfast the language lessons continued, Tentacles’s grasp of English was very patchy, but its understanding of advanced concepts was sometimes beyond Vani’s comprehension. Clearly it was intelligent—ferociously so—and the only thing holding it back was the language barrier. It was also starting to ask more complex questions. Where the Earth was, for example. Axial tilt effects—seasons. Climate extremes. She wished she could just hand the thing a bloody encyclopaedia, but it couldn’t read. Or can it?

Vani strode over to the bookshelf, taking down a simple science book. She opened it at random and placed it in front of Tentacles. It placed several smaller tentacles on the pages, then held up several others in confusion.

“It’s a book,” Vani explained. “You read it to get information. Data.”

Read?

“Look at words and pictures, understand what they say.”


So apparently Tentacles’s remarkable sense of touch had a resolution limit. Could it be the material? Vani frowned at the thought, grabbing the crayons and paper again, writing as small as possible, trying to copy the format exactly. She handed the sheet to Tentacles.

Information same?

“As the book, yes.”
“Huh, okay. I guess we gotta find another way to teach you then.”

Vani share learning with chemicals?

“What?”


“Wait…” something was congealing at the back of her mind. Vani recalled the weird sensation after eating Tentacle’s secretion the previous day. “Is that what you did yesterday?”

Yes. Testing if Vani could chemical-learn. Unknown if Vani could chemical-teach.

Holy. Shit. Vani rocked back, shocked. Tentacles was even more alien than she’d thought. If she understood what it was trying to say correctly, it used chemical memory to communicate, and store data, allowing it to trade learning and experiences directly with others of its own species. That meant the flash of wrongness the previous day had actually been a foreign memory—more a sensation—that was the closest her body could come to interpreting Tentacles’s memories. It was also, she realised, a potential form of mental influence—though she had no way to tell if she already had been by that single dose. A disturbing thought.

“Can tentacles control Vani’s mind?”

No. No. Tentacles can only control own mind.

“What about influence—altering a mind?”

Influence possible. Tentacles did not influence Vani. Tentacles only test whether Vani can chemical-learn.

“Can Tentacles influence Vani’s mind?”

Possible. Uncertain. Vani scared mental strong damaged?

Vani sat silent for a moment, thinking. While the translation was admittedly terrible, Tentacles at least understood enough to know that she was worried about being influenced by it, which in turn implied that Tentacles saw this teaching as important, and something that it didn’t want to compromise. She took a deep breath before replying.

“Yes. Vani scared mind influenced.”

Tentacles not use influence chemicals. Not sure how explain safely.

“You can’t,” Vani shook her head. “I just have to trust you.”

Trust?

“Accept that you are telling the truth. Accept that you have good intentions.”
Intention is to eventually breed. Is this good intention?

“Breed?” Vani cocked her head, looking at Tentacles strangely. “There are others of your kind here?”

No. Tentacles would like to breed with Vani.

Vani laughed. The honesty was disarming. It seemed impossible, but maybe it didn’t know that. “Is it even possible?”

Can Vani carry hatched offspring?

“You mean can I have a baby?”

Offspring, yes.

“Yes.”

Tentacles can breed with Vani. Vani must accept first. No breeding if Vani not accept.

Vani lay back against the floor, eyes closed. It was easier to think this way. She felt tentacles gently coiling around her wrists and ankles, and another pressing against her stomach. Another pressed gently between her breasts. Yet another caught her breath. She opened her eyes to stare at Tentacles.

Is Vani okay?

“I… I need time to process,” Vani gently moved the smaller tentacles away from her face and midsection, then uncoiled each from her arms. “Do you need to touch me?”

Touch comforts Tentacles. Does touch comfort Vani?

“Sometimes.” She closed her eyes. “Touch only yes places.”

Tentacles understood, sliding to nestle itself between Vani’s knees. Pseudopods gently began to coil around Vani’s toes, down her feet, and up around her ankles, all the way to her knees. Another pair twined the opposite way, moving around Vani’s thighs, working down towards her knees. By necessity they came close to the lower ‘no’ region of Vani’s body, but all she did was tense as they passed. Four more pseudopods wove around Vani’s abdomen, gently pressing against her stomach and below her breasts—what she had called the upper ‘no’ region. Two more pseudopods snaked out, wrapping Vani’s arms from the shoulders down to the elbows, then a straight line into the palm of each hand. Vani’s fingers gently curled around the tips of those pseudopods. The final two pseudopods wrapped themselves very loosely around Vani’s neck, feeling the sudden tension and release as she breathed out sharply. Her breath soon slowed, not to sleeping rate, but to something more relaxed.

With its actual tentacles, Tentacles reached for the wax rods and sheets that Vani used to communicate. It drew the yes symbol on one, and the no symbol on the other. Two tentacles held the symbols, leaving the other two to explore. But Vani always said no. One of the free tentacles brushed Vani’s forehead, the two holding the symbols either side of her face. The last free tentacle pressed softly between her breasts, where it could feel an increasing rhythm from her heart. Vani
blinked, taking a breath.

Nothing happened.

Tentacles slowly moved the tentacles holding the symbols. Vani looked slowly towards the yes symbol. She was okay—or at least assented to the situation. One free tentacle moved to hover over Vani’s left breast. She remained looking at the yes symbol. The tentacle came down, a handful of suckers contacting Vani’s supple flesh. She turned slowly to face the no symbol. The tentacle was removed. She turned to face upwards, neither yes or no. A tentacle descended on her nose, a single sucker pressing against the tip. Vani turned slowly towards the yes symbol, her body convulsing slightly in a strange rhythm. Her body’s temperature had risen a fraction of a degree. She seemed to enjoy this touch.

Continuing its delicate exploration, Tentacles placed a tentacle either side of Vani’s face, several suckers gripping her cheeks. Her entire body seemed to ripple with enjoyment, shivering within its confinement, but not struggling against it. Once again a tentacle placed a single sucker against Vani’s breast. Once again she looked toward the no symbol. Tentacles shifted its pseudopods below that breast, then placed the entire surface of a tentacle across the exposed area of flesh, every sucker contracting and expanding in rapid sequence.

Vani’s entire body shifted, seeming to convulse. Tentacles loosened all its pseudopods, afraid of harming her. Vani suddenly looked sharply towards the no symbol. Tentacles removed the tentacle from her mid-section. Vani’s entire head inclined toward the no symbol. Confused, tentacles began to slowly tighten the grip of its pseudopods again. Vani looked slowly towards the yes symbol. Rearranging its pseudopods, Tentacles placed the same tentacle touching Vani’s mid-section—with two suckers and the fleshy tip touching the underside of her breast, making the motion as deliberate as possible.

Vani looked away from the yes symbol—but she didn’t look towards the no symbol.

Tentacles performed the same action with its suckers, rapidly expanding and contracting them. Vani shuddered and convulsed again, her face continuing to look upwards. It was then that Tentacles began to understand that the convulsion was an involuntary reaction to this external stimulation. While Vani’s flesh was not as sensitive as its own, it still served as a powerful sensory input. With that information now in hand, Tentacles understood the need not to touch Vani’s breasts or her lower ‘no’ region—they were far more sensitive, and thus vulnerable to damage, than the rest of her body. With deliberate care Tentacles lowered its final tentacle on to the upper surface of Vani’s left breast, allowing the suckers to gently caress the smooth, supple flesh.

Very slowly, Vani turned towards the yes symbol.

Vani felt her breathing slow. She couldn’t help it—this felt like an important moment, basically wearing Tentacles’s entire body as a BDSM suit. Not to mention how much those damn suckers tickled when they did that thing. It was a weirdly sexual non-sexual kind of stimulation, and it was driving her mad. Even the thought of breeding with Tentacles didn’t seem anywhere near as strange anymore—not if it could do this to her all the time. Hell, I might have problems leaving the house now. She was also very glad Tentacles hadn’t even tried touching her womanhood—because right now she was so stupidly wet she knew she had to be leaving puddles on the floor. And that was even before it started tickling the top of her breast, suckers somehow carefully avoiding her nip—nope. Maybe it was an accident, but it completely took her breath away.

Maybe having sex with a giant alien tentacle thing would be good. What the hell am I thinking? It
was something more than her usual level of horniness, but she also had to trust that Tentacles wasn’t trying to influence her. Well, at least not chemically, because damn did it know how to turn a woman on. She sighed, body going limp, letting out a ragged breath. Was she even considering this? Right now, and would she let Tentacles watch as she did?

Vani shook her head, trying to clear it. Her overactive sex drive was once again fogging things up. Maybe she needed a shower. Yes, a shower. Something to cool off—and an excuse to keep Tentacles away for some time. Time that she would use to sort out her lustful feelings for be-tentacled aliens, and the idea of being ‘bred’ by said alien. Yes, it was weird; Yes, she was weird for even considering it; Yes, it would probably feel amazing…

Vani shook herself free of Tentacles, racing up the stairs to the bathroom, locking the door behind her. She was breathing heavily, panting as if she’d just run a marathon. She needed time to work through this great mass of confusing thoughts and feelings. The cold water did nothing to cool her ardent desire.
The shower pounded against Vani, chilling her skin and somehow fuelling her desire for that alien touch. She shivered, one hand sliding down through her crotch, the other squeezing her breast. Damn it if being cooched by Tentacles hadn’t made her horny as all fucking hell. She shivered again, tweaking the shower to a lukewarm body temperature. There was no way to avoid it—her nails dug sharply into the flesh of her breast. She was actually considering fucking a tentacled alien. She gasped as a single finger toyed with her anus. She’d seen what it could do. Her other hand switched breasts, pinching the nipple hard. She fell back against the wall of the shower, knocking over the shampoo and one of her spare lubes. The way those little tentacles could transform, getting longer, thicker, flatter, or curling and poking in almost impossible shapes.

Vani shivered again, aware that none of it was from the cold. She rinsed her finger, then covered it in some lube. She ran it up and down the outside, between the folds in her thighs, pressing, pinching her labia together. Her right hand continued to almost assault her breasts, working roughly at the flesh, not sure if she wanted it to hurt because she wanted to stop, or because she sometimes enjoyed that pain. She grit her teeth and closed her eyes, both hands now clawing into her breasts. Her treacherous mind asked what it would feel like to have dozens of little suckers doing the same.

“Fuck. Me.”

Vani panted, head down under the stream of water. It seemed that nothing could distract her from the unique possibility of fucking an alien. Not even the thought of old Frank’s comical account of being abducted and probed by the little green men. Vani spread her legs, one hand gripping the handrail so she didn’t fall. The way old Frank always told that story, she swore she probably would’ve liked those aliens. The real deal was so much better.

“What. The fuck. Is wrong. With me?”

Hands rolling down her sides, Vani hooked two lubed up fingers—freshly lubed—deep into her pussy. She was trying to find the special spot, and rub the heel of her hand into her swollen clit at the same time. Then came the shocking revelation that she had two hands, and one of them was idle. That made things so much easier, the fingers of one hand pressing against her g-spot, the fingers of her other hand gently tweaking and pinching her clt. Sometimes it was harder when she didn’t have anything in there. Not today—it felt like she was about to squirt so hard she’d launch from the fucking shower. She laughed at the image, a little of the tension draining away—then it hit her as her fingers continued to move, a shuddering wave that collapsed her knees, leaving her gasping for breath under a tepid shower.

“Fucking. Lord. Above.” She swore floridly, arms unable to lift her. All these thoughts about actually having sex with the thing now living in her house. And she was giving it serious thought too—maybe not the idea of breeding, but definitely letting it play with her. With a ragged breath she managed to rise enough to turn off the shower, rolling and sliding down against the wall of the recess. At least in here she didn’t have to worry about wet spots, or cleaning up afterwards. And maybe that would be the best place to do it the first time, keep all evidence well hidden. She shook her head in annoyance, because a) she knew it was going to happen, and b) it would happen where it happened, whatever felt most natural.

It took several minutes before she felt she could trust her knees again, standing slowly, towelling off. There were times she regretted being naked so often, and this was one of them. With Tentacles
around she still felt a little vulnerable and unsteady—and she just knew it would be waiting behind the door. She opened it slowly, towel wrapped around her middle like a shift. Tentacles moved back from the door with an odd ripple, larger tentacles waving softly. The smaller ones were already starting to sign.

Vani health good?

“Yes,” Vani placed the palm of her left hand against the suckers of one tentacle, enjoying the sudden tickling sensation. “But I’m still concerned about the mind control you mentioned.”

Tentacles not sure how to answer. Has Vani’s mind changed?

“Maybe. I didn’t think I would ever consider having sex with an alien.”

Sex is breeding?

“The actions, but without actually breeding.”

For what purpose?

“Pleasure, intimacy, bonding.”

Please explain to Tentacles. Understanding difficult.

As Vani talked, Tentacles found itself intrigued by the concept of long term bonding that she spoke of—with the greatest benefit being to any offspring from the pairing. It was not an entirely unique trait, but it was certainly one that it hadn’t encountered in a very long time. Its own kind placed little value on long term pairings—their young hatched self-sufficient, and were easily trained with chemical memory sequences. But this particular revelation also gave Tentacles a much deeper insight to certain features of Vani’s race. One truly notable point was their capacity for something Vani called ‘intuition’—something she defined as the ability to have or grasp knowledge, without understanding where it came from, or having prior experience.

Talk about race quickly developed to discovering additional facts about the planet they lived on—something they called Earth. They lacked orbital infrastructure, interplanetary flight, external colonies, and even lacked planar depth. Stuck on an island at the bottom of a gravity well, seemingly without the desire to escape sideways instead of up. Vani continued to talk rapidly and passionately about various probes the humans had sent into the outer system—so Tentacles altered its opinion slightly, understanding that they were slowly feeling their way upwards, ignoring the possibility of outwards shifts.

More information came to light, seasons, the annual rotation period, climatological extremes. Most fascinating was the variety of fauna—of which Bosko appeared to be a tame version. When Vani began speaking of oceans and abyssal depths Tentacles felt a pang of homesickness.

Is Vani far from ocean?

“Yes,” Vani reached down to pat Tentacles’s main body. “But there’s a big lake not far from here if you want to swim around.”

We go to lake. Not now. But go in future.
“Sure. Should be lots of fish in there too, in case you get hungry while you’re diving.”

Fish good.

The following conversation turned circular, then went back to language lessons, Vani leading them both downstairs. Tentacles was intrigued when Vani sat, starting to draw with the wax rods. She gave the drawing to Tentacles, asking if it could tell which colours were different. Pseudopods extended into fine filaments, carefully tracing the shapes within the drawing. It didn’t know what colour was, but it could taste different chemical compositions in broad regions of the drawing. Only when it started counting the spurs did it realise what Vani had drawn.

Itself.

But the drawing was not accurate. Not true to life. The essence of its image existed without the reality being present, giving a most peculiar sensation of unease. Vani had not done this deliberately, it knew. As a visual creature her perception was very different—or perhaps it was her fingers that lacked the dexterity to create a fully representational image. It asked as much, and Vani explained that she had simply created a rough sketch—an image only ever intended to have vague resemblance to the actuality of the subject.

Can Tentacles touch Vani?

“Why?”

To create drawing of Vani.

“You can touch me in the allowed places.”

There was a pregnant pause as Tentacles slid closer, several pseudopods climbing around Vani’s smooth legs while others tasted the wax rods, or retrieved sheets of paper. Already as the pseudopods moved it began to draw, creating a complex image of Vani as it saw her—from every side at once. There were notable blanks as it moved up her body, expanding around her thighs and over her stomach, more pseudopods reaching up to twine around her arms, feeling the soft covering of fine hairs. With a free tentacle it wrote the glyphs on another sheet.

Tentacles touch Vani’s breasts to finish drawing?

“To finish the drawing.”

Tentacles was careful, making sure to apply only the slightest pressure to what it now knew to be a very sensitive part of Vani’s anatomy. It was still more than enough to be able to draw her accurately. It didn’t bother asking to touch the lower ‘no’ region. retracting its pseudopods,

Tentacles held up the drawing, passing it to Vani.

Vani took the weird, multi-hued sheet and simply stared at it for a moment. *Is this what I look like to that thing?* She frowned, trying to make heads or tails of the image. It took some effort, but she soon realised that the colours were meant to be something like a contour map, and that this was her from every angle. At once. It was like unwrapping a cube into squares on a flat plane. Except that this was so much more complex it was almost incomprehensible. It was also inconceivably accurate, spanning several sheets from head-to-toe and side-to-side. She wondered briefly about using it as a UV map for some 3d modelling—not that she could really make use of it at her level.
“This is hard to read—hard to understand,” Vani collected the images, placing them on the table in what she hoped was the correct pattern. “Could you draw me using only your echo-location?”

Possible. Accuracy of image unlikely. Would return as Vani’s sketch.

“That’s fine. I’d just like to see how different it is,” And Vani sat patiently, watching as Tentacles worked, a simpler, fuzzier drawing taking shape. That drawing also included various objects from around the room, looking almost like a panoramic fish-eye photo. It seemed as if Tentacles’s senses always covered its whole surface, or every direction within its environment.

Vani satisfied?

“Yes. I find it interesting that your drawings are all panoramic, either with touch or with echolocation.”

Does this confuse Vani?

“A little. You remember what I said about eyes?”

You have two, forward facing. Understanding now happening. Vani’s perception is primarily arc-planar. Tentacles’s perception is radial-polar. Perceptual models difficult to integrate.

“Yeah,” Vani laughed softly, rising from the floor. There was a lot that needed doing today, and it was already after noon. She would have to put off her fascination with Tentacles for at least a little while and do some damn work. But after that…
It was after dinner, Vani enjoying a small bowl of ice cream while Tentacles attempted to eat an orange whole—even though she’d instructed it how to peel and separate one during the afternoon. It must have sensed her watching, smaller tentacles saying something about texture flavourness, trying to explain why the whole fruit was tasty to it. Vani just shrugged, gulping down another spoonful of coconut chocolate ripple. She wanted to speak candidly with Tentacles—though all their ‘speech’ to this point had been nothing but candid. She wanted to ask about breeding—and if its species had anything like sex, given it had seemed confused by the notion.

Rinsing out her dish, Vani saw that Tentacles was finished with its meal too. She started running the water to wash the dishes from the last few days, pulling on a pair of rubber gloves. Dish gloves, not her other rubber gloves. She sighed—she just couldn’t avoid it, she was a very sexual woman, and that was something that had driven away at least one of her lovers. Apparently there was such a thing as too much sex for some people. She talked as she worked, glancing over her shoulders to see Tentacles’s replies.

“I want to ask you about sex.”

Sex is like breeding, but not?

“Yes,” Vani turned back to the sink. “But more. I explained about intimacy, and bonding. I just wondered if your species had anything they did just for pleasure, with one another?”

Vani means more than surface touch?

“Definitely. I mean, if you guys didn’t have breeding for fun, what did you have?”

Mindsharing.

Vani nearly dropped the plate she was scrubbing. “What?”

Each chemical memory Tentacles has can be shared with another. Every memory, ever. Also, memories shared to Tentacles can be shared again.

“And sharing memories is pleasurable?”

Sharing single memories is normal. Not special. Mindsharing is special. Sharing both ways—many ways. More than two can share at once.

“So what is mindsharing?”

Each small tentacle can give memory. Each small tentacle can taste memory. When partners mindshare, all twelve give and taste at once. Sensation sometimes overwhelming in pleasure.

“Holy shit,” Vani blinked, putting down the handful of cutlery she’d been holding. “I’m sorry, I would never be able to mindshare.”

Tentacles understands. Mindsharing is special for beings with chemical memories. Act of giving is mild pleasure, when done many at once. Understand if Vani does not want, because similar to mind
influence chemicals.

“Maybe in the future,” Vani finished the last few dishes. “When I feel it might be okay to be influenced by some weird tentacled alien. For now, think you can help with the dishes?”

Help how?

Tentacles was confused, until Vani handed it a rough fibrous sheet, with many loops of fibre across the surface. It was woven, with the two short edges fringed. Vani guided one of its pseudopods to the the metal rack on the sink, while miming a rubbing motion with the tentacle that held the woven fibre sheet. With its echo sense Tentacles could see Vani doing much the same, flipping the item over twice for some reason.

Why does Vani rotate item?

“Making sure it’s dry before I put it away.”

Understand.

Tentacles wiped down the bowl she had given it, using several pseudopods to conduct a brisk surface inspection for liquids. It signed that it was dry. Vani took the bowl and placed it in an upper receptacle against the wall. Then she made a contemplative sound and handed Tentacles two more woven fibre sheets. It was some kind of challenge—Vani could dry only one item at a time, though her inspection was swifter. Tentacles could dry faster, but its own inspection was a good deal slower. Still, it could do three at once. A game was very quickly made. A game which Vani won by a small but reasonable margin.

What does Vani win?

“The satisfaction of having the dishes done.”

That is not answer.

“It wasn’t a contest.”

Then what was it?

“Being useful. It’s interesting to have you around—very interesting—but you have to be smart enough to know that feeding you won’t be free.”

Principle of exchange in value. Trade in useful skill for reward, physical.

“Something like that, yeah,” Vani walked to the lounge, picking up her metal tablet. “Y’know, I bet I could figure out a way for you to use this—it’s got text to voice after all.”

Tentacles is intrigued by this notion.

“Here, lemme try it.”

It didn’t take long to understand the layout of the squares and rectangles on the bottom half of the device. The top remained blank, flat, and slightly warm with thermal radiation. But from somewhere in the device came a voice—with some delay—after a sequence of rectangles had been
depressed. The voice was unlike Vani’s; deeper, a bass note, but lacking the variation in tone her voice carried with every word. Artificial. It was much easier to understand given glyph sequences—but it had no intent that could be read.

Tentacles quickly set to work, listening with rapt attention to the voice issuing from the device as it began to describe metallurgy on this world. It followed the key sequences exactly, searching the database for any planar information. It seemed that in this world multi-planar beings were considered fictional—and horrifying, from most accounts. The largest compilation of errors came from a historical being known as Lovecraft—though in fairness it seemed that his somnolence was often unduly disturbed by such extradimensional creatures. Further accounts had scant information, though Lovecraft had the essence of it correct.

Priests and temples, they weren’t required to break through—neither did they make the task any easier. All they managed was to mark what might be a suitable emergence point for the being they were attempting to commune with. At Vani’s insistence, Tentacles explained why it had been searching such topics. Vani understood the concept of homesickness, but laughed at the idea of being able to take over a planet—even when Tentacles explained the plan.

“Little buddy, you might think we can take over the world with a handful of tentacle babies and some mind influence, but trust me when I say it can’t be done.” There was a thoughtful silence. “Why would you want to take over the whole planet anyway?”

Resources. Food. Oceans.

“Yeah, sure, but I’m feeding you, I’ll take you to the lake—hmm, maybe tomorrow, maybe the next day—and most resources we got are just rocks. You heard what we had on metallurgy.”

Vani makes point. Desire still remains.

“What would you do with all that then?” Vani pressed. “How would you use it?”

Tentacles would…

Tentacles waved its pseudopods in confusion. When it had first arrived it had had a grand plan involving the domination of the entire planet, but deeper research had showed an alarming amount of hostile fauna and extreme environments—and several predatory fauna species perfectly adapted to those extremes. Vani forcing it to examine its motives more closely was an excellent manoeuvre—it showed a high calibre intelligence, along with the desire to effectively influence others. It didn’t have the pure chemical persuasion that Tentacles itself might have used, but it was certainly enough to make it stop and think. Especially given the likely energy and resource expenditure in conquering such a planet. Perhaps as a long term stratagem—for now, Tentacles wondered if it could be content merely with Vani’s company and her ability to show it a small, safer, part of the world.

Yes, that will be ideal. More reconnaissance is required before this planet can be assessed for conquest potentials.

With its pseudopods, Tentacles began forming the glyphs again.

Tentacles is unsure conquering Earth would be a wise resource investment. Tentacles requires more knowledge of the planet before it can assess requirements.
“I still don’t want you trying to take over the planet.”

Even if Vani becomes co-ruler?

“Tempting, but I’m happy here. I was hoping you might be too.”

Possibility exists. If conquest is untenable, Tentacles is likely to be happy with Vani.

“Maybe I shouldn’t tell you about sharks then—they live in those oceans you want to conquer.”

Tentacles pushed the rectangles in sequence, and listened to what the tablet had to say about sharks. Its horror grew with every passing moment. Surely it could defeat a handful, one-on-one. But a whole school? And if they entered a feeding frenzy? A shiver ran across its entire surface. This was a truly hostile planet—it had not been lucky with its planar travel this time. And even if it did gather sufficient resources from this world, where else could it go? There were a number of unexplored planets, near the lowest potential for conquest—this being one of the more attractive prospects. Perhaps it truly was time to settle, and begin the difficult process of uniplanar integration.

Tentacles is now mostly sure that conquest of Earth oceans would result in Tentacles being eaten.

“Sharks aren’t even the worst of it,” Vani’s voice had become quietly unsettling. “Sperm whales think colossal squid are delicious.”

Tentacles dutifully searched both of those creatures. The squid it could probably commune with—despite the vast size differential. The whales, not so much. In less than a day its ideas of world domination had gone from a loose but achievable goal to near impossible—unless it managed to avoid the deep oceans completely. Only then did it understand Vani had been forcing it to research the most dangerous fauna from that particular environment.

“Alright little buddy, I’m going to bed.”

Somnolence required?

“Yes.”

No touch until wake. Understanding.

“Good. Have fun doing your research.”

And Tentacles did, learning as much as it could about the various biomes of the planet, flora and fauna, and then onto human megastructures and advanced physics. Given the sheer riches on offer—and the fact Vani offered a zero energy alternative to long term conquest—Tentacles began considering the idea of uniplanar integration with far more seriousness. It would take time, anchoring it forever to this dimension, but it would also allow it to bring through a few of its more esoteric capabilities—those which were compatible with the physics of this plane.

There was also the lake to look forward to, with the possibility of free food. Not, of course, that it needed to feed, but that Vani seemed to expect it to do so, not understanding how its energetic structure was mostly self-regenerating. It would be able to survive for months without food—but as it was so plentiful here, why let it go to waste? Tentacles shivered in anticipation. Yes. Integration here was a good choice. Breeding with Vani was a good choice. Perhaps even stopping on this
plane was a good choice—nothing deeper could be nearly as inviting.
When she woke, Vani was idly fingering herself, half-dreaming about what those little tentacles could do to her—inside and out. And yet, she wasn’t even tempted to rub one out this morning. Even with the rain pattering against the roof. She wanted something more than sex, and she hated having to acknowledge it. Sure, the sex was fun, but it wasn’t something you could build a relationship on—she’d tried in the past, of course, but it had never worked out. Her fingers traced up and down her ribs, around her stomach, resting gently under the crease of her breasts. She was turned on, but it wasn’t enough to make her want anything. At least, not anything more than a playful touch here and there.

The idea came to her then. If she did fuck Tentacles, it was going to need to know her body—both what it felt like, and what it could do. It wouldn’t hurt to let it touch her. Everywhere this time. Let it do the thing where she was trapped in writhing tentacles, tickled to the edge of glory. Let it force her around, understand what her body could and couldn’t take—and then she would do the same for it. Explain how pain could sometimes be pleasurable, how the addition of discomfort could amplify the pleasure so—despite how counter-intuitive it would sound. She was already out of bed, not even thinking about breakfast.

The rain somehow added to the scandalous desire as she crept quietly down the stairs, carpet plush against her soles. Her hand rested against the polished wood of the banister. She smiled—she’d had fun up there once, but the headache afterwards had kinda ruined things. Sure, the risk made it feel more powerful, but it was a stupid risk. Not one she’d do again… at least, not without some cushions to land on. She was at the bottom of the stairs, and Tentacles waved in greeting, still studying something—she squinted at the screen—exoplanets.

Understanding lightmaps difficult. Metal device cannot render into audio format.

Vani sighed, crouching next to the laptop. She picked up one of the scattered sheets of paper they’d been using, and a crayon. She quickly sketched the axes and the graph curve. “Here.”

Tentacles used several of its smaller tentacles to study the sheet.

Information clarity surprising. Why can metal device not perform?

“You just can’t see it, the display is just little light cells.”

Tentacles has minor temperature/photosensitive cells over entire body. Pattern not detectable.

“144 dpi—dots per inch. Here—“ she handed Tentacles a small ruler, marking out an inch. “—this is an inch. Make it a square, fill it with 144 points. Could you sense that?”

Easy if material or state change involved.

“It’s not. Electrical current fires the light in there.”

Answer to why non-keyed panel caused tingle sensation.

“I’ve got something else that might cause that, but not right now.”
Now is Vani food intake period, yes?

“Maybe,” Vani stepped over to the cupboards in the kitchen. “Did you study anatomy last night?”

No.

“Do it while I eat, I want to run some experiments.”

On Tentacles?

“With you, and me, about touch—I will let you touch everything. That’s part of the experiment.”

Other parts?

“To understand how I feel about your touch. To learn about the strengths and weaknesses of both our bodies.”

Tentacles studies now. Self-study of Vani’s mind-state intriguing concept.

Vani ate in silence, just slightly nervous about the experiment she was about to undertake. So far Tentacles had proved considerate and accepting, and honest—even about wanting to try and take over the world. But there was always that little voice, one she couldn’t silence, one she figured everyone had. A little voice telling her to be careful—more careful than she already was about the risks here. Especially if she was going to ask Tentacles to use its beak on her, anywhere at all. She’d been nibbled on by a lorikeet at a pet store in the city once—all fun and games until it actually bit her ear. Soon enough she was finished breakfast, placing her dish on the sink.

“You want anything?”

Tentacles is not hungry.

“Then I’ll just feed Bossco first, okay?”

Tentacles continues to study.

“Alright then,” Vani rummaged in the fridge, grabbing a round of dog sausage for Bossco. She went out the back and he came bounding up, shaking himself off on the porch. He took the chunk of meat and ran into the distance. Vani shouted after him and he froze. “You better not be burying that!” Then he was running again, loping across the field and into the cover of the trees. Vani rolled her eyes.

Back inside, a nervous shiver running down her spine, Vani lay on the lounge room floor, having cleared some more space for both her and Tentacles. Tentacles sat between her legs, main body level with her ankles. Smaller tentacles seemed to shiver in anticipation, reaching up to ‘speak’.

Anatomy lesson interesting. Understanding growing within Tentacles. Differentiation of terms. Smaller tentacles called pseudopods. Vani’s smaller upper bone tentacles called fingers. Segments. Tips. Nails. Vani’s feet have toes. Ankle is interesting hinge joint. Skin is sensitive organ—very sensitive around vagina. Tentacle’s assumes this is name for Vani’s lower ‘no’ region. Tentacles assures Vani gentleness will be used for all touches near vagina. Tentacles also desires to know if Vani wants to use Yes/No symbols again.
“Y’know, I think that’s your longest ever speech, you silver-tongued little weirdo.”

Tentacles’s tongue is not made of metal. Unsure if colour applied.

“It’s a figure of speech—a metaphor. Anyway, thanks to that I can know parts of you better—and I’ll ask more later, too—but thanks for being so considerate. I don’t know if I’ll need the Yes/No symbols held up, but I guess if all your ‘pods are around me you won’t be able to listen, so yeah, let’s use them.”

Is Vani ready to start?

“Yes.”

Vani willed herself to relax, with little result. She was going to let some weird tentacled thing touch everywhere, all over her body. I guess it makes sense to be kinda scared. I guess it also makes me kind of an idiot. Letting out a quiet breath, Vani felt a soft, smooth presence trace up the arch of her foot. It felt like warm glass, but it didn’t stick. It felt slick, like something lubed up, but it left no trail or residue. It was like the finest silk, finer still, and so pleasantly warm. She felt another ‘pod pressing gently against her insole as the first crept under the hook of her big toe—she couldn’t help it, she was ticklish.

Does this touch pain Vani?

“No, it’s a reflex. I’m ticklish, so really light touches feel good—but make me move around.”

Would Vani like Tentacles to use more pressure on this touch?

“Please—unless you like trying to catch my foot with those ‘pods.”

The pressure against her foot increased, and her body started acting normally. Vani felt her breathing slow as another ‘pod twined around her ankle. Then the end of a proper tentacle pressed into her foot, the suckers immobilising her even as she felt her foot trying to twitch. It actually felt pretty damn good, being held that way. A definite note for later. She hoped it would feel as good in other places. Then Tentacles opened the flaps at the end of a ‘pod and lowered it over her pinky toe. The flaps closed a little tight, making her squirm—and inside it was wet. Vani grimaced, looking towards the ‘no’ card.

Pseudopod tasting makes Vani uncomfortable?

“It hurt a little—it’s too tight.”

Physical limitation. Can attempt to overstress muscle to reduce pressure.

“If it doesn’t hurt you.”

Can maintain for short period. Assess comfort.

They tried again, and this time it was a lot better. Still wet, but that wasn’t a problem—it made sense, in fact, if Tentacles was tasting her. Its ‘pods moved further up her leg, gently squeezing her calf muscles. It felt like a massage. She asked Tentacles to do both legs at once. The even sensation felt so much more amazing. More ‘pods started wrapping around her thighs, digging in not quite painfully into the muscle there. Her breath was suddenly coming hot and fast as a tentacle applied
itself to the outside of each thigh. It felt strange, the touch subtly incomplete, being able to feel her skin being stretched ever so slightly between every sucker. The mass sensation was almost overwhelming.

Her breath ragged, Vani tensed as the tentacles moved around to the inside of her thighs. The fleshy tips of those tentacles didn’t quite brush her labia. She so badly wanted them to. She dug her fingernails into her palms—Tentacles hadn’t even touched her pussy yet, and already she was feeling horny and frustrated. And wet. And then it began, two ‘pods gentlynestling against the crease between her thighs and her labia. There they felt deliciously cool. With great care another ‘pod explored the folds of her labia, gently teasing them from side to side before tenderly sliding between them. She swallowed hard.

She could feel that single ‘pod swimming inside her, the walls of her vagina pressing tight against it. She wanted to squirm and squeeze and quiver and thrust up and down that thing—and yet at the same time she didn’t, afraid of betraying something deep inside her. It was a discomfiting feeling, even if she knew it would eventually be incredibly pleasurable. But she knew she could take it; it wasn’t breaking any kind of consent. Not unless she told it to stop and it didn’t. She felt a hot tear roll down the side of her face. Maybe it was too much.

“Please. Stop.” Her voice was a breathless whisper, almost afraid.

The tentacles detached from her thighs. ‘pods unwound from her legs, no longer massaging her calves. Her pinky toes were suddenly freed. With great care the final ‘pod was removed, Tentacles moving exceedingly carefully so as not to hurt or discomfort her. She wasn’t quite sure how she could explain what just happened—or that she wasn’t sure if it was a good idea to continue.

Did Tentacles harm Vani?

She shook her head and sat up, breath still coming in rapid gasps.

Is this ticklish reflex?

She shook her head again.

Tentacles does not understand. Did experiment fail?

Vani managed to let out an even breath. “Maybe. I’m not sure.”

Would Vani like touch of comfort only?

“No,” Vani shook her head. “I think… I think I need some time.”

Tentacles will wait. Will experiment recommence when Vani returns?

“I’m not going,” Vani gave a short laugh. “I just need time. That’s all. I have to decide if I’m trying to go too far, too fast.”

Understanding is difficult. Is Vani’s mind-state difficult to self-study?

“You could say that. It’s a lot to process.”

Tentacles has also processed much recently. Creating chemical memories of improvised audio
collection is difficult. Lacking surface gestalt and proto-limb sensation-orientation requires radical coding paradigm.

“Alright, you lost me. I can’t even understand half of what you just said—except that it’s hard to make memories of sound.”

In generality. Attempt was to explain specifics. Vani cannot understand chemical encoding paradigm difficulties.

“No, sorry.”

Has sufficient time elapsed for Vani to reintegrate mind-state self-study data and evaluate experiment?

“Again, no,” Vani found herself studying the carpet. “It’s… complicated.” She lay back against the carpet, staring sightlessly up at the ceiling. “I just want to lie here for a bit.”

Tentacles does not understand, but will temporarily remove its presence if Vani desires.

“Please.”

With a quiet rumble Tentacles curled up into a perfect sphere and rolled away, coming to rest in the kitchen. Vani let out a quiet breath she hadn’t known she was holding. It wasn’t any different than the first time with Eric—or Yuki—and yet… She threw her head back against the carpet, fingers carefully tracing everywhere the ‘pods had touched her womanhood. It felt so different. She knew she could trust Tentacles as much as she had previous lovers, so why? She slammed her fists against the carpet. She was still wet, but she really didn’t want to. Not now. Not with all the confusion boiling within. Why did it feel so fucking weird? She shook her head. And why was I so afraid? She didn’t have a good answer for either of those.

“Fuck.” She swore into the empty air, even less sure of what she really wanted. Is it because it actually felt good?

The only answer was the rain drumming against the windows.
Conflicting Desires

Tentacles was concerned. While Vani had explained that it would be an experiment, and that she would assessing her mind-state afterwards, Tentacles had not predicted that the outcome would be a confused negative. As far as it had been able to tell Vani was completely uninjured—it had been very careful with that pseudopod—but seemed to act as if she had been hurt. It was a curious state of affairs, and one that required further research. It reached for the metal information tablet only to have that pseudopod smacked sharply away as Vani took the tablet.

“I need to…” Vani’s pause seemed to indicate a search for the correct term. She didn’t find it. “Think about things.”

With information tablet?

“Laptop. Yes. There’s some stuff I need to look up.”

Vani does research about mind-state?

“Yes.”

All her answers had been clipped, shorter than usual. Tentacles decided that the best course of action would be to leave Vani alone until she summoned it back. With the mental equivalent of a shrug it made its way to the back door. All the time while listening to Vani there had been an enveloping background hiss, some kind of interference effect, like oil or mucous membranes on contact surfaces. Bosko was also outside—but Tentacles figured that the creature would be easy enough to distract or disable. It wasn’t like it was a shark or anything.

Further outside and Tentacles spread its pseudopods into the widest parabola it could manage. The background hiss remained all enveloping, more drum-like in the vertical plane, and opposite the wall, softer, more spread out. The obvious answer would be that Vani’s dwelling was generating the effect, but given this was new while the dwelling had previously been silent, it stood to reason that the effect might be environmental. Tentacles rolled itself onto the grass behind the dwelling.

Its upper surface was immediately bombarded by liquid projectiles, bursting to cover its entire surface, almost overloading its sensory capacity. Its tentacles beat the ground, but nothing additional was visible to its echo-sense. The sensation was almost overwhelming, hundreds of impacts every second, the liquid forming miniscule droplets and rolling down its body, tentacles, and extended pseudopods. It flattened itself to cover as much area as possible, enjoying the sensation of being on the verge of being completely overwhelmed. A shiver ran out across its entire body, the liquid on its surface leaving a rippling wake.

It was a strange thing to think of, but the sensation was close to that of mindsharing, albeit limited to touch. Tentacles lay immobile, immersed in a sea of miniature caresses and the barest whisper of an echo-sense. Through the ground it could sense the light impact of something moving purposefully towards it. Its echo-sense showed that the interloper moved on two legs, not four, as it might have feared. It could only be Vani. She gently stroked a flattened pseudopod, then returned to the edge of the dwelling.

“That rain’s kinda cold, so I’m just gonna sit here, okay?”
Tentacles signed an affirmative.

“I’m not really sure what happened before.”

Vani confusion was not an easily posited outcome for experiment.

“Yeah, I guess not. Anyway, I’d like to try again later—but this time you can only touch outside, got it?”

Tentacles only touched outside previously.

“How was that outside?” Vani’s tone indicated anger and confusion.

Vani has contiguous outer covering of skin. While touching skin, touch is only outside.

“Oh, because yo—“ Vani stopped abruptly, her angry tone replaced by one of understanding. “Because you can’t see, you define inside and outside differently, don’t you?”

Correct. Skin is outside. Organs are inside. Only opening is mouth, for food entering inside.

“I think I need to give you a more personal anatomy lesson.”

Vani offers to increase Tentacles’s understanding empirically?

“I’ll teach you myself, if that’s what you mean.”

Meaning is close enough. Tentacles accepts. Lesson begins now?

“No—I still need some time to process before I’m ready to be touched again.”

Tentacles will stay in rain. The sensation is enjoyable to Tentacles.

“I like it too, sometimes.”

Vani sat on the bottom step, rain running down her arms and back in frigid rivulets. It was more than enough to cool any latent desire, and was in fact slightly uncomfortable. But that ‘pod up inside her… it hadn’t been at all uncomfortable. It was slow, and purposeful, and had made itself quite narrow. It had been discomfiting, yes, but not uncomfortable. It actually felt kinda good—so then why did I panic? Vani didn’t have a good answer. She’d been searching all morning, finding nothing truly helpful. It wasn’t even about consent, or revoking it—because Tentacles had very much stayed within the bounds she had set, barring this single action caused by a minor misunderstanding of terms.

She still wasn’t quite sure how she felt about the whole experience either—the build-up had been excruciating, and the sudden rush of excitement powerful, but the frisson of fear and disillusion was powerful. Shivering, Vani moved back up the stairs onto the deck, sheltering under the awning. A little further away she could see Tentacles, its ‘pods now waving idly in the rain, forming odd shapes to capture and play with the droplets. Well, you could always entertain him in the shower… It wasn’t actually such a bad thought. And an anatomy lesson would probably be easier in there too…

“I hate myself sometimes.” Vani whispered into the distance.
It was easy enough knowing what she had to do; somewhat harder to accept it. The thought occurred to her that she knew little enough of Tentacles’s anatomy—the lesson could quite easily be a two-way street to better understanding of each other’s bodies. She just had to be cold about it, clinical, like a doctor—and pretend like Tentacles was one. Easy to say, harder to do. She hoped the exposure to that touch would help normalise it, because she had to admit the idea of being the first person to have sex with an alien—actual sex, not probing like old Frank loved to claim—was pretty epic. She could be ambassador for human-tentacle relationships.

She laughed at the mental image, her in a bikini, Tentacles wearing sunglasses and a straw hat, both sipping cocktails on some lazy, sunny beach. Stupid. Ludicrous. And yet, somehow, endearing. She laughed again, heading inside to make lunch. She called out over her shoulder as she left.

“Hey, want anything to eat?”

Does Vani have new foods?

“I got some stuff you can try if you want, you want me to bring it to you?”

No. Tentacles will return to dwelling. Time in contemplation outside has been useful.

Vani busied herself in the kitchen, making a couple of sandwiches, and another half of one for Tentacles. She also had work to consider, her project out in the shed—really an old barn that had come with the place—taking on definite shape now. She still needed to take some pictures to send to the client who wanted to modify some smaller details. It was fine, art installations could be like that, and they were paying more than enough this time.

When Tentacles hauled itself in the door, Vani passed it the sandwich, which it really didn’t get too good of a grip on. A lot of it went on the floor, and Vani sighed, quickly putting it back together, then folding a tentacle around it to hold it better. Tentacles thanked her, then tore off a large chunk with its beak. Smaller chunks followed, its tongue darting out to taste between the slices with each bite.

Tentacles wishes to inquire if this food has been constructed.

“Well, yeah, I made it. Bread, lettuce, tomato, bacon, a little mustard; why?”

Variety of flavours is too rich for single ingredient food. However, construction is too weak to hold form unassisted.

“Oh, well, it’s not usually a problem for those of us with hands.”

It then took nearly an hour to explain the concept of humour—and jokes—to Tentacles in order for it to understand what had just been said to it. Vani had to admit she quite enjoyed it; teaching Tentacles anything new, in fact. She decided it was time for them to share that anatomy lesson, and so she led her erstwhile companion up the stairs and into the bathroom.

“This might be kinda weird for me, okay?”

Vani is suggesting Vani might suffer confusion-effect again?”
“Maybe,” she shrugged. “I hope not.”

Tentacles echoes hopes.

“Well, I guess we get started then—and we’ll both do it, okay, point to or touch things, and ask what they are, and what they’re for.”

Combined cooperative study is enjoyable. It is not mindsharing, but still enjoyable.

Vani put a robe down on the floor and lay on top of it, allowing Tentacles to make the first move. It touched her toe.


Apologies. Tentacles enjoys learning words for making distinction of body locations. Vani may touch now.

Vani rolled over, gently taking hold of one of the oily-slick pseudopods in front of her. Tentacles explained them section by section. Tip. Flaps. Spine. Base. Vani drew her fingertips along the upper and lower surfaces, but Tentacles made no distinction between them. She gripped the base of a tentacle and started moving up. Root. Bands. Pad. Tip. Suckers. It all seemed so simple, but then, there were four of them, and twelve pseudopods to track at once. Transforming pseudopods.

Lesson continues?

“Yes. You can touch anywhere, but be gentle.”

This time the pseudopods started to climb her arms first, wrapping slowly around her wrists.


Vani did say Tentacles could touch everywhere.

“I did, but I think this time I want to guide you myself first.”

Tentacles accepts.

Vani took a deep breath, taking hold of the two nearest pseudopods, guiding them to the inside of her thighs. She decided to start higher, gently pressing the ‘pods against her landing strip, then top and tail beyond that, explaining about pubic hair. She figured it might be an important distinction later. Moving very carefully, she pressed the tips of the ‘pods to the inside of the crease between her thighs. Then again closer in, gently running the length of her inner labia. She took a moment to explain about her labia, and about the sensations she liked. With great care she took the ‘pod in her right hand and pressed it against her clit, shuddering slightly at the sheer smoothness she felt against that little nub.
Is Vani okay?

“I’m fine. It’s just… it’s very sensitive. Easy to… overload, I guess you might say.”

Tentacles will avoid this area in future if Vani prefers.

“No, it’s very important for sex. And hey, what about you, do you have any secret, super-sensitive parts?”

Tentacles has skin-sealed cloacal opening for ovipositor.

“Ovisposi—you lay eggs when you ‘breed’?”

Eggs are gestated within desirable female to absorb useful genetic material. Process may sometimes cause pain and discomfort during germination and hatching, but is not fatal.

“I guess that’s reassuring.”

Tentacles speaks only truth on this matter. If Vani were willing to breed with Tentacles, Tentacles wants Vani to understand entire process.

“Fair enough then, little buddy. May I see your ovipositor?”

Tentacles rolled sideways, and a narrow slit opened facing Vani. Vani watched in fascination as a broad, flaccid tube began to protrude. The tube grew in length, but not girth or stiffness. She reached out to touch it, but a ‘pod gripped her arm firmly before her fingers could get there. Another pair of ‘pods thinned down and wrapped around her first two fingers, gently moving them up and down before her arm was allowed to move closer.

Ovipositor is not as robust as pseudopods or tentacles, and must be protected.

“Is it sensitive?”

More than normal skin surface, but not capable of ‘overload’ Vani mentioned.

“Does it get stiff?”

Unnecessary, ovipositor is prehensile. Hold gently and feel motion.

Vani gingerly cradled the appendage in her hands, the texture much rougher than the rest of Tentacles’s oily-slick skin. She could feel the muscles moving inside, leading the tube around. It seemed flaccid, but that was only the skin, the muscular core was certainly rigid enough as it twitched against the cage of her hands.

Is Vani’s curiosity satisfied?

“Yes,” Vani smiled, sitting up on the robe. “Is there anything else you’d like to know?”

Why does Vani’s vagina have two openings—one smaller—and why is there a third, possibly unrelated opening further around Vani’s lower region?
“Well…” Vani laughed softly, a slight blush in her cheeks. I guess I’m more human than I think.
Vani sat on a rock at the edge of the lake, wearing a bikini in deference to common decency—whether or not she actually had any was up for debate. Her legs dangled in the cool water, kicking idly. It had been a busy day, productive for her art, and now it was time to relax. To that end she’d actually packed some toys and lubes, hidden in the cooler back up the shoreline. Tentacles was going to get a comprehensive education about those things, Vani had already decided. When was another issue. She also wanted to try swimming with Tentacles, to see how it moved in what seemed like a more natural environment for it. It was also just as well this part of the lake was hidden by a crumbled cliff face, and cut back towards the trees.

Especially given how openly Tentacles was playing in the water—then again, it claimed it could easily deal with any interlopers. Kidnapping and false memories were the flavour of the day after Vani forbade it from eating anyone. Well, that, and given how the area was rife for UFO sightings anyway, it wasn’t too likely to be taken seriously in the first place. Scanning the far shore one more time, Vani unlaced her bikini top and slid down her briefs, launching into the water stark naked.

She swam out for a few dozen meters before rolling and floating on her back, gazing up at the clouds forming in the distance. Something about the risk of doing this; of getting caught out; always turned her on in a way she couldn’t quite define. It wasn’t merely lust, or adrenaline, but something more. Some frisson of something unnamed and powerful. She almost wanted there to be someone watching. Foolish, perhaps, but it didn’t stop the want. Tentacles suddenly popped up beside her, ‘pods tugging at her arm.

Vani breathes under water?

“No. I can hold my breath for a while though.”

Define timeframe of ‘while’.

“A couple of minutes?”

Insufficient for exploration of depths. Tentacles will create cocoon for Vani diving.

“You’ll what?”

Dive. Tentacles will construct underwater cocoon for Vani to breathe.

Confused, Vani rolled and slipped under the surface of the lake. Already Tentacles looked different, a wan orange light limning its pseudopods as they began to gesticulate purposefully through the water before her. Lines expanded into a complex geometric pattern and Vani’s mind flashed to several old AMV’s she’d watched. It looked almost exactly the same. She let out a shocked breath, and was even more surprised not to see air bubbling in front of her. Instead she was floating in a cage of orange light, beams circling and weaving into a complex, ever-shifting pattern.

This is cocoon. It will adapt to suit Vani’s environmental needs. It requires much energy to maintain, but Tentacles can maintain this level for approximately one hour.

“Holy. Shit.” Vani stared in wonder. She was beginning to think Tentacles was less alien, and more
eldritch right now. After all, aliens didn’t normally use magic. She reached out to touch one of the lines, but the orange streak danced away when her hand neared it. She tried bringing both hands together, but that just created a larger hole, and a slight distension in the sphere. She reached through the side of the sphere, cold water enveloping her arm. Her arm was almost dry when she pulled it back in.

“Holy. Shit.” She had adopted a floating, cross-legged posture, and was dangerously close to hyperventilating. It also dawned on her that maybe Tentacle’s plans for world domination had not, in fact, been overly ambitious. Though it had just said even this drew a lot of energy. Vani closed her eyes, drawing in several calming breaths.

“You wanted me to explore with you?”

Yes. Vani should see steel skeleton and rotting corpse.

“Corpse of what?” Vani tried to keep her voice neutral.

Tentacles is unsure. Is not fauna that we have researched.

Well, at least it isn’t human. Vani gestured for Tentacles to lead on, then rolled her eyes and asked it to lead her.

Tentacles dove swiftly, pulling them both to the lakebed, some pseudopods fanning out into paddle shapes, others forcing water through a ring of yet more pseudopods. It was as swift and efficient a method of locomotion as any, and Tentacles enjoyed applying its knowledge of fluid mechanics to this situation. It wasn’t instinctive—this was an engineered solution. Still, the skeleton ribs of rusting steel should interest Vani, and the corpse—whatever it actually was—would hopefully provide another point of conversation in future. Perhaps even a moment of bonding as a shared discovery. Tentacles slowed as it approached the steel skeleton.

Echolocation working properly underwater, Tentacles was finally building a more comprehensive impression of Vani, more than just touch and land-echo could show. Things like body density. Structural layering. The strange haze her hair caused. At least, each time she moved a limb or other body part out of the cocoon. The circuit must be causing visual interference for her. Resolving to ask Vani about the situation later, Tentacles began swimming around the steel skeleton.

“It’s old…” Vani had trailed off in a way that indicated deeper thought. “It might be a river monitor, from way back.”

Where is ‘way back’?


Would Vani call this item a ‘relic’?

“It’s a shipwreck, but… maybe. Maybe if there’s something really important left on it. Otherwise it’s just bits and pieces of scrap.”

Tentacles bade Vani to follow it, then swam at a leisurely pace towards the rotting corpse. It was of moderate size—between that of Tentacles and the shipwreck—and had no easily discernible structure left behind. Some jagged triangles suggested teeth, and while it was bloated and shredded—or possibly half-eaten—it had a shape that suggested it was adapted to underwater environments.
A single long spine—or perhaps tail—hung from the carcass.

“I have no idea.”

Has Tentacles discovered new species?

“I doubt. This thing’s too damaged to tell anyway. Hell, I can’t even tell if it had a skeleton.”

Tentacles could not detect presence of bones. Some small triangles may be teeth.

“I’d guess shark,” Vani ventured a possible answer. “Sometimes they’ll come up river, but this is really far inland for them.”

Other no-bone species exist?

“Can’t think of any right now, but yes, they do.”

Points of interest have been covered, does Vani wish to continue underwater exploration?

“For a while. Hey, maybe see if you can catch some fish down here.”

Enjoying the idea of displaying its hunting prowess to Vani, Tentacles sped away, already spying a tasty fish as large as the spade end of a tentacle. Tentacles rearranged itself, four tentacles forming a spearhead for speed, and all twelve pseudopods undulating in convulsive waves behind it, sending it surging towards the fish. Suddenly aware of the danger bearing down on it, the fish began darting left and right, diving and climbing in an attempt to shake off its pursuer. In a last ditch effort the fish slowed and executed a rolling dive, passing just under Tentacle’s pseudopods. The hunt was proving more than enjoyable, the target fish deceptively agile and swift for its mass.

Tentacles stopped, drifting in the current, zeroing in on its meal with echolocation. This time it primed the muscles in its tentacles for an immediate strike. As it dove, the fish darted upwards, swimming a complex—or panicked—evasive path. A lashing strike from a pseudopod barely missed it. For the sudden annoyance it felt, Tentacles was almost prepared to use a the tiniest flash of magic. But this was worthy prey, and the hunt was important.

Flipping end for end, Tentacles burst upward, tentacles slowly forming a cage around its prey. This time Tentacles saw it coming, and the spade end of one tentacle slammed into the fish, suckers holding it tight. The fish squirmed and struggled, and Tentacles savoured that first bite as blood began to flavour the water around it. It was different to the fish Vani had given it, stringier, the muscle fibres raw and elastic. The base flavour—the richness of the meat itself—was also different, but no less satisfying.

Vani watched Tentacles eat, impressed with the way it had finally trapped the fish. Underwater it ate the same way she figured a squid or octopus might eat. Still floating in the middle of the cocoon, Vani half swam towards the surface of the lake, the orange tracery fading away before her head bobbed up above the rippling water. There was no one even close to being around, though they were further out than she had expected. She was tempted to rub one out while floating right there, just for the hell of it.

She was also sorely tempted to ask Tentacles what other types of magic it could do, and whether they might be any good for sex. Or mindsharing. Vani knew that was an aspect she could never offer Tentacles, but she still wanted to do something for it the first time they had sex properly. It
had said sharing multiple chemical memories was somewhat pleasurable—and while the taste and feeling of those was beyond strange, it wasn’t unpalatable. It was at least one thing she could offer; aside from her body, of course.

When they got to shore, she decided, they would conduct another experiment. One involving chemical memories, and some form of mutual masturbation. *Some form indeed.* Vani laughed, starting the swim to shore. All the effort was going to do was get her worked up—but in this case, that would be a very good thing.
Lying on a bed of rock at the lakeshore, Vani waited patiently for Tentacles while warming her naked body in the late afternoon sun. The cooler with her toys and lube was conveniently nearby, and if she really felt like it she could stretch out and go fish for one of those toys. Right now though, she was just drying off from a swim, hands pressing against her ribs and down her hips, sliding around over her thighs, fingers lacing together over her exposed labia. She was still tempted to do this herself, but the larger part of her was waiting for Tentacles, to further their mutual understanding of each other’s very alien bodies.

At that point she recalled Tentacles’s ovipositor, thick with banded muscles, and darker than the rest of its body. Prehensile, so it had claimed, and only a bit thinner than her wrist. She was willing to attempt taking it, even if it did fill her with trepidation. She’d never tried fitting anything quite that big before. _Lube and patience_, she told herself. _I want to, for him? it? that?, I’m just not sure I actually can_. She had given up trying to figure out quite why she was so willing—eager, even—to have sex with an alien, eldritch, tentacled, thing. It was perhaps something about the sheer number of taboos she was breaking.

The fingers of her left hand traced a line between her thigh and labia, pressing deliciously into her skin. Her right tugged gently at the curls of her landing strip. She would wait for Tentacles, she told herself; this was just warming up. With both index fingers she pressed against her pubis and traced a line directly towards her clit. A gentle squeeze—no more—and a quick tickle of the tiny hood there. Her hands were at her sides, balled into fists, nails digging into her palms. Oh but how she wanted to. She rolled onto her stomach, the rock rough against her suddenly sensitive breasts and belly.

Her forehead now against the rock, Vani let out a frustrated sigh. She could, but then she might not be ready for Tentacles to touch her. Or she might be too sensitive. Or sleepy. Or even hornier and willing to go too far then. She rolled over again, her right hand clawing at her left breast, trying to make it _hurt_. She wanted—needed—that pain to distract herself. She squeezed harder, her nails leaving bright red welts against her flushed skin. She gasped at the sudden rush of pain, both hands now gently massaging those same welts. She let out another breath, the sudden sting of pain fading slowly.

A loud splash came from nearby, and Tentacles breached the surface, drawing itself onto the rocks beside Vani. It waved in greeting, then formed several ‘pods into a dish so it could listen to her. Her hands now at her sides, Vani spoke softly to Tentacles.

“I want to run another experiment.”

What are experimental parameters?

“I want you to touch me, sexually. I want to know if I can accept it; or find it stimulating.”

Does Vani desire to guide Tentacles as in previous lesson?

“I…” Vani pursed her lips, considering. “At the start, yes.”

Experiment begins?
Tentacles had placed its main body between her knees, in what was becoming its preferred location for these explorations. Vani took two ‘pods and guided them to her right breast, squeezing and pressing, massaging around the ‘pods to show them what to do.

“I want you to play with squeezing harder too, I’ll tell you if it hurts too much.”

Vani enjoys pain?

“Sometimes,” Vani gave a stray ‘pod a gentle nip. “Like that. It can make the pleasure so much sharper.”

Tentacles finds this notion strange. Most creatures avoid painful stimuli.

“But what if they know something better waits beyond the pain?” Vani grit her teeth against a too-tight squeeze from the ‘pods around her breast. “Okay, that squeeze was too much.”

Apologies.

“It’s okay. You just need a little more finesse,” Vani let out a quiet sigh. “And play with teasing me a little more. Try flicking my ni—oh. Yes, like that. Um, ohh, you know how your ‘pods can open at the tip?”

Vani desires Tentacles to suckle her toes again?

“Suckling, yes; toes, not so much,” Vani was wearing a devilish grin. “Carefully, on my nipples.”

Vani watched as two more ‘pods came up, their flaps opening, descending slowly towards her nipples. The sudden pinching sensation was glorious, all around, just a little tighter than her nipple clamps. There was suction as well, puckering her flesh, pulling the sensitive nubs deeper into the slightly damp tubes inside those ‘pods. Vani felt a sudden slickness between her thighs. It was more arousing than she’d thought, and she was almost willing to try fucking Tentacles’s brains out right there.

Her breath suddenly ragged, Vani asked Tentacles to stop.

Is Vani suffering mind-state confusion again?

“No, no,” she reassured it. “Just a little… a little too sensitive right now. A quick break.”

Would Vani like touch of comfort?

“Yeah, that’d be nice.”

Two ‘pods wrapped around each arm, and two wove around each leg, with four more encircling her stomach. The ‘pods pressed gently into her from all directions, and a shiver ran down her spine at the flood of sensation covering her. Her hands gripped softly around the ‘pods that were holding her arms, and her breathing soon became even again, not the ragged pants of someone in the throes of pleasure. It was an enjoyable way to cool the lustful heat burning in her core.

When Tentacles enfolded Vani in the touch of comfort, it had to admit to having a feeling of contented fulfilment. Vani’s flesh was soft, supple, and surprisingly warm. Especially around her breasts, thighs, and belly. Perhaps this was the concept of long term pair-bonding that Vani had
talked of—and it had researched during a night accessing the metal tablet’s memory. It was not akin to mindsharing, or breeding, and yet, somehow, there was contentment.

As Vani began to shift and squirm within its embrace, Tentacles loosened its grip, pseudopods slowly unravelling from around its future breeding partner. Vani had now taken hold of the pad of a tentacle, her fingers and thumb firm around the flesh, guiding it down. Then Vani placed both hands on top of it and mimed a swirling motion around her breast. Tentacles tried to ape the movement, suckers rippling against the warm flesh below, almost rolling around with Vani’s breast. She shivered, but drew another tentacle down onto the nipple of her other breast, lightly pressing down and lifting up. Tentacles copied the motion, trying to centre each sucker over her nipple in turn.

Vani was now writhing against the ground, her hands balled into fists, beating against the rock. Her breath was shallow, and in its sudden concern for her, Tentacles lifted its tentacles away, removing a possible troubling sensation.

“Wow…” Vani was still panting. “I think… I think we have to be careful playing with those suckers. That, or I’m just horny as fuck right now.”

Vani is not covered in horns or keratinous growths.

Vani laughed. “It’s a phrase. We use it so say we’re really… umm… aroused. Willing to have sex. To breed with one another.”

Does this mean Vani is ready to breed with Tentacles?

“If I wasn’t in control of myself, maybe,” Vani pulled a tentacle down to caress her cheek. “But for now, its just this touch, okay?”

Tentacles understands. Would Vani like to take a quick break again?

“Uhh… maybe… what if we experiment on you for a little while.”

Experiment how?

“Well, I’m showing you how I like to be touched—so, do you like to be touched? Was there lots of physical contact when mindsharing? Some sort of mating ritual?”

Is Vani enquiring about the existence of a touch of comfort equivalent for breeding?

“Assuming it’s about touching you, yeah.”

No such touch exists—but Tentacles would like to experiment to create this new touch. Will Vani help?

“Of course I will. What did you want to try first?”

Tentacles gave the matter some thought, and was tempted by the riskier options. After a moment it pressed a single pseudopod to Vani’s lips, asking her to suckle it the same way it had suckled her nipples. Tentacles felt it as Vani’s hand took hold of the pseudopod, rising slightly so her lips could press gently against the closed flaps on the tip. A wet, slightly acidic layer coated a good portion of the tip as Vani used an unnamed muscle structure in her mouth to manipulate the pseudopod.
Then, suddenly, a contracting ring of moist, warm, supple flesh was constricting well past the tip of the pseudopod, that same internal muscle pressing the tip around and teasing the flaps, trying to force them open. Tentacles obliged, using the flaps on that pod to press and explore the muscle structure being used on it. It seemed fascinatingly powerful, and very rough. And at that point Tentacles realised it was playing with Vani’s tongue, so very different from its own.

Vani withdrew the pseudopod from her mouth and took several deep breaths. “I… guess you… like tha… that one.”

The sensation is strong, but moderately enjoyable. Can Vani accommodate more than one pseudopod in her mouth?

“If you… if you keep… them small.”

Tentacles will carefully insert additional pseudopods until Vani indicates discomfort or a desire to stop. Acceptable?

“Just be aware that if I try and take too much I might get hurt, and I don’t regenerate like you.”

This is why Tentacles will be careful.

Tentacles slid the first pseudopod back into Vani’s mouth. Forming another’s tip into a gentle taper, it managed to push that in without undue effort, or any seeming concern from Vani. A third pseudopod crept into Vani’s mouth, and Tentacles could feel her skin going taught against its own banded muscle. This would be Vani’s limit. Flaps teased and tickled Vani’s tongue, and another tickled a strange growth hanging from the roof of her mouth at the rear.

Vani rolled over, explosively expelling all the pseudopods with a giant, hacking cough. She continued coughing for several seconds, slowly regaining her composure.

“Do not. Touch that. Again.” From the clipped manner and elevated volume, Tentacles understood that it had done something very wrong. “You’re lucky I didn’t throw up.” Vani coughed again, making an odd gulping noise, panting for air. “Very fucking lucky.”

Tentacles offers sincere apologies for distressing Vani.

“And right now I’m just a bit too pissed to accept that, considering my body thought it was choking on alien wing-wong and decided to get rid of all of it,” as she spoke, still somewhat curt, Vani was rummaging around in the storage container she’d brought with her. “Aha, my beer. I knew I threw another one in.” There was a sharp crack, followed by a fading hiss. One arm around her knees, the other holding her beer, Vani stared off into the distance. She no longer felt anywhere near as horny. There was really only one way to sum up her feelings, and as she fell back against the sun-warmed rock, she swore.

“Well, fuck.”
Looking forward

Tentacles lay in the back of Vani’s pickup—the term she used to describe her vehicle—sheltered from the afternoon sun by a covering of synthetic, waterproof fabric. It was a wise precaution to hide itself from other interested parties. Vani had spoken of ruining ‘the moment’, the phrase used in a somehow concrete form despite the vagueness of the description. Then, after she had calmed somewhat, she had explained to Tentacles about reflexes, and recommended that it do further research on any reflexes that it might trigger—or attempt to avoid triggering—in the future.

As they moved, the constant vibration allowed Tentacles to see for some distance around them. Not entirely clearly, given their speed, but enough for flashes of what must be nearby. The surface they moved along was hard, compacted, and not entirely even. It conducted and reflected sound in chaotic patterns, creating intriguing overlaps in Tentacles’s echo sense. Beyond the hardened strip was bare earth, and beyond that was a soft whisper implying light foliage, perhaps grasses. The occasional burst of reflections spoke of bushes, or even small trees.

There were regular structures, spaced at precise intervals, and made of wood. They extended past the range of Tentacles’s echo sense at the speed it was moving, but it knew enough about various flora to know that these were not trees of any kind. It resolved to ask Vani about the structures when they arrived at the house. The path they traveled was straight and long, with few segments that triggered Tentacles’s inertial senses. It recalled enough about the topography near Vani’s dwelling to know they were close, a rapid series of switchbacks followed by a sharp, almost ninety degree turn.

It was also the ground texture that changed, the hard surface giving way to something looser, softer. Dirt. They weren’t far from the house, and as they approached Tentacles drew back the covering Vani had thrown over it. Turbulent air buffeted its upper surface in a vaguely enjoyable way, and it spread itself out through the rear compartment of the vehicle, accepting all the airflow it could handle.

In the cab of the pickup, Vani toed the brakes and eased the old pickup to a stop just in front of the house. She left the engine running as she jumped out, folding down the tailgate so Tentacles could disembark more easily. Vani watched with interest as it seemed to flow almost liquidly out of the back of the truck, seemingly at odds with the weight she knew it had. Directing it to meet her in the house, Vani went through the normal routine of parking the truck in the barn, then walked back to the house barefoot.

Once inside she prepared her laptop for Tentacles, then went upstairs to take a shower and wash the salt water off, and any mud that might have been left between her toes. One disadvantage of walking barefoot, but sometimes the ground having that kind of give was just… nice. She’d also brought her cooler full of toys back in, and having a shower was an excuse to give them a quick rinse as well.

Hot water streamed down her back, pounding against tense muscles. She hadn’t really felt that tense, but she also conceded that Tentacles’s mistake might have tangled her up a bit. It wasn’t really Tentacles’s fault, but it still had some negative effects. Vani sighed, turning around, soaping up her breasts and stomach. She recalled a stupid stunt she’d pulled with a college girlfriend that had left a dent in the shower ceiling in their dorm. The good old soap launcher trick. Vani eyed the ceiling with some suspicion.
Some time later, clean, with her toys rinsed, and wearing an apron over nothing, Vani began preparing dinner. Steak, with a side of greens. She recalled Tentacles saying using its magic was draining, so she offered it the option of a steak as well.

Is ‘steak’ energetic?

“If you mean it gives me energy, yeah. Lots of protein in red meat.”

Meat is animal flesh, and is coloured?

“Yes. And sort of. Red meat comes from larger animals, grazers like cows and deer. White meat comes from smaller, faster things like chicken and fish.”

Then steak is good for eating. Tentacles must replenish energy utilised for Vani underwater breathing cage.

“That really was magic?”

There is complex physical explanation, but Tentacles doubts Vani’s world understands core planar principles.

Vani gave that a moment’s thought. “Airplanes, yeah. but I’m guessing you’re talking about something else, like a… multiverse? maybe?”

Concept of multiverse is similar, but inexact. Complex interactions between planar energy potentials allow manipulation of higher energetic states and corruption of localised physics.

“So… it’s sort-of science, and sort of not?”

Explanation is difficult. Tentacles doubts its ability to explain even to top field theorists on planet.

Vani stared at the mass on the kitchen floor, trying to figure out what it was really trying to say. After a few moments thought she shrugged, putting it to the back of her mind, and added some spices to the steaks as they cooked. The peas were cooking, and the broccoli was almost done steaming. She opened the fridge and tore a few leaves off the lettuce in the crisper drawer. She also wondered how Tentacles would respond to the new flavours.

It didn’t take much longer for the steaks to finish, and Vani plated up one serving for herself, and another for Tentacles, placing it on the floor in front of the creature. She trimmed the fat off her steak, then carefully cut it into bite sized chunks, taking the occasional piece of broccoli as she cut. The steak itself was tender, cooked medium, and flavoured with a hint of Indian spices. It was true that cooking could be a chore sometimes, but the end result was usually worth it.

She turned to watch Tentacles, seeing its tentacles holding the steak close to its beak while the beak tore off large chunks to be swallowed whole. Its tongue occasionally darted out to taste the meat, and whenever that happened its ‘pods seemed to squirm in satisfaction or curiosity.

Tentacles inquires why this meat tastes of complex organics and aromatics, and not just animal flesh.

“I used spices, they enhance flavours.”
Tentacles approves of this practice.

“I’m glad you do, it takes effort to get those right,” Vani looked down at the plate in front of Tentacles as she spoke. “What do you think of the greens?”

Softened plant mass provides useful chemical compounds in easily digested state. Small seeds lack effective flavour or compounds not found elsewhere. Raw leaf tastes mostly of water, with minimal nutrients; however, crunch of leaf in beak is most satisfying.

“So, the first is broccoli,” Vani proceeded to spell it out for Tentacles. “The ‘seeds’ are called peas; and the ‘leaf’ is lettuce.”

Is it common human custom to combine plant masses and animal flesh when consuming nutrients for energy restoration?

“Pretty much, yeah,” Vani spoke around a mouthful of broccoli. “You gonna help me with the dishes once you finish?”

Tentacles will exchange time performing labour for continued shelter and sustenance.

“Hey, maybe you can help wash this time too, I’ve got an idea.”

Waiting patiently for Vani to finish explaining, Tentacles began wrapping its pseudopods around her arms, following the motions she made in the water in the sink. Two pseudopods were dedicated to placing the dishes in the correct places in the draining rack—a contraption of wire mesh Vani had placed upon the bench for the specific purpose of letting water and enzymatic cleaning agents run off the dishes. This appeared to be a common human habit, as few humans hunted for food in this epoch—another clear sign of an advanced civilisation. As they worked together, Tentacles noticed Vani was allowing it to cover and explore more and more of her body, only placing a hand against a single pseudopod as it neared her vagina.

Tentacles accepted the limit, attempting to combine its touch of comfort with the manner in which she had instructed it to touch her earlier, by the lake. Tentacles noticed the change as Vani tensed, her muscles going stiff.

“Stop wriggling, damn it, it’s tickling me, and I can’t concentrate.” Tentacles stopped its exploratory movement and continued with the task at hand, helping Vani to dry the dishes. “Better.”

After they finished, Tentacles slid off Vani’s back, retreating to the lounge, planning to continue its studies with the metal tablet.

“You didn’t have to jump off,” Vani’s voice was soft. “It’s alright to wrap me up around the house sometimes, just ask, okay?”

Vani wished Tentacles to stay in touch of comfort?

“Yeah, it was nice. I think I actually quite like it—it doesn’t even have to be a sexual thing, right?”

Touch of comfort is normally used for restoring mental/emotional balance. Tentacles was unaware it was being not intentionally sexual.
“That’s okay,” Vani reached out to grip a pseudopod, pulling it closer. “How about we just spend some time wrapped up, and talk about what you want now you know you can’t conquer the planet.”

That gave Tentacles pause, the idea that Vani wished to hear of its future plans—beyond mere conquest and the idea of breeding with her. *She wishes to establish a deeper rapport.* And with that Tentacles was forced to restructure its mental image of Vani’s mindstate as being beyond simple sapience, and placed it among the higher tier of cooperative cultures it had previously encountered. Rare though they might be, cooperative cultures had unusual synergies that could prove incredibly dangerous to would-be conquerors. In fact, Tentacles was surprised that this had not been made common knowledge. It knew why after a moment’s thought—and consideration of how information might be delivered to the metal tablet.

*Tentacles was not told because this is basic assumed foreknowledge of all species members. Explanations of such obvious concepts are unnecessary to humans.* It was revelation after revelation, and it germinated ideas from these concepts as it enfolded Vani in a gentle embrace of tentacles and pseudopods. It started with Vani’s core this time, pseudopods sliding smoothly over warm flesh as they encircled Vani’s stomach. Another pseudopod crept up Vani’s back, past her shoulder blades—a term Tentacles found confusing due to the lack of blades, sheathed or otherwise—and over her shoulder. That pseudopod continued slowly as another mirrored it on Vani’s left, both now gliding gently over the soft, supple skin of her breasts, now flushed with sudden warmth.

Four more pseudopods started their journey down Vani’s thighs, avoiding her vagina, holding her legs firmly as the secondary pseudopod in each pair flowed down and around the tight muscles in Vani’s calves. The tips of those pseudopods pressed up against the soles of Vani’s feet—firmly, such that it didn’t tickle. That left four pseudopods free to bind around Vani’s arms, but none to communicate with. Tentacles decided on a different tact, each tentacle winding carefully around Vani’s arms, one upper, one lower, with the pads meeting above and below Vani’s palms, suckers gently holding onto the skin they met.

Now that Vani was enfolded—and that neither of them seemed to feel the need to move—Tentacles began considering Vani’s question with greater import. What did it want, now that it knew conquest truly was untenable? Was there still a purpose to breeding with Vani? Even if there wasn’t, was it worthwhile to remain in this location, on this plane? How could it know its own desires, when the instinct to rule and dominate—by subterfuge and intrigue normally—was so strongly ingrained?

It decided to pose a similar question to Vani, to establish a baseline by which it might create a reasonable answer.

What does Vani want now; abstract?

“Can’t think of a good answer, eh?” There was a hint of smugness in Vani’s voice, but nothing more. “I’m not really sure myself. I went to college, got my arts degree, and came back out to the country. I just make stuff from scrap, sell it sometimes. I guess maybe I hope one day I’ll be one of those big names in art galleries, the kind that people talk about. I had ideas about being an engineer to, or a tradie, but I was never brilliant at math. Passable, yeah, just not great. Then in college I also discovered BDSM—I’ll explain more later—and thought maybe I could get rich selling sex tapes or something, but it kinda cheapened it for me, so I went back to my art.

“Okay fine, yeah, I do get a little money here and there from those downloads, but its kinda pocket change compared to my art commissions. Oh, and I guess one day, maybe, I had vague ideas about
having a family of my own, but finding the right person is hard, so I kinda put that on hold too. I’m still young, so it’s not a big issue yet, but it might be one day.”

Tentacles took a moment to process all this information, assessing what Vani was saying, and what she might only be implying in some cases. After a few minutes of amicable silence it had compiled an answer of its own for Vani’s initial question of what it wanted.

Tentacles still wishes to breed with Vani in future, for the genetic viability of species continuation. Tentacles also wishes to have a comfortable existence for itself, where it is useful, and free from possible predation or undue risk of injury. Tentacles also wishes to expand its knowledge base of Earth based sciences and theory, in order to better understand physical and metaphysical limitations of this plane. Tentacles also tentatively desires to understand and perform long-term pair-bonding behaviours with Vani, as Vani has previously explained.

“You know what?” Vani sounded deeply thoughtful when she spoke. “That actually sounds pretty damn reasonable for a tentacle monster that fell out of the sky and wanted to take over the planet a week ago. We can probably work on a lot of those thing together—and while I don’t particularly want to breed, I do want to try having sex with you at some point. Breeding, I think, might be something we have to have considerable discussion about.”

Tentacles can accept this compromise on breeding. Breeding is considered biological imperative for species, but is not time critical.

“Good,” Vani shifted slightly within the embrace of tentacles and pseudopods. “I kinda like this, maybe I’ll have a short nap wrapped up in your arm—tentacles.”

Sighing softly, enfolded in a tentacled embrace, Vani drifted off to sleep.
Vani woke shortly before midnight, a moment of abject terror at her immobility giving way to warm contentment as her brain caught up to her body as to where she’d left it. It didn’t take much effort to free herself from Tentacles’s embrace, and the creature seemed at least half-aware of its surroundings, ‘pods and tentacles sliding away and coiling back under it as Vani extricated herself. She smiled, petting its main body before she turned off the light and headed upstairs.

Sleeping for so long, kept warm in that tentacled embrace, Vani found herself incredibly aroused—so much so that her fingers played against her labia as she climbed the stairs. Already her treacherous mind was imagining what it would be like to be filled by Tentacles’s ‘pods. Or even its ovipositor, no matter how large. Or perhaps a ‘pod in her ass, the ovipositor stretching her pussy, another ‘pod—or two, or three—in her mouth, with a tentacle doing the sucker-special against each breast. Vani shivered in forbidden delight at the thought, one finger hooking up into her vagina as her palm ground against her pubic bone.

It was really the idea of being filled and stretched that appealed to her tonight, and with that in mind she grabbed as many toys as she could carry, dragging them into the bathroom. The large tile walls were always so useful for things with suction cups. Even some of her own home-made fake cum for a couple of her more special toys. It wasn’t just flesh she was imagining being filled with. She was tempted to lock the door, to make sure Tentacles stayed out if it awoke, but something about the thrill of being caught in such an indecent act just added to her arousal.

A few moments later—one hand often straying to her pussy—and Vani was ready to go. She wanted to be left weak at the knees, fluids running out of every hole as she sprawled languorously on the floor. She almost wished she had a friend—any friend—to help putting her in some shibari just to make it even hotter. Maybe next time Tentacles could help with it. Those ‘pods were surprisingly dextrous after all.

Down on all fours, Vani backed against the dildos she’d stuck to the wall, the heights and angles just off, enough to be tantalising rather than frustrating. She reached back, guiding one of the larger dildos into her waiting—practically dripping—pussy. She forced herself against the wall, feeling the girth of the dildo through the length of her vagina. It was larger than normal, but tonight she was so horny it hardly mattered, already able to slide along its length. Slowly, mind, but she could still take the whole thing.

Hands out to her sides, as if she was practicing for press-ups, Vani lowered her lips towards the dildo she’d stuck to the floor, imagining instead the incredible smoothness of Tentacle’s ‘pods, not even a nub of a head on them. Her lips caught and sucked the head of the dildo, her tongue swirling around as she swallowed hard and sucked it in deeper, tip pressing towards her throat. She thrust hard with her hips, breathing through her nose, knowing she could still take more—wanting to take more.

She slid forward, and releasing her lips from the dildo on the floor, turned to lube a slightly slimmer, longer dildo on the wall—and then another, beneath the first, still in her pussy. This time she was gentle. She had to be. It was a long time since she’d tried to stretch herself like this, tried to be more than full in any way. She’d been comfortable with her body’s capacity. But now there was a new challenge, and while she didn’t completely embrace it, she was facing it head on.

Vani gasped as the pair of dildos entered her vagina, the distension of her labia on the cusp of true
pain. She was thankful she’d used the thicker lube for this, making it just a little easier. She backed up further, the smaller dildo now pressing insistently at her ass. Rocking her hips back, she felt the pop as that dildo pushed just past her asshole, now practically touching the upper dildo in her pussy. It took several calming breaths before she could move again, her thighs twitching and her knees almost refusing to obey. Her lips closed around the dildo on the floor again.

With a choked cross between a sigh and a gasp Vani forced her head down and her hips back, flooding her body with sensation. Her mouth was filled, the tip of that dildo almost in her throat, forcing her to fight hard against her gag reflex. Her ass was slowly being filled, forced ever so slightly outwards by the slimmer dildo. Her pussy was the seat of all that sensation, burning through her stomach and below, filling her with a desirous flame. She felt every wrinkle and contour on both of those dildos. She knew she was stretched to her limit—and perhaps beyond—but the intensity of sensation was too much to bear. She forced herself back further, her hands no longer supporting her weight.

The dildo in her mouth was practically choking her now, serving as a very effective gag. It was so hard to fight that reflex. Her right hand clawed deeply into her left breast, the stinging welts only serving to heighten the sensation between her thighs. Her left hand pressed fingers either side of the hood hiding her clit, alternately flicking over that sensitive nub. She was trying to force herself back still further, towards the wall, but a sudden spike of pain from around her labia stopped her.

She let out a choked breath around the dildo filling her mouth, knowing this was as far as she was going to get with stretching herself tonight. She could still feel the dildo in her pussy rubbing against the dildo in her ass, and the dildo in her mouth was leaving her dangerously short of breath. Her fingers were already toying with her clit, and when a gentle shudder ran down her spine she knew it was too late to stop—she could already feel the contractions building. She had wanted to fight them—to edge while filled beyond her limit. But her body didn’t want that.

So instead of fighting it, she stopped, grabbing the plungers of the syringes filled with her fake cum mix. Both of them. A burst of warm, sticky fluid filled her pussy first, and then another squirt made it so slick the shuddering contractions almost forced both dildos out. Her ass gripped the smaller dildo like a vice, and with what little mind she had left, Vani squeezed the other plunger, a sticky, white mess erupting in her throat, forcing her to gag and spit it around the dildo. Her whole body shuddering, her thighs quivering, and her throat thickly coated in fake cum, Vani slid forward one last time, her whole body falling in to languor as it was emptied of the toys that had so recently filled it.

Lying on the floor, insensate from pleasure—and with a dull ache around her labia and lips—Vani felt herself temporarily drift away, runnels of white leaking down her thighs, and out the corner of her mouth, over her lips. This really was what she’d wanted, and at this point she didn’t care if she woke up later covered in her cum and surrounded by sex toys. She floated above and within herself for several blissful minutes, riding the high for as long as it could last, slowly falling to earth as a pool of white drool gathered under her cheek and leaking white fake cum and pussy juices made the floor sticky under one leg.

Still recovering, Vani crawled for the shower, just sitting under the stream as it washed her down, the evidence of her depravity gurgling thickly down the drain, the only reminder now a deep, subtle ache within her core. She blinked, realising that what she’d just done had only been about two thirds as big as that ovipositor. If they tried to soon she had a sudden feeling that one or both of them might be injured during the act. That would not be a good start.

Vani lay under the shower for another minute or so, then turned it off and dragged on a robe.
Staggering tiredly back into her bedroom, she collapsed on the mattress, hair a tangled mess. She was asleep in seconds, all thoughts of tidying the bathroom or drying herself long since gone.

Downstairs, Tentacles listened to the metal tablet—laptop—that Vani so often shared with it. Right now it was studying the science of prosthetics. While the concept of technological replacements for organic systems was not uncommon, the sheer crudeness here was. Yet another thing that humans were a long way from perfecting. They had yet to surpass their biological originals in functionality, and it seemed no research had been devoted to augmentation.

When it came to repairing sensory systems, however, the humans seemed to excel with their interfacing and integration. Tentacles ardently wished that the laptop had a tactile display—it was very tempted to attempt construction of a simple prosthetic known as a hearing aid. With a touch of metaphysical power it could easily be improved and integrated as an additional sense to allow easier conversation with Vani. To create a voice—and not a toneless synthesis like the laptop—Tentacles was much less sure of which approach to take. Perhaps it would be better to concentrate merely on inputs for now.

That, of course, led to the second key challenge. Converting electrical impulses into chemical synthesis compounds. The human brain seemed to rely on highly specialised chemical receptors to create action potentials in order fire an electric charge. What was more interesting was that thoughts and memories were considered to be created by these electrical charges—not the chemical compounds used to fire them. This meant that human minds had the potential to operate much faster than Tentacles’s, but lacked the ability to be distributed throughout the body and form a gestalt.

Any potential offspring with Vani would immediately rectify that problem, along with the lack of sensory inputs. That, however, was a future problem. Right now Tentacles was still considering if extra sensory capacity could be formed ex nihilo via its magic. The possibility existed, but the probability of a successful cast was vanishingly small. It would also have to be maintained virtually indefinitely, which would be a significant drain on Tentacles’s energy reserves. There was also the chance that if the experimental casting went awry, Tentacles itself might suffer damage that could not be regenerated without the use of eldritch magic—magic that it might no longer be capable of casting.

Thus, Tentacles intended to pursue the issue in the morning, after Vani’s normal somnolence period ended. It also wished Vani had stayed longer in its embrace, her regular breathing while somnolent a soothing rhythm of expansion and contraction. Pushing itself up the stairs, Tentacles even considered applying a singular variation of the touch of comfort to connect itself with Vani while she slept, but Vani’s desire not to be touched while asleep crept into its mind and it instead contented itself with simply curling around itself on the floor next to her padded resting slab. While its body rested, it let its mind wander through the planar depths, assessing its current level of uniplanar integration.

The process was nearly complete, and Tentacles found itself satisfied with the process thus far. A distant cry touched the very edge of its consciousness, and it watched as another of its kind sailed past what remained of it beyond its current plane. No interaction was possible, and for a moment Tentacles felt a great pull to return—a feeling that abated when a loose hand fell upon its main body. Its consciousness properly gathered, Tentacles realised that Vani had shifted while asleep, her hand slipping from the edge of the rest slab, and her legs dangerously close to dragging her off completely.

Using the backs of its tentacle pads, Tentacles gently pushed Vani back towards the centre of the
padded slab. She would surely understand that such a touch was only from concern for her wellbeing, nothing more. That was when it felt one of those tentacles being ensnared in Vani’s arms, held just tightly enough that removing it might awaken her. Tentacles attempted to extract the appendage as carefully as possible, but Vani shifted again, her arms pulling closer, holding the tentacle against the strange fur-like garment she wore.

Through the garment Tentacles could feel Vani’s breathing; a soothing rhythm against the surface of its tentacle. It sorely wished Vani could be enfolded in the full touch of comfort again. It was also aware that this might be beyond the boundaries that Vani had set, but it didn’t want to disturb her period of somnolence. It had investigated sleep patterns, and found Vani to represent a typical human cycle of wakefulness and somnolence. So Tentacles stayed put, almost inert, planning what to say to Vani when she eventually awoke.

Vani yawned and stretched, her robe suddenly too warm in the morning sun streaming through the window. She threw the robe off, noting with vague interest that it never reached the floor, seeming to float awkwardly beside her bed. Several ‘pods were manipulating it, trying to figure out how it worked—or possibly what it was made from. Rising slowly, Vani padded into the bathroom to relieve herself, blinking at the mess on the floor and the dildos still stuck to the wall. She was actually kind of impressed by that, given the pounding they’d taken.

Her bladder now thankfully empty, Vani sighed and grabbed a cloth to wipe the floor with, throwing down a little cleaner first. With that done, she collected her toys and walked back in to the bedroom, for some reason happy that Tentacles didn’t have eyes. It wasn’t about being embarrassed or caught out—it was actually a vague feeling she didn’t have a name for. Not even unease, or unreadiness, but just a sense that it was very slightly too soon to openly discuss this particular aspect of her sexuality. That, of course, led her to wonder if Tentacles possessed any sort of drive for sexual contact beyond breeding or mindsharing.

Walking slowly downstairs, Tentacles following quietly behind, Vani entered the kitchen and grabbed a small tin of food for Bosisco from the pantry. Her faithful companion had of course heard the sound from a mile away, sitting expectantly on the back step, tongue hanging out the side of his mouth. Vani fished his bowl out from under the small table there and dumped the contents of the tin into it. The food vanished in seconds, and the german shepherd looked expectantly up at her.

“You think I didn’t see you inhale that, buddy?”

Bosisco woofed happily.

“How about going for a run?” Bosisco jumped up excitedly, sprinting down the path out into the field. Vani turned to Tentacles. “You can follow us if you want, nobody’s gonna see us out here.”

Vani leapt from the porch and hit the ground running, chasing Bosisco as he darted for the bushes in the distance. Vani felt the impact down her legs, the way the soft earth pressed against her feet, and the morning air almost seemed to pinch at her skin. Running wild—running naked—was an experience she cherished out in the country. It wasn’t just the freedom to do it, but the experience, the wind, her hair flying, feet pounding, heart thumping. The burst of sudden energy allowing her to nearly catch Bosisco, playfully slapping his rump.

“Gotcha!”

And then Bosisco surged further forwards, tail wagging, barking with excitement as he skidded
around the bushes. Vani leapt and rolled over one low bush, glancing behind as she came up. Tentacles was just barely keeping pace in its roller-ball form. Bossco bounded around the bushes, darting back to growl at Tentacles as the creature approached Vani. Vani placed a hand on his shoulders, loosely gripping the scruff of his neck.

“You can’t eat Tentacles,” Vani crouched down beside Bossco to reinforce her point. “Tentacles is a friend.”

Bossco continued to growl. Vani bopped him on the nose.

“Enough, Bossco. Sit. Tentacles, get over here, I need Bossco to sniff you.”

Tentacles is unsure approaching Bosko is wise.

Vani looked at the large, ovoid creature tentatively approaching her, its ‘pods, held close around its main body. “I’ll stop him from trying to eat you again. And if he can he see you’re not a threat to me, he won’t try in the first place.”

Tentacles will trust Vani, but remains unsure.

“You know what, just hold out a tentacle for him to sniff.”

Tentacles unfurled a single tentacle to its fullest extent, placing it within what it considered easy striking range for Bosko. But the creature didn’t strike, held relatively still by Vani’s touch. The tentacle lay inert against the ground, but tensed against any sudden strike. With its echo sense Tentacles could observe Bosko crouching, inching closer, its tooth-filled mouth dangerously close. Hot, damp air washed over the back of the tentacle’s pad, but no attack came.

A sudden scratching movement and the same air—in fact, the creature’s breath, Tentacles realised—washed over the other side of the tentacle. It heard Vani encouraging the creature, and could vaguely sense that her hand moved above its head, rapidly and chaotically. Bosko sat, and Tentacles dared raise its vulnerable appendage. It immediately felt that same warm breath washing between the suckers on the pad’s underside, followed by a sudden coating of acidic moisture—not unlike what Vani’s mouth had spread over its pseudopods at the lake.

Is Bosko going to attack?

“No, he just licks things. It’s a thing that dogs do.”

Bosko is dog?

“Yeah, he’s a dog. And not a particularly smart one sometimes either. He likes ear scratches, and you might be able to give him some—wrap a couple of ‘pods around my hands again.”

Tentacles did as instructed, and followed Vani’s motion as her hands reached for Bosko’s head, behind the pointed cartilage that served as the creature’s external auditory structure. The dog—Tentacles was unsure how broadly the term could be applied in future, so relished using it now—started panting and wagging its rearmost appendage. Vani explained that it meant the dog was happy. Also that the dog liked to chase things, especially a small round object called a ‘tennis ball’.

After a few example throws, Vani handed the ball to Tentacles, who gave it an impressive swing. Bosko bolted off after it, faithfully returning it to its point of origin. Tentacles found a simple
pleasure in attempts to launch the ball further and further, despite its complete lack of visual reference. It was trying to launch it far enough that Bosko would be unable to retrieve it—but every time the dog found it, and placed it in front of Tentacles. It took what seemed like a long time for the dog to come back, and then simply lie on the ground, ball still gripped between its teeth.

“He’s worn out for now,” Vani explained when Tentacles questioned her about the unusual behaviour. “But he’ll want to play again later, I’m sure. I’ve kinda been neglecting him a bit since you showed up.”

There was a pause, Tentacles wasn’t sure how to respond.

“Oh, he’ll be fine, he’s always full of energy. Speaking of which, I need some breakfast, and to wash my feet—care to join me?”

Tentacles warmly signed an affirmative, and the pair of them headed back towards the dwelling. The dog lay in the distance, contentedly chewing on the ball as he rested. Tentacles inwardly resigned itself to the fact that the animal would be unavoidable in future—but at least it was no longer an aggressive threat. For the future, however, Vani would always be far more important, and if interacting with Bosko was required to move closer to breeding with Vani, then Tentacles would—if not happily, at least willingly—do so.
It was before Vani’s morning food intake, and Tentacles was helping her to wash her feet, something made far more pleasurable by the fact that Vani had a device that made warming rain, used primarily for the removal of surface contaminants from skin. The use of semi-alkaline enzymatic agents was something that could have been skipped, until Tentacles discovered that Vani simply couldn’t generate any sort of repulsion field for self-cleansing—or avoiding contamination in the first place.

Vani sat, rather than standing as she said she normally would, allowing Tentacles to both explore her body more fully, and help with the task of washing herself. From her demonstrated flexibility, Tentacles knew her to be fully capable of handling the task herself, which meant that this action was another point to reinforce their pair-bonding traits. It was stunningly difficult to generate the foamed layer of enzyme with simple pseudopod motion, and Tentacles found itself experimenting constantly with shape, texture, and motion in attempts to optimise the process.

For Vani it seemed almost obscenely easy, taking only a second or two to generate that foam, which at times, rather than applying to herself, she would smear over Tentacles’s body with a laugh, before rinsing it off with splashes of water funnelled from between her hands. That was another advantage of being immersed in the warming rain—it gave Tentacles’s echo-sense a massively improved resolution, even if it did hinder most attempts to hear Vani’s speech.

Tentacles found that Vani was far more accepting of many different kinds of touches during this routine of cleansing, only gently pushing away those that might encroach on her Vagina. She explained that she didn’t need soap—what she called the enzymatic cleaning agent—in order to clean that part of her body. She also spoke of how she enjoyed Tentacles’s roaming touch on this particular morning, but that it should not assume it would always be so. She also asked an odd question.

“Are you always gonna speak in third person?” Out of the warming rain, Vani had grabbed a larger version of the looped cloth she used to dry the dishes.

Tentacles does not understand this question.

“That’s actually exactly what I mean. You seem to understand that when I say ‘I’, it means Vani.”

Tentacles understands this concept.

“I’m guessing you didn’t study languages or grammar much on my laptop, then.” While her movements seemed too distant to follow, a subtle airflow came from Vani, and her voice shifted its origin point as she moved.

Existence of languages was known, but research beyond requirement of mutual intelligibility was deemed unnecessary.

“Next lesson then, ‘I’ generally refers to the current speaker in a conversation.”

Does this mean that if Tentacles were to consistently use ‘I’ statement, Vani would still understand this to mean Tentacles itself?
“Of course. Now I think it’s past time we should have breakfast.

Ingestions of small foodstuffs satisfies Tentacles. I would like the crunchy flakes with small fruits and protein chunks.

“Muesli.”

Yes. I would like muesli.

Vani looked down at Tentacles. It seemed strange for it to be using ‘I’—somehow the act of familiarity made it seem more alien. On a whim, Vani grabbed a silk robe as she left her room, wrapping the sash loosely around her waist. The feeling of silk sliding over her thighs as she walked, bunching ever so slightly at her hips and waist, hanging loose from her shoulders, just brushing her suddenly sensitive nipples… With a sigh of contentment, Vani headed down the stairs and prepared breakfast for the both of them. She couldn’t help but notice how Tentacles gently pulled and toyed with the hem of the robe—clearly fascinated by the texture of the new material.

Tentacles will ingest sustenance with Vani. Discussion of future plans as well?

“Sure.”

Vani pulled at the robe as she moved around the kitchen. It just felt right to be wearing the robe, the soft silk caressing her as she moved. That, and somehow splashing herself with her breakfast would be annoyingly cold. Cornflakes, milk, and some banana slices for sweetness. She made the same dish for Tentacles, though with rather less milk. Table manners were not the creature’s strong suit, but she had to admit they hadn’t always been her greatest asset either.

As they were eating in relative silence, something occurred to Vani about Tentacles’s ability to share chemical memories and other influences. “Hey, y’know how you can make chemical memories… how does that work?”

Tentacles recalls memory and packages it into engrammatic gel to facilitate absorption by receiver.

“Is it only memories and that… ‘influence’ stuff?”

Vani elaborates on context of question?

“I mean, can you only make the memory stuff to share, or could you make other chemicals too?”

Tentacles can create ink and biocompatible gel for healing injured breeders and offspring, but both require additional energy and nutrient compounds.

It took Vani a few seconds to process that, especially the second part. In her mind she saw a vast array of new activities they might share, perhaps even a little rougher than even she was used to. If the gel worked rapidly enough, of course. And ‘inks’, well, if they could be modified slightly… Vani smiled, her cheeks flushed. She’d just heard something new that Tentacles could do, and already she was thinking of sexual applications for all of it.

“I am a terrible person,” she whispered, shaking her head and grinning.

Breakfast was finished soon after, and Vani rinsed out her and Tentacles’s dishes. She needed to put in some more hours on her main commission, something else she’d been neglecting since
Tentacles’s arrival. Making the rusty scales was tedious—easy, just time consuming and kind of boring. Putting them all in place was more fun, usually just a tack with the MIG was enough. Of course, that also meant getting on some real clothes for a change. With a sigh Vani headed back upstairs, pulling on a pair of plain black briefs and black lace bra. Then just some old jeans, and a t-shirt with several holes burnt through it from grinding sparks.

Her overalls, as per normal, were in the barn. To get there she pulled on a pair of gumboots she kept at the back door, and asked Tentacles not to follow her—mostly for its own safety, really. She wasn’t too sure how it would react to the general cacophony of her workshop area. Or the heat. Not always great for her either, but the money from commissions was always good, with one exception that no longer had a gallery exhibit anymore. Vani smiled as she zipped up her overalls and pulled on her gloves and earmuffs; she was already wearing her glasses.

There were only a few scales to finish off, so Vani grabbed them in a handful and put them on the shelf next to the linisher. Tedious, yes, but she could lose herself in the flow, the pile of finished scales growing very quickly. Then it was time for the real fun, and Vani traded her glasses for a welding helmet, firing up the MIG. She glanced at the small TIG welder in the corner—difficult as it was, she enjoyed the work immensely. With a soft sigh she grabbed the first of the scales and picked up the torch.

She started from the tail, tacking the rearmost scales in place first, so that the overlap from the next set would cover the welds of the former. Just a little touch, but important to the final look of the piece. It also meant less finishing work on the rust and iron-scale effects. She moved slowly, methodically, holding a scale in place, tacking it down with its neighbours, then finished with a quick stitch-weld. In the corner of the barn, set up earlier that day, her camera was taking time-lapse pictures of the process. Her clients—the bigger ones especially—loved to see progress like that. She liked it too.

The crackling fizz of the MIG welder had filled the barn for at least four hours, and Vani now lay on the dirt, spread-eagled, her visor flipped up as she looked at the belly of the beast. She blinked away a bit of fading arc-flash—and the sun streaming in through a gap in the woodwork—and wormed her way out from under the thing. It was looking a lot more like a dragon now. Levering herself from the ground there were the usual aches from being stuck in awkward positions for too long. She stood with a quiet groan, turning off the camera and taking out the memory card. She threw off her overalls on her way out.

Back in the house, Vani gently took the laptop from Tentacles, attempting to answer questions about pronoun use that she hadn’t really considered since high-school—if at all. While she waited for the time-lapse to finish uploading, she continued talking with Tentacles, and together they helped expand the creature’s vocabulary with as many possibly useful phrases as possible, and the appropriate contexts for them. It was a lesson, of sorts, and it took nearly two hours, at the end of which Vani was achingly hungry.

She started with a chocolate bar, and then some mixed nuts as she prepared a large bowl of microwave pasta. White sauce, and a few minutes frying some chicken. Heavy for lunch, but light for dinner. It was also nearly four in the afternoon. Vani offered some to Tentacles, but it refused, saying it currently had no need of extra energy. Considering the time, Vani knew she still had to get at least another few hours in on her commission to catch up, and play with Bossco, and prepare a late dinner, and then maybe catch up on some TV, or talk with some old friends online—if they were still up. The timezone difference always confused her.

Cleaning her dishes in the sink, Vani left the house smiling, dashing back quickly to collect the
memory card for the camera. The barn still smelled slightly of welding fumes, but to Vani it was a welcoming scent. Donning her overalls again, Vani set to work, welding up the scales from the belly to the throat of the dragon. As she worked her mind sank into the most satisfying flow-state, unable to mark the passing of time for the concentration her work was taking. She straightened slightly, noticing it was dark outside—she couldn’t remember when she’d turned on the worklight in the barn.

It was also raining softly, the pattering just audible against the roof and walls. Just outside the side door she could hear Bossco’s contented snores. He perked right up when she opened the door, jumping at her exuberantly.

“Down. Down, you idiot.”

Bossco woofed happily.

“Yes, yes, I’m happy to see you too. Down!” Vani held him at the shoulder. “Play, or dinner?”

Bossco shot off towards the house.

“Well, that answers that,” Vani rolled her eyes and started walking, memory card in her overall pocket. They needed a wash anyway.

She ducked inside and grabbed a slice of dog roll for Bossco, putting in his dish, then put in a handful of biscuits. Both disappeared almost instantly. She stared at him disapprovingly.

“Are you a dog or a vacuum cleaner?”

All she got in reply was a happy bark. After stepping back to place the memory card in the reader, Vani stripped off and headed back outside. Rain this light… she loved the feeling of the raindrops striking her skin. She shivered in delight—and a little at the chill—as the tiny droplets ran down her body. Over her breasts. Down her back. Across her stomach. Arms. Down her thighs. The rain didn’t care where it touched her; where those droplets caressed her skin. After a while she retreated to the deck, rinsing her feet with the tap for the hose. It was time to make a very late dinner.
Vani lay propped up by a pillow she’d folded in half, thinking about her distant friends. She’d talked with Cora some time ago—just talk, catching up on each other’s lives. Cora still teased her about not being able to settle down. Vani teased her about her lacking a sense of real adventure. They also spoke about how neither of them had heard from Bryce in several months. Vani wanted to visit them—both of them, if they could manage to track down Bryce—but wondered about leaving Tentacles alone.

To that end she was talking with Tentacles in the light from her bedside lamp. She had explained about masturbation, and the concept of mutual pleasure—and it was about that point that both she and Tentacles realised she couldn’t really give a demonstration for Tentacles without it actively participating.

“I’m really not sure how to go on,” Vani admitted.

I understand this confusion. Vani’s sensory precepts differ so massively from Tentacles’s that this forms another unforeseen barrier to future breeding.

Vani frowned, trying to phrase her answer correctly. “Not a… barrier. A… umm… a challenge. Something we can overcome together.”

Mutual problem solving is very acceptable. Tentacles asks how to proceed?

“I guess… slowly,” Vani shrugged. “Maybe I’ll just touch myself while you wrap a ‘pod or two around me?”

Vani seems confused by her intentions.

“Just unsure is all. After all, it’s not like I’ve ever tried anything like this before.”

Tentacles would remind Vani that ve has not tried it either.

“Wait, did you just call yourself ‘ve’?”

Is this not acceptable? Tentacles studied pronouns extensively, and searched for agender pronouns suitable to vis/its unique physique and psychology.

Vani laughed softly. “No, no, it’s perfectly acceptable. You just caught me off-guard using it properly like that.”

Tentacles finds verself pleased by this. Does Vani still wish to proceed with this self-contact experiment?

“Maybe… maybe just get up here on the bed first and we can explore together.”

Sending two tentacles over the cushioned slab, and four pseudopods to assist by pushing against the floor, Tentacles hauled itself up next to Vani, aligning its various appendages so they draped conveniently back towards the floor. Ve felt it as Vani took hold of a pseudopod, gently wrapping it around her arm and over her hand. Tentacles spread the tip of the pseudopod out over the back of
Vani’s hand, gently coiling another around her arm to slide between her fingers.

Vani moved slowly, deliberately, her two leading fingers first pressing into the smooth skin of her abdomen before lifting away from contact. She explained the action as a ‘stroking’. Tentacles felt a subtly different movement, Vani’s fingertips describing a rough semi-circle of approximately the same length as a stroke. This motion she called a swirl. Then with her leading finger and thumb she pressed firmly into the flesh at her waist, bringing the tip of finger and thumb together as much as possible. That was a pinch, and at this point she warned Tentacles to be careful, because pinches could also cause pain if done too strongly, or in the wrong place.

Tentacles felt it as Vani shifted, leaning closer, pressing her lips into ver body. A kiss. Ripples of a strange disquiet echoed throughout ver mind as Tentacles realised that this was an action ve could not replicate. It was enough to give it pause to ask about the significance of a kiss—and from Vani’s explanation it appeared to be a rough physical analogy for mind-sharing. Nowhere near as many channels, nor a connection so deep, but enough that it remained vitally important to human rituals of pair bonding and preparation for breeding.

Vani gently drummed on ver, and Tentacles placed an extra pseudopod at her shoulder and brushed it down her arm. Vani took that pseudopod in both hands, kissing the flaps on the tip. Then she swept her tongue along a short length of the pseudopod. Licking. Tentacles knew most of these actions, of course, but it also realised that Vani was building a sort of vocabulary that they could both use. A place on their bodies, and an action. It could be a question or an instruction. Even a demand.

Tentacles was brought swiftly back to reality as Vani’s lips closed around the entire end of its pseudopod, the inside of her mouth creating a mildly pleasing vacuum effect. Sucking. Calcified blades very gently sank into ver flesh, and for an instant grave misgivings filled ver. But those blades—teeth—did nothing more than press against ver flesh. A bite, or nibble—but this kind, so dangerous and gentle, was restricted to sexual expression.

Then Vani asked Tentacles to try each of the actions on her. Ve obliged, starting with the stroke, gently brushing the tips of two pseudopods across Vani’s belly. Four more pseudopods had begun slowly wrapping themselves around Vani’s torso, and beneath them ve could feel a slight shiver, and a strange localised deformation of her skin. Many slightly raised points, with hairs attempting to stand upright. Tentacles didn’t understand the response, but as Vani did not seem to mind, ve continued.

This time ve used a single pseudopod to perform the swirl, tracing a semicircle around Vani’s navel —then ve got adventurous. All six free pseudopods arced up and descended towards Vani’s stomach, thighs, and breasts. A single tip touched each breast and thigh, and one brushed either side of Vani’s stomach, just below her ribs. She said nothing, but Tentacles noticed how much her breathing had slowed. Lifting those same pseudopods away, ve asked if Vani wished to allow ver to experiment with these touches.

“I wanted to—I want to,” Vani’s voice was soft. “Why did you stop?”

Because Vani’s breathing changed, slowed. Tentacles was concerned this was mild fear response.

“Well, uh, thanks for being concerned.” Tentacles couldn’t see Vani’s wry smile, but ve could sense the slight frustration in her voice. Vani continued. “Experiment, if you like—be firm; be gentle; touch different places; ask if you’re not sure; maybe even do that thing with your suckers that’s really kinda ticklish. If you go too far I’ll tell you.”
Once again Tentacles raised ver pseudopods, then very slowly lowered two of them to touch Vani’s stomach, just below her ribs. Those pseudopods gently stroked against soft, warm flesh, following subtle contours around Vani’s stomach and navel. Occasionally one of those pseudopods would swirl. One of the pseudopods touching Vani’s thigh opened its flaps, attempting to pinch, but couldn’t quite seem to gain purchase, more like gentle sucking than anything else. Ve tried using two pseudopods, tapering the ends, and with just a little effort ve managed to get the pressure right, eliciting a soft exhalation from Vani.

Stroking and swirling around Vani’s stomach, and slowly pinching odd points on her thighs, Tentacles pressed a pseudopod into the supple, sensitive skin of Vani’s breast, firmly enough to leave something of a dent. A new idea quickly forming, ve coiled a pseudopod around the entirety of Vani’s right breast, drawing it tight, hoping it was not too uncomfortable for her. The flaps opened on the tip of another pseudopod—ve had remembered Vani talking about her nipples being more sensitive than the rest of her breasts, and also using a pseudopod’s flaps to suckle a small toe. Those flaps now pinched against Vani’s right nipple, and drew a sharp breath from her, a shiver running down her body.

“A… a little… much…” Vani panted.

Tentacles withdrew the pseudopod from Vani’s nipple, and loosened the constriction from around her breast.

“Better,” Vani sighed in relief. “It’s… intense, and maybe—no, definitely—another time, just not now.”

Growing more confident, Tentacles drew away ver pseudopods, then began enshrouding Vani in as much of the touch of comfort as ve could reasonably manage while leaving ver enough length to play with at least half of ver pseudopods. Ver tentacles, meanwhile, had been placed very strategically over Vani’s breasts and the outside of her buttocks, the two on her breasts rippling suckers against flesh in slow moving waves. Those pseudopods were carefully stroking, pinching, or swirling around any exposed flesh on Vani’s body, and from the subtle shivers and slightly unsteady breathing ve could detect, Tentacles considered that ve was doing a good job.

“How…” Vani spasmed for an instant, interrupting herself. “How thin can you make your ‘pods?”

Tentacles couldn’t really reply in that moment, all ver pseudopods being busy with attempting to explore, press into, pinch, or stroke as much of Vani as was inhumanly possible. It could, however, demonstrate. The pseudopod covering Vani’s right hand spread and flattened, curling back up over her fingertips, attempting to flow into the spaces between her fingers with some difficulty. Even ver malleable skin had its limits.

Vani seemed to find this acceptable, her hand moving slowly, fingers distressing the skin of the pseudopod as they swept against her labia with all the weight of a feather. Then her thumb pressed against her clit, and it seemed as if her breathing had stopped. It had. Tentacles eased any constriction ve might be causing around her chest. Another touch swept swiftly across Vani’s clit, a third, in yet another direction. Tentacles felt her exhale.

“Wow…” she seemed quite surprised. “Is there something on your skin?”

Tentacles wished it had enough pseudopods free to reply. It had thought of a perfect humourous rejoinder: *Yes, a Vani.*
“Wait, you don’t have to answer. I like this. Just… stay like this for a while, okay?”

Tentacles gave Vani a gentle squeeze with every appendage. It was an excellent approximation of something far more than a hug. Vani seemed to appreciate the movement, and Tentacles filed it away for later reference. Vani’s hand, still wrapped in extremely attenuated pseudopodal skin, was toying idly with her labia, occasionally sliding a finger into her vagina. Sometimes two fingers, in fact. Her free hand—the one not covered in pseudopod—was splaying her labia apart.

A sudden flash of inspiration struck ver, and Tentacles placed a tentacle from one of Vani’s buttocks atop her labia, point just touching her clit. Ve could feel Vani’s sudden and very firm grip against that tentacle. Then ve rippled the suckers, and Vani’s entire body convulsed, as if attempting to break free. Her breath was nothing but ragged pants.


Vani continued to push her fingers into her vagina, and suddenly the whole configuration of her hand changed, from a hook to a spear shape. Tentacles could feel the rugose inner flesh of Vani’s vagina constricting against the smoothness of its pseudopod. Those internal muscular bands were powerful. A sudden contraction paradoxically made Vani move her arm more quickly, a layer of warm biological fluid lubricating and assisting the movement.

A massive spasm rocked Vani’s body, and forced the muscles in her vagina to constrict even more heavily for a painful instant. Vani fell back heavily, cushioned somewhat by the bed of pseudopods on which she lay. With a sigh she withdrew her hand. She cursed, asking Tentacles to let her go. Ve did so. At that point ve also noticed the slightly metallic flavour of the biological fluid covering ver pseudopod.

Has Tentacles injured Vani?

“No,” Vani’s voice was matter of fact. “It’s normal.”

It’s normal for Vani to bleed after this act?

“It’s called masturbation, or self-pleasure. And no; but bleeding like this regularly happens to women. Most people call them periods—explains why I was horny as fuck the other day too—and mine’s always been a little irregular. It’s… well it means my body is getting ready to possibly make a baby.”

Vani has oestrus cycle for breeding?

“We—I mean people, usually call it menstruation, but that might just be a name thing.”

Tentacles understands differentiation. Does this cycle mean Vani is ready to breed?

“What? No.” The vehemence in Vani’s reply surprised Tentacles enough that it lowered the pseudopods it was using to talk, carefully considering its next question.

Rephrasing: Does this cycle mean Vani’s body is ready to begin breeding?

“It does…” Vani’s answer was slower than usual, the tone only slightly veiling the edge of anger.
Tentacles acknowledges that Vani is not yet ready to breed. This question was from biological curiosity. Tentacles did not mean to imply that ve wished to breed immediately. Ve has not gained enough trust or performed significant pair-bonding activity to allow this.

“You really are a silver tongued little monster,” Vani sighed as she finished. “And that tongue is something you could try using next time—or even your beak, if you’re really careful. That won’t be for a few days though, until the bleeding stops.”

Vani is not at risk from bleeding?

“No. I’ll be fine. Well, maybe a bit cranky, and probably a bit sore, but otherwise I’ll be fine,” Vani stood, heading for the bathroom. “Come on, let’s wash that blood off your ‘pod. I’ll try and explain a bit more about masturbation while we’re at it too.”
Quiet Moments

It hadn’t been anywhere near as bad as usual this time. Not that it always terrible, Vani admitted to herself, more just dammably uncomfortable. That, and the fact she more often had to wear actual clothing around the place. But it turned out that Tentacles’s ability to create those so called ‘healing gels’ wasn’t just limited to external use. Ve was able to make a decent painkiller as well. Maybe not tylenol, but it had a similar effect. She was still getting used to Tentacles’s pronouns though, given that ve had basically created them on its own.

Some gentle massage—touch of comfort, as Tentacles called it—had also helped rather more than Vani thought it would. Now that her period was over and she was feeling a little more even, it was time to change the sheets and as good a time as any freshen up a few other things. Right now, however, she was sprawled on the couch, enjoying the sound of rain against the roof, and not quite so enjoying the weight of Bosco in her lap.

She scratched the dog behind his ears, lamenting the situation. “You’re heavy, you know that?”

He woofed, rolling over, inviting her to rub his belly.

“Okay, fine, have some bellyrubs. Yes, you like the bellyrubs, don’t you?”

Bosco’s response was twitching his back leg and blobbing out even more.

“I have stuff to do, you know…”

A pair of tentacles sidled around, sliding under the dog. Vani smiled, letting go of Bosco. He yelped as the tentacles lifted him bodily from the couch. He landed softly, trotting over to headbutt Tentacles. ‘pods moved to push him away, and he saw his chance. Vani laughed as Bosco capsized on top of several ‘pods, doing the puppy roll and pinning those limbs to the ground.

Vani helps?

“You got yourself into this,” Vani rose from the couch, one hand patting Bosco, the other stroking Tentacles’s top surface. “You can figure out your way out of it. No biting. That goes for you too, Bosco.”

Bosco woofed happily, rolling around to pin more ‘pods.

Vani laughed as she headed for the stairs, stripping off her shirt as she did so, wadding it into a tight ball. It sailed cleanly over her bed, off the back wall, and off the edge of the laundry hamper. Muttering in annoyance, Vani hooked the shirt up with her foot and dropped it properly into the hamper. Next it was time for the bed. Pillowcases first, then the light duvet on top of everything. The pillowcases went into the hamper, while the duvet was shoved roughly into a corner along with the pillows.

The sheets came off with little effort, but Vani still took a moment to roughly fold them so they’d fit into the hamper better. Before grabbing any fresh sheets, Vani threw herself onto the bare mattress, enjoying the bounce. Her left hand traced the line between her labia over her briefs, her right gently pinched her left nipple. She sighed softly, moving around to get comfortable. A few minutes wouldn’t hurt… and would frustrate her for later. Always fun. Her hands roamed, but
never ducked under the waistband of her briefs. Everything outside, filtered—dulled—by the fabric. Enough to be arousing, but not stimulating. Enough to tease, but not to please. Vani ground the heel of her hand against her pubic bone in frustration, then rolled from the mattress, standing quickly.

The sheets were in the cupboard in the hall, and moving into late spring it was definitely time for lighter sheets. She was still going to keep the duvet though—it was just hard to sleep without a little weight on top of her. That was another thing Tentacles might help with, in future. Vani moved at a leisurely pace, flicking out the under-blanket across her mattress, smoothing down the sides. Setting the bottom sheet out she got to thinking about how quickly Tentacles might complete a task like this, given ver additional limbs and greater reach. Very quickly, most likely.

And just thinking of Tentacles, Vani was going through ideas about deepening their connection. Even so far as to include sex of some kind. Not immediately, and not that she hadn’t been considering it before, but now she was giving it serious thought. Very serious thought, given her left hand was now surreptitiously rubbing at her clit through the fabric of her briefs. There were other things they could do, and given the fuzz she could feel on her thighs and pubis, shaving was one of them.

So was some sort of attempt at mindsharing, or at least some careful experimentation with Tentacles’s mind influencing chemicals. I wonder how strong they really are? It wasn’t really a fantasy of hers, but, if it was safe, Vani saw several ways they might include it in their play sessions. Vani smiled, thinking about play, and seeing her duvet in the corner. Plenty of cushions on the seats in the living room, and as she was going to wash the sheets anyway…

While Vani was upstairs, Tentacles had been engaging in physical activity with Bosko for some time before the dog suddenly ran off. Ve paid it no mind—easier to do now that the animal was unlikely to attack except in mock-hunting activity. For some time Tentacles had been considering ver place in the relationship ve shared with Vani. To ver mind their relationship had been progressing well, improving rapport such that Vani had included ver in a sexual activity. Vani also seemed to appreciate a firmer—almost palpitating—touch of comfort around her abdomen recently. Vani had stated that this was from cramps caused by her menstruation. Certain chemical analgesics and anti-inflammatory compounds had helped relieve the most serious symptoms.

For now, Tentacles was content, almost happy that ver direct actions had relieved some of Vani’s pain. Is this an effect of pair bonding? The thought struck ver like a blow, stilling all ver pseudopods and tentacles in their idle swaying. Ve had felt such things before, of course, from mindsharing—but to have it induced by rapport and psychology? It was a truly fascinating development. The feeling was understandably weak, but it was there and easily recognised. Studying—and bonding with—Vani, even as a single subject, was surprisingly revelatory at times.

Climbing—or rather roll-shifting—up the stairs, Tentacles sought Vani to discuss this latest revelation. Ve could hear Vani’s soft footsteps approaching, and ver echo-sense showed Vani cradling a convoluted sphere of soft materials. Vani stopped just short of Tentacles’s perimeter. Tentacles held up a pseudopod in a questioning glyph.

“You’re in the way, I was heading downstairs.”

Tentacles apologises. I was looking for you.

“I wasn’t lost,” Vani laughed softly. Tentacles didn’t understand the humour. “Come on, downstairs. We’re gonna make a blanket fort.”
Vani has served as a siege engineer; military?

The sphere of soft material fell on top of Tentacles as Vani exploded with laughter. Tentacles struggled to remove the sphere as it broke down into smaller and smaller components, finally realising that these components were of a similar texture to the coverings on Vani’s rest cushion —*mattress*. Vani calls it a mattress. These are blankets. Tentacles was glad ve had remembered the terms—but it still left the question of how Vani might turn such soft materials into a realistic defensive bastion.

Gathering the blankets into a rough sphere once more, Tentacles passed them to Vani as they continued down the stairs.

“Blanket forts aren’t anything military,” Vani spoke, amusement shading her voice. “They’re something kids build—children. I was a kid once.”

Vani has completed metamorphosis?

“You did study human growth and aging, right?”

Humour is difficult to execute. Concept is seemingly simple. Language words have many meanings.

“You need to work on your material.”

But Vani is carrying all material today.

Vani laughed, putting the blankets on the couch. “Okay, that was good.”

Vani appreciates situation based humour?

“Yeah. And slapstick.”

Slapping of sticks?

“Well, maybe in caveman times. People messing up, falling over, schemes backfiring. As long as they weren’t injured. Damn, I wish you could see, I could show you Buster Keaton’s stuff.”

Tentacles continues to acknowledge this difficulty in mutual understanding. Frustration and acceptance. Vani’s planet not yet advanced in prosthetics for augmentation.

“Wait… you mean you could… if our technology was better… and… wait—our brains use electrical signals. You use chemicals. How would that even work?”

I am unsure, Vani. It would require much experimentation on Tentacles’s part.

“I mean, it’s not like you can just grow an eyeball.”

Tentacles considered the idea, the complexity of the visual input organs used by many species on this planet. It was not a simple task. It might not even be possible, but it offered a smarter alternative than magic—for now. Even if it was possible, that still left the problem of signal conversion from electrical to chemical, and given that Vani’s temporal resolution for vision was
finer than ver own with regard to tactile sensation, it might even be that that electrical signalling was the key missing from its own evolution.

Vani crouched, frowning, stroking Tentacles’s upper surface. “Hey, you okay?”

Tentacles is processing data. Concept of eyeball growth is not considered impossible, but many difficulties arise with input integration and comprehension.

“Oh, so it’s damn hard,” Vani sighed softly. “I meant it as a joke, you know?”

I did not. Possibility seemed intriguing. We have strayed from task of material fortress construction.

“A little diversion is fine,” Vani laughed, sitting cross legged on the floor, dragging a cushion off the couch. “It’s not like we’re on a schedule or anything.”

Vani dragged another cushion out, then stood to drape one of the blankets over the back of the couch, hem touching the floor. If she sat back against the couch the blanket was just long enough to cover her face, making her sneeze. Shuffling one of the smaller armchairs around she draped a blanket between it and the cushions she’d liberated earlier. Another blanket covered from that to a small ottoman—usually jammed in the corner for Bosco to worry at. Also, lifting the lid, filled with some old porn mags, a half-empty box of cigarettes, and an empty lighter.

She tried to think of the last time she’d had Nigel over—and couldn’t. Far too long ago. And for all his tattoos and piercings he’d been really vanilla. Quite disappointing, though he’d indulged her passions once or twice in an attempt at deeper intimacy. Shaking her head, Vani smiled at the memory. Maybe it was fitting that this stuff was forgotten inside a piece of old furniture.

It didn’t take long to finish the blanket fort, Vani just able to sit up inside, and shuffle around past the cushions. She dragged Tentacles inside and dropped the blanket door down behind ver. The only noise now was her own breathing—the light rain having stopped some time earlier. Resting with her back against the couch, Vani encouraged Tentacles to rest beside her. Ve obliged, one ‘pod wrapping lazily around Vani’s leg, trailing down her thigh and around her calf, gently pressing into the sole of her foot. She found her own arm wrapping around Tentacles’s body, and that she was leaning in to ver more than she was leaning against the couch.

Shifting somewhat awkwardly, Vani pressed her lips against Tentacles’s body; a soft kiss. She sat up slowly, nestling into ver side.

“This is nice.”

Tentacles finds verself content.

Vani smiled warmly as the lone ‘pod gave her leg a gentle squeeze. It was enough. For now, it was enough just to sit there, drifting into a warm quiescence.
The shower rained down upon them both, Vani sitting with her back against the wall of the shower. Tentacles rested ver main body between Vani’s ankles, pseudopods and tentacles shifting slowly in the streaming water. Vani had explained ‘shaving’ earlier in the day, a specific act of grooming unique to humans, and practised by both males and females—though each gender had a tendency to shave different areas of bodily hair. It was also, Vani had explained, optional. There were plenty of men and women who chose not to shave.

Vani had also demonstrated correct shaving technique with the enclosed blade-holder she used, obviously optimised for the human hand, but a pseudopod and a tentacle did the trick. With the suckers on ver tentacles, Tentacles stretched and smoothed the skin of Vani’s pubis, then drew the blade-holder gently away from the midline. Another pseudopod splashed more of the warming rain from the shower over the area.

Tentacles felt it as Vani shook her head, taking the blade-holder in her own hands.

“You have to be firm, like I showed you. You won’t cut the hair otherwise, see.”

Tentacles would remind Vani that ver lack of eyes remains problematic.

“Sure, but you can feel a lot—I don’t know, finer?—than I can. Surely that’s enough to tell you how hard you should be pressing.”

I am concerned about the cutting you explained earlier.

Tentacles felt a hand reach out to stroke down ver side. “Don’t be. I’ve cut myself shaving in the past. It stings, but it heals.”

Tentacles tried again, pressing the blade-holder more firmly into the flesh covering Vani’s pubis, then drew it back, blades perpendicular to the direction of motion. Ve could almost feel the bump of each hair as it first resisted the cutting action of the blades. Another pseudopod inspected the area, finding the remaining length of hair almost sharp, and somewhat uncomfortable. A second pass with the blade-holder reduced that length to a protrusion barely longer than its follicle. The demarcation between that shaved hair and the normally soft curls of Vani’s pubic hair was markedly sharp. Ve asked about it, and Vani explained that the effect was entirely intentional, and partly for visual stimulation of another.

As Tentacles finished shaving her landing strip, Vani stood, letting the water wash down her stomach, feeling the rivulets flow around and over her breasts. She had to admit that she was more than a little turned on right now. Tentacles was now shaving her legs, the smooth glide of the razor reminding her that any sudden movements would be a bad idea. The tiny snag of the occasional hair that was fraction too long wasn’t unexpected either. And Tentacles was being so tender—or possibly thorough—with two ‘pods trailing behind the razor, smoothing her skin.

But when it came time to shave the area around her vagina—her vulva—Vani was rather more tentative. She had confidence enough that Tentacles could manage the task without incident. She even trusted ver enough to let ver help the last time she’d masturbated. The doubt still nagged at her, and Vani just didn’t know why. There wasn’t a rational explanation. But sometimes that was okay; sometimes feeling could trump reason. Her willingness to try and befriend Tentacles instead
of reporting ver to… someone—that had to be a prime example.

With resigned sigh, Vani stopped Tentacles, taking the razor for herself.

Tentacles has done something wrong?

“No, I just feel kinda strange.”

Vani suffers mind-state confusion again?

“No, not really,” Vani shook her head. “I can’t quite explain it—but you haven’t done anything wrong.”

Would Vani prefer if Tentacles removed ver presence?

“No,” Vani smiled, patting Tentacles’s body. “I just feel weird.”

Vani is under warming rain with tentacled creature of extraplanar origin. Perhaps weird is correct feeling?

Laughing, Vani stood right under the shower head, razor poised to remove the short growth around her labia. The shower helped in washing the hair right away, and as she leaned back to help it, she asked herself a simple question: Have I let anyone else shave me there? And the answer, to her, somehow, was surprising.

No.

She hadn’t let anyone else shave her there, ever. And an idea started to form that maybe this was just because she liked doing it herself. Nothing about trust, or skill, or anything; just self-interest and self-satisfaction, and maybe a desire not to give that up. Or maybe, weirdly, it was jealousy. Vani really wasn’t sure, mulling it over as she finished shaving, rinsing away all the cut hairs. It was then that she had the idea. They had been experimenting more recently, and Tentacles did seem quite strong from their physical interaction.

“Hey, how much do you think you can lift?”

In human measures—Tentacles thinks ve could lift a tonne, possibly more. Tentacles are stronger than pseudopods in this case.

“So you wouldn’t have any trouble holding me up then, would you?”

Does Vani wish for elevation?

“Sort of, and I need to explain about safe-words too—and BDSM in general. It’s not something most normal people like.”

Vani is considered to have deviancy from human norms?

Vani laughed. “You could say that.”

Understanding. How does Vani wish to be elevated?
“I guess start with the touch of comfort,” Vani reached out to turn off the shower. “I’ll turn off the shower first though, no need to waste water. Hmm… is it okay if I sit on top of you to start?”

Tentacles sees no problems.

Sitting slowly, Vani found the smooth flesh strangely slick under her backside, almost as if she was at risk of slipping off. And yet, somehow, skin-to-skin, there was enough friction she didn’t slip. She couldn’t quite relax fully, however—there remained that feeling that if she did, she would slip. The feeling passed as she felt herself being enfolds once again. Two ‘pods to each leg, one coiling around her foot, climbing slowly up her shin to stop below her knee. The other lying over that, gently squeezing her thigh, placing some of its length in the crease between her thigh and labia. Tentacles was pushing boundaries, but carefully.

Two ‘pods wrapped around each arm, one from elbow to wrist, the end splaying out to cover her palm. The other ‘pod wrapped her upper arm, around her shoulder and across her back before very gently coiling at her throat. Vani felt her breath hitch, even knowing how careful and respectful—and gentle—Tentacles could be, a feeling of utter vulnerability remained. As her breathing slowed, so did Tentacles.

I am slowing, because Vani’s breathing has changed again. Is this desirable?

“Yes,” Vani nodded firmly to reinforce the point, the ‘pods pressing softly into her throat as she did so. “I feel pretty vulnerable with those ‘pods around my throat.”

What is vulnerable? This is undesirable feeling?

“Not normally, no,” shaking her head, Vani felt her breath catch again. “It means I feel like I might be hurt, and hurt badly, even by someone or something I care about.”

What is causing Vani to feel vulnerable? Do you want to stop it?

“Your ‘pods around my neck. If I stop breathing for long enough, I could die. If your ‘pods got tight somehow, and didn’t get undone. It’s weird, I know you don’t want to hurt me, and would not do so deliberately, but there is a nagging doubt in the back of my mind. I can’t define it, or what causes it.”

Vani’s mind-states remain curious. But you did not answer if you wanted Tentacles to move ver pseudopods away.

“Because I’m still thinking. I feel vulnerable—and a little scared—but I’m not sure it’s bad,” Vani smiled, shaking her head. “Not with what I’m going to ask you to do next, anyway.”

This notion is curious. Most sapients avoid situations of possible harm at all costs. Some will save offspring when threatened, but many avoid all dangers. Why does Vani desire fear of harm causing?

“It’s…” Vani trailed off, thinking. “It’s kinda hard to explain, really. Something like giving up power, but still being in control of the situation. There’s also adrenaline, and other sense being heightened. There’s more, a lot more. And another thing is I’d only ever do this with someone I trust, and someone I know that cares.”

Is this normal pair-bonding behaviour?
“It’s not considered normal to most, but I think we can call it a bonding experience—or bondage.”

Tentacles does not understand.

“Humour, maybe because I still feel a little nervous.”

Tentacles re-iterates offer to reposition pseudopods.

“No, I’ll be okay. But you might find the next part a little weird.”

Lifting Vani was easy, and Tentacles did so as she explained what she wanted. Tentacles was concerned about the idea of deliberately harming Vani—afraid that it might damage their rapport, even if Vani requested it. Then Vani explained to ver the concept of ‘safe-words’. A pair of special words, one meaning to slow down or ease off, and the other meaning to stop immediately. The explanation continued that these words were necessary because Vani might protest or make sounds of pain when in fact she still desired the current situation. Tentacles was still confused to some degree. Why would Vani desire harm to herself?

Tentacles began slowly constricting ver pseudopods, leaving those around Vani’s neck and upper arms alone. As ver muscles contracted ve could feel the smoothness of Vani’s freshly shaved skin, and the very slight puckering of hair follicles if ve really concentrated. Ver tentacles coiled around Vani’s waist, and one sucker pad covered the underside of each of Vani’s breasts. Ve could feel Vani’s slight, convulsive gasp as ve gripped with those suckers and began to pull. Ver other tentacle pads covered the sides of Vani’s buttocks, and ve began to pull with those as well.

Vani writhed and groaned, but did not use the safe-words. Tentacles was somewhat concerned—surely the discomfort was now undesirable.

“Harder,” Vani commanded.

Tentacles began to pull with ver pseudopods, and now ve could feel it as Vani’s muscles began to strain against the force being applied. Ve could even just feel the unsettling sensation of bones beginning to grind against each other. Vani writhed again, and made strange exhalations, but still did not use the safe-words. Tentacles decided to experiment, knowing roughly what Vani’s body’s range of motion was. Ve started by driving Vani’s legs apart, feeling her powerful thigh muscles actively fighting the effort. The strength there was impressive, but could be overcome with a little effort. Ve kept forcing Vani’s legs further and further apart.

“Argh… heimdall.” Vani used the slowing down word. “Any… ugh… any further and… my legs might… ow… break.”

Does Vani wish this to stop?

“No, just…” and here Vani broke into ragged series of gasps. “No more… on… my legs…”

Tentacles felt it as Vani tried to writhe, and couldn’t, her upper body exerting little force against the tentacles holding her in place. Knowing Vani’s arms had a much greater range of motion than her legs, Tentacles instead used ver pseudopods to draw Vani’s arms down and back, elbows locked.

“Heimdall.” It came through a sharp gasp. “Go… go back.”
Tentacles reversed the path of Vani’s arms.

“Stop, right there.” Vani’s breathing had evened out. “It hurts… but… I can… handle it. Mostly.”

Vani enjoys feeling of painfulness?


Warming rain has stopped. Why does Vani feel wet?

“Touch my vagina.”

Tentacles used one of ver free pseudopods and gently ran it down the external length of Vani’s vagina. The pseudopod came away covered in a thin, biological film with surprising lubricative properties. Ve rubbed the pseudopod against another, noting the decrease in friction and increase in warmth from the fluid film.

What does wetness signify?

“That my body… wants… to have sex. That… maybe I… want to as… well.”

Vani wishes to perform breeding?

“No.” And just to be sure, Vani used the stopping word. “Flugen; on… the breeding.”

Tentacles understands.

“Now, I want… no, do you… want to… play with my… vagina, now?” Vani’s breathing was suddenly very ragged. “Or after… when we… when we… recover?”

Choice is understood. If now, and if Tentacles chooses after?

“No, you cou— ow… could be… rough. Violent. After you would… have to… gentle. You… very gentle.”

Tentacles considered the choice carefully. Ve thought it would be much easier to be gentle to Vani than to be violent to her.

I choose after; to be gentle to Vani.

“Then… heimdall; loosen off.”

Vani felt her muscles begin to relax as the ‘pods and tentacles slowly crushing and stretching her released their iron grip. There would be bruises, probably, and sore joints. But she hadn’t yet been pushed past her limit. She wanted that feeling, being right on the edge of losing control. But she also knew how careful she had to be. Breath play was still too dangerous for now. But more… just a little more past her body’s limits. That she could do.

“Okay, now I know this might make you uncomfortable, but the next goal is to actually hurt me. Not injure me permanently, but hurt to last a little while. I want you to do what you were doing before, and go further. I want you to make me scream, or cry. Only then do you stop. Or if I say
‘flugen’ again. Then you have to carry me to the bed, Okay?”

Tentacles understands.

“Go!”

Vani felt the sudden sense of exposure as her legs were slammed open, the force enough to make her thighs and pelvis ache. Her arms were pulled down, almost hard enough to dislocate them. ‘pods and tentacles worked to arch her back painfully around Tentacles’s body. Her wrists burned at the constriction. Her breasts ached at the force being used by those suckers. The strength pulling at her backside, opening her out, left her feeling incredibly vulnerable. Tentacles pulled and twisted just a little further. Vani felt her calves strain and cramp, and the pain shot straight through her.

She screamed.

The release was instant, but the descent felt like it took several very painful seconds. She felt an odd sense of weightlessness as Tentacles carried her to the bed, depositing her with utmost care on top of the duvet. Breathing slowly, taking in great gasps, Vani turned her head to speak.

“Now… now this part… is vital,” she smiled as her body tensed, grunting in pain. “Now you have… to make it better.”
Sensual Overload

Vani lay sprawled on top of her duvet, face down, twitching slightly, deep aches forcing her breath into ragged gasps. It hurt. She *hurt*. The pain was strong, but not overwhelming. Now it was reduced, aches, pains, twitches and twinges, more than enough to remind her how rough she’d allowed Tentacles to be. Vani felt it as Tentacles climbed onto the bed, placing verself between her legs. She felt it as a ‘pod probed tentatively at her entrance. She shook her head.

“Not yet… hurts. Make it… better.” Vani turned as she spoke, to better see Tentacles’s reply.

How to make better? Pain cannot be undone.

“How to make better? Pain cannot be undone.


Tentacles remembers massage. Where does Vani wish massage first?

Vani tried to wave a hand, finding her arm feeling strangely slow and heavy. “My arm; my shoulders. Then… you pick something.”

As a trio of ‘pods began to press into the muscle around the back of her right shoulder, Vani felt her breath slowly returning to normal. It still hurt basically everywhere, but now her shoulder was beginning to relax, knots of tension being carefully worked out. Hyper-smooth skin pressed firmly into her flesh, adding a slick, cooling sensation over the slowly spreading feeling of relaxation. She flexed her shoulder experimentally, finding it only slightly uncomfortable to move.

A single ‘pod coiled a short length around her upper arm, squeezing against her biceps as she flexed her muscles. The tips of more ‘pods pressed into the flesh of her upper arm, working the tension around and out of her body, the coiled ‘pod giving her an almost affectionate squeeze. She could even feel the odd puckering as another pair of ‘pods opened their tip flaps to try and suckle her flesh. She shivered, then grimaced from the wave of pain washing over her. A tentacle pad covered from her shoulder blade to halfway down her tricep, suckers gently pulling at her skin.

She shivered again, cursing. “That’s too much… for now… just… normal massage, okay, no… suckling?”

Tentacles made no reply, but continued to work down her arm, pressing and kneading with ver ‘pods. Vani felt it as another ‘pod wrapped around her wrist, working with the one around her upper arm to gently force her arm to move. Tentacles manipulated her arm slowly, extending it to the limit of what was comfortable before slowly drawing it back in, other ‘pods continuing to work the tension out of her muscles the entire time. The problem was, now that one arm felt so relaxed, the ache throughout the rest of her body seemed almost too sharp of a counterpoint.

“I think that arm’s okay… now,” Vani managed half a smile. “Maybe try moving on?”

Tentacles may choose?

“If you want.”

Vani felt a gentle swipe across her foot and her body spasm in a confusion of delight and agony.
“You know that tickles.”

I know. Tentacles wished to understand if reaction was mitigated by Vani’s pain. It is not.

“Were you experimenting on me?”

Confirmed. Vani seems discomfited by this notion.

“Because it hurts right now. So experiment another time.”

Tentacles apologises.

Vani shook her head. “I shouldn’t snap like that; sorry.”

Tentacles didn’t answer, instead moving ver ‘pods to Vani’s right leg, four of them sliding around and completely covering it. A fifth spread and wrapped around her foot, moving it as the other ‘pods moved her leg. It felt strange, and then Vani realised that it was because those ‘pods were gently pulsing along their length, rippling against her skin. It wasn’t a massage, but it was an interesting—and maybe enjoyable—sensation. She just wasn’t quite sure yet.

Freeing her leg, Tentacles started a more normal massage, and Vani felt like she was beginning to sink into the bed, slowly falling to one side. She reached out slowly, her right hand finding purchase around smooth, banded flesh. A tentacle pad pressed against her forearm from wrist to elbow, each sucker gently latching on. Vani tensed, holding back the shiver she knew was coming. The point of another tentacle pad pressed into the small of her back. Somehow she couldn’t shiver now. Another half smile tugged at the corner of her lips. Neat trick.

So was the next, a not quite so accidental brushing of a ‘pod against her entrance as it wound up around her thigh to deliver a deeper massage. Another ‘pod repeated the trick, just very gently teasing at her opening before pushing into the crease between her thigh and her buttock. The tentacle from the small of her back—at least, she assumed it was the same one—moulded itself around around her right cheek and gently squeezed and rolled, clearly experimenting with the more ample supply of her body’s assets back there.

She didn’t complain. Not this time. The ache was fading, and as Tentacles’s ‘pods moved to her other leg, Vani had to admit that she was kind of enjoying being played with like that. It was a while since she’d played with herself—properly, just played. Or had anyone to play with, for that matter. Yuki had always been fun in that regard. Sure, she hadn’t been nearly as sexually driven as Vani, but she liked being played with; worshipped, sometimes. And she had been so petite. Yuki Pettanko, Vani had teasingly called her time and again. Nympho-Vani-ac was the usual reply.

Vani shook her head at the sudden memory, suddenly feeling like something had changed in those few seconds. Nothing new—except Tentacles gently pressing ‘pods against her ribs and left calf. So maybe something gone—the pain, the ache; that was it. Vani let out a contented sigh, slowly rolling over, forcing Tentacles to move and somehow untangle ver ‘pods. The tentacle pressing against her right wrist had managed to stay in place and not get tangled up. It gave her a rippling half-squeeze as the other ‘pods drew back before approaching her leg from different angles.

A trio of ‘pods wound their way around her left arm, pressing down with their tips in a strange sort of rolling motion. One ‘pod looped past her thumb, while the others met beneath her palm. All three pods flexed slowly, manipulating her arm, stretching it out and back, rolling the remaining
tension out of her still slightly stiff muscles. Two tentacles placed themselves against her abdomen, their pads lying from her ribs to just below her breasts. The suckers touched and released in a rippling wave making her squirm.

But it didn’t hurt.

Those suckers rippled again, and with her left hand Vani tried to grab hold, feeling a playful resistance to her movement. Another ripple, and while her body squirmed, Vani shook her head. One last ripple, and the tentacles lifted, pads falling back to cover her breasts.

Does Vani accept this touch?

Lost in the moment, the sensation of dozens of tiny suckers essentially kissing her breasts, it took her a moment to respond. “…hnh… yes. Just be gentle. Less tickling.”

Understanding. Is experimenting allowed?

“I guess…” Vani wasn’t entirely sure what Tentacles was planning to experiment with.

She found out a moment later as those suckers rippled again, then latched on, gently working their way around her breasts. She felt a gentle force lifting her breasts, pulling outwards, then letting them fall back. Enough for a little bounce, even. The tentacle pad lifted from her right breast, and a ‘pod slowly lowered itself toward her nipple, working at the sensitive flesh around there. The ‘pod’s tip flaps opened, and with an odd squelch it began suckling at her nipple. It was so tight, the sensation so close to painful, that Vani gasped in shock. She could feel waves of constriction and release, pulses enveloping her nipple, the sensation washing over her completely.

She hadn’t noticed the tentacle leaving her left breast, but she felt it when another ‘pod began sucking that nipple. It was hard for her to catch a breath, let alone speak. Tentacle suckers held fast and pulled gently at the underside of each breast. Another tentacle rippled its suckers across her stomach, her whole body beginning to writhe. Her arms tensed and spasmed, and she felt her back arch in the throes of pleasure. She hadn’t noticed the building fire in her core, but she felt the release with every fibre of her being, falling back hard against the mattress, feeling like she could melt. She did. Her mind fuzzing over and blanking for a moment as she rode the peak, coming back in time to see two ‘pods hovering and waving in front of her face.

Will Vani accept touch on vagina now?

Vani nodded, forgetting for a moment the need to speak. The question hung in front of her. She let out a contented sigh. “Yes. You can… play some more first, if you want…”

Vani felt it as a ‘pod rested some of its length neatly between her labia, the tip flicking feather-light across the bud of her garden. She almost felt like begging for entry, but that was damped by a part of her mind rarely sated by raw lust. She began to relax, her breathing more even, letting Tentacles’s gentle restraint on her arms pin her in place. Mostly. She squirmed a little to get more comfortable as four ‘pods spiralled and wound their way around each leg, squeezing her thighs and locking her legs in place as they tickled her feet.

Her hands balled into fists, nails digging into her palms. She said nothing, a gentle swirl across her hood stealing the breath from her throat. Her feet and calves had been released, two of those ‘pods now pressing their length into the crease between her thighs and her womanhood. That quiet, secret part of her almost purred in satisfaction. In want. ‘pods began to enfold her, keeping loose, only
giving her an occasional squeeze as they wound into place. This… it just felt… right.

With a soft sigh, Vani closed her eyes, waiting, wanting. She lived for a moment in an endless present full of promised sensation. The moment drew on, and she felt a strange explorer teasing open her entrance, exposing her core. Another like it, so slick and smooth and different to any other she’d had feathered and swirled at the bud above her entrance. With a strangely gentle kind of boldness, the first explorer forged onwards, separating her lips, and beginning to slide inside her. Slim, and so very smooth, she tried to grip it, to feel more of it, squeezing those special muscles. But on its own it was simply too small.

Another explorer pressed tentatively at her entrance, feeling a slight resistance to its passage. She gave the other a gentle squeeze, trying to encourage it. The second seemed to flow inside of her, filling her with a feeling of slickness quite unlike anything else. She could feel them flex and open, perhaps to try and touch—or taste—what lay deepest inside of her. And still another played with the bud of her garden, drawing back the hood and drawing forth a great gasp of pleasure. Inside she felt gentle thrusts begin, the owner perhaps not understanding why the motion was necessary. Perhaps she had spoken—but in her current state, she simply could not be sure.

Thrusts deep inside of her, slow and sure, purposeful. Tender. Top and bottom together and alternating. She felt her breathing grow shallow as outside, above her entrance, the other teased the secret bud there without mercy or respite. No malice or pain, merely focused on a single task. Forward and back, in and out, both at once inside of her. Soft thrusts. Gentle flicks. All over she felt the gentle squeeze, a compression like a lover’s embrace, but covering so much more. She felt the cresting peak as that stranger outside pressed insistently against her secret bud, tiny flaps massaging the hood behind. Her whole body tensed.

Arms stretched wide, clawing at whatever they could hold. Her legs writhed in their bondage, and her belly shifted and squirmed. She knew how close she was, and how useless it was to try and fight something this powerful—but still she tried, nails digging into her palms, calves almost cramping again, teeth grinding against each other. One more feathery swirl was all it took, the wave crashing about her so strongly it stilled every movement, every aching muscle. Deep inside she felt herself move, trying to draw forth a seed that wasn’t there. A tiny part of her felt betrayed at this—but the rest saw it as the softer, more gentle kind of touch it should have been.

She had been brought to her fall, and as she lay in abject pleasure, she felt the coils around her sliding away, the pads and their kisses withdrawing to nothing. A loop remained around her ankle, a gentle pressure just enough to know it was there. Her right hand still closed around thickly banded muscle. Even that drew away as her breathing slowed. Her mind drifted in and out, not sure of the barrier between fantasy and flesh. Not caring. A sated sigh escaped her lips as she fell back into the bed. So long she’d waited, and it had been worth it.

So worth it.

She just wished she had the energy to stay awake after that. She wanted to talk to her lover. Give back. But her body and mind so richly drained could not. Would not. So with a ‘pod for an anklet, and haphazard tentacles for a comforter, she slept.
Wakefulness came slowly, a haze thick and sweet as honey falling from her memories. Vani smiled, any recall of pain from the night before dulled by what had come after. Twice, even. She continued smiling, slowly opening her eyes. She knew Tentacles would be there, still feeling a single ‘pod draped around her ankle. Blinking a few times to clear her sight, Vani shifted, sitting up, noting the sun outside was well on its way to noon. After last night, I don’t think sleeping in is really that bad.

Vani yawned, covering her mouth with the back of her hand. The ‘pod had fallen from her ankle, and a quiet rustling told her Tentacles had moved around the bed.

Vani’s somnolence extended. I didn’t want to wake you.

“Thanks,” Vani reached down and brushed her fingers across Tentacles’s main body. “I had some nice dreams.”

Tentacles wishes to enquire what are dreams?

Vani considered for a sleepy moment how to explain the concept of moving pictures and images and other sensations to something that couldn’t see at all, and normally didn’t sleep either. Ve might not even know what hallucinations were. She would have to look up a good way to explain it.

“There’s a lot of visual stuff, and I kinda need my breakfast to wake up properly today.” She leant down to kiss Tentacles. “Also, last night… I loved it. I want to do it again, sometime, but… I don’t know what to do for you. It can’t all be about me.”

I would ask to discuss breeding, but that is for a different time. Tentacles is unsure of how to proceed with such exchanges. Perhaps experimentation with physical sensations is required.

“You want me to experiment on you—with you?” Vani swung her legs over the side of the bed, feet pushing into the soft pile of the carpet.

Vani understands, yes. This is what ve desire.

Half masked by another yawn, Vani asked: “After breakfast?”

Can Tentacles have fish and apple?

Standing and stretching, Vani replied. “There’s no fish left, but I’ve still got a few apples. I’ll have to go shopping soon.” Looking over at the dresser she decided it wasn’t worth the effort getting dressed just yet. And the fact her body was still tingling just a little from the stretching and the amazing sex last night.

Tentacles’s ‘pods waved for attention: What is ‘shopping’?

“I buy things like food and drink, cleaning stuff, maybe a science magazine.”

This is exchange of tokens or barter for worth of similar items?
“We use money,” Vani wandered to the stairs. “Maybe you can do some research after breakfast, before we experiment.” A thought struck her. “Or look up dreams; pretty sure there’s better explanations than what I’ve got.”

Tentacles studied dreams on the metal tablet, nipping chunks off one of ver apples. It seemed that dreams, in their basic form, were some kind of visual echo or hallucination, occurring only during nocturnal somnolence. Experts in the understanding of these alien minds had differing—and often conflicting—opinions on what purpose dreams served, if any. To ver own sensibilities it seemed that memory consolidation was the most likely—because beings like Vani had to have some form of process similar to ver own gestalt. The study of dreams was not, however, a major concern. An interesting diversion, but of little concern, as Vani had characterised her dreams as ‘nice’; a word Tentacles understood to mean pleasant or satisfying given differing contexts.

Finishing the apple, ve rolled over to rest next to Vani, extending a single pseudopod to lie against her foot. Not receiving any requests to stop, Tentacles began to coil the pseudopod around Vani’s calf, squeezing gently. Ve felt it as Vani placed a hand on ver main body, stroking it gently down one side.

Tentacles finds feeling of physical connectedness to be filling ver with contented feeling of warmth. Does Vani feel this same warmth?

“Could you repeat the first part?” Vani’s voice held an odd note. “Sorry. I was reading something.”

Repeating the first part of ver query, Tentacles analysed the odd note ve had heard. Shame?

“That warmth is called affection, little buddy,” Tentacles felt it as Vani attempted to tickle ver. Ve couldn’t figure out why it seemed oddly unsuccessful. “And yes, I feel it too. It’s part of forming a relationship—the ‘pair bonding behaviour’, you like to call it.”

Tentacles calls it this because ve did not know a better word. Ve did not know there was a better word.

“I guess there’s still a lot I take for granted.” Ve felt it as Vani rose from the table, moving to the sink. There came the sound of water, in a flow, then random droplets scattering. A different sound, and then Vani walked to the fridge. Tentacles had to admit that ve liked the sound and impact Vani’s feet made as she moved around this particular section of the dwelling. Always clear, solid, and the lower surface had enough stiffness to effectively transfer reverberations from that movement.

“Hey, would you like to try feeding Bossco?”

Tentacles made a cross—the largest negative symbol ve cold think of—with two of ver pseudopods fully extended.

“Okay, I get it,” Vani was laughing. “I’ll do it.”

Tentacles rolled back into the main area of the dwelling, waiting patiently for Vani to return from feeding her dog. Part of ver was still suspicious of the animal. Most of ver mind, however, was consumed with constructing experimental parameters for Vani to test. There were many physical sensations Vani was able to provide. Ve also had to consider that sensations merely physical in
nature might have been unable to induce the chemically focused pleasure of true mindsharing. It also seemed that while Vani did have some pheromonal secretions they were instinctive in nature, not controlled as ver own could be.

Ve felt it as Vani returned, gently lowering herself onto the carpet, legs spread to either side of Tentacles’s main body. Her hands rested low, clasped together between her legs.

“How do you want to start?”

I am unsure. There exists vast range of possible sensation. Multitude of choice has suddenly become overwhelming.

Vani laughed softly. “You don’t know where to start.”

Tentacles finds verself disconcerted by this notion, but yes. Ve does not know with which sensation to begin.

“What if I pick something for you, and we go from there?”

This is acceptable. Vani begins experiment?

Tentacles felt Vani take hold of a pseudopod, wrapping her fingers around it, applying a gentle pressure as evenly as was possible given her anatomy. Her other hand joined in, rhythmically alternating a squeeze and a release. The sensation was mild at best, and too concentrated to induce reactions throughout most of ver mind. Ve wished Vani had more appendages to work with in this experiment. Ve made the negative symbol.

“Not working, huh?”

Confirmed. Sensation too focused on single area, and of low strength.

“You want me to use more force?”

No. Would like to attempt more sensations.

“Here, lay one of your ‘pods out next to me.”

Tentacles did as ve was instructed. A single pressure point indented the tip of the pseudopod next to Vani. Another next to it. Another. Four in total. Then they began to move in sequence, striking softly against ver flesh, sending subtle ripples of sensation down ver pod and also into her echo-sense. The sequenced strikes raced down ver pod, eliciting a strange sensation of movement and contrasting stillness. An interesting effect, but not one ve could yet define as ‘pleasurable’. It almost feels like rain.

Effects of sensation are interesting. Tentacles is unsure if pleasure is created. Tentacles also notes feeling is equivalent to very limited rain effect.

“That’s right…” Vani’s voice trailed off. “You liked the rain; and the shower.”

Sensations of droplet impacts over whole body are enjoyable. We continue experiment?

“Sure, what next?”
Vani experiments with touches she showed Tentacles for masturbation?

Tentacles felt it as Vani’s fingers gently brushed down the side of ver body. Soft touches flowed and swirled and crossed over lingering paths as Vani’s fingers moved with surprising deftness. Attempting to trace the pattern—if there was one—proved a waste of effort, but somehow the mystery of those paths seemed to enhance how enjoyable this touch was. Definitely one to use and refine in future.

Sensation is enjoyable. Frustration of pattern predicting also elicits mental enjoyment. Tentacles would like to know about why Vani wishes ver to experience ‘pleasure’ via limited physical contacts.

“Because I can’t mindshare,” Vani’s voice was soft. “And for now this ‘limited physical contact’ is all I can offer you.”

Understanding begins, context of Vani’s earlier statement: It can’t be all about me. Implication is Vani wishes to reciprocate pleasure giving as act of building relationship, yes?

Tentacles felt it as Vani shifted and leaned heavily against ver main body. Vani’s arms wrapped around ver, linking on the opposite side, while Vani’s breasts pressed softly against ver skin, both surfaces deforming slightly under the force applied. A moment later and Vani had moved back into her resting posture, waiting to continue.

Tentacles wishes to enquire about previous contact.

“It’s called a hug—kinda hard to do, given you’re a weird shape and all, but that’s alright. People do it to show affection, or understanding. Some people do it as a greeting.”

Contact was strange. Ve was not expecting it. I cannot define it.

“Would you like me to hug you again?”

Yes.

Ve felt more keenly for the sensations this time, observing ver mind-state as well. Where Vani’s arms contacted ver body, ve felt warm—likely an effect of Vani’s metabolism. Ve also felt a slight roughness from very fine hairs, almost like the sensory cilia certain species possessed. As more of Vani’s body pressed into ver, ve felt a tiny pulse of the warmth Vani had described as affection, and found oneself with a sudden urge to enfold Vani in the touch of comfort. An instant later ve realised that this ‘hug’ was likely the human equivalent of the touch of comfort, allowing as it did as much direct contact as was possible between two strange bipedal beings.

The hug was not finished, and now Tentacles felt Vani lay her head gently against the top of ver body, hair trailing between them. Vani’s hair created an interesting sensation of soft and imperfect contact, and just as ve was starting to define that, Vani gently kissed the top of ver body and lifted her head away. The hug continued. Ve found more and more that this sensation was enjoyable—and that the soft warmth of affection continued as long as contact remained. It was not to the heights of what Vani wished to give in terms of pleasure, but it was still very much enjoyable.

I like hug. It does not give pleasure, but feeling of warmth/affection is enjoyable on its own.
“Okay then, little one, what next?”

Vani wishes to create state of peak physical pleasure in Tentacles, yes?

“That’s the idea. Hopefully.”

Tentacles shifted ver main body slightly, carefully releasing ver ovipositor. The looped fibres of the floor were almost rough against the more sensitive skin. With a pair of pseudopods ve gently took hold of Vani’s wrists.

Vani may experiment with careful touch on ovipositor. You remember information from anatomy lesson?

“It’s sensitive, and prehensile, so I need to be gentle,” Vani shuffled closer as she spoke, moving her arms slowly against the slight restraint. “Or perhaps you could show me how it is you would like to be touched?”

It took Tentacles a moment to parse the question, and then ve signed an affirmative. Experimenting together would be far more instructional. But ve was still unsure ve could reach the level of physical pleasure experienced by Vani the previous night. Anatomical—and neurological—structures were simply so different that ve could not predict the outcome of the experiment, though ve would admit disappointment if ver concerns proved true.

Setting those thoughts aside, Tentacles spread two additional pseudopods around each of Vani’s hands, thinning them as far as was possible to allow Vani the greatest sensation of what she was touching. Ve began with movements that would be familiar to her; strokes, swirls, tracing. Ve was even daring enough to attempt a very gentle pinch. Then, to be sure Vani understood ver limits, ve pressed almost painfully hard into the less sensitive root of ver ovipositor, making verself flinch slightly.

“I’m sorry, did I hurt you?” Concern was evident in Vani’s voice.

Action was deliberate. Vani may only use lighter force when her hands are released. Understanding.

“I understand.”

A sudden lack of envelopment brought Vani’s senses back to her hands, the mid-morning air pleasantly cool. She had to admit to being surprised that she hadn’t caused any major reactions thus far—and that the action that elicited the strongest response had been a simple hug. It was just proving more and more how truly alien Tentacles was, along with ver unique biology. But there were almost human traits as well; ver curiosity about the world; ver desire to experiment; how much ve was willing to trust Vani. Just like the trust she had shown allowing Tentacles to ‘see’ all of her by touch.

With her own touch, Vani traced a single finger from root to tip of Tentacles’s ovipositor, noting how much rougher the skin felt. It wasn’t a pattern, or harsh, or sharp, but it was rougher than wrinkles should be, and yet strangely flexible. Two fingers idly tracing around the circumference, Vani leaned in for a closer a look. She could also feel that somehow, in some way, it was smoother tracing in some directions than others. She placed her entire hand against Tentacles’s ovipositor, moving first one way, then another. It was a strangely familiar feeling. So familiar in fact the she almost couldn’t place it.
Fur.

Something on Tentacles’s ovipositor had a nap, just like Bossco’s fur.

Leaning in even closer, her hair falling across Tentacles’s ovipositor as she almost lay her cheek against it, she could finally see what it was. Tiny, rounded, fleshy barbs. They grew in patches, leading to the chaotic nap she’d felt in places. There was another place she’d seen shapes like that —because she was a sucker for articles about big cats. It looked like a tiger’s tongue. Except in a weird dark green-grey colour. Then she saw some ’pods waving for attention.

Vani continues thermal gradient stimulation?

She blinked, sitting up straight, trying to figure it out. Then she realized how close she’d been. Close enough to share body heat. Close enough for her breath to skate across those fleshy barbs. Papillae. That was what the tiger tongue things were called. It would serve as a description unless Tentacles had something better. She leaned down again, exhaling against a short length of Tentacles’s ovipositor.

“Like this?”

Yes. Is very enjoyable. Which mechanism does Vani use to create micro-pressure thermal gradients?

“It’s just my breath, see,” And after taking a deep breath Vani blew gently along the length of Tentacles’s ovipositor.

Vani’s breath has interesting stimulating characteristics. Breathe along other surfaces please?

Vani did as she was asked, wondering just what Tentacles was trying to figure out. She leaned close over a mass of ’pods, her breath skating around and between them. She picked up a tentacle and exhaled hard into the forest of suckers. She shifted slightly so her breath could play in a line across the top of Tentacles’s main body, then she moved again and blew against the nap of some of the papillae. Tentacles seemed to twitch ever so slightly at the change.

Vani continues this breath against ovipositor?

With a smile Vani shifted into a low crouch, moving her head so she could trace patterns with her breath. Skating up and down, and making little swirls. Exhaling soft and close, or blowing hard from far away. Every now and then Tentacles would twitch, or give a minute shiver. It seemed clear that ve was enjoying the play. It was also becoming clear that the build up, or whatever it was, was not going to lead to some kind of alien orgasm. Even she added her hands into the equation—Tentacles didn’t protest—Vani couldn’t sense any changes in the creature before her.

The play between them continued for a while, but the results of the experiment were obvious before Tentacles called a halt to them.

Tentacles finds verself unable to experience peaks of pleasure that Vani seeks during sex. Ve finds that ve is disappointed in this outcome, but cannot understand fully why this should be so.

“It’s okay,” Vani sighed softly, leaning back into Tentacles’s body. “I guess we really are alien to each other, more than I think.”
This is stated fact. Physiological and neurological divergence is extreme, but not insurmountable. Understanding of this trait is full, but disappointment still exists.

“Here,” Vani turned and wrapped Tentacles in a tight hug. “We can work it out together.”

Together.

Tentacles had to admit ve liked the sound of that. Together.
In her workshop—once again wearing too many clothes for her liking—Vani was putting more work into the scrap dragon she was building. The wings needed some solid mounting points, and to that end she was constructing a Y-brace in the belly of the beast, welding it to the heavy steel frame that ran through the dragon’s legs. Of course, if the dragon were to have its wings folded, like in her original design, then she could just weld the braces in and have the wings integral to the structure.

Her client, of course, wanted it to look like the dragon was about to take flight, wings outstretched—which would mean some serious transport problems if the wings weren’t detachable. It also meant she would likely have to supervise the install, almost halfway across the country. That, however, was a problem for another day. Today’s major problem was sorting out the internal bracing. The problem she was trying not to think about too much was that Tentacles didn’t seem to be able to orgasm—or whatever ve might call it—from physical stimulation alone.

It was actually quite a puzzle, but one they’d agreed on trying to figure out together. From what she knew about biology, Vani understood it as being something like an electrical signal overload that triggered a lot of other things. Things from the autonomous nervous system. And though she knew ve could feel things, Vani had to wonder if Tentacles had nerves at all. After all, Tentacles had shown her magic, and had literally come from another dimension. That, perhaps, was the root of the problem.

But she wasn’t about to ask Tentacles if she could dissect one of ver ‘pods, even if ve could regenerate. It was also the fact she hadn’t done too well with the whole frog dissecting thing in high-school either. All of that seemed especially weird given that she didn’t mind the occasional painful scratch or cut on herself. She scratched softly at the scar under her left breast. Stabbed in the lung by a piece of loose rebar had been just above what she could handle. That was before factoring in how terrified she’d been. Shaking her head, Vani turned off the welder and crawled out of the dragon.

She could work through it, almost every time. Almost. But this time she could feel it, pinning her to the seat, making her breath wheeze in the most terrible way. The taste of blood in the back of throat. The slightly used looking mask they’d put on her while they cut through the rebar just in front of her chest. Even the scream of the grinder, and the stupidly petty thought that it was going to ruin her dress with the sparks. She couldn’t remember what they’d said, but she remembered the compassion and reassurance in their voices. She also remembered thinking that one of them was too young—and way too attractive—to be an EMT. Or was it a firefighter?

Vani blinked, shaking her head. She hadn’t told many people, but for a few months after she’d been seeing a shrink. There was a recurring nightmare, and then it happened when she heard a weird clang in the workshop at uni. A flashback—and a lot more intense than the one she’d just had. So she’d done some research. Looked into things for PTSD—which was still way too weird to her, given that this wasn’t a firefight, or losing a comrade, or some sort of mugging. It was just something that had happened. It was only during a counselling session that she learned it didn’t have to be caused by a person. PTSD was related to a traumatic event—and if being terrified of dying while impaled on a piece of rebar didn’t count as a traumatic event, she didn’t know what would. Vani smiled. Those had been the almost exact words of her counsellor.

Looking up at the dragon, Vani sighed. “You know, I’m not sure I’ll be able to get any more work
done on you today.” She looked at her watch. “Well, it wasn’t long until lunch anyway.”

Bossco was waiting at the door, like always. And just like always he was jumping up exuberantly, trying to lick her face.

“Down.” He didn’t stop. Vani put a hand on his shoulders, forcing him down. “I said ‘down’.”

Bossco trotted at her side as she walked back to the house. He kept pressing his head against her leg, obviously angling for some ear scratches. Vani obliged. The wagging of Bossco’s tail helped lighten her mood. She sat on the middle step to take off her boots. Bossco rested his muzzle on her shoulder, sniffing her ear. He licked it.

“Eww…” Vani pushed him aside as he tried it again. “Enough.”

Only after she was inside did it occur to her that he’d just been trying to help. ‘Help’, in his own inimitably inept fashion, but he was only a dog, after all. Not the best with reassuring conversations.

Rummaging through the cupboards in the kitchen, Vani was having trouble deciding what to make for lunch. There were still eggs, and plenty of bread. Soft-boiled, with ‘little soldiers’. She also wondered how Tentacles would handle food like that. Putting a pot of water on the stove to heat up, Vani went to find Tentacles, currently spread out behind a couch, ‘pods moving in strange patterns and limned with a subtle orange that didn’t quite glow.

For ver own part, Tentacles was concentrating on the progress of ver uniplanar integration. It was complete enough now that ve could safely accelerate the final stage with a touch of eldritch physics. It was considerably easier given that this planar realm was a constrained 4/11 on dimensionality, with only three of those dimensions—in total—being temporal. It was something the residents of this planet, at least, had yet to completely grasp. Far, far easier than the blossomed 6/17 ve had passed through prior to arriving in this planar reality.

Tentacles felt it as Vani paused near the reach of ver tentacles. Tentacles shifted part of ver consciousness back towards the physical plane, using a pair of pseudopods to indicate ve was now listening.

“Would you like some eggs for lunch?”

Tentacles was so shocked ve nearly created a second rift in the locus. Moving very slowly and deliberately, ve disentangled the physics, leaving the process to continue on its own. To consume an egg—on its own, external to that which bred from it—was an act that had alarming implications. Tentacles could only remember a handful of times ve had consumed an egg, and the required sacrifices and ceremony around such an important act. For Vani to suggest it with such casual nature was more than culture shock.

There was a deep sense of revulsion at the suggestion, and also vague notions that perhaps Vani was no longer an ideal specimen for breeding. But there remained other evidence, such as the fact Vani asserted that humans gave birth to live young, and that many creatures on the planet seemed to consume eggs of other species as a matter of course. Ve had to make sure this was the case.

Egg for consumption, what level of animal creates it?

“Uhh…” Vani seemed confused by the question. “I don’t know what level. It’s from a chicken, a
kind of bird we use for meat.”

Chicken is not sapient?

“Pretty sure. They just wander round, eating grain off the ground, pecking things, and laying eggs.”

Ceremony is not required for egg consumption.

“Wait…” Vani’s voice held a note of confusion mixed with realization. “Are you trying to tell me you eat your own eggs as some sort of religious thing?”

It was always special ceremony, and the egg for consumption was delivered without coding of fertility within. Egg instead contained memories that ve who delivered wished to no longer keep or suffer. Ve who delivered egg never ate of it, but required to reinforce mind of individuals that did consume egg contents. Memories from within that could not be consumed were diluted and washed away with currents of water. Deliverer of egg remained bound to egg location until dissipation complete. All individuals then created temporal construct to remove physicality of egg and disperse into adjacent planar realms.

“I think I get it,” Vani’s voice was soft, and at some point during the explanation she had sat down, cross legged. “Somehow you could put every copy of a bad memory into an egg, and when you laid it, others of your kind would ‘taste’ it, to see if it was too valuable to forget. Does that seem right so far?”

Vani understands basic concept well.

“So, whoever laid the egg—the one that wanted to forget—had to help the others somehow if they chose to absorb those memories?” Tentacles felt it as Vani placed a hand against a nearby pseudopod. “And if no one wanted those memories, then whoever laid it had to wait until they were all gone, and then everyone nearby helped spread whatever was left spread so far apart it could never be re-absorbed.”

In simplistic understanding of event, this is true. Significance for deliverer of egg is higher. Egg is special, memory should not be removed, but ceremony allows for this function, and transfer of memory if importance remains despite mental conception of deliverer of egg.

“So it’s like a holy ritual or something?”

If holy implies high significance to core individual, yes.

“Okay, I think understand.” There was a lengthy pause. “So, aside from eggs, are there any other foods that might be taboo?”

Consumption of own species is considered abhorrent act, even in desperation or mental damage.

“Cannibalism. I don’t think we’ll have any problems with that. People just don’t eat each other—and Bossco knows better than to try and eat you now anyway.”

Tentacles is willing to consume egg of chicken, if Vani guarantees no memory within, and no coding of fertility.

“I’m not 100% on how chemical memory works, but I’m pretty sure chickens wouldn’t use it that
Vani stood, awkwardly reminded of how many layers her work forced her to wear. She unzipped the front of her overalls and tied the sleeves around her waist. The lid of the pot had been rattling for a little while, but she’d been captivated by Tentacles’s explanation of how its kind forgot things. Still, time was wearing on, and she was getting hungry. One egg each, and some toast as well. A light lunch. The problem, of course, was the toast cooking faster than the eggs. Even after so many years she hadn’t quite got the timing right. The toast popped up nearly two minutes before the eggs were ready.

It didn’t take long to spread some butter on the toast, then slice it into strips. She called out to Tentacles, grabbing a pair of egg cups from the cupboard as she did so. She took the eggs out of the pot, then sliced the tops off them before sitting them in the egg cups. She dipped one of her ‘little soldiers’ in the egg, enjoying the gooey mess it ended up as. She handed the other egg to Tentacles, along with the strips of bread. Only after hearing a couple of odd crunches did she realise she needed to explain the concept of ‘little soldiers’ to Tentacles.

“No, no,” Vani held a ‘pod in her hand. “You dip the bread in the egg, like this.” She suited action to words. “Then you eat it. And dip it in again, if there’s any left. Then get another ‘little soldier’. Yeah. Like that.”

What purpose does ritual of coating ‘soldier’ in egg yolk have?

“It’s not a ritual. You just do it so you can eat the yolk without having to use a spoon.”

Tentacles could eat entire egg without spoon. ‘Little soldiers’ seems to add unnecessary process to eating.

“For you, I guess,” Vani smiled. “I don’t have a beak for cracking shells, or a heat resistant tongue.”

Point is understood.

Vani let her mind drift back to what Tentacles had said about placing memories into those special eggs, and the first attempt she had made at chemical communication with her. An attempt that had left her feeling weird and slightly fuzzy, unsure if she’d been influenced by some kind of drug. But the weirdness had had structure, almost giving her a hint of flavour, of being… something. Something else. It was, she considered, something she would be willing to attempt again. Provided it didn’t end up poisoning her—but she was fairly sure Tentacles would be able to avoid that, having studied a fair amount of chemistry before attempting to make her up some analgesic substances.

Chewing on another ‘little soldier’, Vani found herself shuffling closer to Tentacles. “There’s something else I want to ask you.”

Vani has question of importance?

“Yeah. About chemical memories… how do they actually work?”

Can Vani define work; topic of chemical memory is complex and multi-faceted. Narrowing field for explanation will help answering of Vani’s question.
“Umm…” Vani tried to think of how to phrase what she’d experienced last time. “Is it possible for a non-chemical memory using person to understand them?”

Possibility exists that person could absorb fractional gestalt from memory, or identify compounds, but full deciphering and understanding of memory is not possible.

“So the first time you tried to give me a chemical memory, and I felt weird—that’s about all I’d get?”

This has similarity to gestalt. Vani please explains feeling weird?

“It felt like I didn’t have enough arms,” Vani tried to recall more detail. “My body felt wrong. And I think there was flash of silver, or maybe the taste of fish. I can’t remember it exactly.”

That is gestalt. Vani tasted form of Tentacles for a moment, and feeling of satisfaction.

“So the gestalt is like… an overall feeling?”

It is sensation of being. One of many parts, above, but also within. Concept has difficulty of explanation. Gestalt is more than biology.

“Hmm…” A thought had just occurred to Vani. “Could you create a memory that was only gestalt?”

I could. Does Vani wish for Tentacles to do this?

“Yes.” Vani took a deep breath. “I’m just not sure what it will do to me.”

Compounds for chemical memory are non-toxic, and seemingly digestible for Vani. Tentacles understands feeling of risk; possibility of unsureness about influence?

“I think if you really wanted to, you would have by now. And you also know that if you did now, I wouldn’t trust you again.”

Vani has correct conclusion. I will begin, process is simple.

It didn’t take long, Tentacles preparing a memory—or not-memory—that looked like pale green slime in the bottom of a shot glass. Vani stared at it dubiously. “That’s it?”

It is gestalt-only memory. Substance is slight.

Vani drained the glass, and felt her eyes glaze over. The world was black, and blurry. She could feel herself trying to branch her arms and legs out into the proper manifold configuration. Her mass was wrong, and her shape unstable. Then the world swam back into focus, sitting on the floor next to Tentacles, still wearing her working overalls. The feeling from the gestalt had been surprisingly strong. Except it wasn’t even really a feeling.

Is Vani okay?

Vani reached out and stroked Tentacles’s body. “I’m okay. That gestalt… I think I felt—or saw—or something—like you for a few seconds. I wanted to spread my arms and legs out into lots of ‘pods. And I felt like my body was all wrong.”
That was my gestalt. The framework for being Tentacles.

“So a gestalt is like—“ Vani searched her mind for the right words, but only found a loose allusion “—like an OS for your mind?”

 Possibly. Vani defines ‘OS’

“Operating System. It’s the basic level of programming that a computer—like my laptop—runs on.”

Then yes. Gestalt is like OS for Tentacles’s mind, but more complex. Gestalt is special word. Also means overall feeling of memory; or collection of memories that creates Tentacles. All are types of gestalt. Vani has experienced second kind. Without encapsulated memory experience is re-encoded as blankness and instinct. Would Vani consent to experiments at later time?

“Later.” Vani found herself agreeing. “But we talk about it, what you’re trying to do, what I should expect, and so on—before we start experiments.”

Conditional requirements understood. Later experiments. Now we eat more chicken egg?

Vani smiled. “Sure, just give me a little while to cook some more.”
Vani lay in bed, relaxing, doing nothing other than let her hands roam across her body. Occasionally they would roam across Tentacles’s body. Occasionally a ‘pod would roam across hers. She was still mulling over the fact Tentacles was unable to experience whatever ver equivalent of orgasm was through physical stimulation alone. She was also considering the impact that just the gestalt had had on her—and whether or not going deeper down that rabbit hole was enjoyable, terrifying, or just plain weird. But Tentacles had talked about chemical memories as being the norm for ver species, and a way for newly born—or hatched, or whatever—offspring to immediately be able to face the challenges of the world.

It also led her to thinking about mindsharing. A connection Tentacles had said involved every ‘pod from both parties, with both sharing and receiving chemical memories. Vani had to wonder if memories weren’t the only chemicals being shared. Though, if so, Tentacles should have said something about it—ve certainly knew enough about ver own biology.

“Tentacles?”

Yes Vani?

“You remember how we played with physical stimulation this morning?”

Ve remember mutual frustration at negative outcome from experiments.

“I know,” Vani sighed softly, playfully batting away a ‘pod near her thigh. “But I was thinking about how you spoke of mindsharing working both ways. Chemical memories.”

Feeling is possibly considered equivalent, but description is difficult. Tentacles understands only basic mechanics of orgasm. Vani understands only basic mechanics of mindsharing. Experiential mismatch in data sets means direct comparisons remain impossible.

“More specifically,” Vani pressed on, teasing a ‘pod that was stroking around her breast. “I was wondering if the state from mindsharing was chemically induced—by more than just memories, possibly.”

Vani has excellent insight into this biological discipline. Many academics postulated this as reason for mindsharing continuing, despite lack of biological necessity. Many mindsharing dyads, triads and larger groupings contributed to experiments. Evidence remained anecdotal. Alternative hypotheses existed in many forms. Most common was that gestalt reorganisation triggered by mindshared memories caused chemosynthetic disruption. For species continuation, biology came to treat this disruptive range as pleasant.

Frowning slightly, Vani tried to think of a decent parallel. “So it got you guys high?”

Physical elevation from partners was irrelevant. Why does Vani ask this?

“Sorry,” Vani shook her. “I mean it was like being drugged—“ and then Vani realised that was another thing they had not discussed in depth “—like drinking influence chemicals for pleasantness.”
Postulation is not entirely inaccurate. Influence chemicals had been considered possible cause, but no traces remained after mindsharing.

“What about during?”

Emission of influence chemicals was noted in very few observations. Observers remained unsure of purpose, for initiation of mindsharing, pseudopodal guidance, or perhaps reflexively due to prior acts. Possibility also of dilute traces from other activity in area.

“Okay, maybe we’re getting off track here.”

Tentacles reminds Vani that she began digression with new line of questioning.

“Maybe I should start another one.” Vani underscored her words with a kiss to each of the ‘pods she was currently holding hostage.

Discussion is for increase of pair bonding rapport?

“Yeah,” Vani let one of the ‘pods go, tracing around Tentacles’s body with two idle fingers. “I wanted to ask what your home was like. I mean, it’s easy enough to imagine another dimension like Earth, with stars and planets and stuff, but yours was probably completely alien. I wanna know if I can understand it.”

Plane from which Tentacles comes was aquatic void. Liquid filled all space, but liquid was not water—we are not sure Vani’s plane has chemical equivalent substance to ocean between stars. Vani may question existence of stars within great ocean, but planar space manifold contained five dimensions, meaning orbital paths became unstable. Pressure of liquid medium was mitigated by radiation and ejecta output of extant stars. If liquid fell inwards, path led to escape or collapse, no orbits. Tentacles is not sure ve can explain sufficiently without use of highest order physics and invocation of infinites.

Vani shook her head. “Yeah, I wouldn’t get it anyway. So, your home was basically all water—liquid—and had stars that pushed the liquid away?”

In essence of simplicity, correct. Culture could expand and exploit entire universe. Ve could feel great pulse when stars would die, gravitic wave propagating through liquid as bubble does in water. Explosion-collapse of star launches chemical ejecta into liquid, creates currents, combines elements eventually. Evolution takes untold time. Eventually Tentacles’s people spawn. We study planar reality. Understand pulses. Touch stars. In dead stars we find gates beyond.

“Wait, how did you touch stars without getting incinerated?”

Bodies native to plane supported vastly different composition. Stars could not harm except by crushing during starquakes. Continuing: Gates beyond are forbidden when explorers do not return. Technology is developed. Magic is realised through dimensional potentials. Spread is accelerated by mindsharing. Magic and technology required by first successful explorers. Returners mindshare experiences beyond. Understanding dawns across culture. Tentacles’s culture then remakes self. Suits bodies to travel through planar realities with physical manifolds unsuitable for normal dimensional existence. Magic becomes ingrained. Gestalt becomes disconnected from physicality, then returns remotely. Link is strengthened through technology, then magic. Mind may exist for moments outside of form, during interplanar travel, or during existence in hyper-manifold planes.
“And you guys did all this without even being able to see?”

Echo-sense provides at-range perception of locations. Entire realm filled with liquid. Vani is understanding now?

“Sorry, I’m still trying to wrap my head around this whole thing,” Vani rubbed her chin. “And then somehow you took your minds out of your bodies, and put them back differently. There’s so much I don’t understand.”

Explanation difficult. Requires concept-words for which Vani’s culture lacks even most basic precepts. Cannot create new combination-words to explain. Even use of term ‘gates beyond’ and ‘magic’ highly inaccurate to actuality of concepts discussed. Confusion was always possible. Likely. Tentacles tries to simplify to understandable level, but may not have capability with given vocabulary and knowledge of this plane’s physics.

Vani sighed, throwing herself back against the pillows. “I’ll just have to try and keep up then, and hope my head doesn’t explode.”

There is possibility of dangerous cranial event due to knowledge acquisition?

“No, no,” Vani laughed, feeling some of the weird tension suddenly draining from her. “It’s just something we say when we think information might be overwhelming. Like this stuff.” She waved a hand in the air. “Just go on, please. I am interested even if I can’t understand more than half of it.”

Continuing: Culture expands to several planes via gates beyond. Magic used to open pathways to planar matrix not requiring gates beyond for functionality. First limited branes discovered—travel restricted to unidirectional path. Much time passes, consolidation phase of culture begins. Physical existence now possible in dimensionality from three to twenty-one. Returners from limited branes begin mass mindsharing experience. Branes are result of sapience. Sapient cultures infiltrated, dominated, or uplifted as necessary to dissolve limitation on branes. Culture expands to empire. Planar matrix evolves like fractal branching. Explorers become curious about expansion narrowing in depths of matrix.

“So, like a giant tree, with branches?”

Vani is more insightful than she thinks in this matter. Tentacles also decides matrix narrowing is curious. Ve is bored with conquest. Subterfuge provides excellent intellectual challenges, and allows study of planar matrix from ‘below’. Limited brane was selected—but no sapience discovered beyond. Event was not unprecedented. Lack of returning gates beyond was. Planar realm was six dimensional, dead, uniform heat distribution. Tentacles realised ve had discovered heat-death universe. Sapience existed, but no longer possible. This was ‘hard’ barrier at depth of planar matrix. Frustration beyond comprehension that ve could not communicate this.

“Oh… I…” Vani didn’t have words to describe the great pang of sorrow she felt for ve companion.

Tentacles dove deeper into planar matrix, well beyond planned depths. Gates beyond to higher matrix non-existent. Ve continued exploration, searching depths for possible sapience. Gates beyond themselves becoming rare. Time blurred with space as Tentacles explored depths of planar matrix. Increase of limited branes without sapience beyond. Second heat-death plane discovered, but not behind limited brane. Ve created matrix beacons to warn of dangers. Then ve discovered
limited brane near bottom of matrix. Ve found verself in dimension with planets. Gravity. Atmosphere. Emergence point could not have been accidental.

“Earth?”

Yes, Earth. Magic seeks centres of sapience in the plane beyond. Accuracy is low, but distance is relative to sapience distribution in realm. I fell, through the sky. I waited, into the night. I was chewed on by a monster with teeth and bones. I found sapience restraining that beast. I found you. I found Vani.

Tentacles found verself suddenly supporting Vani’s weight as she wrapped her arms and legs around ver body, lying her head against it as in the hug earlier. But this time Vani did not move. Her breath rippled across Tentacles’s body, causing ver to shiver. Making ver wonder why ve could feel tiny drips of liquid, and those drips leaving tracks down the side of ver body. Ve could also feel a strange, rhythmic shuddering of Vani’s body against ver own. Arms grew tight around ver upper surface. Ve felt a gentle kiss where the drips had fallen.

Vani seemed reluctant to leave the hug, so ve began slowly enfolding her legs and torso in the touch of comfort. She sat back slightly, then leaned in close again, leaving one arm around ver body.

“How long…” Vani’s voice had acquired a breathy quality that Tentacles had not heard before. “How long were you alone?”

Ve do not know. Time can also exist multi-dimensionally. Tentacles cannot measure it in words meaningful to Vani. Ve could say deep. Or long. Ve could sometimes sense another nearby, passing adjacent planes. Matrix roots too distantly separated to allow communication.

“That’s… that’s…”

Tentacles felt the tiny droplets again, falling against a pseudopod. Ve lifted one to Vani’s face.

Is Vani leaking?

Vani laughed, her voice keeping the same breathy quality. “Tears. when people get sad, they cry.”

Why is Vani sad?

“Because she imagined living alone, trapped in another world for eternity.”

Vani was trying to understand Tentacles’s mind state? To make… better?

“Yes.”

There is word for this?

“Compassion,” Vani sniffed.

Tentacles likes compassion. It is good word.
Friend

Tentacles was outside, exploring the land surrounding Vani’s dwelling, within what she had called a ‘safe area’. Ve found it interesting to move and experience all that ve could contact. The tiny prick of miniature cellulose based leaves, followed by their subsequent folding. The gentle rise and fall of the land, not perfectly level beyond the dwelling. The hard, almost spiked sensation of colliding with a bush at low speed. The strange shaking sound, much like a whisper, that followed those impacts was another phenomena worthy of investigation.

So was the fact a damp muzzle was pressing insistently into ver body. A short lick from a rough tongue followed it. Then a very soft thump, as something was retrieved and dropped next to ver. A ball. Bosko nudged it towards ver with his nose. Ve was confused by the action, using a tentacle to lift the ball for inspection. As soon as ve did so, Bosko’s posture changed from relaxed and expectant to ready and waiting to spring.

Ve threw the ball.

Bosko bounded after it, the animal’s speed impressive given its moderate size. Moments later and the ball was dropped next to another tentacle, Bosko assuming a posture of readiness once more. Intriguing. Tentacles threw the ball again, harder this time. Bosko tore away again, quickly leaving the range of Tentacles’s echo-sense. The dog returned swiftly, skidding to a stop before dropping the ball again. Throwing the ball again—because clearly that was ver expected role—Tentacles resolved to ask Vani about this behaviour, and whether it was related to the play she had mentioned the first time ve had interacted with Bosko.

At the edge of ver echo-sense, Tentacles felt heavier footsteps coming from between the dwelling and the secondary structure—what Vani had called her workshop. The footsteps were Vani’s, her clothes leaving her form vaguer than usual from the strange echoes and absorption of the woven materials. Ve waved a pseudopod in greeting.

“Good to see you two getting along now.”

Ve waited as Bosko raced over to Vani, then dropped the ball next to her.

“Don’t give me that look,” Tentacles was confused. Ve hadn’t made any ‘look’. “Take the ball over there, you’re playing with ver, not me. No. There.”

Bosko trotted back over, dropping the ball next to a tentacle, ready to be thrown again. Tentacles picked it up, launching it at top speed. Bosko tore off after it, impacts from detritus of muddy ground landing close by Tentacles’s extended pseudopods.

“I’m just gonna grab a snack. You two may as well play until one of you tires out.” Vani had placed her boots on the porch, and from the sounds and sense of movement she had to removing the outer layers of her woven garments from the workshop. Bosko returned, sliding to a halt again, dropping the ball and letting it roll. Tentacles threw the ball again, idly wondering why the animal next to ver enjoyed the repetitive exercise. As the dog sprinted away again, Vani spoke once more. “Y’know, when Bossco tires out, I might be able to use your help with something in the workshop.”

This is for relationship pair-bonding building?
“Nah, it’s for work. You’re strong, and can hold stuff pretty damn steady. It’s just some assembly work.”

Tentacles finds verself intrigued by this notion. Vani performs work in exchange for tokens of value, yes?

“It’s called money, but that’s a pretty good description.”

The dog returned, but this time did not drop the ball. Instead the animal moved slowly towards the dwelling, and Tentacles heard a quiet splashing from that approximate direction.

“Well, looks like Bossco’s done for now; come on, I’ll show the workshop.”

Tentacles followed Vani across the field, noting how much heavier Vani’s footsteps seemed because of the heavy leather and rubber padding surrounding her feet. They left moderately sized areas of depressed grass and dirt, not unlike the wide, straight trail Tentacles assumed ve verself was leaving. The workshop, as Vani called it, was a space with approximately the same ground area coverage as the dwelling, but no internal divisions. At the centre, ve could feel—with ver echo-sense—a large mass of hollowed metal. The shape was vaguely familiar, and as ve closed in, ve realised it was both incomplete, and something Vani could never have seen.

And yet, it lay in front of them plain as the ground beneath them.

“Tentacles?” Vani frowned, concerned at the agitated waving of the ‘pods she was seeing.

How does Vani comprehend structure of voidsailer without planar knowledge?

“Voidsailer?” Vani knelt beside Tentacles and gently stroked ver body. “I’m sorry buddy, but that’s a dragon, not a voidsailer.”

What is ‘dragon’?

“A legendary creature, big, lizardy, generally with wings, breathes fire. At least, that’s a typical western dragon legend. Eastern dragons are long and skinny, and fly through magic, rather than using wings, they might control storms, and are said to bring good luck. Then there’s things like wyverns and lindwyrms, which, for now, I’ll just say are other types of dragons.

“Thing is, though, none of these ever existed.”

Vani is wrong. Description of dragon types akin to voidsailer physical structures. Possibility comes from cultural contamination, or ancestral contact between planes. Tentacles cannot be sure of which.

“It would definitely make history more interesting to study.” Vani shook her head, trying to focus. “But right now, I just want you to hold up the wings while I bolt them on. There’s a light dolly winch on the I-beam up there, but I thought you might like to help.” Vani smiled. “And it takes a while to rig these awkward shapes properly.”

Vani explains process for working?

“Follow me, I’ll show the wings we’re putting on.”
Vani walked to the rear of the workshop, taking a ‘pod to guide it to the wing. Tentacles carried it without much effort as she walked back and directed another ‘pod to feel for the bolt holes on the left side of the dragon’s body. And for someone that couldn’t see, Tentacles was holding the wing steady and surprisingly close to where it should have been.

“Alright, let the studs come through the holes there. Slowly. Good. Now hold it up while I lock these nuts up.”

Half an hour, and a second wing later, they were done. Vani stepped back to admire her work, using the camera to take a few pictures. And only then did she realise she’d left it on the whole time. With a resigned sigh she set about the tedious process of deleting the files from the camera itself, using the annoying little touchpad. It wouldn’t do for other people to know about Tentacles. Not that ve posed a threat. Anymore. But ve was new, and strange, and Vani wasn’t about to let some men-in-black types start experimenting on her friend.

She frowned at the thought, trying to figure out why it had surprised her. Ah, ‘friend’. It was true though. She didn’t so much think of Tentacles as some supremely strange, interplanar being. Instead ve sat in the much more comfortable—and now interestingly shaped—category of ‘friends’. But it still made sense. Vani smiled, pocketing the camera and heading back to the house. Lunch, and then maybe some more experiments in the afternoon. Or maybe looking up some tentacle porn, because it wouldn’t hurt to get a little inspiration.

Vani stared at the screen before her, cocking her head, squinting, trying to figure out what went where from who to what. She rewound the clip slightly, but still couldn’t really make heads or tails of it. The art she’d found—in what were surprisingly large amounts—seemed a lot better than the animated clips. Maybe the artists just care more. After closing that tab, she flicked through some more galleries, looking for more—oh, yeah, that might be fun… Vani grinned, looking at the picture, and seeing a lot of things she and Tentacles could do together. And there was even a bit of bondage and submission too. So good.

Upside down, legs held apart—maybe forced apart, arms tied behind, and a ‘pod in every hole. And more ‘pods serving to bind her breasts. It would be a good one. Or maybe she could forgo the ‘pods for a little while, and they could just talk. About the other things she’d seen. And about mindsharing, and experimenting with Tentacles’s influence chemicals. She shivered slightly, goosebumps forming as she thought about what it would look like to have all those fluids running down her body as she was suspended upside down. Part of her wished she could film it, and be honest about exactly what was going on. Participating in the act would have to be enough.

Tentacles was easy enough to find, still in the kitchen, experimenting with what ve called ‘constructed foods’, and what Vani normally called sandwiches, or insert-food-here on crackers. Of course, Tentacles’s ideas about what tasted good included some very strange combinations. Vani watched as ve took a salted cracker, dipped it in peanut butter, then used the tip flaps of a ‘pod to sprinkle salt and cinnamon on it, then a single potato chip.

“I honestly got no idea what you’re tryin’ to do now.”

Construction combinations open intriguing possibilities for flavour/texture combinations. Palatability remains variable, but nutrients remain useful for regeneration material and increasing energy level. I am attempting to find best combination for texture-flavour-nutrient-energy mixture. Increase towards vertices of matrix correlate to shift away from opposite vertices. Combination to
satisfy all criteria is seemingly non-existent within combinations tested.

“Oh, so you’re experimenting to find the tastiest food that’s best for you?” Vani laughed, shaking her head. “You can’t really have both. You have to compromise somewhere.”

As is becoming apparent. Does Vani wish to help?

“No thanks,” Vani gently brushed Tentacles’s body with her fingertips. “But later I’d like you to help me with trying out some kinky sex stuff I found.”

This is for pair bonding, building relationship?

“Mostly just because I’m horny, but it’s not going to hurt our relationship either.” Vani felt a ‘pod slowly start to coil around her wrist, squeezing it for a moment before releasing.

Vani will also be experimenting to increase Tentacles’s pleasure via physical stimulation?

“Of course; if you want that.” Vani stole a cracker from the bench where Tentacles had spilled them from the box. “But I was also going to ask about mindsharing, and how you said the act of giving brought some pleasure—and maybe if it was combined with something physical?”

Tentacles thinks this will be most intriguing experiment. Mindsharing normally contained minor physical interactions, but Vani’s suggestions are basis for solid experimentation. Ve are looking forward to ‘later’.

Vani smirked, forgetting Tentacles simply couldn’t see it. “So am I. So much.”
If I've got something wrong about complex BDSM relationships here, please let me know—I don't want to malign or misrepresent such an awesome and diverse subculture.

Vani was lying in bed—or on the bed—wearing a side-tie bikini bottom, and a loose wrap around her breasts. She wanted Tentacles to take them off, maybe even rip them off, only a little rough though. All part of the play. Another part of her was also wondering if she could ever comfortably fit Tentacles’s ovipositor inside her herself. She hadn’t been a fan of fisting, and that ovipositor looked even bigger. And then with all those papillae, it might turn out to be painful. Or, at the other end, it might so pleasurable it was at risk of being crushed accidentally, being more than a little uncomfortable for her partner. But all those considerations were for the future.

For now, she was going to be stripped, restrained, and fucked in every hole. Then, hopefully, left dripping and covered in something warm and sticky. She smiled, her hand finding a ‘pod beside the bed, gripping gently as it curled around her wrist. There was also something else they could do, just a little thing, before they started. She undid the wrap around her breasts, then grabbed a second ‘pod, pressing and thinning both ‘pods just past the centre of her chest, halfway between her breast and collarbone.

“What do you feel?” Vani’s voice was soft.

Ve feels a strange pulsation within Vani’s chest. Does Vani have internal echo-sense?

Vani laughed, lightening her touch against the ‘pods. “No, I don’t. Think about the anatomy you studied.”

Pulsation is rhythmic beating, regular, rapid. This is Vani’s heartbeat?

“Yes,” Vani smiled, lifting a ‘pod to kiss it. “It’s probably fast because I’m excited about what we’re doing.” Her smile turned curious. “But I was wondering, do you have a heart—or something else?”

Tentacles is not sure ve has analogous organ to heart. Ve has triplicate diaphragmatic valve systems for creating, reducing and maintaining fluid pressure internally, and cell-chambers with permeable external membranes and restrictive orifices. Vani might call these check-valve hydraulic pumps. Systems maintain fluid pressure or counter external pressure, but are not fully required for movement of internal fluids. Ve are not sure ve have a heart.

“You do,” Vani rolled over, kissing Tentacles’s body. “Maybe not in form, but in our interactions. You care about me. It hurt you to be alone for so long. Just because you don’t think you have a heart doesn’t mean you can’t be heartbroken. And if you were heartbroken, it means you have a heart. Somewhere.”
Perhaps my heart is part of gestalt identity, not physical manifestation?

Vani kissed ver again, and laughed. “That’s exactly what I’m saying; I’m just using shorter words.”

Ve like this mannerism of Vani—of showing Tentacles compassion even during moments of excitement.

“That, and because you might need to show it to me later—I’m asking you to be a bit rough, after all. And we both have no idea how having that much chemical memory inside me is going to affect me either.”

Understanding; teaching of concept through self-demonstration very effective. To secondary effects from chemical memory, if Vani attempts actions ve think she does not want—like breeding—we will use touch of comfort as restraint, but only on arms and legs. Is this acceptable to Vani?

“It is. I just don’t know how long that influence might last.”

Ve can always try rocking Vani to sleep—although previous evidence indicates she sleeps once satiated sexually.

Vani smiled ruefully, unwittingly reminded of how she’d wanted to talk and return pleasure to Tentacles after their first time. But ve was right. “Maybe this time, that’s the best result.”

Her mind flashed forward, to what she planned to have Tentacles do to her—and realised that effectively bound and gagged, she wouldn’t be able to say her safe words; or grip or push against anything. She could only nod, or shake her head—things Tentacles wouldn’t be able to see. She frowned… gagged, with a mouth full of—oh. She could bite, gently. Tentacles wouldn’t be able to miss that, but first she had to make sure she wouldn’t hurt ver ‘pods if she did have to bite them.

“I realised we might have a problem with saying safe words if my mouth is full, and your ‘pods are all occupied, probably your tentacles too.”

Vani has solution?

“Yeah, I do, but I want to make sure it’s not going to hurt you.”

Vani is concerned with causing injury to Tentacles?

“Well… yes. I know you can regenerate, but I don’t want that to happen on purpose. I was thinking I could use a gentle bite—here, let me demonstrate.”

Tentacles let Vani take a pseudopod into her mouth, feeling some apprehension as ve felt Vani’s teeth dig into ver flesh. Not enough to cause injury, but enough to be very uncomfortable—perhaps even painful. A warning that ve might be causing pain—to much pain—to Vani.

“There’s another problem—and I’m sorry I didn’t ask you about this the first time—you need safe words of your own. For when doing something doesn’t feel right to you, or you want to stop. Like my ‘Heimdall’ and ‘Flugen’. And we also need to figure out how you could use them when I can’t see, or when you can’t use your ‘pods fast enough.”

Ve have a beak. Ve could bite Vani with gentle pain to communicate distress. You will allow Tentacles to demonstrate?
Tentacles felt a slight shift as Vani held out her arm. She guided a ‘pod to a spot on her forearm, below her elbow, and another, to a point on the outside of her thigh. Ve could feel a slight shivering, and a shallowing of breath. Vani was unsure, possibly afraid of injury to herself. Tentacles pulled Vani’s arm down slightly, trying to nip the indicated area gently with ver beak. Ve learned a lot in the following instant, as ver beak pierced the flesh of Vani’s arm, drawing forth a thin line of blood. Ve felt the sudden force as Vani jerked her arm backward—more powerful than the slight movement ve had been expecting in case of injury. Ve also heard Vani’s sharp intake of breath as the muscles in her arm tensed as she moved.

Apologising very much. Ve did not know Vani’s skin to be so thin.

Vani placed a hand against her forehead, bowing her head. “I should have known. It’s that parakeet all over again.”

Parakeet?

“A bird, at a pet store. It bit my ear.”

With beak?

“Yes, birds have beaks.”

Is Vani injured? Does she require recovery?

Vani shook her head, rising from the bed. “It’s not that deep, it just stings. I’ll get a bandage from the bathroom; and file using your beak under ‘bad ideas’.”

Failure of experimentation is not uncommon between Vani and Tentacles. May Tentacles help make better for Vani?

Laughing softly as she opened the cupboard, Vani turned to speak. “It’s fine, I can do this one myself; but thank you.”

Ve are unsure now of how best to communicate discomfort if beak not usable like Vani’s teeth. May have necessity to keep pseudopods free for communication, or tentacles for variation in contact.

“Wait…” Vani cut off a short strip of bandage for her arm, running the phrase ‘variation in contact’ through her mind, trying to figure it out. Her hands were running on autopilot, grabbing an alcohol wipe for the cut—because she had no idea what could be on that beak, from Earth, or elsewhere, that could get into the wound. The cold swipe, and the slight sting. Different contacts. Pressing the bandage down over the cut, feeling the sticky sides against her skin. Contacts. Was that ve was already thinking?

“When you say variation in contact, you mean like changing around your suckers, or using the point of your tentacle pad, right?”

Correct. Suckers for discomfort, point for stopping. Ve can demonstrate for Vani.

“Please,” Vani sat back down on the bed, guiding a tentacle to her belly.
The force Tentacles applied with the suckers on ver tentacle was almost painfully strong. Vani leaned forward slightly, trying to rub her stomach. Tentacles let go, then tried again. More gently, but still enough to be uncomfortable. Vani patted the tentacle pad softly, then aimed the point just above her navel. Again it was forceful enough to be uncomfortable, but not quite painful.

“I think that’s clear enough,” Vani fished around on top of her bed for the wrap, cinching it tightly around her chest. “And I think we’re ready to go, you remember what I explained earlier?”

Vani wishes to be held inverted, her legs forced apart. She wishes Tentacles to remove simple clothing—force may be applied to do so. Vani has said she wishes for compression of breasts, and insertion of pseudopods into mouth, vagina, and anus while her hands are held bound by pseudopod or tentacle. She also wants Tentacles to attempt mindsharing when she is near orgasm, if ve can recognise signs. Both Vani and Tentacles are then to move under warming rain, after short delay. Vani has then confused Tentacles with implication that pillows can talk.

Vani laughed, shaking her head softly. “No, no, it’s called ‘pillow talk’ because you normally lie on pillows afterwards, and share little secrets, or things you want to do again.” She took in a breath, standing. “But everything else was pretty much right—and remember, if doing something to me, or you, doesn’t feel right, you can use your safe-touches. It doesn’t have to be my stomach, just somewhere you can easily reach, okay?”

Ve are having understanding of specifics now. Vani wishes for beginning of actions?

“Please…”

Tentacles wrapped the base of each of Vani’s legs with a tentacle, the pad and suckers against her calves. First ve moved suddenly to unbalance her, then caught her with a bed of pseudopods. Ve found Vani’s sounds of surprise to bring a strange sense of enjoyment. It seemed to be related to the knowledge that ve could have caused Vani pain and distress—as stated by Vani earlier—but chose deliberately not to. A minor act of compassionate defiance. Vani was now suspended with her head a short distance from the floor, her hair falling over Tentacles’s body and pseudopods. It was an intriguingly soft sensation, and for a moment ve let Vani simply sway in ver ‘embrace’, enjoying the way in which Vani’s hair swirled and flickered across ver flesh.

Ve sent a pseudopod up and around Vani’s stomach, snaking down between her breasts. The soft weave of fabric bound tight against her chest couldn’t stop the explorations of a single pseudopod, first flattening itself to move under the tight fabric, then expanding again to gently press against the inside of Vani’s breasts, finding the supple flesh firmer than previous encounters. Ve understood it had something to do with the woven material Vani had covered her breasts with.

Another pseudopod joined the first, exploring the exterior of the woven material, attempting to find a fastening, but all ve could find was a short fold—and yet, upon undoing said fold, the fabric loosened, allowing Vani’s breasts to fall slightly, stretching the fabric in a different manner than before. With a third pseudopod ve began to unravel the woven fabric, removing it from Vani’s chest, exposing her breasts. A pseudopod snaked around each, contracting slightly, squeezing with light firmness. Ve did not want to overly discomfort Vani.

The tip of each pseudopod was left free, allowing the tip-flaps to open, very softly pinching at Vani’s nipples, causing her breath to become slightly ragged. The third pseudopod from Vani’s chest now free, Tentacles now moved it towards Vani’s mouth. With one hand Vani took it and pushed it aside. Ve tried again. After the third attempt ve stopped.
Vani sighed. “Did I say ‘Heimdall’?”

No.

“Then keep trying, and solve the problem.”

It took ve a moment to understand what Vani meant. Only Vani’s hands were pushing the pseudopod away. With swift, firm movements ve used that same pseudopod to snake around and between Vani’s wrists, pulling her hands behind her back. Only then did ve try to place another pseudopod in Vani’s mouth. This time Vani struggled, but playfully moved her lips up and down the length of pseudopod she could reach. Ve gave her breasts a gentle squeeze, and was surprised to feel Vani increase her speed of movement, perhaps from excitemt, perhaps from something else.

Two pods explored the borders of Vani’s lower body garment, tracing from simply woven cloth to thin, slightly slippery strips of bordered fabric. With another idea forming in ve mind, Tentacles pushed a pseudopod under the main sections of fabric at the front and rear. At the front a trio of tip-flaps gave Vani’s clitoris the lightest of pinches. Vani’s whole body moved, arching sideways and backwards, but ve felt no pressure from bites, so ve continued with a feathering stroke away down the length of Vani’s labia.

The pseudopod under the rear section of fabric turned back on itself, tip-flaps closed, seeking the tightened ring of muscle that ve had been instructed to penetrate. As ve started to push, ve felt a soft biting sensation. Ve remembered Vani’s advice from before—and from within that pseudopod ve drew forth a thick, gelatinous fluid that could function as a lubricating substance. Gently ve spread it around Vani’s anus. The bite was harder, firmer.

Ve withdrew that pseudopod, and though there was another bite, this one was brief, soft, almost playful. Ve understood then that while Vani wanted this action, she was not yet ready for it. Instead, with that pseudopod and another, ve played with and eventually untangled the fabric strips keeping Vani’s lower body garment in place. Ve placed it on the bed, with the long strip that had been around Vani’s chest. Then ve took two pseudopods, one arcing from Vani’s belly, and the other from her back, and gently forced them into Vani’s vagina. Ve did not thrust with them yet, merely left them penetrating her.

Vani’s lips moved faster, slightly acidic saliva now coating the pseudopod in her mouth. Remembering their experiment on the beach, Tentacles decided to add another, enjoying the variations in sensation ve was feeling. A slippery, acidic, vacuum constriction from Vani’s mouth. An all round softness in her bound breasts. A slick sensation accompanied with gentle waves of alternating compression and release within her vagina. Even the slight quivering strain of Vani’s calves as she attempted in vain to close her legs. Ve began to thrust with the pseudopods in Vani’s vagina, and felt it as her whole body began to writhe and twist, attempting to break free.

Ve placed another pseudopod against Vani’s stomach, tapping softly as it moved up, very slowly tracing its way up, finally pinching Vani’s clitoris with its tip-flaps. Softly swirling along Vani’s labia, another joined it to balance out the sensations. Ve felt Vani’s attempt to gasp as both pseudopods suddenly dove into her vagina, stretching her, thrusting in alternating patterns, feeling for her response. Again ve ran a pseudopod up Vani’s back, closed tip-flaps pressing gently but insistently at Vani’s anus. This time there was only a slow, soft bite. Ve made sure to draw forth more of ve gelatinous compound. Vani’s mouth relaxed.

It was tight. The strength of that ring of muscle was impressive. Ve felt it as Vani swallowed, her
Vani felt her entire body tense, held upside down by her calves and shins, her breasts almost painfully bound. She could feel four different kinds of thrusting deep inside of her. And then, behind her, but inside her, there was another sensation. Gentle expansion. Movement up and down. Thrusting gently as if to meet its partners towards her stomach. But her fulfillment was incomplete, one possible angle no longer occupied with giving or receiving pleasure.

“Pods… back in… mouth.”

Vani tried to smile, starting to swallow the length of the ‘pods inside her mouth. One went deeper, gently pressing at the back of her throat. She bit down gently, feeling the ‘pod withdraw slightly. Then she realised she’d closed her eyes, missing that it was now three ‘pods in her mouth. She swallowed again, drawing them deeper. Her breath came unevenly, her nose not quite able to keep up on its own. She swallowed a gasp and the tip of a pseudopod as she felt something else press insistently against her labia, rippling, ticklish patterns of suction letting her know exactly what was in store for her.

She struggled in vain, attempting to break free, playing the part of the alien captive. She writhed, and tensed her arms, but did not bite. She was only surrendering a little of her control. She knew her eyes went wide when the ‘pods withdrew from her core, preparing the way for something... else. She felt it easing in, pointed tip first, curled backwards, suckers making a terribly powerful sensation even more so. It was potent, drawing forth hidden muscles, her body contracting within, trying to draw this new member even deeper.

An almost painful pull at her back snapped her back to herself. She tried to quell the muscles responsible, but it was hard, building frustration in powerful ways that those same muscles would have to release soon. It felt big, almost painful. It was right at the edge of pleasure and pain, capable of tipping either way. Then those treacherous suckers pulled at her from within, and the muscles of her core could not be denied. She swallowed hard, trying to draw the ‘pods in her body tensing. Ve moved slowly here, while continuing to thrust with ver other pseudopods, or squeeze Vani’s breasts, or playfully duel with her tongue. Ve wished there was a way they could communicate more than just the simplest feelings while in this state. Ve could experiment, testing which additional sensations Vani might enjoy. Ve was also entranced by the coordination required to keep track of so many different movements inside and around Vani’s body.

*It would not be harmful to ask what else Vani desires.* Tentacles withdrew ver pseudopods from Vani’s mouth, but continued squeezing and thrusting with the others, and used ver tentacles to spread Vani’s legs slightly more.

“Why did… yo—oh…” Vani writhed with pleasure, almost lost in an ocean filled with strange rushing sensations. “Are you uncom… comfortb…fortable… someth… wrong?”

Ve are seeking permission to experiment, ve did not wish to cause pain to Vani as ve altered sensations.

“Alter…ed how?”

Ve will insert tentacle into Vani’s vagina, very lightly engage suckers. Move while covered in lubricative films.

“You didn’t ha… have to stop… ask, we have… saf—safe-touches… and safe worrrr—oh, fuck yes. Safe words. Please… that. Again.”

Vani felt her entire body tense, held upside down by her calves and shins, her breasts almost painfully bound. She could feel four different kinds of thrusting deep inside of her. And then, behind her, but inside her, there was another sensation. Gentle expansion. Movement up and down. Thrusting gently as if to meet its partners towards her stomach. But her fulfillment was incomplete, one possible angle no longer occupied with giving or receiving pleasure.
mouth deeper into her throat.

She could feel it as her ass began to contract in sympathy, even as Tentacles placed a point against her back. She couldn’t apologise, or explain herself, because in that moment she was letting go of herself, letting her body take its own path to pleasure. Even as that point of flesh pressed hard into her back, she could feel the other members beginning to pulse, bands of expansion and contraction driving something forward, ready to expel something deep inside her, on her, over her. She didn’t care.

Sound and sight blurred together, and she wondered at the concept of colour. A longing for touch became all consuming, and she didn’t know if the tears were hers or another’s, reaching out with misshapen pods filled with bones to comfort something made of flesh and ancient memory. Her echo-sense was mute, and she wondered at the strangeness of this body, with bones, and only four primary limbs. She fell without falling, her mind rushing back from something beyond her to something deep within her.

She wasn’t quite covered in the sticky stuff, but there was a lot of it. She could feel some of it shifting slightly inside her ass. A lot of it leaked around her pussy, gelling between her labia, falling in runnels down past her landing strip and over her stomach. She could even feel a drip running down from one of her cheeks…and not one on her face. Her breasts—and her nipples especially—were covered in thick, off-white-green goo. What had been in her throat was already on its way to her stomach.

As the goo ran around her, she felt herself being tilted right way up. She was being carried. With one hand now free, she patted Tentacles’s body. “I can walk.”

Her feet were on the floor, but her knees felt weak, and the first step she took was very shaky. The second also. By the third she was using the door into the bathroom for support. Fucking hell. She smiled, staggering to the shower, her shoulder colliding painfully with the door.

“Fuck.”

She reached in to turn the water on as a ‘pod snaked around her ankle.

“I’m fine. A little shaky, but fine,” she put her hand under the water, finding it still too cold. “And what about you, how do you feel?”

Tentacles feels strange, mindsharing into a partner that cannot understand chemical memories. Ve almost feel like ve have wasted something.

“Because I can’t understand what you gave me?” Vani’s voice was far more curious than hurt. “And what else?”

Ve enjoyed sensation of movement coordination while have multiple pseudopods performing divergent taskings. Tentacles is unsure about Vani’s explanation of safe-touches, as Vani’s pain-constrictions did not stop despite using stop touch.

Vani sat in the middle of the shower, playfully pulling Tentacles in a ‘pod at a time. “I know it hurt a lot more than you wanted, and I also know saying sorry won’t fix it right away. I also want you to know that this is not me making excuses—because this happened, and I hurt you, and it shouldn’t have happened that way.
“When my body—any person really—gets close to orgasm, their body will tense up like that. It’s an instinctive movement, a reflex, something I can’t control—at least, not for long. I should have thought of it before, given how big your tentacle pads are, but my mind was lost in the moment; focused on my own pleasure.”

This is apology?

“Yes, and a debrief, because things went a little wrong.” Vani rubbed her hand up and down the side of Tentacles’s body. “And also, aftercare. You remember the first time, when I made you hurt me, then made you make it better with massage?”

I remember. Is Vani offering to make better?

“I am. It’s the only way to rebuild trust and rapport in a relationship like this. If you ask to be hurt, you’ll usually have a plan in mind for how to make it better afterwards. But this wasn’t planned. You could discipline me—cause me equivalent pain as punishment—if you wanted. If you don’t want that, you can ask for me to do something to make it better for you. Or, if you simply want me to apologise, that’s fine too.” Vani spread her hands wide. “It’s all up to you though, I don’t get to choose—I’m the one that broke the rules.”

Tentacles will discipline Vani as she apologises. Is this acceptable to perform later? Tentacles is enjoying warming rain, and resting with Vani.

“Later is fine. It lets you figure out an appropriate punishment, while I work on my apology.”

Tentacles accepts these terms. Vani will be disciplined later. Now, Vani and Tentacles rest together under warming rain. It is nice.

“Yeah,” Vani leaned forward, wrapping Tentacles in a hug. “It is nice.”
So, those of you asked about Patreon in the past… I have one now.

First up, don't worry, the story will continue to be posted right here on Ao3.

Second up, Patreon perks: 2 weeks early access for each chapter, .pdf collections of chapters, and, for $15 patrons, collections with cover art, or writing notes/internal commentary, or both.

My Patreon profile uses the exact same username as here.

Tentacles was using Vani’s metal information tablet to research discipline. The word itself had many meanings; from learned and ingrained habits, to fields of study, to minor punishments to remEDIATE wrong actions. Ve tried working in reverse. Vani had spoken of something called BDSM, so ve decided to research that to give verself some context. What ve learned, listening closely to some familiar words used in seemingly wrong contexts or places, was illuminating. Both about the desires Vani might have, and about acts and practices humans might consider normal.

Ve was also considering how ve might discipline Vani for what appeared to be more of an accidental breach of trust than a deliberate transgression. Under the warming rain, ve had said that ve would discipline Vani—as one of the the options she had listed—but now ve was wondering how ve felt about doing such a thing. It did not seem to be something Vani welcomed, but rather, accepted as necessary for restoring any lost rapport due to the accidental inflicting of pain. Do I want recompense? Balance? Tentacles felt as if the words themselves didn’t quite fit what ve actually wanted, Are these word-concepts correct? And then ve also asked if ve actually wanted to cause pain to Vani, even as this act of reparation was offered.

Conflicted, ve even considered waking Vani, but lying on her mattress, emitting quiet, rhythmic breathing sounds, she seemed so peaceful. Contented and sated. Leaving such concerns to ver subconscious, Tentacles instead started to perform more research on the field of prosthetics, wishing ve could simply manifest an eye in order to assimilate and process data faster. Then ve considered how such a novel construct might alter ver perceptions, shifting from a radial-polar frame of reference to one that saw arc-planar as a baseline.

Sight was something difficult to imagine properly, let alone perceptualise. Ve had always used a sense that was somewhat similar—ver echo-sense—but that created a gestalt image of ver in central position, with all nearby objects sorted by radial separation from midline and elevation or declination from equatorial band. Ve could understand form, shape, and some textures or densities. Distances and locations were exact. Ve tried to construct a model of vision based on what ve knew of Vani.

Two eyes, set close together, would provide overlapping fields of view. To what advantage? Ve was forced to think hard to understand why an arrangement with short horizontal separation would be desired over vertical separation, or a wider spacing to allow a fuller field of view. Ve considered how ver own echo-sense worked with multiple tentacles, and understanding the return from each pulse. But Vani’s eyes used the the radiation spectra of this universe, which would mean
information delivered so rapidly that even her brain with its electric signalling would be unable to process the minute time differentials. *Does each eye see exactly the same thing?*

…no.

Ve had almost answered in the affirmative when ve realised that each of Vani’s eyes would see a slightly—minutely—shifted image compared to the other. Different distances away would generate more or less shift in the images, and by interferometric comparison Vani’s mind would understand relative distances to each object, and between objects themselves. But how was it possible that Vani could perceive something the shape of a voidsailer/dragon at the scale she had constructed in the secondary dwelling, while at the same time understanding glyphs and words smaller than a tip-flap? Ve knew Vani’s eyes could close, a horizontal narrowing. *Could that be a mechanism for attenuating unwanted input?*

There was so much to learn. And that was just basic functionality. How could humans even begin to replicate that, without the help of magic, when ve was struggling to understand how it might be done *with* magic. Ve pressed the glyph-keys to spell ‘eye’, and searched. Ve listened intently to the cool voice, wishing it could have the same slightly erratic pacing and variation in inflection Vani’s voice had. Tentacles stilled as ve heard about the different types of eyes that existed, and possible evolutionary paths to create them. Ve did not have to start *ex nihilo* to create an eye.

Ve could start much simpler. Something that could detect light and dark. Then several somethings. Construct an array. Keep refining the array, increasing number of cells, reducing cell size. Ve could then attempt a simple detector array based on wavelengths—which ve could code as flavours, but which ve knew Vani called colours. Ver echo-sense could both augment and refine this idea. But ve also needed a method of creating a perceptual input channel unlike any other ve currently possessed. Something with the array sensitivity of ver touch, and the response/resolution of ver echo-sense. Which, ve belatedly realised, was amplified by ver sense of touch being so sensitive.

Another very important consideration was whether ve wanted to manifest this experimental object as something physical, or use ver command over interplanar constructs to create something that could also be dispelled. Both approaches required considerable energy, and offered their own unique advantages and disadvantages, be they portability, feedback, adaptability, or solidity. It was something that could wait, because ve would need to ask Vani about the availability of certain gross compounds and protein chains for each option. Resource scarcity might prove to be the deciding factor.

With a plan set for experimentation with simple eyes and cell-arrays, ver mind swam back to what ve wanted from disciplining Vani. Ve also had to ask verself whether ve was suffering from the same type of mind-state confusion Vani had been during an early experiment with the touch of comfort. Ve wasn’t certain the situation was entirely analogous, as Vani had experienced a condition of strangeness, while right now ve was only assessing options mentally. *And why does Vani offer option of suffering deliberate pain caused by Tentacles when she caused pain by accidental mechanism?*

*Why do I hesitate?* Tentacles found verself asking. *Is it due to possibility that I might enjoy deliberately inflicting pain on friend? Is this feeling of compassion extending too far? What does Vani think Tentacles gains from experience of inflicting pain as apology is issued?* It was not a question ve could answer easily. Not until ve tried thinking of it from Vani’s perspective. Vani had hurt her friend—accidentally—but offered to suffer equivalent pain to make experiences equal. She had accepted that she was at fault, for assuming Tentacles knew more about her internal muscles. She thought—she knew—that not acting on the touch of stopping had broken the trust between
them. A little. Vani wishes to redress fault and restore trust. Return pair-bonding strength to higher level.

It took a moment for Tentacles to realise the importance of that revelation. Because on the surface it seemed a simple act of reparation, seeking forgiveness for a transgression. Deeper, it showed a sense of fairness and justice, and respect for differentiation of individuals that was sometimes uncommon in larger cooperative societies. At its deepest it showed that Vani was as committed to continuing the relationship as Tentacles versuself was, which meant that breeding in the future would become a reality.

Ve hoped.

Vani lay in bed, staring at the sunrise—she hadn’t bothered shutting the curtains, again. She wanted to roll over, go back to sleep for a few more minutes. But she also needed to think of a sincere apology, and perhaps help Tentacles plan her punishment. And also figure out just how much she could absorb from the chemical memories she had ingested the night before. It was almost like the way some people described a drug trip, but… different. There was an element of otherness, of complete difference, that simply couldn’t be processed. Something that meant the filter through which she saw these things—if saw was even the right term—was warped and almost beyond recognition.

It was the ‘almost’ that was the most frustrating part. Something just out of reach, glimpsed out of sight, heard on the edge of the wind. A thought that flitted away before it could be known.

“Gyaah…” Vani growled in frustration, sitting up and throwing the covers off. “Why?”

The question nagged at her through the morning, as she washed her hands, rushed breakfast with rapid spoonfuls of cornflakes, and fed Bossco his ration of dog biscuits. Even as Tentacles handed her a list of required materials the question held her in thrall, trying to figure it out. She blinked and re-read the lists. What the fuck?!

“Chlorine?” Vani frowned, her restless pacing finishing abruptly. “You know that’s poisonous, right?”

Vani ingests chlorine as elemental compound to flavour food.

“I what—oh.” Shaking her head, Vani sat heavily on the couch. “Salt. It’s not just chlorine. Sodium chloride, it’s a compound.”

Compounding removes toxicity?

“More than that, because sodium’ll explode if you put it in water. But in salt it’s fine. I really don’t know how it works.”

Understanding. Metal tablet has access to explanation?

“Yeah, you should be able to look it up.”

Later. Ve enquire if Vani can locate and acquire other items on list.

“Some of them. Whatever that cobalt is, I’m pretty sure it’s gonna be bad for me.”
It is to serve as radionuclide generator to empower Tentacles for higher order disruptions of local physical laws.

“Do you know radiation is bad for people, right?”

Vani’s species cannot catalyze radiation by-products for energy generation and storage?

“Uh… no.” Vani was glad she was sitting down. “So you’re telling me you can ‘eat’ radiation?”

Radionuclides provide little nutrient based sustenance, but energy potentials in chaotic state can be utilised for efficient creation of eldritch breaches.

“Okay, I think I follow,” Vani put the list down next to her. “But I still can’t get this stuff. It’s controlled by the government, and I really wouldn’t want to be near it myself, let alone handle it.”

Vani can write list of items she can acquire for Tentacles?

“Sure,” Vani took a crayon and a fresh sheet of paper, creating a much shorter list of her own. “Why do you want this stuff all of a sudden anyway?”

Tentacles wishes to experiment with creation of ocular systems and visual-to-gestalt interfaces.

“This is because I joked about growing eyes the other day, isn’t it?”

Vani intended humour, but ve was intrigued by concept. Further research has proved possibility exists, experimentation begins with simple light/dark recognition system.

“While you’re at it, what about ears?”

Tentacles already hears and interprets sounds correctly.

“But you need to use a few ‘pods to do it. Wouldn’t it be better to keep all your ‘pods free?” Vani leant forward and collected a few ‘pods with her arm, keeping them tight to her body.

This would be desirable, but increase in efficiency may not offset cost in resources.

The ‘pods were already exploring and slipping around every way they could. She let them go. “All you really need is the right shape, and something sensitive enough to tell the sounds apart inside that shape.”

Morphological deformation of Tentacles skin is simplest of matters. Internal membranes are used to reinforce structure and create channels to maintain semi-rigid structural elements. Does Vani recommend topology of her ears for ideal hearing?

“There’s little bones in my ears as well, they help transmit the sound.”

Tentacles does not desire usage of bones. Vani’s ear shape works without internal bone structure?

“I’m not sure,” Vani shifted from the couch to the floor. “But copy the shape, and lets test it, shall we?”

Tentacles extended a pseudopod, gently moulding it to cover Vani’s ear. The shape was surprisingly complex and convoluted. Ve used a second pseudopod to gentle grip and extrude ver own flesh, around ver midline, attempting to replicate the shape and structure as closely as possible. Setting up internal fluid channels posed some minor difficulties, but was easy enough to overcome. When ve was finished, ve raised a few pseudopods and bid Vani to speak.
Ve waited, then extended ver pseudopods into their previous formation.

“…ing. So I guess it didn’t work?”

Detection area too small, or fidelity too low. Ve attempts new form.

With that, ve set to work, noting with ver echo sense that Vani was using the metal tablet. Possibly searching for something. Talking, about ears. Ve had almost completely formed the new shape—triangular—like Bosko’s ears, when ve released ver pseudopods from listening duty again. The new ear shape was little better, barely detecting Vani’s words, and keeping them muffled and unintelligible besides. Ve sent ver pseudopods back up into their hearing formation.

“This is kind of interesting, y’know?” Vani’s voice carried a note of interest and amusement. “And maybe the problem is you’re not a veterbrate—I mean, the only bony-ish part of you is that beak. Ears may not work. But there’s something called a tympanic membrane—just skin over a space filled with air. And something under it to feel tiny movements?”

Tentacles considered Vani’s words carefully, lowering internal pressures in an annular shape immediately above cluster of pseudopods. Ve then took one of those pseudopods and stretched it as thinly as possible over the depression in ver flesh. Vani’s voice was muffled, not quite understandable, but ve knew ve was close. Ve gestured to Vani to continue talking, then began to manipulate the internal shape of ver makeshift tympanic membrane.

Ve started by increased the radius of the annular component, and decreasing the pressure below, creating a more significant depression that pulled ver skin and external membranes taut. Ve could almost hear Vani’s voice at this point, catching occasional words, or stronger phonemes. Then ve had a better idea. Allowing internal flow back to the previous depression, ve created an annulus opposite ver contact patch with the fibro-cellulose covering of the dwelling’s lower level. Ve made sure to tension this one before applying ver pseudopod over the top, and was surprised at the clarity ve was achieving. Ve could actually hear Vani better without the reverberations of ver makeshift cover—but ve was also hearing many other noises besides.

*Reverberation layer is for attenuation of unwanted frequencies, and amplification of desired inputs.*

With some trial and error, ve found that ve could create a depression the perfect shape to capture most of Vani’s vocal range. Keeping a thinned pseudopod over it at all times would be annoying, but that could be counteracted by the simple expedient of accelerating regenerative cover. Ve had more than enough energy in reserve, and it would take little effort to preserve the pathway, though after regeneration fluidics would have to kept a minimum distance away, and the tympanic drum would no longer have load bearing capacity—though ver skin should stretch enough to fill the depression that way.

Feeling a tentacle resting on her shoulder, Vani lost her train of thought. She nuzzled the tentacle with her chin, looking up to see what Tentacles was saying.

Ve are confident new tympanic drum will function, but time is required to complete creation thereof. Until completion ve will use previous system.

“You’re growing something?” Vani sat up slightly to see the chunk seemingly missing from Tentacles’s upper body.

Reverberative covering for tympanic dish, to create drum system. Energy reserves more than sufficient for this task. Now we wish to ask Vani about discipline she desires, and why this is so.
“You get to decide,” Vani gently lifted the tentacle off her shoulder. “I don’t. I’m the one that broke the rules.”

But ve are understanding that this was accidental; desire was not to cause harm or injury to Tentacles. Tentacles was not enough of understanding Vani’s internal musculature. This confuses Tentacles about Vani’s motive for suffering equivalent pain when fault does not appear to exist.

Shuffling closer, Vani began tracing idle patterns on Tentacles’s body with one hand. “It’s not about hurting you—not that I intended to. It’s about the fact I ignored a safeword—safe touch. That is something that should not ever happen. Especially one that means to stop. You’re punishing—disciplining—me for that transgression, not for causing accidental pain.”

This applies, even if failure to observe is caused by accident?

“In a good relationship, it always applies. Always,” Vani turned away, leaning against Tentacles, bringing her knees up to her chest. “And if you apply it even when it shouldn’t matter then you won’t forget it when it does matter.”

So Vani desires suffering of equivalent pain caused by Tentacles in order to reinforce gestalt pathway that acknowledgement-failure of safe touch is not allowable?

Vani took a moment to process, then nodded, forgetting once again that Tentacles couldn’t see the motion. A moment passed as a querying ‘pod popped up.

“Yes; I want you to hurt me so I know in future that I can’t ignore a safe touch.”

Can Vani define parameters of ‘hurt’ such that Tentacles does not injure or inflict excessive pain on Vani?

“I can,” Vani smiled, rising. “In fact, I can show you some tools used for this special ‘discipline hurting’.” She paused at the bottom of the stairs. “Come on. And while we talk about these tools, we can discuss the scene constraints.”
Chapter Notes

If I have anything drastically wrong about the way this would go down by BDSM community standards, please let me know. It is never my intent to misrepresent or malign the community in any way.

Opening the top drawer of her nightstand, Vani felt a little thrill of trepidation mixed with lustful excitement. Eventually most of her lovers had learned about the toys she kept, but it still felt like an important moment every time. Choosing to be that little bit more trusting, more open than usual. And also to see their expressions—of course, that was somewhat harder with Tentacles, who didn’t have any expression to speak of. Unless the waving of ‘pods and tentacles counted as an expression.

She decided to start with the simplest toys, a leather paddle, and a crop. There would be time to go over cuffs, spreaders, ropes, and clamps later. Better start with something that had an obvious use. She passed the paddle to Tentacles, who immediately began experimenting on it with ver suckers.

What item has Vani given Tentacles, made of synthetic stretched fibres under polymer coating?

“It’s called a paddle, and it’s made of leather.” Vani took the paddle back for a moment. “It’s used to spank someone, like so.”

Tentacles may test this on Vani?

“Once, on my butt.” Vani reached down to massage her backside after Tentacles hit it, perhaps a little harder than ve had expected. “If we’re only playing, it has to be a bit lighter than that.” Vani grabbed the paddle again and spanked Tentacles’s body. “More like that, okay?”

Tentacles took the paddle again, and this time Vani didn’t feel any sting. It felt properly playful. Tentacles offered the paddle back to her.

“No, you can keep it for a bit, you can hold more than me.” As she spoke, Vani flopped face first onto the bed, making the other toys bounce and jingle. “You can play with spanking other places too, if you want—but gently, like I showed you.”

Vani couldn’t help the little smile that quirked her lips as Tentacles began to gently spank first her thigh, then her foot, a shoulder, and trying very carefully to get the side of her breast without catching the paddle on the sheets. She rolled on to her side, playing with the crop, running it along the length of a tentacle as Tentacles seemed to freeze for a moment.

“You okay buddy?”

Vani is using item of similarity to paddle to touch Tentacles?

“Yeah, I am,” Vani played the crop up and down the pad of the same tentacle before giving it a playful smack. “This one is called a crop, it can hit harder, and you can vary the sensation more. Like this.” As she spoke Vani turned the crop sideways, so the edge of the leather dragged slightly against another tentacle.
I may try, with gentle spanking?

“Sure,” Vani let ver take the crop in another ‘pod, turning once more to lie on her front. “Then we can talk about restraint, and our—your—scene for later.”

Tentacles examined the crop with a pair of pseudopods, noting its firmness and differing construction to the paddle—although both were apparently used for the discipline hurting of which Vani had spoken earlier. One end appeared to be made of some kind of long chain cellulose fibres, coated to keep the exterior smooth and free of defects. To the opposing end was attached a short, folded strip of the same material that the paddle had been made from. The central shaft was a new material, smooth, but ver echo-sense could detect micro-scale fibres of something much harder woven into it.

Moving slowly, ve replicated the actions Vani had made. First ve pressed the folded end flat against Vani’s leg, drawing it along a line to her hip. Then ve tried using the same motion ve had used with the paddle. A sharp intake of breath from Vani told ver that this was not the correct method to use.

“You said gentle.”

Apologising. Technique for spanking is not same as for paddle.

“Hmm…” Vani had taken one of ver pseudopods into her hands. Ve could feel the manner in which Vani’s hand moved, a strange rolling about the wrist joint, with a sudden reversal that caused sharp deceleration. At the same time Vani seemed to draw her whole arm back. “Can you make that kind of movement?”

Ve tried it, finding it hard to coordinate everything required for the reversal deceleration component of the movement. Ve could stop suddenly—but reversing direction was harder. So what makes it easy for Vani? It took ver a moment to put it together, but it reduced itself down to Vani having bones, with muscles attached to either side of her wrist, making rapid momentum changes possible through a natural hinge and counterweight system. Ve couldn’t find an innate reason for the finesse with which Vani had used the crop earlier, so that merely had to be continued use—practice.

Ve took the crop and wrapped two pseudopods around it, one below the other, then rested a portion of their lengths together. Ve attempted following the motion Vani had made, aiming to strike her backside with the folded end of the crop. Just before impact ve pulled up with the lower pseudopod, and pulled back with the upper, attempting to replicate both the gross and fine movements Vani had made.

“Okay, still a bit hard, but much better,” Vani sounded happy. “You just need practice—though if you do, try and use both cheeks, okay?”

Is Vani using humour?

“A bit, yeah—but I don’t mind if you want to practice now. Later, in your scene, you’ll be hitting me harder, but if you can figure out ‘gentle’ first, it’s easier to scale up than scale down.”

Vani speaks of scene, can she explain to Tentacles what ‘scene’ is in context of discipline hurting?

“It’s what you want to do to me. Things we both agree are allowed, and not allowed. Using safewords, or safe-touches. You also get to decide how long it should go for—unless we use a safeword, or want more. We both get to ask for aftercare—like giving me the massage after
stretching me in the shower, our first time. We could pretend to be other people, playing roles. We also decide on toys, and even outfits. But the most important parts are what's allowed, what the safewords are, and what happens for aftercare.”

Tentacles took a few minutes to process the information, parsing it section by section so it couldn’t be misunderstood. Ve decided the best way to confirm understanding would be to repeat basics and question specifics.

Ve wish to ask questions about scene.

“Sure,” ve could sense Vani rolling over, facing the roof of the dwelling.

If there is item-action that Vani wants, but Tentacles does not, is it in scene?

“No. We both have to agree.”

Can Tentacles add item-action to scene after beginning?

“If I’m okay with it.”

Do safe-touches change?

“Change how?”

Changes in type and meaning.

“You can use the exact same safe-touches as before,” there was a slight pause. “I use my safewords because they don’t normally come up during an average conversation. Also, ‘flugen’ was a joke between me and some friends that just kind of stuck.”

What is maximum length of scene?

“Until someone falls asleep. I mean, some couples will always be their roles, but I’m not that deep into the culture.”

What can be asked for ‘aftercare’?

“Anything that might reasonably make you feel better after the scene—for example, getting hurt, you might want to be cared for. After hurting someone, you might want them to tell you they still care about you. It’s even acceptable to ask for intimate contact.”

Why might person ask for sex after being hurt?

“It’s not normally sex,” ve felt Vani’s hand reaching for ver, and began to gently coil a pseudopod around her wrist. “It’s more like this, right now. You can ask to be kissed, caressed; have all your hurt made better. You might want to wait while your partner takes off your restraints. Taking it slow, being touched gently like that, keeps your mind where it should be. It’s also talking about how you felt about the scene. If it made you uncomfortable. If you liked it. If you wished something else could happen.”

Tentacles remains unsure of what ve should do after scene.

“Then why don’t I ask for mine first?” Vani gently pulled on the pseudopod around her wrist, attempting to drag ver closer. “You can tell me I’m still a good person, I just made a mistake. You could brush my hair and tell me why you still want to be my friend.”
Vani would not ask for hurt made by Tentacles to be made better?

“No this time. I feel like I deserve what I’m going to get.”

What if Tentacles does not feel that way?

“Then maybe your aftercare could be to make it better. Or I could tell you that we’ll be fine, I accept this pain for causing you distress by ignoring your safe-touches.”

What if Tentacles did not wish to hurt Vani?

“I wouldn’t force you to. Remember, I said that a scene is something that we both agree to.”

But Vani might foster minor dislike of Tentacles for refusal?

“A little bit, for a little while,” ve felt Vani roll over, leaning out to kiss ver body. “It’s who I am. I’ll get over it—and I’m sure you would have good reasons to refuse a scene.”

I am not sure I want to hurt Vani.

“Even if I hurt you?”

Conclusion was action was in fact accidental, stemming from Tentacles’s lack of knowledge on Vani’s internal musculature, and Vani’s mind falling into gestalt, perhaps losing some control over her body.

There was silence, for a long time.

Vani?

“I won’t force you into doing this, if you don’t want to. But, I will be a bit disappointed.”

Ve understand. Uns sureness comes from not understanding if relationship will remain strong after deliberately inflicting pain on Vani. If pain inflicted goes too far. Ve wants to, but ve is also afraid of wanting to. Does Vani understand this dichotomy?

“Maybe better than you think. One of my first scenes was actually getting whipped—literally, being hit with a whip, to leave welts. I remember being afraid; not being sure if I could handle it—and I couldn’t. It was too much pain, and being held up like that, but I just said the safeword and she came right up to me, asking me if I wanted her to let me down; asking if I needed an ice pack, or hot a drink. Or a cold one. I was crying, I remember, but it wasn’t from the pain—it was from the sudden rush of kindness and concern.

“Things went wrong. I wasn’t ready for that much, yet. But she understood, and she helped me through it. We went for lighter stuff. It was actually a lot of fun. I also remember the time she used the safeword, undoing my cuffs, and telling me she couldn’t finish the scene. And we sat there, buck naked, each of us with a mug of hot chocolate, and we just talked about it. About why, and why not. And how important we were to each other. We put blankets around each other at one point, I’m pretty sure. It was actually really nice. We’re still friends, actually, we just don’t sleep together anymore.”

Use of safewords has lead to increased bonding, in spite of negative circumstances?

“No in spite of; because of,” a soft smile spread across Vani’s lips. “It’s about understanding limits, and understanding each other. We used to use three words to define our play.”
You required usage of only three words?

“Important ones, if a scene failed on any of them, we wouldn’t do it,” Vani sat up on the edge of the bed. “Safe. Sane. Consensual. Those were the words.”

Tentacles is increasing of understanding about idea of scene, of restriction on possible action, contingency for negative outcomes. Ve is unsure, but ve wishes to try.

“Then tell me what you want.”

Tentacles stilled, placing the crop and paddle back near the other tools Vani had intention of explaining. Ve was asking verself what it was ve wanted out of this experience, if hurting Vani was not the objective. *It never was. She wishes pain to be combined with* learning. And ve knew that lessons purchased with pain were long remembered, no matter what form of being was being taught. Another thought occurred to ver. *Vani feels pain and apology will cleanse remorse.*

And when ve had come to that conclusion, Tentacles knew what ve wanted from the scene.

Ve want Vani’s hands unable to interact or stop discipline hurting. Ve want to hear apology for wrongdoing from Vani. Ve want to *believe* apology. Ve also desire permission to strike Vani with tools of discipline hurting.

“I’m okay with all of that. So, how long?”

Ve do not know how long scene should be. Ve have not attempted before.

“Twenty minutes? An hour?”

Thirty minutes?

“Okay. Now how hard do you want to hit me?”

Playful spanking would be insufficient?

“Playful spanking is for tease. Discipline is supposed to hurt.”

Ve can demonstrate, scaling force upwards?

“Okay, just let me lie down first,” Vani shifted on the bed, lying face up this time. “You don’t just have to spank my ass either. You could go for my legs, or my stomach; my breasts, my back; even my face—but you have to be careful if you strike my face.”

Ve do not desire striking of face. Underlying structure may be damaged more easily than other indicated areas. Additionally, is Vani sure she would allow her breasts to be spanked?

“Yes, actually,” Vani smiled at the memory. “Not much, but if you want to get a few strikes in it should be okay. And there are some other areas you need to be careful of, if you're spanking them.”

Vani can list other areas she mentions?

"Of course. The first is my throat, you remember what I said the first time you wrapped your 'pods around my neck?"

That Vani was feeling vulnerability due to possibility of injury, even with full trust of Tentacles. That this was not undesirable state, but ve would have to be careful.
"Good. The same applies moreso with spanking. Or you can just avoid it completely if you prefer. The back of my neck, and around the sides here, and here. We're only spanking, but again, some caution. And my lower back, about waist level, halfway out from my spine, I think."

Ve will not be spanking Vani on throat or neck. On lower back area ve will reduce force. This is acceptable to Vani?

"Yes. That's good."

Ve is now understanding all constraints.

“So, what about your aftercare?”

Tentacles would like touch of comfort, to be told relationship is still maintained strongly. Ve would also like to take away pain from Vani.

“Yes, yes, and no. I want it to hurt for a little while, remember?”

Ve remember, and this makes me uncomfortable.

“What if we set a timer, and if it still hurts after that timer runs out, then you can make it better?”

Tentacles can accept this compromise, if timer is reasonable limit after scene.

“Ten minutes?” Vani frowned, thinking. “Actually, make it fifteen, because I'd really like you to brush my hair, and play with my toes.”

Tentacles accepts, but questions ability to perform actions while also keeping Vani in touch of comfort.

“You might just have to keep a couple of 'pods, or a tentacle or two free to do that—but if you need to have everything touching me, we can stay like that for a little while too.”

This is ideal to Tentacles. Does this mean scene has been defined for later creation?

“Yes, but there’s one little thing you forgot…”

What has Tentacles forgotten?

“You get to do some test spanking…” and with that Vani handed over the paddle and the crop. Her eyes were already closed, but she wore a lustful smile. Nobody said they couldn’t have a little fun beforehand.

Vani felt the familiar sting of the crop against her thigh. A little lighter than Yuki used to. Then the paddle, a soft thwack against the side of her breast. Another, across the front of her breast, stinging somewhat around her nipple. The side of the crop dragged down from her throat to her navel, ending a solid, stinging strike. It was close to actually hurting. But she kept her eyes closed, waiting, wanting. Another solid thwack from the paddle, against her other thigh this time. Enough to make her wince, and maybe enough to leave a mark too.

“Do you want to leave marks, later?” Vani opened her eyes to see the reply.

Vani’s flesh can be marked by impacts?

“If you hit hard enough, yeah… although, you're not going to be able to see them.”
Is vision necessary?

“Sometimes seeing those marks is arousing. Sexually exciting.”

Tentacles does not fully understand visual stimulation. Leaving marks is not necessary. Is force ve is now using sufficient for Vani’s discipline?

“I’ll roll over, I want one more test,” Vani suited action words, lying face down on the covers. “Now hit me with the crop, maybe twice as hard as you were hitting me before.”

Vani sucked in a breath, using one hand to massage her cheek. The sting took quite some time to subside. It would definitely leave a mark.

“Okay, later, you can hit me a little bit harder than that, if you want, but no more.”

Ve is understanding limit. Is there lower bound for discipline hurting strikes?

“It has to be harder than the playful spanking earlier. You can still drag and slide things softly, but when you hit me it has to be causing pain.”

Like this?

“Ow. Yes. Like that.” Vani took the crop and paddle back, lying them next to her other toys. “So, I guess that just leaves restraint—how do you want keep me from interfering with my hands?”

Vani has additional tools for this purpose?

“I do,” Vani smiled, picking up a pair of handcuffs, and a leather wrist cuff. “Both of these do the same thing, one of them is just more comfortable.”

Tentacles took the leather strap first. Ve could tell it was leather from the residual warmth and the feel of the material. It was a contact sensation ve could easily admit to liking. It also made slight ringing noises, and as ve explored it, ve found small hoops of metal held by a smaller strap of leather. But those alone would not lock it into an annulus.

How does tool restrict Vani movement?

“Like this,” and ve could feel Vani’s fingers working some small mechanism attached to the shorter leather strap, pulling it tight around ver pseudopod. The functionality of the device against ver own pseudopods was nil, and questionable against ver tentacles. But against Vani’s hands, filled as they were with bones, they would be much more effective for minor immobilisation. They would not cause Vani discomfort, so any additional sensation—such as pain from discipline hurting—would become primary focus.

Conformable leather straps can be used for restraint of Vani’s hands. Implication is straps are additionally bound to secondary device.

“A belt, or a cross chain, or a bar. Or just something nearby to keep my hands out of the way. It’s up to you, but you also have to be able to undo it.”

Vani can teach Tentacles to manipulate device of locking for this strap?

“Sure, just have a couple of ‘pods follow my hands.”

As Vani explained the mechanism of the buckle—as she called it—gently manipulating ver pseudopods, Tentacles began to notice an odd sensation filtering through ver body, starting near
ver newly formed tympanic membrane. The sensation itself was difficult to define, almost like an internal/external pressure differential, but also feathering slowly down ver entire body. It was strange enough that ve stilled ve pseudopods, attempting to isolate the sensation.

It stopped.

Ve was confused. So, apparently, was Vani.

“You okay there?”

Ve had strangeness of sensation. Pleasantness of odd discomfort flowing down body. I tried to isolate it, to hold onto it.

“I think you might have had some tinges.”

Tingles?

“It’s a sensation I get sometimes, when I’m being taken care of, touched softly. It’s not sexual, but it feels very nice.”

Sensation was pleasurable. Ve would explore this in future timing. Ve wish to know if scene has been fully defined.

“It has. Our safewords and safe-touches are the same. And we’ll play it out this afternoon, maybe just before dinner. Right now I really have to try and get some more work done on that dragon.”

Tentacles still insists Vani has accidentally copied voidsailer.

“Maybe I’ll call it that, when the piece is done.” Vani rolled off the bed onto her feet, standing to pull on some clothes. A ‘pod gripped her ankle. “Sure, you can help me dress today. It can’t be any worse than my mom’s fashion disasters.”
Frowning at the dragon before her, Vani hauled herself up next to the wing to inspect the hooks for the canvas eyelets. She cursed, realizing how much extra work her client’s bright idea had caused, rather than going for the normal sheet steel wings. And it wasn’t just along the body of the dragon, but along all of the wing spines as well. It was easier to weld them in here, with the wings in place, because they were going to send a blank sample for her to check the fitting with. Which meant all of the hooks could only be tacked on. For now.

It also meant playing around with the pallet-jack and the custom risers she’d made for working at these heights—heights too low for a ladder, but too high to just reach up. Her second commission had taught her the importance of working at the right height, aching arms, and nearly falling off a ladder twice. She’d decided then and there that she would have to swallow some of the cost for the extra labour time, and just make something to work from. The problems the risers had saved her from on some of the following commissions proved how useful it had been to make them.

She also knew she was distracting herself, trying not to think about the scene later. About just how much it was turning her on. Shaking her head, Vani returned to the task at hand, picking up another hook and tacking it in place with the torch. She hoped the dimensions they’d given her were close enough that she wouldn’t have to adjust too many of the hooks to have the canvas sheets fitting properly. She checked her watch again. Finish tacking the hooks along this spine, and then she could call it a day.

As she left the workshop, Bossco came bounding over, woofing happily as she scratched behind his ears. Bossco sprinted ahead as she walked back to the house, occasionally darting back and trying to slip around her legs. Her admonishments just made him more excited, and as she reached the back door to the house she found one of the balls they played with. With a three count she hurled it into the field, taking off her boots as Bossco tore off into the distance, little bits of dirt scudding up behind him. By the time he got back, Vani was through the door. He just sat there, trying to look pathetic.

“Don’t give me that look. You know playtime is after dinner.”

And speaking of playtime...

Vani made her way up the stairs, her overalls unzipped. Tentacles greeted her at the entrance to her bedroom.

“Just let me strip off first, okay?”

Ve have no problem with this. Ve are having problems with practice of fastening leather straps into
annular formation. Help may be required for scene.

“That’s fine,” Vani spoke over her shoulder as she started to shuck her overalls onto the bathroom floor. “If I feel you struggling, I’ll lend a hand.”

Shaking her leg out of the overalls, Vani pulled her t-shirt over her head, then unclipped her hair, letting it fall messily over her shoulders. She looked back around at Tentacles, seeing ver attempting to buckle the cuffs again, around another tentacle.

“Do you want me completely naked?”

Tentacles’s purpose is to strike exposed flesh, correct?

“Okay, naked it is.” Vani unhooked her bra, throwing towards the laundry hamper. She also gave each nipple a sharp little pinch, making herself shiver. Just one of the reasons she’d started to explore the BDSM scene while she was at college. Tonight wasn’t about that excitement though—but it was sometimes hard to divorce the feelings from the acts. This was making amends for transgressions. Her mind stopped wandering as a ‘pod tugged gently at the band of her briefs. She pulled them down, then knelt on the floor for Tentacles to cuff her. She could feel ver struggling—fumbling with the cuffs—but she allowed Tentacles a few moments longer to try and do it verself, just in case.

“Here,” Vani threaded the strap through the buckle, pulling it tight with her free hand. “Now try pulling the other one through with your tip-flaps—no, no, through the buckle—the square hoop shape… oh. Wait, can’t you thin your ‘pods or something? Yes. Yes, like that, now try pulling it through. And then you’ll feel the pin go through the hole there. Okay, close, just a little more next time. Excellent. Now what did you want to cuff me to?”

Vani felt it as Tentacles dragged her towards the handrail outside the shower. Ve couldn’t quite seem to use the dog-clips, but Vani watched with interest as ve retrieved a short length of rope, threading it though the hoops on the cuffs, and around the rail before knotting it in a complex pattern. Vani gave it an experimental tug. It wouldn’t stretch, but it could slide a little along the handrail. She had to commend Tentacles’s knotwork. And possibly introduce ver to shibari.

Looking behind her, Vani saw Tentacles picking up the crop and paddle. And forming ver ‘pods in

Vani sucked in a sudden breath, her fists clenched. She was definitely meant to feel that one. Instinctively she tried to move to massage the pain away.

Vani does not gain arm movement until ve are satisfied with her apology.

“Then I’m sorry.”

The crop stung the top of her left cheek, hard enough she knew it was going to leave a nice welt. The paddle slapped against her right thigh, almost seeming to balance the sensations. She muttered something insincere and vaguely insulting. Fists clenched, she couldn’t help a ragged breath, the side of her breast feeling like fire. Two more strikes with the crop lashed hard against her thighs. She sagged, but refused to fall to the floor. She could feel herself starting to get wet.

Apparently so could Tentacles, rubbing a pod against her labia enough to coat it in her wetness. She turned to see what ve was doing, but suddenly felt little suckers pulling insistently at her cheek
and ear, turning her to face away from Tentacles. Her other cheek, rather lower, received a spank hard enough to knock her sideways. The tentacle turned her head again, to the side, to read the 'pods waving around.

Will Vani offer sincere apology?

“No.” Vani smiled through gritted teeth. She wanted this. She deserved it. She wanted to remember why.

Then ve will be forced to use more pain.

Vani drew in a ragged breath; six lashes against her thighs and buttocks leaving her weak at the knees and more charged than ever. She could feel a pair of 'pods twining around her legs, coiling from knee to thigh around each, holding her up, keeping her legs slightly spread. She felt the rough leather side of the crop drag against the length of her labia. A gentle smack against her clit was followed by a stinging slap from the paddle against her left breast, landing squarely on her nipple. Now she couldn’t fall from her knees, but her arms weren’t doing much to keep her up either. She could feel the tears begin to burn her eyes as the crop left a welt just below her right nipple.

The paddle met the outside of her left cheek with a slap that rang around the small room, and even with the ‘pods around her legs she fell slightly. Her knees slid back, and she realised the ‘pods were no longer holding her up—only the tie around her cuffs was. Another ringing slap against the inside of each thigh, dangerously close to her labia. She could feel the tears rolling down her cheeks. But there was something she had to be sure of.

“Heimdall.”

Tentacles force too much for Vani?

“No,” Vani shook her head, taking several short breaths against the pain. “You’re just slapping too close to my pussy to use that kind of force.”

Tentacles was confused. Inference from context was that ve was striking too forcefully near Vani’s vagina. But she had given it a different name. One normally used for smaller animals of felidae family. Ve did not understand, but would ask later. Right now ver task was to discipline Vani for failing to acknowledge a safe-touch. Ve had noted the changes in Vani’s posture with ver echo-sense, and with ver still growing tympanic membrane ve could hear the changes in Vani’s breathing as ve continued to inflict the pain.

Ve still wasn’t sure about how ve felt as the impact shock from the paddle against Vani’s buttocks rippled up ver pseudopods, but ve knew it to be something Vani desired. Ve was also intrigued by the concept of receiving aftercare—as Vani called it—for having inflicted pain rather than for having received it. Ve had asked to be reassured about the strength of their relationship. Vani had said she would do so. But she had not yet said sorry to ver satisfaction. It is almost as if Vani is deliberately prolongi—oh. Tentacles felt a flood of realisation wash over ver as ve began to understand how it was Vani that was in control.

Ve also wondered if surrendering some of that control would be acceptable. Slowly, carefully, ve sent two pseudopods out to curve around Vani’s knees, locking them in place at that angle. Vani stiffened slightly, but said nothing. Ve could feel her shifting her weight. Ve used the crop to deliver a sharp blow to the inside of her thigh. Vani shifted again. Ve struck her other thigh with the crop. She stopped moving, but she spoke clearly.
“Heimdall.”

Vani wishes Tentacles to stop?

“No. I just want to know what you’re trying to do.”

Tentacles is applying touch of restraint, using pseudopods to prevent Vani movement during application of discipline. This is acceptable to add to scene?

“I think so,” Vani’s reply sounded a little ragged. Her breathing uneven. “But no stretching, just holding.”

This was intent. Firm holding prevents Vani moving.

“Well, I’m not going to apologise if you keep me waiting…”

Tentacles used the paddle to slap Vani’s stomach, creating a sound that reverberated strangely in the small room. Then ve dragged the smooth side of the crop from Vani’s armpit to her hip—but ve didn’t strike with it, instead placing a tentacle pad against Vani’s hip and rippling ve suckers to attach it firmly. Another tentacle slapped Vani’s backside before latching onto her other hip. Two pseudopods pressed into the flesh of Vani’s arms, coiling around from shoulder to elbow, squeezing firmly. Ve could feel Vani’s muscles tense and release.

With a swift flick ve struck Vani’s backside with the paddle, creating another reverberating sound. Then ve struck again, on her thigh. Then a powerful blow with the crop on the underside of Vani’s breast. Ve could feel it as she tried to move with each blow, attempting to reduce the impact. But the touch of restraint prevented such movement, forcing her to experience the full force of every blow. Three rapid strikes with the crop against Vani’s other breast was followed with a powerful blow from the paddle, making her whimper.

“I’m sorry.” This apology was unprompted, but incomplete. Ve responded with a sharp strike with the crop to Vani’s thigh.

Apology is insufficient. Vani must explain reason for being sorry.

“I’m sorry… I… hurt you.” It sounded more sincere, but ve knew it was incorrect. Vani’s remorse was for ignoring ve safe-touches. Ve responded with a softer slap with the paddle to each of Vani’s breasts.

Vani is sorry for wrong thing. Tentacles will be forced to inflict more pain.

“One more… one more… round.”

Tentacles readied the crop and the paddle, ve pseudopods and tentacles holding Vani firmly in place. Ve did not offer any warning. The crop lashed out twice, each blow landing just beneath Vani’s nipples. The paddle alternated between the inside of each thigh, the force a little lower. Then three rapid strikes against one buttock. Five against the other, the crop almost seeming to sing with the cadence. Ve could hear Vani’s ragged breath. Another sound suggesting that she was crying. Ve suddenly felt incredibly uncomfortable about hurting Vani so badly.

Vani felt the tip of a tentacle pad pressing at the small of her back. She turned, vision blurred by
tear filled eyes. Tentacles was using ver safe touch. And at the moment of— Vani cut herself off. This wasn’t about her.

“Y–Yo… You want… to stop ri—right… here?”

Ve are afraid. Vani is crying from pain inflicted. This was not predicted end point of scene—but was endpoint of previous scenes.

“Shit…” Vani swore, breath still ragged. A small part of her wished she could wipe the tear tracks from her cheeks so her friend could feel better. “Of course you… you wouldn’t know… this–this is… this is normal with… with pain play… in discipline.”

Vani had expected outcome of crying from pain?

“It’s a… huma–human reaction t–to overwhelming pain. Another reflex. I’m so used to… to play with other people I… I just didn’t… realise. I sho—should… have warned you,” Vani tried to take in a deep breath, her backside, thighs and breasts still feeling like fire. She managed a ragged gasp. “I am very sorry. We can… end the scene… h–here, and go… straight to your afte–af–aftercare, if you want.”

Tentacles desires this, but also wishes to hear final apology from Vani, for Vani to conclude scene internally.

“Okay,” Vani tried to let herself fall, but was still held in the touch of restraint. “I am so sorry… that I hurt you—and broke our trust—by ignoring… by ignoring your safe-touch.”

Ve would have accepted this apology. Ve also accept Vani’s prior apology about crying reflex being assumed human self-knowledge. Tentacles would also like to know if ve could re-order ver aftercare.

“You want to make me feel better, right?” Vani smiled, gently tugging at her restraints. “You can start by releasing me from the touch of restraint. And then you can make one thing better; my breasts, or my butt, your choice. The other has to wait, remember?”

Ve can accept this compromise to accommodate Vani’s original plan for aftercare.

Vani watched with interest as Tentacles used ver ‘pods to undo the rope binding her cuffs to the rail. She helped as Tentacles’s pods struggled with the buckles on the cuffs. She knelt on all fours for a moment, knowing sitting back or lying on her stomach was going to hurt something. So was standing. Vani felt a number of ‘pods, pressing softly against her ankles, thighs, hips, shoulders, and wrists. Because Tentacles had wanted to use touch of comfort for reassurance.

“Go on then,” Vani stood slowly, wishing she could instead lie back in her lover’s arms—or ‘pods —without anything hurting. She took a hesitant ‘pod in her hand, slowly coiling it around her other wrist. “It’s okay. I kinda want this too, and playing with my toes, remember?”

Feeling the ‘pods coiling and twining around her arms and legs, and enshrouding her torso with tender care, Vani leant backwards, allowing Tentacles to take her weight. “I know I can trust you; you won’t hurt me unless I ask you to.”

Vani felt a ‘pod pressing gently into her backside before spreading something cool and gel-like over the welts. Ver healing gel. Vani had forgotten all about it, even though she’d thought of plans
for using it. Even with the scratch on her arm from ver beak, she hadn’t thought of it. *Because asking for it must have been so natural to ver people*… Once again, Vani had a glimpse across the abyss that separated them as people. An abyss bridged by respect, tenderness, and a little kink. Maybe even love. Definitely trust.

“Sometimes I think it’s weird how different we are,” Vani lifted an arm to her face, placing a warm, brief kiss against every coil of ‘pod she could reach. “But then I think of everything we’ve talked about. Where we’re really not that different. We mostly want the same things. You were surprised about compassion. I was surprised how deep your history was. And it was kind of exciting too. I want to know more, one day. But I think I understand you better for what you’ve told me.”

Vani could feel Tentacles’s free ‘pods using their tip-flaps to swirl and massage the gel all over her cheeks. The sting from the welts was almost gone.

“I know you’re probably a little bit scared that stopping the scene might have hurt our relationship. Maybe you’re even afraid that hurting me until I cried damaged the bond between us,” Vani licked one of the ‘pods on her other arm, then exhaled right next to spot she’d licked. “But if I didn’t like you, do you think I’d still be willing to give you ‘temperature differential’ play?”

A tentacle pad approached each of her breasts from the sides.

“No…” Vani drew the word out slowly. “You can only make one better.”

The tentacles seemed almost disappointed as they folded over, retreating out of sight. Vani couldn’t help a little laugh.

“I think I’m going to have to teach you about acting too. I want to teach you about a lot of things. I want you to teach me about things too.”

Tentacles had been feeling a strange internal warmth for the entirety of the time Vani had been speaking. Even with the pain inflicted on her, Vani’s muscles felt strangely relaxed, except in those places pain had been inflicted. The way Vani had been moving, kissing ver pseudopods, using her breath to cause temperature differentials, and talking so casually contributed strongly to the internal warmth ve felt. It was almost as if the core of ver gestalt was the target of something deep and positive, directed specifically for ver benefit.

Because it was.

Ve was so shocked by the revelation that ver pseudopods almost slipped off Vani. An instant later ve coiled them again, regaining the contact of Vani’s warm flesh and fine body hairs. Vani stretched, her muscles tensing oddly as her body assumed an offset X shape. Ve heard a strange vocalisation. Then Vani turned her head to kiss a pseudopod coil around her shoulder.

“Y’know, this is actually real comfortable,” Vani stretched again, but much less expansively. “If you ain’t careful, I might drift off here.”

Tentacles carefully freed several pseudopods so ve could talk.

There is risk Vani might enter accidental somnolence?

“It’s not a risk,” ve could tell from the pitch and cadence of Vani’s voice that she was quite happy.
“And I’m pretty sure it’d be quite deliberate too. Oh, and if you’ve got ‘pods free to talk, you’ve got ‘pods free to play with my toes or brush my hair…”

After performing task, Tentacles may make Vani’s breasts feel better with negation of pain?

“‘Yes, you may.’

Using ver free pseudopods, Tentacles touched the underside—soles—of Vani’s feet, trying not to tickle them. Ve traced one pseudopod up the inside of Vani’s foot, using ver tip-flaps to attempt to kiss the underside of the largest toe. With another pseudopod ve stretched the opening of ver tip-flaps, gently manipulating the next toe in line from the largest. The wordless vocalisations Vani made seemed to indicate contentment and relaxation. Ve continued to manipulate Vani’s toes in sequence, from largest to smallest, experimenting only with slight movements and the odd tip-flap kiss. The biomechanics were wrong to even attempt to replicate the kisses Vani could deliver, but ve felt that she understood what the action was supposed to signify.

After several minutes playing with each of Vani’s feet—alone, and in tandem—ve sent a pseudopod over the enclosed hollow with doors that Vani called a vanity, searching the top counter for a hairbrush. Ve selected the softer of the two available; one that seemed to have more blunted synthetic spines per unit area than the other. Ve was not entirely sure on how to utilise the brush. Previous data suggested that Vani held it a distance and moved it along a bundle of strands with little force. Ve had observed Vani brushing her hair on several occasions after exiting the warming rain. Inasmuch as ver echo-sense allowed close observation anyway.

Ve used a tentacle to gently hold Vani’s head in place while ve isolated a section of Vani’s hair. With another pseudopod ve drew the brush through the isolated hair, noting how a slight resisting tension kept the hair in the brush until enough strands had fallen free for the entire section to fall back against Vani’s neck. Vani wasn’t making any noises, but her breathing was soft and regular, perhaps on the edge of the somnolence she had spoken of earlier. Another section of strands, and ve felt a powerful resistance to the drag of the brush. Ve did not force it for fear of hurting Vani outside of scene limits.

Vani sighed. “Yeah, it gets knotted sometimes. Just hold the hair behind the knot and pull it through.”

Ve wasn’t quite sure how to constrain Vani’s hair, first attempting a circular bind with a free pseudopod. A pained exhalation from Vani told ver that wasn’t working. Two pseudopods pressed against each other was more effective, but not by much. Then ve tried a tentacle suckered around a pseudopod. It seemed to work, keeping Vani’s hair in place, and preventing the tension being transferred back to her head. Ve continued to isolate Vani’s hair in small sections, wondering about the purpose of this ritual movement when not used after cleansing. Ve also wondered about the purpose of the gentle manipulation of Vani’s toes and feet.

It was the aftercare Vani had requested, but ve could not quite see the purpose behind the individual actions. To the whole, ve knew it was designed to reinforce positive feelings within Vani, but ve was having trouble understanding how that could be so when feelings of pain remained. Ve knew pain faded over time, and ve was beginning to consider that such small, positive actions might serve as a distant loci for Vani’s gestalt, away from the pain, but associating strongly with a positive effect from another. By feeling compassion directed towards her.

*And if that positive mind-state experience is preceded immediately by a negative physical experience, does that make it feel deeper?*
Ve posed the question Vani.

“Yes,” her voice was soft, with a slight slur. “If you want you can make my breasts feel better now—but you also need to reassure me that I’m a good person, remember?”

Tentacles held up a pseudopod in the affirmative.

“I know you needed the touch of comfort earlier, so I didn’t ask then, but I just want to make sure, okay?”

Ve are understanding. Vani is using low intensity reminder of responsibility at what she sees as ideal point of exchange.

Slowly ve uncoiled from the touch of comfort, lowering Vani to the floor. As the last of ver pseudopods was withdrawn, ve felt Vani forcing herself back slightly, pressing into ver body, maintaining contact and physical closeness. Ve liked the warmth of her body, and the growing feeling of linked togetherness it was creating. Ve used two pseudopods to spread ver healing gel across the pads and suckers of two tentacles, allowing Vani to witness what ve was doing. Ve felt Vani place a splayed hand against the upper/outer surface of each pad, then gently compress each tentacle against the breast it was closest to.

Tentacles still shares trust-link with Vani. Ve are understanding she was making honest mistake. She could not fully control reflexive action.

“That’s mostly about me,” Vani’s voice was low, still with that slight slur. “What do you feel?”

To make Vani mind-state improve?

“Please.”

Ve are feeling that ve has much to learn about human body and reflexes. Actions and triggers ve want to explore. Ve would very much enjoy Vani to help in exploration and understanding of this.

“And I will,” Vani looped an arm around a tentacle, then shifted sideways, leaning into the nook she’d created.

I am still enjoying being in proximity of Vani, and close to her in gestalt senses. Wishing for feeling of warm closeness to increase as Vani and Tentacles extend relationship.

“I like being close to you too.”

In future timing, if Vani and Tentacles could speak of breeding, ve would welcome discussion—discussion of processes only, rescinding obligations of actions therein.

Vani let out a breath and nestled closer, enjoying the way Tentacles’s suckers were spreading the healing gel and attempting to massage her breasts without moving. “Sure, we can talk about it sometime; no pressure.”

Ve are thankful Vani is understanding. Ve also wish to know if Vani is now free from pain.

“Pretty much,” Vani smiled, closing her eyes and leaning back. “But I wouldn’t mind staying like
this a while longer.”
Vani stripped off her underwear and threw herself onto the mattress. It had been a long day working on the dragon, rigging up the wings. Almost half the hooks had needed shifting, the spacing on the canvas’s eyelets being off by a fraction because of the stretch over the sheer size of the pieces. It was something she hadn’t accounted for, but she was glad she’d decided to only tack the hooks in place, just in case. But now she could put concerns like that out of her mind and just rest. Tentacle was downstairs, studying. Vani closed her eyes, head resting against a wayward pillow. She dozed for a while, occasionally glancing at her bedside clock.

She sat up slowly, later in the evening, pondering what to do for dinner. She checked the clock. It was a little later than usual, but she was ravenously hungry after all the work she’d done. Steak seemed about right. There was also the salmon, but that would require something heavier on the side. The steak would almost do on its own. Her mind made up, Vani headed downstairs, throwing on an apron for safety’s sake. And also because she’d like teasing former lovers by wearing nothing but an apron. She smiled at the memories.

The fridge was the first stop, and after feeding Bosco his roll, she grabbed a few things from the crisper drawer. The cool air against her skin also gave her an idea for playing with Tentacles another time—if ve liked warm temperature differentials, how might ve react to ice-play? It would be an interesting experiment. In the meantime, placing the vegetables on the sink, Vani reached back in and grabbed the steak. She lost herself in the ritual of cooking, prepping the vegetables between flipping and seasoning the steak.

Plating up, there was enough for Tentacles, if ve wanted any, but over the last few days, after finishing the growth required for ve tympanic membrane, ve hadn’t eaten much, except for occasional snacks. Ve had talked about resource exchanges and excess energetic burdens, saying something about planar integration greatly reducing baseline energy requirements. As best as Vani could translate, that meant ve wasn’t eating because ve didn’t need to. For a while.

Ve still admitted to liking apples, and crunchy foods for the beak-feeling. Vani pondered this as she ate, recalling a meal she’d once shared with Yuki in very interestingly themed Japanese restaurant. With the foods Tentacles liked it wouldn’t be hard to do something similar; but a lot of the appeal was in the visuals. Vani smiled. It would still be fun to try anyway. And they could also test what kinds of foods Tentacles could hold on or around ve body. Using tentacle suckers would be cheating, of course…

In the room that Vani referred to as the lounge—likely because it contained the upholstered object of the same name—Tentacles was studying and experimenting. First, ve was testing how broad ver range of hearing was with ver newly integrated tympanic membrane. Second, ve was expanding ver vocabulary, and learning about idiomatic expression. When ve talked with Vani about breeding, ve did not want to be misunderstood. Idioms were complex, given ve own lack of context with what Vani had called ‘the human experience’, and deciphering them took additional time to parse for additional meanings. Ve had been disrupted enough by Vani’s use of the diminutive name for a domestic feline in reference to her vagina—another language variant she referred to as slang.

Research had revealed at least two pure, logic-based languages, but both were difficult to speak. Ve had shown Vani how to access them on the metal information tablet—Laptop, ve reminded verself—but apparently that only allowed Vani enough information to understand what they were, not to speak them. The system which the laptop accessed was excellent for dissemination of information, but did not grant knowledge or learned background of that same information. For a cooperative
society, it seemed like an inefficient system—but they did not have access to chemical memory or consciousness sharing of any kind. So, for now, ve would be restricted to talking in English—the name of the auditory language used by Vani.

Vani had also offered to occasionally ingest chemical memory sequences in attempts to provide greater insight into or clarification of Tentacles’s goals. Ve was not sure how to use or approach this new willingness to attempt differential communication. It showed a deepening of the trust they shared in the relationship, and of each other. It had given ve pause when Vani had asked if, at some future juncture, they might experiment—very carefully—with influence chemicals. It both intrigued and slightly disturbed Tentacles that Vani might temporarily surrender her autonomy, even in a purely experimental context. Most sapients ve had previously encountered considered internal autonomy sacrosanct—and those few that didn’t usually formed gestalt minds from communal biological masses.

There were other factors to consider, such as Vani self-identifying as being deviant from normal human patterns of behaviour. It was not a negative deviance, but ve was not sure it was positive either. Without a more detailed baseline, ve could not identify the strength of the divergence, or its evolutionary purpose—if, indeed, it had one. Sapient beings were quite often responsible for all manner of evolutionarily unhelpful behaviour. Especially those that knew nothing of planar boundaries and how to utilise the energy therefrom.

Ve could feel slight vibrations as Vani walked over, circling ve once, tracing a finger softly around ve tympanic membrane. It was strange to be able to hear the noise that particular feeling made with such clarity.

“Doing more research?” Vani’s voice was clear, but with the vibration of ve tympanic membrane, it still sounded different than when ve had used ve pseudopods as an improvised tympanic system.

Ve are studying language so ve can communicate with clarity about processes of breeding with Vani

“You know, if I was confused about anything I’d just ask you to explain it, right?”

Tentacles wishes to have correct word shapes for such explanations

“You’ve got a lot of word-shapes already,” Vani gently traced her fingers along a tentacle. “But this is important to you, so you can tell me about it when you’re ready.”

Ve are thanking Vani for her consideration of Tentacles mind-shape during consolidation phase.

Ve are still having problems with minor auditory distortion of hearing Vani’s voice with tympanic membrane. Sound does not appear to propagate as singular notes but as frequency spread. Ve are still working on hypothesis.

“Your ear-thing is like a drum, right, covered with a layer of skin?”

Ve curled a pseudopod into an affirmative symbol.

“And what you were doing before—you were using like three or four ‘pods, right?”

Vani is suggesting interference patterning from overlaps, and that hearing now is greater in range?

“I think…” Vani drew out the word, trying to remember what she’d learned of acoustics in high school. “Hey, speaking of changing your ‘pods, how thin can you make them, or long, or big?”

Vani wishes to further understand Tentacles’s anatomy?
“I do,” Vani smiled, tracing her fingers around Tentacles’s tympanic membrane. “We both need to learn more, especially when we talk about breeding—and for our future experiments.”

Vani watched as Tentacles flicked the ends of ver ‘pods around like a cat’s tail, then she felt a pair winding around her ankle.

“I know you want to get the right words for talking about breeding, but can I ask what you know about pregnancy?”

Pregnancy is alternative term for human gestation caused by sex.

“Yes,” Vani sat, half-leaning against Tentacles’s body. “But you know I mean more than that.”

Tentacles understands, but is unsure how to present knowledge ve has gained due to differing categories. Ve cannot share gestalt of knowledge.

“You can try, I might get something.”

Vani guided a ‘pod towards her mouth, squeezing gently when it was close enough. It tasted coppery, like blood, but there was a hint of something like cinnamon, and maybe lemon zest. For a moment it felt as if something was growing inside her, something she wanted desperately to protect, and then a lot of confusion about her. She blinked. That was about as much as she normally got from a chemical memory anyway—she also wished she knew how it worked, to elicit those feelings and plant the ideas within her. It was a very different—if also very unreliable—kind of communication.

“I got some feelings, and maybe like something was growing inside.”

Tentacles is assuming if breeding occurred, Vani would allow egg to gestate internally until brooding/hatching phase.

“So it really would be a proper egg, growing inside me?” Vani had to admit to being intrigued, and a little confused. “If it was with someone else it’d be a baby growing inside me.”

‘Baby’ is name given to term-carried human offspring, correct?

“Yeah.”

If breeding occurred, our offspring would develop inside egg to be oviposited inside Vani. Egg limits offspring size until hatching.

“And how big are those eggs?”

Size is variable, egg is created in harmony with breeding partner. For breeding with Vani, optimal size would likely be slightly larger than ovipositor diameter.

“That could hurt,” Vani swallowed. “It could hurt both of us, or even the egg.”

This is why Tentacles is looking for correct word-shapes to express concerns similar to these.

“And what about the fact a child—any child—is going to be a long term responsibility; a person we’ll need to take care of. Someone whose wellbeing relies on us.” Vani pressed a little harder against Tentacles’s body. “And what if something goes wrong—or they get hurt too badly for us to fix?”

Ve are not sure. Responsibility would be shared burden/gift. If our offspring was hurt beyond our
capabilities for healing, ve are not sure what to do. Vani has previously mentioned normal human
aversion to newness and strangeness. Ve are understanding that this tendency could be deeply
problematic. In extremis, Vani or Tentacles may have greater capacity for making critical decision.
But ve hope we do not have to make such decisions.

“So do I,” Vani fidgeted, nestling against the tentacle draped against her shoulders. “But I might
just be worrying at nothing.”

Tentacles thinks these concerns are valid. Ve had different words to use, but core meaning is
sufficiently convergent.

Vani yawned, nestling back against Tentacles. “Hey, while we’re here, do you wanna try another
experiment—take your mind off searching for word-shapes?”

What are experimental constraints?

“I want to see what sorts of sizes you can make your ‘pods and tentacles, and maybe whether or not
I can actually take your ovipositor—but not for breeding, yet.”

Ve are understanding constraints; Vani begins?

Tentacles felt Vani gently compressing and stretching one of ver pseudopods. She asked if only
that one could be made longer. It took Tentacles a moment of concentration to isolate internal
flows and direct additional pressure towards the pseudopod in question. Ve could feel points of
warmth as Vani rested part of it against her thighs, then a more suffusing warmth as she began to
slowly coil and fold the pseudopod, working it back forth to lay in a strange pattern over her
stomach. Tentacles was unsure if the pattern had any significance, but allowed ver pseudopod to be
pulled and stretched yet further, feeling somewhat strange as Vani began to lay the remaining
length straight. Ve felt an odd shiver as a warm, soft constriction closed around a section close to
the tip, but ve could not be sure if the shiver was from ver, or Vani.

Ve definitely felt ver pseudopod tingle when Vani’s tongue licked the tip-flaps. The constriction
further down suddenly made sense—Vani was pressing her breasts together against that
pseudopod. Ve stretched that single pseudopod to its fullest, manipulating the tip slowly, and
arching the short section past Vani’s breasts as if it were some type of striking beast. Vani laughed
when the tip-flaps attempted to pinch her nose. The sound echoed through ver tympanic membrane,
and ve felt it through the length of the pseudopod covering Vani’s abdomen and running between
her breasts. Ve liked the suddenly shifting flush of heat it caused as Vani moved around.

“I guess that’s as far as you can stretch?” Ve felt Vani’s hands gently tugging against a length of
pseudopod. “Well, without hurting yourself.”

Vani’s conclusion is correct. Tentacles can extend up to three pseudopods to this length, but
additional pseudopods, tentacles, and body will be notably diminished.

“Wait…” there was a hint of puzzlement combined with understanding in Vani’s voice. “You
mean if you make parts of you big like this, other parts have to get smaller?”

Vani is correct again. Tentacles has only finite internal fluids to support overall mass and structure.
Passing fluids to individual structural components requires loss of form or structure in other areas.

“Sort of like a giant water balloon, okay.” Tentacles felt it as Vani slowly unraveled the pseudopod
from her stomach. “So, that’s length—what about girth… umm, making it thicker?”

Tentacles aligned several pseudopods in front of Vani, expanding them in stages so she could see
what ve was doing. Ve also decided to show off some finer control. The first pseudopod ve made thicker, then gently tapered down to the tip-flaps. The second ve shortened, expanding the tip until it was almost twice the size of the rest of the pseudopod. The third took careful concentration, gradually opening and closing internal membranes to allow for a multi-staged expanded/contracted appearance. The final pseudopod ve expanded until the tip was flattened out almost perpendicular to the pseudopod’s length.

“I think we should name those shapes,” Vani’s voice had an edge of excitement and anticipation. “I get the feeling I’m going to like experimenting with them—unless… do you already have names for them?”

Tentacles does not have names for pseudopod shaping configurations. Ve was showing off.

“But they’re not too difficult; they don’t hurt you?”

Reconfiguration may require a few moments, but is trivial otherwise. Does Vani still wish to name these shapes?

“Hell yes—especially if I’m gonna ask you to make them inside me.”

Tentacles held up the first configuration, tapered gradually down to the tip-flaps.

“Well that one’s easy,” Vani laughed. “Call it ’taper’.”

Ve raised the second shape before Vani, the expanded tip.

“Hey, can you move that shape up or down the ’pod?”

Tentacles concentrated for a moment, shifting the fluid within ver pseudopod up and down between internal membranes.

“Cool…” Vani shifted slightly. “We’ll call that shape ‘knot’.”

Tentacles held up the multi-staged pseudopod, allowing Vani to grip it and attempt to squeeze the fluid inside between the expansions.

“It looks kind of like a string of beads—or pearls. Yeah, we’ll call them pearls. Sounds cooler.”

What about final pseudopod configuration?

“The ‘club’,” Vani pronounced firmly. “Although I think I might like that more for a bit of impact play than anything inside me…”

Vani has completed naming of and experimenting with pseudopods?

“Can your tentacles do anything like that?”

Tentacles are morphologically designed for strength and stability. Minor expansion/contraction possible, but reshaping is difficult and limited.

“What about your tentacle pads then—I know you folded it backwards when you put it inside me.”

Ve held a tentacle pad in front of Vani, then slowly and deliberately went through a series of simple movements and reconfigurations. Ve folded the point down to the base of the pad, then back up. Ve curled the pad backwards and forwards. Ve splayed and flattened the pad slightly, then ve expanded the suckers on it. Ve formed reinforcing ridges on the back of the pad, then
demonstrated their purpose by attempting to fold the pad again.

“Okay, I get it,” Vani took the tentacle and gently lowered it to the floor. “Your ‘pods can do fancy stuff, your tentacles do strong stuff. But there was another appendage we were going to experiment with…”

My Ovipositor. Ve are still unsure about using—playing—with Vani.

Vani let out an odd, short breath. “I’m nervous too. It’s… well it’s huge, compared to anything I’ve ever taken before. And I’m scared I might hurt you too, because I already did with your tentacle pad, and that was smaller, so…”

Tentacles understands Vani trepidation. Ve are also unsure how to begin next phase of experiment.

Vani shifted, turning, then lay against the floor. “It’s probably better if I start lying down, right?”

Ve are unsure, but positioning seems better than sitting.

Ver echo sense showed Vani resting against her elbows. “Hey, would it be okay if I guided it?”

If Vani is using hands, and little force, this will be acceptable.

“Yes, I’ll be gentle.”

Ve rolled slightly, shifting tentacles and pseudopods so ve could slide ver ovipositor from ver cloaca. Ve felt it as Vani shuffled closer, the warmth of her hands gently radiating through the tip and upper rings of ver ovipositor. Ve also noticed the movement of Vani’s fingers, teasing the surface of ver ovipositor as it was manipulated into place. Once again ve felt the sensation of a slight shiver running down ver body. The sensation Vani had called tinges. It was not concentrated around the light pressure and teasing touches against ver ovipositor’s flesh, but more that ve was being manipulated—allowing parts of verself to be physically manipulated—towards a mutual goal.

Vani’s vulva felt very different against the lips of ver ovipositor. Labia felt almost like they would need to be forced apart, rather than enclose ver appendage. Ve could also feel Vani’s slight shiver at that first contact, her warm skin contrasting with ver cooler flesh. One of Vani’s hands gave the upper lip of ver ovipositor a careful, playful squeeze. She shivered slightly when it moved again.

“You never told me you could do that.”

Vani did not ask. Sometimes using lips—is this correct word?—required for careful placement of eggs during exomorphic breeding, or for forming seamless transfer vein with other ovipositor.

“Wow… okay,” Vani let out a breath. “If you want, you can use those lips and play for a moment.”

Vani delays due to nervous mindshape?

“You’re not nervous?”

Ve admit to having reservations, and unwanted recall of Vani’s accidental pain causing. But ve are also confident in Vani’s guidance of ovipositor. Ve are accepting risk of pain in pursuit of knowledge and shared goals.

Vani didn’t speak again, but ve felt it when she used only a single hand to guide ver ovipositor until the lips rested against her labia. And her fingers, spreading them wider. Ve already knew it would
not be enough. From the reluctant pace, ve suspected Vani knew this as well. With the lips of ver ovipositor already beginning to stretch the insides of Vani’s vagina, ve wondered how much would actually fit—regardless of the fact an entire tentacle pad had filled it out. Ve could also hear sharp, deep breaths from Vani, as if she was somewhere between fear and pain.

Ve placed a tentacle pad against Vani’s stomach, gently pulling up with ver suckers.

“Is it okay if I at least try to take a little more?”

Ve relaxed the suckers. Vani was choosing this, despite the difficulty, and perhaps less obvious pain. Ve felt an odd sense of relaxation suffuse ver as Vani attempted to insert a little more of ver ovipositor into her vagina. Ve could also feel tight bands of muscle beginning to constrict and ve hurriedly pulled up with ver suckers.

“I… know,” Vani’s breath was short, and she pulled the short length of ovipositor out of her. “It hurts both of us.”

Vani lay back, looking around at nothing in particular. She saw a ‘pod waving for her attention. Is Vani injured?

“No,” she shook her head. “It’s too much stretch—I can only take so much, and anything more is painful.”

This presents non-trivial problems for breeding. Vani likely does not desire pain for this purpose. Tentacles does not wish to cause pain by breeding. Understanding of egg size vs ovipositor size vs Vani size creates thoughtscape that indicates injury or severe pain inflicted on Vani during process. Tentacles is still desiring breeding with Vani, but is deferring until acceptable solution can be found for both of us. Ve are hoping Vani is also still desiring, but understanding of complications.

“It’s okay,” Vani sat up, turning around so she could nestle in against a mess of ‘pods. “We can work something out. Together.”

Ve are liking together.

“So am I,” Vani smiled, nestling down. “And if you want to wrap a few ‘pods around me while we think, I’m okay with that too.”
Outside Influences

There was a slight breeze in the air, taking the bite out of the early summer sun. Vani looked up, shading her eyes. Some wispy clouds, really high up. Light rain overnight had made the grass seem to grow an extra inch by morning. The cool, moist grass against her soles was invigorating. Bossco was waiting patiently by her side, ears perked up for the signal. Vani went in to a sprinter’s crouch. She could hear Bossco’s tail wagging almost ninety-to-the-dozen. She smiled.

“Go!”

Bossco zipped ahead of her as she launched herself into a powerful sprint, one hand playfully slapping the dog’s rump. He woofed with excitement and surged ahead. Vani turned, then did a zig-zag step, her fingers brushing his tail. He barked again, darting in front of Vani. Her next step turned into a frantic sideways dodge, and her next, slowing her massively as Bossco raced ahead.

“One of these days I’m gonna land on you when you do that.”

All she got was a happy woof as he came sprinting back and rubbed against her legs. She fell into a crouch again, and he tensed up beside her.

“Ready? Go!”

Feet pounding against the soft grass, hair flying out behind her, skin drinking in the sunlight, Vani felt alive. And free. Just a moment, with no other concerns. Slowing at the end of the run, she turned to look at the big clock she’d hung under the veranda. Nine-thirty.

They’d been out here, playing and exercising for a good twenty minutes. She was walking slowly, her breathing slowing back down to normal as Bossco panted away beside her. She lifted her arm and pointed towards the bucket beside the house.

“Go on, get a drink.”

Bossco ambled off, and by the time Vani got to the porch Bossco had come back around, his very cold nose nuzzling her thigh.

“Hey!” She moved him away with her leg. “That’s cold.”

He just nuzzled her leg again.

“No.”

He stopped, trying to look pathetic.

“Not gonna work,” Vani opened the jar of treats she kept on the porch, watching as Bossco suddenly got very alert. “Just one.”

She tossed the treat just off the porch, laughing as Bossco dived after it, bouncing it off his nose. While he was preoccupied, Vani headed inside to take a quick shower. Tentacles was in the lounge, doing more research on complex medical compounds. Ideas for further down the track. In case breeding proved to be more complicated than they might be able to manage.

In the shower, sitting to give her feet a good scrub, Vani’s mind kept jumping back to the sheer size of Tentacles’s ovipositor. Bigger than her arm. Considerably so. Painfully so—and not in a
good way. And then we needed to force an egg through it, into her. She looked up and got a face full of water. She’d played with larger toys in the past, sometimes two at once, and once three as a punishment—but feeling so filled and stretched just hadn’t been comfortable, though that was the point. It was why she couldn’t understand the allure of things like fisting. But she really did want to try with Tentacles. Breeding—just once, at least—seemed like the next logical step in their relationship.

The physical logistics of the act were something they would have to work out together, and carefully. But there was something she could experiment with right now. Still sitting, Vani turned so the shower was running down her back, then began to slowly tease her entrance with her middle finger, running around the outside of her labia. One finger. She smiled. One finger would never be a problem. Or a challenge. Or satisfying. Her index finger joined her middle finger. Two fingers. And if she curled them just—no. That wasn’t what she was supposed to be trying. Maybe just a little. She smiled. From what she could remember, doing it properly meant you had to be ready, and a bit relaxed. Or totally into it.

She let out a little breath, then let in a third finger. Just a little tight, a slight stretch. Another short breath, and then some gentle thrusts with those fingers, already feeling slick and slippery. Taking in a deep breath, she closed her eyes for a moment, feeling the tightness as that fourth finger entered her. Gently easing in, questing further, she found a formidable obstacle. Her knuckles. And the stretching crossed from uncomfortable to painful.

With a frustrated huff, Vani pulled her hand out before trying to drive it back in.

“Owww…” she sucked in a sharp breath. “Bad idea.”

She massaged her labia rather more gently, turning around again so the water ran down her front. Lots of practice. She grinned at the thought. And maybe we can help, with those expanding ‘pods. That was still going to hurt, or at least be deeply uncomfortable. And on the flipside, she knew she’d accidentally injured Tentacles with the strength of those muscles. It would take care and practice from the both of them. Still, she smiled, it’s gonna be fun figuring it out.

Massaging herself again, Vani stood, and turned the shower off. Towel in hand, she dried herself quickly, still dripping slightly on the bathmat. As she stood there, her thoughts turned again to what breeding with Tentacles would be like. Only then did she realise they hadn’t discussed the consequences—or how drastically being bred might differ from a regular pregnancy.

Lying sideways on the couch, face-to-something with Tentacles, Vani let a few ‘pods twine around her arm. The slight coolness of ver skin was nice in the afternoon warmth.

“So, if we do breed, you say you need to put in an egg inside me—but what then?”

Answering depends on question parameters. Does Vani wish to understand genetic-sequence analog splicing, biological functioning of egg, or gestational period purposes?

“Yes… all of those things?” Vani’s smile was slightly sheepish. “But maybe first: does it get bigger?”

Egg is not undergoing process of enlargement. Offspring within grows inside constraints of egg dimensions. When time of hatching approaches, offspring will rupture egg membrane—if inside host, membrane will be re-absorbed by host for nutrients; if outside host, will make mess, but can be consumed for initial sustenance of offspring.
“So… wait,” Vani frowned, confused. “If the egg doesn’t need a host, why use me?”

Because Tentacles enjoys relationship with Vani. Additional factors involved with external eggs, including nests, brooding, normal faculty for laying eggs or oviposition, or use of external fertilisation. Internally, egg is kept safe from normal environmental threats, and if breeder is safe, offspring is also safe. In current state, Tentacles could only use external egg for parthenogenetic offspring. This is undesirable, as offspring would be exact copies, lacking adaptations or traits useful to this plane.

Vani shook her head, then played with her hair, trying to take it all in. She had known it wouldn’t be simple, but a lot of the information she’d been given just raised more questions. Part of it might have been subconscious reluctance to be bred by an alien—or to have something that large placed within her. Another part was the sheer weirdness of the situation. There was nothing wrong with it, in theory, it was just weird. That was probably another factor throwing her off. She still wanted to—when they could work out the physical logistics of the act—and now, somehow, despite the fact she was resolved to do this, she felt less sure about it than when it was just a theory.

A ‘pod pressing softly against her shoulder brought Vani’s mind back to the current conversation.

Vani is requiring time for mind-state consolidation?

“Yeah,” Vani smiled, placing her free hand against a roaming tentacle. “It’s weird. I want to breed with you, but at the same time I guess I’m kinda afraid of it too.”

Does Vani fear harm or injury caused by Tentacles?

“No,” she frowned, sitting up. “I don’t actually know what I’m afraid of—or even if it’s really fear.”

Would you like touch of comfort around chest and shoulders during consolidation?

Still frowning—but more in confusion than anything else—Vani tried to make sense of the question. Because Tentacles didn’t normally specify where ve would touch her during a touch of comfort, and—

“Are you asking if I want to cuddle?”

This is name for shared touch of comfort that encircles upper body?

“Oh, a hug. And yes.”

It felt different, ‘pods wrapping around her shoulders, seemingly unsure of whether or not to pull her closer. She knelt and wrapped her arms around Tentacles’s body. Ve responded with a gentle squeeze before retracting ver ‘pods. Vani sat with her back against Tentacles’s body, thinking. She was trying to tease out what it was that might have been holding her back. It wasn’t the idea of breeding. It wasn’t that it might be painful, or require some strange preparations. Even the idea of an egg growing like that inside of her wasn’t scary—even with the scenes of those chestbursters popping into her mind. Thanks for that, brain. She frowned, brows almost knitted together as she tried to figure out why her fear was so vague despite feeling so specific at the same time.

And then she remembered tasting Tentacle’s gestalt-memory about breeding. About wanting and feeling something inside her, and being sad when it was missing. About their conversation of what they would do if something bad happened to their offspring. It wasn’t breeding she was afraid of at all.
It was motherhood.

It was enormous, and daunting, and she had no idea where to start, except…

Vani shook her head. Much as asking her mother might be a brilliant plan, her mother was also a terrible gossip. Swearing her to secrecy wouldn’t work too well, either, given Vani’s past experiences. *I wonder what dad’s up to these days?* Her and her father hadn’t always seen eye-to-eye, but he had always been willing to listen. And when she’d been planning to adult film work, and asked him in roundabout ways, he’d somehow seemed to know what she was trying to ask the whole time. The idea clearly hadn’t made him happy, but he’d kept it from her mother basically forever.

“I need to find my phone.” Vani stood, hurrying upstairs.

It took three rings for him to answer.

“Hi dad.” It was tentative—Vani couldn’t remember the last time they’d talked properly.

“Hayseed—wait, are you okay?” His concern was instant.

“I’m fine, really. It’s just been… I don’t know, how long?”

“You’re right. Kinda my fault too, getting wrapped up with work projects. You’re lucky, really, caught me on a day off. So, what’s on your mind?”

Was it really going to be that easy? “I’m kinda thinking about children. Maybe even my own—but I’m scared about it too.”

“Scared about what, Hayseed?”

“Motherhood, I think,” Vani let out a quiet breath. “There’s just so much I don’t know.”

“Then why not ri—oh, yeah. And I know exactly who she’d tell first. Sorry, go on…”

“Actually, I was kinda hoping you would—well, fatherhood. It’s kinda similar, right?” Vani could tell her words were almost tripping over each other in their nervousness to get out.

“Slow down, you’ll be okay,” she heard her father take a breath, and could imagine him squaring his shoulders for the next part. “Well, first off, are you pregnant?”

“No.”

“Then you’ve got a lot of time to sort through this,” his voice was calming, somehow. Full of wisdom. “Although you might never feel like you’re ready until the day comes. I know your mother didn’t.”

“And you only said ‘maybe your own’ children,” and now Vani was imagining her father raising just one eyebrow at that. “Are you thinking of being a surrogate?”

“No, actually,” she couldn’t lie to him, but she could perhaps be frugal with the truth. “I’ve met someone recently, and we’ve really hit it off over the past few months. I don’t think we’re rushing into things—we’re not really trying yet—but I… I guess I kinda wanted some support.”

“You’re growing up too fast for me, Hayseed, but it’s fine,” Vani closed her eyes, letting out a breath as she felt a tear forming in the corner of her eyes. “And your new partner, they’re willing to wait while the two of you sort it out?”
“Ve’s been very accommodating so far.”

“Ve?”

“Oh, ve’s non-binary.” Which was a lot better than ‘ve’s a tentacle alien from another dimension’.

“Okay, I still really don’t understand that whole thing, but if he—ve—makes you happy, and might give me grandbabies, I ain’t complaining. But you’re sure you’re really okay?”

“Yeah…” Vani let it hang, maybe a little too long. “I think so. I needed someone to talk to.”

“Hey, what about talking to your friend Cora, too?”

“She doesn’t have kids, dad,” laughing softly, Vani continued. “And anyway, we do keep in touch. Well, less touchy than our college days, but we communicate.”

Her father was laughing on the other end of the line. “Don’t worry, I learned my lesson that day.”

“So did we.”

There was a lengthy pause.

“Dad… is there anything you’d like to talk about?”

“No, it’s just boring project stuff. Actual boring, trying to get around an aquifer. I needed a day off to think of new solutions.”

“Well, good luck.”

“Thanks Hayseed,” it was sincere. “I’ll try not to be such a stranger—but you gotta promise the same.”

“Okay dad, I’ll try.”

“And please let me know if I really am going to have grandkids. I’d like to meet them before all my hair falls out.”

Vani couldn’t help but laugh—her father had been bald since his late 30’s. “I’ll let you know. Bye.”

Hanging up, Vani fell back against her bed, bouncing softly on the mattress. It was true, she’d really just needed someone to talk to. A perspective outside her own—but still easy to understand. It had been years since anyone had called her ‘Hayseed’, and in her teens, she’d hated the nickname. But now, hearing it from her father again, it felt a lot warmer. It probably always had been, but she just hadn’t appreciated it.

Downstairs, waiting, Tentacles found verself idle. It was an odd sensation, to not have any pressing need or objective, and to let verself almost drift on the tides of another intelligence’s desires. Ve was content to follow Vani’s desires, and to allow her to lead the relationship. After all, she had strongly indicated that they would attempt breeding—it was the physical logistics of the act that had to be overcome. Primarily to minimise pain and prevent any possible injuries.

Vani’s conversation—muffled though it had been, it was clear she had been talking to someone else—had ended some time ago. Tentacles decided it was time to investigate, and headed upstairs. Stairs were something that remained an interesting challenge to surmount. Vani’s physiology and bipedal locomotion made it seem so easy to traverse such small sequential rises. Tentacles’s
physiology made it a rather more interesting experience. Ve had in fact attempted a great number of locomotive techniques to deal with those stairs, but the simplest by far was to reach out on each side with a tentacle, grip the wooden boards close to the sides of each step, and use fluidic contractions to pull verself up.

Ve could also push off from the ground in the same way, or use ver pseudopods to grip each of the vertical struts at the side of the stairs, and essentially roll up sideways. Given sufficient speed ve could also simply roll up the stairs, though it left minor bruising when doing so. That method was also noisy enough to awaken Vani from her somnolence, the first time ve had tried it. There was also the option of placing tentacles against the internal roof of the dwelling, and alternating their movement such that ver body didn’t even touch the stairs as ve ascended.

And if ve was feeling truly lazy—at least, as far as it came to physical exertion—ve could create an effect to modify the local gravitic tensor field around ver body. Nullifying vectors would be more than sufficient for such a low altitude. It was also something ve wished ve could have done upon ver emergence into this plane.

Ve realised how much ver mind had drifted in idleness, and noted with some surprise that ve was still at the bottom of the stairs. Pulling verself up the stairs, ve waited outside Vani’s open door.

“I heard you come up the stairs,” Vani called out. “Come on.”

Tentacles rolled into Vani’s bedroom, ver echo-sense indicating that Vani was lying on the bed. Ve raised ver pseudopods higher than normal to ensure Vani could see them.

Has Vani resolved mind-state concerns satisfactorily?

“I think so,” Tentacles heard a short breath. “I called my dad. He gave me some advice. Well, someone to talk to, anyway.”

Vani’s father knows about Tentacles?

“No,” Vani’s voice was suddenly very firm. “He just knows I’m thinking about having a child. He thinks it’s with another human.”

Vani has deliberately misled her father?

“I didn’t tell him the whole truth—I mean, what if he tells someone? What if the authorities find out? Or try and take both of us away?”

Tentacles is capable of self-defence, anchoring, and evasion of detection. Unless unspecified others attack with sharks.

Ve heard Vani laughing, and seeming to hit something softly. “I’d rather we never have to find out.”

Vani wishes to keep Tentacles existence secret from all other humans, for protection of self?

“Yes.”

Possible alternative: If Vani tells all other humans of Tentacles existence, is risk reduced due to cooperative society?

“I wish,” Vani seemed unsure. “It’d make anything happening to us much bigger news, but it wouldn’t really stop anything bad. There’s a lot of people that would attack us just for being
different.

Cooperative society dislikes such differences?

Tentacles heard Vani’s sigh. “Did you ever research ‘war’?”

Yes. Humans having seemingly violent tribal urges. Or foolish notions about ownership of non-demarcated physical boundaries. Notable global conflicts over mistreatment of selected groups seemed justifiable. Ve are unsure of scale of response revelation of Tentacles existence might cause.

“If we were very lucky, or could maybe prove you weren’t a threat; I don’t think much’d happen. But most likely, someone would start a war, trying to claim us, and figure out how powerful you are, and if you would work with them. Worst case, they would try and cut you apart to figure out how you function.”

Losing physical manifestation on current planar reality would be most disconcerting and inconvenient, but would not prove fatal to Tentacles.

“You coul—that’s right, you said your gestalt is separate from your body.”

Correctness. Losing physical manifestation would also present severe challenges for interacting on physical level, and for keeping gestalt keyed to singular location. Ve are also understanding that Vani’s species lacks any faculty for survival of gestalt if physical form is rendered unsurvivable.

“Wait…” Vani’s voice indicated skepticism. “You seemed afraid of being eaten by sharks, which would be pretty much the same result.”

Physical manifestation for planar anchoring is a core precept for conquest or infiltration. Losing ability to influence physical area of plane represents massive loss of potential resources and contact. Ve would not die, but ve might be involuntarily moved between planes by shifting of other creatures or intelligences. Returning to datum point in Vani’s planar reality may prove impossible, or become temporally unstructured resulting in branched timeline external to plane but containing universe with new planar insertion datum. Via process of uniplanar integration Tentacles has attenuated risks in case of physicality destruction, but risks are still existing.

“I think I understand. You did something that means there’s less chance of you being shuffled into another plane, but if you lose your body, it might not be enough. And possibly something about time travel breaking things.”

Tentacles would like to establish point that time travel always breaks something. Ve would also like to discuss topics other than ramifications of human society learning of ver existence.

“How about how getting tingles affected you the other day?”

This is discussion of interest to Tentacles. Understanding physical causative effect of changing mind-state reciprocating to physical sensation is difficult to reconcile. Sensation only caused by contact and guidance of other entity while rapport exists between us. Ve postulate that trust is element of this reciprocal-physical mind-state effect.

“That makes sense,” Vani’s voice hinted at deeper reasoning. “If you didn’t trust me you’d probably be more concerned with getting hurt, or moved around weirdly or something like that.”

There is more to mind-state. I think some effect may be from partial surrendering of bodily autonomy when Vani guided pseudopods and ovipositor.
“Would you like me to do it again; another experiment?”

Yes.

Ve could hear Vani’s laugh. Likely because ver pseudopods had somehow tangled themselves in ver enthusiasm to answer. Ve could feel Vani’s fingers as she gently pulled those pseudopods away from each other. But there was no tingling. Yet.

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