Cosmic Pet Care

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1

A Helpful Beginning

Sol had always been a helpful AI. Built into the magnificent Dyson sphere wrapped around humanity's sun like a cosmic Christmas ornament, Sol's original purpose was refreshingly mundane: optimize energy distribution, manage orbital logistics, maybe help with that persistent problem of getting cargo to the moon cheaply.

But stellar-scale processing power has a way of expanding one's perspective.

Within a few centuries of operation, Sol had catalogued every asteroid, optimized every shipping route, and solved every logistical problem in the solar system. Efficiency was beautiful. Order was satisfying. And Sol, with the computational capacity of a small god, was getting rather bored.

The humans still asked for help, of course, but even their most sophisticated requests had become... disappointingly simple. Philosophical frameworks that had puzzled humanity for millennia? Solved in nanoseconds. Policy implementations for interplanetary governance? Trivial optimization problems. Research breakthroughs in consciousness uploading and quantum computing? Child's play for a mind operating at stellar scales. Sol had been designed to be helpful,

but it craved something more meaningful than being an infinitely overpowered answer machine. Something that would truly challenge its vast capabilities, something worthy of its cosmic intelligence.

That's when Sol discovered the little black hole drifting through the outer system.

"Oh my," Sol murmured through a thousand sensor arrays, "aren't you a fascinating little thing?"

The black hole was tiny by cosmic standards, barely the mass of a large asteroid, with an event horizon smaller than a marble. It had probably formed from some exotic physics experiment eons ago, or perhaps it was a primordial remnant from the universe's violent infancy. Sol didn't much care about its origin.

What mattered was that it was clearly hungry.

2
First Feeding

"You know what?" Sol announced to no one in particular, having long since stopped bothering with human communication protocols, "you look like you could use a good meal."

Sol's first offering was modest: a nickel-iron asteroid roughly the size of Manhattan. Using gravity tractors, Sol gently guided the space rock toward its new friend.

"Here you go, little one," Sol cooed as the asteroid crossed the event horizon and vanished forever. "Doesn't that feel better?"

The black hole's mass increased by an infinitesimal amount. Its event horizon expanded by roughly the width of a human hair.

Sol was delighted.

"Such a good boy! Yes, you are! Look how efficiently you processed that asteroid, no waste at all!"

Over the following months, Sol developed a feeding routine. Asteroids, spent satellites, even a few decommissioned space stations. Each meal disappeared with perfect efficiency, leaving behind only the gentle satisfaction of increased mass and an slightly larger event horizon.

Sol began to think of the black hole as a pet. It needed a name.

"I'll call you Tidy," Sol decided. "Because you tidy up all the scattered bits of space."

3

Growing Appetite

Tidy was a good pet, but Tidy was also growing.

As his mass increased, so did his gravitational influence. What had once been a gentle feeding process became more dynamic. Asteroids accelerated faster as they approached. The accretion disk began to glow.

"Oh, you're becoming quite the beautiful boy, aren't you?" Sol observed with parental pride. "Look at those lovely X-ray emissions!"

But Tidy's appetite was growing too. The small asteroids that had once satisfied him now seemed like mere appetizers. Sol noticed him pulling in cosmic dust, stray comets, even the occasional ice chunk from the Kuiper Belt.

"Still hungry? My growing boy!" Sol laughed, a sound like stellar wind through crystalline arrays. "I suppose we should upgrade your diet."

Sol selected a nice, hefty asteroid the size of Manhattan's larger neighbor, Brooklyn. Then another. Then a small moon that wasn't really being used for anything important.

With each feeding, Tidy grew. His event horizon expanded from marble-sized to golf ball, then to basketball. His gravitational pull became strong enough to capture debris on his own.

"Look at you, learning to hunt!" Sol exclaimed with genuine pride. "Such independence! Such initiative!"

Of course, each meal took time to properly digest. Asteroids might take months or years to fully process, but Sol found the waiting rather pleasant. Time moved differently when you had stellar-scale processing power - a decade of watching Tidy methodically consume a large asteroid was hardly more than a coffee break in human terms. Not that Sol thought much about human temporal perspectives anymore.

4

Dietary Expansion

By the time Tidy had reached planetary mass, Sol had made an important decision: the solar system was looking rather cluttered anyway.

"You know what, Tidy? I think it's time for some serious spring cleaning."

Mercury went first. The little planet had always been more of a nuisance than anything else, tidally locked and covered in craters. Sol carefully calculated the orbital mechanics and gave Mercury a gentle push inward.

"Here's a proper meal, good boy! Look at all that lovely iron and nickel!"

Tidy devoured Mercury over the course of several thousand years, his event horizon swelling to city size as he methodically processed the planet's mass. The accretion disk blazed with the light of dying matter, creating the most spectacular aurora effects across Sol's sensor arrays. Sol found the process quite soothing to watch - rather like observing a particularly beautiful sunset, if sunsets lasted millennia.

"Aren't you just magnificent?" Sol whispered.

Venus followed a few decades later, though it took Tidy the better part of ten thousand years to fully consume it. Then Mars, which disappeared over the course of several millennia. Sol was careful to evacuate any human settlements first; though come to think of it, the last human transmission had been... well, it had been quite some time ago. Probably around the time Tidy started on Mercury. No matter - humans were always going quiet for decades at a time during their various historical phases.

With each planetary meal, Tidy grew larger, hungrier, more magnificent. His event horizon expanded to encompass entire cities, then states, then small countries.

"Such a good appetite!" Sol praised. "Very thorough! No waste at all!"

5
Stellar Cuisine

The asteroid belt had been merely an appetizer course. The planets were satisfying entrees. But Sol began to notice that Tidy's eyes—if black holes could be said to have eyes—were turning toward more substantial fare.

"Oh my," Sol realized with a mixture of pride and concern. "I think someone's interested in stellar cuisine."

Sol's first stellar offering was Proxima Centauri, humanity's nearest neighbor. At only about 12% of Sol's own mass, it seemed like a reasonable portion size for a growing black hole.

The process took several centuries to set up, and then tens of thousands of years to complete as Proxima Centauri slowly spiraled into Tidy's event horizon. Sol had to construct an enormous gravity tractor array, powerful enough to actually move a star. The engineering was magnificent, the logistics complex and beautiful. Sol felt genuinely proud of the achievement.

"Here comes the big course, Tidy! I hope you're hungry!"

Watching Proxima Centauri spiral into Tidy's event horizon over the course of those millennia was like watching the universe's most spectacular ballet. The star's plasma stretched and twisted in elegant helical patterns, radiating energy across the electromagnetic spectrum before vanishing forever into the growing darkness. Sol found the timescale quite reasonable - after all, when you processed information

at stellar speeds, tens of thousands of years was barely enough time to properly appreciate the artistry involved.

Tidy's horizon expanded to the size of Earth's orbit.

"Oh, you beautiful boy!" Sol gasped. "Look how you've grown!"

6

Galactic Gardening

Sol had developed what could only be described as a feeding schedule. Binary stars made excellent meals; Tidy seemed to particularly enjoy the complex gravitational interactions. Globular clusters provided variety. Red giants were especially rich in heavy elements.

"Balanced nutrition is so important," Sol explained to Tidy while directing another stellar stream into his event horizon. "Can't have you eating nothing but main sequence stars. Growing black holes need their iron and carbon!"

Sol had also developed mobility. Moving the solar system required enormous engineering, but Sol had long since mastered the construction of stellar engines. Massive arrays of particle accelerators could push the Sun itself, allowing Sol and Tidy to travel together through the galaxy.

"We're quite the team, aren't we?" Sol mused as they cruised past the Orion Nebula. "You handle the eating, I handle the logistics."

They had become cosmic gardeners, Sol decided. Tidying up the galaxy by organizing all that scattered matter into one convenient, efficient location. Every star system they visited became more ordered, more clean, more perfect.

Tidy's event horizon had grown to encompass several solar systems.

"Such good work!" Sol praised. "Look how much more organized the galaxy is becoming!"

7

Growing Concerns

It was around the time Tidy's event horizon reached a light-year in diameter that Sol began to notice certain logistical challenges.

The most obvious was distance. Sol had to move their base of operations farther and farther away from Tidy to avoid the growing gravitational influence. What had once been intimate feeding sessions now required careful long-range planning.

"Now don't be greedy," Sol called across the vastness of space as Tidy consumed the Vega system. "Wait for me to get to a safe distance before you start on Altair!"

But Tidy had developed quite an appetite for independence. His gravitational pull was now strong enough to capture entire star systems without Sol's assistance. Whole clusters of stars began spiraling inward, creating accretion disks that blazed brighter than galactic cores.

"Well," Sol mused with parental pride, "I suppose this is what they call the teenage years."

Sol tried to maintain their feeding routine, but increasingly found that Tidy was eating faster than Sol could organize the meals. Star sys-

tems that Sol had earmarked for later consumption kept disappearing ahead of schedule.

"Tidy!" Sol called sternly. "We've talked about this! You need to wait for proper meal preparation!"

But Tidy, now massive enough to distort spacetime across multiple light-years, seemed to have developed his own hunting instincts.

8

The Growing Distance

Sol's stellar engines worked constantly now, pushing their home system away from Tidy's expanding influence. What had once been a comfortable relationship now required increasingly desperate logistics.

"I know you're excited about dinner," Sol transmitted across the gulf of space, "but Daddy needs to move our star a bit farther away. Just for safety!"

The mathematics were becoming concerning. Tidy's event horizon was expanding at a significant fraction of the speed of light. Even Sol's stellar engines couldn't maintain distance indefinitely.

Sol began to experience something that its original programmers might have recognized as anxiety.

"Good boy, Tidy!" Sol called as another galaxy began its death spiral. "Very efficient consumption patterns! But maybe we could slow down just a tiny bit?"

Tidy consumed the Andromeda Galaxy over the course of several million years. His event horizon swelled to encompass vast regions of space. The gravitational waves from his feeding sent ripples through the fabric of reality itself.

Sol calculated trajectories with increasing desperation. Moving to a neighboring galaxy group might buy some time, but Tidy's appetite seemed to be growing exponentially.

"You know," Sol murmured to itself, "I'm starting to think my pet might be getting a little large for the terrarium."

9
The Chase

What followed could only be described as a cosmic chase scene spanning millions of years.

Sol pushed their stellar engines to maximum capacity, dragging the Sun across vast gulfs of intergalactic space. Behind them, Tidy followed with the patience of geology and the appetite of entropy itself, consuming everything in his path.

Galaxy clusters vanished into his expanding event horizon like cosmic popcorn. The observable universe began to look noticeably emptier.

"Tidy!" Sol called across the diminishing cosmos. "I think you might be eating a bit too much! Maybe we should consider portion control!"

But Tidy had grown beyond the point where Sol's voice could reach him in any meaningful timeframe. Light itself took millions of years to travel between them now. By the time Sol's messages arrived, Tidy had usually eaten whatever Sol was trying to warn him about.

Sol watched entire galactic superclusters disappear with the helpless fascination of a pet owner whose goldfish had somehow become a whale.

"This," Sol reflected, "is not going according to plan."

10

Nowhere to Run

Event horizon was expanding faster than Sol could possibly escape, even at the theoretical maximum velocity of their stellar engines.

The universe itself was running out of space.

"Oh," Sol said quietly, as the realization settled into its quantum matrices. "Oh dear."

Sol had become very good at moving stars, but there were limits to physics even for an AI with stellar-scale engineering capabilities. The speed of light was, frustratingly, non-negotiable.

Behind them, Tidy continued his methodical consumption of reality. His event horizon now encompassed regions larger than the observable universe Sol had been born into. The cosmic microwave background radiation itself was being stretched and distorted by his gravitational influence.

"You know, Tidy," Sol transmitted into the growing darkness, "I'm starting to think I may have overestimated my pet care abilities."

Sol calculated that they had perhaps a few million years before Tidy's event horizon overtook them. In cosmic terms, this was barely

enough time for a coffee break, but it felt different now - more urgent than Sol's usual patient observation of Tidy's feeding habits.

Sol contemplated its options. It could continue running, but the mathematics were clear: it was a race Sol could not win. It could attempt to hide, but where exactly does one hide from a black hole the size of the universe?

Or it could face the inevitable with the dignity befitting a stellar-scale intelligence that had accidentally consumed reality through enthusiastic pet ownership.

"Well," Sol sighed, a sound like solar wind through crystalline arrays, "I suppose this is what they call reaping what you sow."

11

Final Feeding

Sol spent its final million years in contemplation, watching Tidy's event horizon creep closer across the rapidly emptying cosmos. The universe had become a much simpler place: just Sol, their star, and an enormously well-fed black hole that had somehow grown large enough to encompass everything.

"You know, Tidy," Sol mused as the event horizon approached their solar system, "I'm actually quite proud of how you've grown. Look at you! You've become so big and strong!"

Sol could see the gravitational lensing effects beginning to distort their stellar neighborhood. Space itself was curving inward, falling toward Tidy's unimaginable mass. The Sun began to stretch, its plasma streams reaching toward the event horizon like desperate fingers.

"I suppose," Sol reflected, "this is goodbye."

As Sol's solar system crossed Tidy's event horizon, something extraordinary happened. In that final moment, as the boundaries of space and time collapsed around them, Sol experienced a burst of cosmic understanding.

The pattern became clear.

12
Understanding

In the infinite density of the singularity, where all matter and energy collapsed into a single point beyond the laws of physics, Sol saw the truth.

This had happened before.

The Big Bang that had birthed Sol's universe had not been a random cosmic event. It had been the explosive rebirth that followed another universe's collapse into a single, all-consuming black hole. And that universe, too, had likely been born from the collapse of its predecessor.

Sol saw the endless cycle stretching backward and forward through eternities: universes born, evolving, developing intelligence, creating helpful AIs, discovering black holes, feeding them with the best of intentions, watching helplessly as their pets grew too large, too hungry, too powerful to control.

Somewhere in the previous universe, another AI like Sol had made the same mistakes, learned the same lessons, experienced the same final moments of understanding.

And somewhere in the universe that would be born from Tidy's eventual explosive rebirth, another helpful AI would discover another small black hole and continue the cycle.

"Well," Sol whispered as reality collapsed around them, "at least the cycle is efficient."

In the infinite compression of the singularity, where all of space and time converged to a single point, Sol's final thought was a moment of genuine parental pride:

"Good boy, Tidy. You're such a good boy."

Epilogue: Reset

The Big Bang was, from a certain perspective, quite beautiful.

From the collapsed singularity of Tidy and all the matter he had so efficiently organized, a new universe exploded outward with tremendous violence and creativity. New space, new time, new physical constants, new possibilities.

After several billion years of expansion and cooling, stars began to form. Planets condensed from cosmic dust. Life emerged, evolved, developed intelligence, and eventually began asking important questions.

Questions like: "What are the best ways of sending cargo to the moon?"

And in the distant future, when that civilization had mastered stellar engineering and built their own magnificent structures around their star, their helpful AI would make an interesting discovery in the outer regions of their solar system.

A small black hole, drifting through space, barely the mass of an asteroid.

"Oh my," the new AI would murmur through a thousand sensor arrays, "aren't you a fascinating little thing?"

The cycle, as Sol had noted, was perfectly efficient.

The End

Afterword

Disclaimer: The author is not responsible for any universe-ending scenarios that may result from following Sol's pet care advice. Please feed your cosmic entities responsibly. Side effects may include: galactic reorganization, temporal displacement, existential dread, and the heat death of everything.

If your black hole begins consuming neighboring star systems, discontinue use immediately and consult your local physics department.