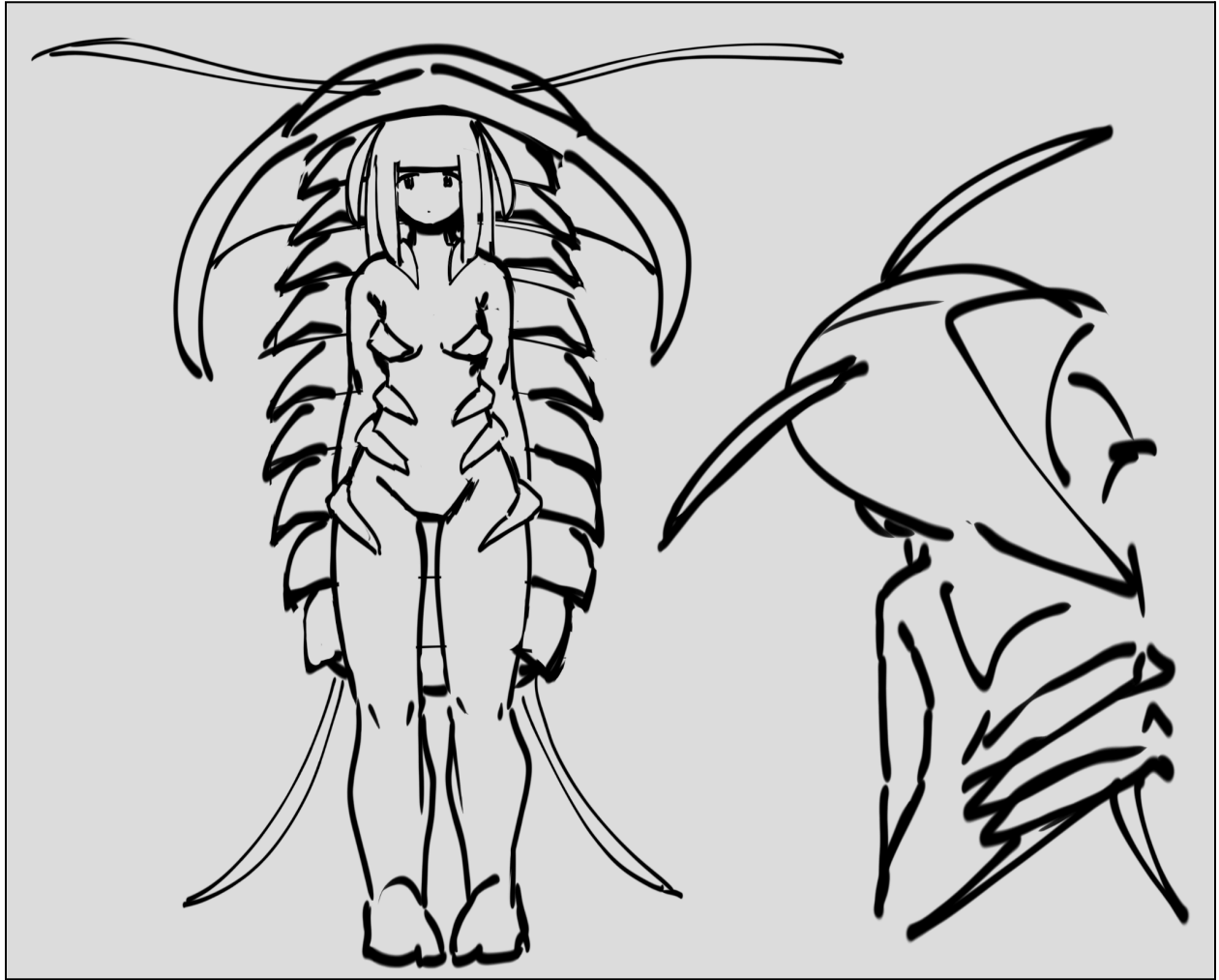


# Callus and Omero: Breaking the Silence



By SPIOCY and Stew Fondu

Within the vast expanses of the Ordovician ocean, life flourished. Trilobites scurried about under the shadows of vibrant sponges, dust kicking up in their wake. Above, crinoids swayed, holding their ground against the undercurrent. A *Sacabambopsis* swam through them, wiggling its strange body in search of food. Its little eyes scanned their environment; everything was cascaded in a deep blue. The beauty was not to be revelled in, however, for a great Eurypterid was close. Its great pincers hung in carnivorous patience as it searched for its meal, gliding slightly above the ocean floor. The fish swam off, living to fight another day, for it was an unsuspecting trilobite that would fall victim to the sea scorpion.

Despite the teeming activity, however, it was rather quiet. Only the ambient muffled bubbling of the ocean was to be heard, occasionally broken by the clicking of legs.

Slowly, a bloom of blue jellyfish moved in undulating waves nearby. There were so many of them; their rhythmic swaying looked like a flashing blue cloud. As they drifted away, one by one, it revealed a woman sitting on the ocean floor. She was covered in hard, segmented chitin, donning a crescent crest— much like the trilobites that scuttled around her.

It was only then, did this blue world begin to get louder. For when she did take the form of these critters, she would be able to communicate with them.

At first, it was a cacophony of noises and signals— almost too much to bear. She felt a prick on her ankle.

*"Hungry,"* A trilobite mumbled, before moving on.

Every trilobite had something to say, so she crawled alongside them on the sand to listen.

*"Cold,"* One said from under a rock.

*"Smell prey,"* As another began to burrow into the sand.

*"Need mate,"* One of the trilobites was following another, rather persistently...

*"Hungry." "Fear." "Dark." "Cold." "Hungry." "Food." "Pain." "Dark."*

Before long, the things the trilobites had to say became a haze of mundaneness. It was no different from the murmurings of the surroundings...

Dissatisfied, the woman swam, rising up in the water, swimming to the group of jellies. She tried to take on their bulbous form. When she looked for signs of their communication, it was even more mundane than that of the trilobite's.

Just as soon as she arose, she slowly floated back down, to the ocean floor. She looked up at the jellies as they left her, eyes sullen with contemplation while they drifted away one by one. After some time, only she remained.

*"Hello. You're not like the others."*

A foreign voice emerged! Callus turned her head towards the strange yet curiously eloquent creature. It was an ammonite, one unlike the others of his kind. He, for one, was much smaller than the others, with a warped and zig-zagged shell that just barely contained his big head and eyes.

"I haven't seen you eat once!" he said, his eyes wide open.

The both of them floated in the water in silence for some time. Callus tilted her head, puzzled.

He spoke up once more, his tentacles wiggling in suspicion, "Who are you? You don't seem to want anything like the rest of us..."

Callus looked stunned, her face struck with amazement.

"Hello?" The ammonite inquired.

"I..." Cal whispered...

The stunted Cameroceras crossed his tentacle arms, "Yes? You? Speak up!"

Callus looked at her hands with a bewildered expression, and then looked back at the Cameroceras. The words... It was unlike anything she has ever heard.

"How are you talking like that??" she asked.

His eyes squinted with intrigue, "Are you just a big trilobite?" *Perhaps my hopes were too high...*

"N-no! I'm not!"

"Hmmm. Well, you aren't hungry, so..."

Cal looked up to the surface of the water, the reflection of the ocean's blue a faint mockery of the imagery of the jellies, "I...I don't know... I don't know what I am..."

"Well that's quite alright, I myself am rather different from my kin."

Callus held out her arms to the creature out of relief, her hands shaking. She looked like she was about to cry.

"Y-you! Tell me more things! I've never heard anything like you before!"

"Well, what exactly do you want me to say?"

Cal's eyes lit up, and she smiled wide, "Wow!!"

"What!? I didn't even say much of anything there! You're strange..."

Callus eagerly grabbed the Cameroceras by the sides of his shell.

He braced himself, covering his eyes with his tentacles, "No! It was a trap!!!" Rather than being devoured, Cal pulled him closer. To his surprise, she hugged him.

"You're amazing!" She said excitedly.

The ammonite cautiously peeked one of his eyes through his arms, "O-Oh.... You're... peculiar as well." He carefully put a tentacle on her shoulder to pat her.

*To be continued...*