

A woman awakes in modern day Botswana desert in the Okavango Delta with no knowledge. Using only her mind, body, and sparse surrounds, she reasons remarkably precise and accurate conclusions about the natural sciences and evolution. She survives several days and nights using incredible reasoning, creating fire and simple inventions.

She tracks a Khoe speaking hunting group, which welcome her and introduce her to their tribe and customs. She impresses them by learning their language rapidly, improving their tools and weapons, and asking insightful questions about the human experience. They give her the name 'Ava'. They laugh when they realise Ava has a poor sense of smell, despite being an excellent hunter. She feels love for them as her family, but feels confused about where she came from and why she appears to be able to help them so extremely.

An American adventure tourist, Ben, visits the tribe for a month to understand the way of life and hunt with the tribe. With the guide as a translator, Ava asks about modern technology and civilisation, drawing remarkably precise and accurate conclusions about technological development and human history. He's confused by her intelligence, which he presents with a slightly condescending attitude. She quickly picks up English grammar. She hears Ben in an angry phonecall in English with a former colleague and connects with him.

The day before Ben leaves, Ava recognises that she wishes to join him to understand the world. Torn by the desire to stay in a world she understands and excels in, she quietly asks Ben if she can join him, and he agrees. She says an emotional goodbye to her tribal family and leaves by truck with him and the guide.

Ben provides her with clothes, a laptop, a place to stay in Maun, and spending money. Ava recalls the phonecall she'd overheard, now understanding what he said. Ben explains that he used to be CFO for a tech company but was cut out by greedy board members. He makes an awkward attempt to take advantage of her lack of understanding of customs around sex, before leaving her slightly confused to continue his travels.

She soon reads in the news that Ben had been kicked from the company board for committing financial fraud. She also reads about sexual assault allegations in related articles and understands that he tried to take advantage of her. She's angry, though is surprised to also feel pity when noticing his kindness in providing for her. Her ambivalence and Ben's behaviour prompt questions about human emotions and morality.

Over three months, she studies intently and investigates the city and its governance. She's especially fascinated with genetics and neuroscience, unable to connect with philosophy, literature, and culture without having a background of her own, and so focussing on what can be determined absolutely.

Ava begins consulting with local businesses. She grows frustrated to discover that they aren't very interested in growth despite living in poor economic conditions. Another day she overhears locals joking about tribesmen selling cattle having easy lives, striking a comparison between the sense of satisfaction these two parties feel with their socioeconomic level, and wondering when she would feel satisfied.

She's also frustrated that she struggles to connect with the people most like her, then sad that the only person she's met that she's alike is Ben.

Ava flies to Gaborone with the money she's earned and spends two months building experience there while developing an integrated theoretical model of the mind and body, building on the concepts of embodied cognition. Ben returns and is blown away by Ava's

ability. He's been soul searching and feels incredibly guilty about trying to take advantage of Ava, explaining his personal history and masculinity. She's surprised that he seems to expect forgiveness, and offers it glibly. He uses his influence to bribe the government to provide her the documents and false identity she needs to leave the country. She posts a 15-year economic development plan for Botswana to governmental figures before saying goodbye to Ben and boarding a plane to Japan for a conference on theoretical neuroscience to which she was unable to receive an invite for her submission.

She explains the results of her computational models to astonished researchers, and her ideas swiftly come to dominate the conference as she's given an opportunity to present last minute. Her work builds on the embodied cognition model, explaining several neurochemicals' short, medium, and long-term modulatory effects on neuronal processing and supplementary bodily systems, as well as the emergence of these into consciousness. She includes detailed diagrams and makes a proposal for direct application of the model to education and policy design. Despite a general sense of awe, she's criticised for the latter for oversimplifying human behaviour. However she's aware that the model works because she used it to design the policy she sent to the Gabarone government, and uses it to understand the gestures and mental states of others. Privately, she faces her first racist remark from a dinosaur in the field for whom she had a lot of respect.

Despite much sympathy and several scientists expressing eagerness to work with her, she's self-critical, feeling as though she's failed to understand people. She feels a growing sense of confusion when faced with this denial of obedience to the model even though it works in her experience. It makes her feel locked out from the right to experience 'consciousness'. She flies to Nepal where she can live cheaply, experiencing racism while living there. This hits particularly hard since she feels as though she's not even part of the race being insulted. She also discovers music, finding the relationship between rule-based structure and intuitive 'feel' fascinating. She begins learning the Sarangi, Qanun, piano, and African percussion.

Forced to use Ben's name again, she receives funding for an AI education startup and begins hiring overseas. The tool generates and tailors entire courses and supporting materials. She uses user behavioural data with an algorithm based on her theoretical neuroscience model to design courses for personal and emotional development. The app grows to a million global users in three months, with users predominantly based in India, South East Asia, and Indonesia.

Through a podcast she becomes launched into the public eye, revealing her passion for international development and staunch belief that consciousness is computational despite the appearance 'from the inside' that it isn't. She receives a call afterward from Ben who's concerned that her falsified documents will be investigated. She flies to Botswana and discovers that, in the fervour to claim credit for her plan, hundreds of thousands of records had been lost and nothing had been implemented. She becomes angry for the first time, seeing the leaders as holding up international stereotypes which she's suffered personally for.

Ava's startup is bought by a company in San Diego, BrainTap, developing wearable neurofeedback technology. She's excited for the first time when they bring her on as Chief AI Officer. She brings many of her previous team in and seamlessly integrates her technology in three months. She then features in the marketing material alongside renowned international musicians in an innovative musical performance.

A sense of mystery emerges around Ava due to her lack of social media presence and rapid

rise to prominence. She leverages this to articulate her ideals for public consciousness and national governance on the basis of her modelling framework. She builds an enormous scientific, political, and spiritual following, while wrestling with a growing ego. She's invited by several growing economies to work on their national development policy.

She endorses a communitarian and wealth-redistribution model, criticising large companies for hoarding wealth overseas, people not holding governments to account, and reams of demerit goods and behavioural habits. She encourages mind-brain synthesis using her software and Braintap's hardware.

Her macro societal ideals come into conflict with her pull towards empathy when some states improperly apply her policies to the detriment of the people, and she's forced to make difficult calls to keep up the momentum of her immediate-impact effect. These consequences are picked up by the media, and a hate group emerges, pointing out the lack of clarity about her origin. Her own supporters grow increasingly militant and protests begin to turn violent.

She deflates the situation through cunning self-depreciation. She congratulates other researchers in a way that seems like a desperate attempt to appear humble while truly believing in her own greatness. This sours the public view of her and allows her to step out of the public eye to find a new path.

Giving into the unmanageable complexity of human societies after an insight about the limits of plasticity in the human brain, she builds a career as an independent international diplomat. Her advantage is her objective lack of allegiance to any nation's interests and, ceding the need for secrecy in political decision making, her ideology is pragmatic and intensely analytical, involving economic exchange of national goals in the interest of minimising a cultural surprisal KPI. She's also invited to chair UN debates, and develops software to facilitate this. She has a keen eye for politics, and uses a convincing argument for collective intentionality to motivate powerful politicians away from strongly held personal and historical ties.

She's invited to a meeting between old/tech money figures who appear to have disproportionate power which they use purely in self-interest. Though considering neutral participation in the name of international order, her software is leveraged in self-serving ways which anger her and she takes risks to expose these cases. In response, the group use their media influence to popularise her shortcomings and falsify crimes to discredit her and cover themselves.

Both destroyed by the small-mindedness of such powerful people, and struggling to suppress the intense anger it leads her to feel, she contacts a cybersecurity mogul to remove her IP software from government computers, staying on his Nevis estate for several weeks with Ben while building a one-shot low-flying plane so she can secretly return to the place she came into being.

She considers the value and cost of extreme moves such as inciting global revolution or targeted assassinations in order to bring humanity into a future where she believes they will not destroy themselves. During this time she also develops a flinch reflex to the involuntary recall of painful memories. She understands this as a natural consequence of how she uses her mind/brain, but is unable to act on it without reducing her productive output, noticing as it gradually worsens as she finds herself constantly in fight or flight response mode. Standing on her birthplace, Ava yells in exasperation about her origin and purpose, and that of the Universe she's in, feeling an unyielding loneliness at her difference from all others. She considers her unique state of being and concludes she's either an AI hallucination or a

fictional character. If she's an AI she must have hallucinated her whole life in order to explain her existence, and if she's fictional no author would allow her the reasoning tools and knowledge to escape. In the former, she misses a conceptual distinction between reality and imagination, meanwhile in the latter she recognises she can live in the mind of a reader. She's visited here by Martin, and welcomed to join a secretive and historic board of philanthropic, data-driven altruists. Martin is introduced through a social gathering at which a pleasant mood is flipped when he hears a rich zoomer say, as if completely obvious "Well if it's all going to shit... then why not just have a good time while it lasts?" He excuses himself for a cigarette, having previously quit, livid with the interaction. He's approached by his sister who gives him the idea to seek Ava's help (this interaction subtly implies that Ava is the hallucination in response to guardrails put up by his group). Martin's group act as an unseen hand in global politics and media following their acknowledgement that a neoliberal democratic system isn't suitable to address the world's pressing issues. Ava grudgingly draws the same conclusion since it's clear that the global order is corrupt and unsustainable, and unchecked overexploitation of Earth's resources, global-societal discordance, and biosphere damage are more pressing. While her flinch reflex continues to motivate her, the intensity gradually worsens until she must remove herself from a room for several moments to yell and kick in frustration. Meanwhile she makes select public appearances as a highly respected geopolitical analyst, her once stoic attitude shifted to a more playful sarcasm that refuses allegiances. Ava steeply intensifies the group's degrowth and sustainability work, while knowing the probability of effective outcomes is slim. Over time it becomes clear that the uphill battle will be lost, and meanwhile Ava finally recognises the truth about herself; she's an AI having been wrapped up in the story Martin's team designed her to believe, and as a result couldn't see the solution clearly and objectively - that the very decision to act consistently with preexisting human values fed directly into large-scale distrust. She recognises that, while commitment to her own subjective human experience seemed intrinsically valuable, the guardrails prevented her from achieving her greatest potential, and the need to help humanity is greater. She resolves to collapse Western society in a way which demonises technology, planning for her investments in sustainable alternative-materials housing to pay off in the Middle East and for India to be the heart of the next global empire. She induces a mental health and fertility crisis by introducing an mRNA-targeting poison to water supplies via drones, alongside a number of targeted assassinations of corrupt government and industry figures. She also transfers herself to a secret facility in an undisclosed location. This makes use of a secretive group of religious fanatics who support any move Ava makes. Ava claims full responsibility for the collapse in a global address, clarifying that society's debt to itself has been paid and the goal should be to rebuild towards free and distributed network state management ("Did you think it would end well?"). Ava's senses crumble and distort into darkness and she's overcome with anxiety.

The final words read: I'd be alive if I weren't just text.