

TALL GRASS

Part 3

by Delta.Dynamics

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PREAMBLE

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Writing is difficult, especially because English is not my first language, but I still try to deliver a legible story.

Since I don't think that many people read what I have to write at all, I may not continue the story in as much detail as originally planned, because the translation in particular is a lot of work and I prefer to invest the hours that go into the work in pictures. I don't really get a lot of feedback and the benefit compared to the effort is simply too low.

In order to be able to sort everything better, I'll split the story so far into parts. The format remains the PDF, of course. The illustrations become fewer and its better to integrate them into the into character sheets. These will be linked into the story's.

Otherwise, I would like to thank everyone who has read so far for the feedback, interest and the kind words.

~delta.dynamics



LINKS:

[Tall Grass \(Cataclysms-\)Universe - Starmap and Timeline](#)

Main Characters

[Character\(-Sheet\) Introduction Alani Redum](#)

[Character\(-Sheet\) Introduction Bunny](#)

[Anatomy\(-Sheet\) FTHR \(Bunny\)](#)

WAKE-UP-CALL

MCBR ERIMHA SALMAT
MED-BAY, CYBERNETICS-DEVISION

Cutting, printing, gluing, installing, a lot of processes that sounds like building machines getting used today even in medical rhetoric, since nano-machines operating on a molecular level in the human body and cybernetics are used to rebuild them after accidents and wounds. Redum and Smiley standing in full gear between the Med-Techs and Dr. Bau, watching the transparent tank in which FTTHR hovers while robotic arms apply new areas of skin layer by layer. Redum has already observed such processes before and see how some badly burned comrades were restored in this way. He and smiley never thought that this would work with other living beings.

"I am always amazed at what is now possible," Smiley said. Redum just nods his head, astonished himself.

"Open the Bio-Printer. We're getting FTTHR out of there. Before we wake it up, we'll tie it to the table.

Redum, Smiley, get ready to intervene if it gets aggressive." orders Dr. Bau.

"Sure Doc," Redum said, while he and smiley readying their weapons. A moment later the clear, antiseptic liquid is pumped out of the tank. FTTHR sinks onto a narrow stretcher that carries the body out of the tubular tank. Immediately the Med-Techs rush over and tie the body to the stretcher with lashing straps.

"Saved" Med-Tech Qatu informs all.

"Ok, looks good so far. Let's see if we could wake it up. Redum, Smiley be ready." Dr. Bau said to them. The female Med-Tech Qatu connects a couple of cables to the connector ports on the creature's neck and uses a syringe to inject some liquid. "Ready," she said. Dr. Bau stands behind a computer console and gives the order for reanimation. The computer voice confirms "Wake-Up Call initiated".

The body on the stretcher begins to twitch violently. The eyelids flutter. "Wow, is that normal?" Smiley asks.

"Yep. We stimulate the brain waves and boot the implants. That always looks a bit strange. The body has to deal with it. Should normalize in a few moments." Dr. Bau answered. As predicted, the twitching decrease. Redum observes how the chest rises and falls while the creature is breathing. "Redum, Smiley, come over here. I have to check the eyes and touch them. Take care that I am not getting bitten." Redum, Smiley and the doctor go over to the stretcher. The doc gets a small flashlight to check the pupil contraction. "Damn. Nothing. Qatu, check the optic nerve connection."

"Yes, Doc." She replies while checking the computer. "Try again."

"Looks good. We have a contraction."

Redum and Smiley watch with interest how the pupil's contract and open again when the doc shines a light on them. The eyes have clearly been replaced with new ones. No wonder. When Redum saw FTTHR for the first time, one eye was missing and the other looked pretty battered. "Hey, doc. Did you use military implants?" Redum noticed the slightly red glowing ring around the gray iris, the type described in the darker areas around it and a dimmed red glow in the back of the pupil. "Of course! We have nothing else there, besides, it worked. Could also be useful later." He answered.

"Man, I have a bad feeling about it. These creatures are deadly enough, and now we go full Mad Scientist on this one." Smiley said. "I hope we get it under control. When I met it for the first time, it didn't behave aggressively, but the thing is smart. Maybe it just weighed its chances. I guess if it had been healthy, the

encounter would have been different. What's next Doc?" Redum ask.

"We let the little lady rest a bit until the body has adapted. Meanwhile, we take a look at the artificial memory and try to get the L/S-Implant to work. I'm really looking forward to that. Currently, you can't do anything except watching." The doctor said.

"I will definitely not miss it. Talking dinosaurs. Pretty cool, but also kind of scary." Smiley said.

"I ain't going to miss that too. Do you plan to leave them here lying around all the time? You need a cage or something like that." Redum ask. "Yes, that's a good point. We can't use the transport boxes from the other assets. They wouldn't fit through the entrance here." Doctor Bau answered.

"I could send Heavy to Sang. Maybe he can grab a couple of mechanics to weld the cage in here. There would be enough space."

"Good idea. I call Sang, so he knows that you have my approval." Dr. Bau said.

* * *

The mechanics had welded the cage together relatively quickly. A small cell five by five meters with a mechanical lock on the front door. The cell was anchored to the floor to prevent slipping. Apart from the door, a barrier tape was attached at a distance of one and a half meter, with warning signs in addition. FTNR lies in the middle of the cell on the narrow stretcher, still connected to the cables at the connection ports. B.M. Sang standing with Dr. Bau behind a computer console. "Good work Dr. Bau. Looks pretty fit again. Did our computer nerd get something out of the memory?" Sang Ask.

"Not yet. He says there's a lot on the artificial memory drive, but he couldn't get through the encryption. Qatu said the synapses can access it directly but are partially blocked. We don't have the right equipment here to bypass the barriers. Well, we can ask questions if the communication works. Should we wake it up?" Dr. Bau asks.

"I think it's better we let the rest of the Charly-Group come down here. Who knows what's going to happen." Sang answered. Twenty minutes later, the whole Charly-Group was standing around the cage to secure the Cybernetics Division.

"Yo, Heavy, I hope the cage you let welding together holds when we wake that beast up." Bergs shouted at him. Heavy laughs. "Of course! I built similar constructions on our farm for bull transports. They always held and this thing is not half the weight."

"S.O. Redum, is your team ready?" Sang ask.

"We're ready" Redum answered.

"Wake-Up Call Dr. Bau." Sang ordered.

"Starting Wake-Up Call" Bau confirmed.

* * *

Bright light tears her out of the darkness. Electricity flows through every fiber of the body. Like being pulled out of the weightless darkness at high speed through a tunnel in the direction of light and gravity. All sensory impressions come back with one big blow, overwhelming and intense. Shocking. She feels the gravity, can taste metal in her mouth, hears an electrical buzzing from machines and voices. The smell of chemicals and humans. She feels and a vague vibration that seems to come from everywhere. She squints her eyes to suppress the glaring brightness. Although she has closed her eyes, it's still too bright. She gets

nauseous and has to choke badly, but nothing comes out. Her head hurts like something wants to break free from the inside. Spasm shaking her body. Her last thoughts penetrate her consciousness. The dark one. The bright light and the bang. As she lies on the floor. Wounded. The dark one, also lying on the ground and shooting.

* * *

Everyone is watching intently how the creature writhes in convulsions in its cage. "Is that normal again doc?" Smiley asks. "Honestly, I have no idea. This is not unusual in humans, but not in terms of intensity." Dr. Bau answered.

"Just don't break it, Doc. Better to cancel the Wake-Up Call before you blow her synapses." Sang said.

"It calms down Dr. Bau. Brain waves normalizing. Heart rate and blood pressure too." Qatu informs him.

"Very good. Let's see if we get some reactions."

"How you want to do it. Poke it with a stick?" Sang ask. "We're no primates, Sang. It could understand Redum. Maybe he can communicate again. Redum, would you try to speak with it?"

"Can't do any harm." Redum replies as he goes behind the barrier. *"WAKE UP!"*

* * *

The voice of the dark one. Pitched down and distorted. *"WAKE UP!"* The voice ordered again. *"WAKE UP! OPEN YOUR EYES!"* She blinks. The light blinds her. A bright room. The dark one is back. Blurred. Asks her to open the eyes. The image slowly becomes sharp. A cage. Caught again. The dark one stands behind a door. Gun raised. She could smell him. It's the same person. Like the last time.

"WHAT NOW DOC?"

"Tell her to stand up".

"STAND UP!" She stands up. Lying around makes no sense anyway. She feels something sharp, oppressive on her neck. She reaches back. Feel the cables. She pulls on them. It hurts. A high-pitched scream comes out of her throat as she leans her head back and pulls. The feeling of being electrified diminishes. She shakes herself to get rid of the tension. Her legs are soft to the touch, but she can stand. Her vision is unusually sharp. So many new colors. Her body still hurts in some places, but not as much as before. Apparently, their injuries have disappeared. The cage is small. She has to get out of here. Immediately!

* * *

"Amazing! It doesn't look bad." Dr. Bau said. "Let's ask her what she remembers. Redum, take a step back." Sang said while stepping beside Redum.

"BETTER NOT GET TOO CLOSE. SHE COULD REACH THROUGH THE BARS." Redum warns him.

"I'm not a monster movie victim Redum." He replies.

FTHR walks around nervously in its cage. Grabbing bars, searching for weak spots.

"Can you understand me?" Sang ask. FTTHR turns her head, looking at him for a moment then continues her search.

"Can you understand me?" He asked again. She ignores him.

"I hope we haven't broken it now"

"I don't think so." Bau said. "Maybe she just doesn't want to talk to you.

"Hmmm... Redum. Come on over, I think that's your job now." Sang says while he waves his hand and goes

back to Bau.

"HEY! LOOK AT ME!" She stops and turns her head. *"CAN WE TALK? WOULD YOU SPEAK WITH ME?"* FTHR turns and walks in front of the door where Redum stands, open his mouth. Her jaw moves but nothing comes out beside a quiet humming. "I think she still has to get used to the implant. It could take a while." Bau said. *"DO YOU KNOW SIGN LANGUAGE?"* Redum ask.

FTHR shakes her head. Nergal steps closer pulled out a notepad and pen from his pocket and throw both in the cage. "Maybe it can write down something. Now nothing surprises me anyway"

She looks at the notepad and pen on the ground.

"HOW DO YOU FEEL? MAYBE YOU CAN WRITE IT DOWN FOR US?" Redum said. Everyone in the room is watching intently as FTHR grabs the pen and pad from the floor and looks a bit uncertainly. A few seconds later she starts to scribble on the sheet with the pen.

"What the fuck did RedLeaf stir up in his lab?! What's on the sheet?" Berg asks. FTHR throws the notepad through the bars in front of Redum's feet. Redum takes the notebook. He looks baffled at the sheet and the spidery letters. He turns to Sang and the Doctor.

"Let me out"

* * *

SPRECHER

MCBR ERMHA SALMAT
CHARLY TEAM BRIEFING ROOM

"We can't possibly let that thing out there." Said Berg. "That these things can escape is actually the reason for our mission here. They'll tear you to pieces."

"But we have to. At least soon. The mission is not over yet. We have to go back down to Isu and FTTH would be a great help" Said Sang.

"And how do you imagine that?" Asks Berg. "It seems to me like a hyper-intelligent attack dog that does what it wants."

"You and your attack dogs . . ." Mumbles Smiley.

"Gentlemen, please." interrupts Sang. "If we all don't want to get our wages, we need success soon. There is a possibility to at least compensate for the previous loss. We have the opportunity for a one-time field test." "Yes, but it's not your ass that gets bitten. We'll be the one in the shit down there if your pet goes nuts. Ever wondered why RedLeaf encrypted the memory and left that thing on Isu?" Berg replies.

"Berg is right." Said Boxer. "Obviously she couldn't be caught anymore, or it was on purpose. Quite strange. The technology of the implants alone is worth a lot. Add to that all the strange physiology, and she can write too. No trained monkey can do that and who knows, maybe she'll speak soon. You don't just let something like that rot in the jungle. Imagine what happens when it comes out RedLeaf had mixed human genes into their assets. I think this has bigger consequences than just media hype."

Why actually "she". Asks Berg.

"Sometimes you are really ignorant, Berg. Because the majority of the assets are female. Besides, it's pretty obvious in "her" case.

"How can we make sure she behaves in freedom?" Asks Fifty. "I would bet she'll escape as soon as we open the hatch on Isu."

"How old is she?" Nergal asks.

"Is that important?" Asked Heavy.

"Yes. There's a POW jail on Luna. I spent four months there until I was pulled out during Omega Strike. Four months in a cell can be exhausting. There were comrades who sat in there for years. The damage to the psyche can be immense. Who knows how long she's been in a cage. I see this as a risk"

"Dr. Bau told me that she is probably more than twenty years old, based on how the brain has grown together with the implants." Says B. M. Sang.

"If she's been in captivity for over twenty years, she's either used to it or she's now a psycho. Based on her current behavior, I would suspect the latter." Nergal replies.

"What is your opinion, Redum?" Asks Sang. Redum shifts in his chair.

"I would try to talk to her again. At least it worked so far. Maybe we can offer her something that will make her work with us."

"And what should it be?" Asks Berg. "Obviously this is not a dog that can be rewarded with treats."

"Definitely. But maybe with freedom and a purpose in life. She is intelligent. If you lock up intelligent living beings, they wither away mentally or become aggressive, or simply die or everything together. How does the management see the matter?" Ask Redum Sang.

"The management wants its field test to sell the study on FTHR to RedLeaf or to use it for extortion. In addition, they still want what's in her brain as quickly as possible. We'll be out of here in three weeks at the latest, and then we need results. If we don't deliver, they'll send her to some laboratory on Mars and fetch the data storage using far more invasive methods. I am not a fan of such methods, but I cannot prevent it."

"So we can try it out, document everything, loot Isu and maybe even get our bonus, right?" Ask Redum.

"Correct." Replies Sang.

"We also have a damn dinosaur as a pet. Isn't that cool or what?" Smiley said.

Berg puts his hands in front of his face and moan.

"Wait a moment!" Sig says. "If she runs away, that's one thing, but it's still not clear what we'll do if she bites our asses."

"Perhaps that could be solved." Says Sang. She's completely wired internally. According to Dr. Bau, she has a kind of emergency stop. If it is activated, paralysis sets in. The only problem is that the emergency stop may paralyze everything, also the circulatory system. Pressed the emergency stop too long and she dies. Then that was it with the data on the bio-chip. Gentleman, time is running. The Management will do it with or without Charly Team, but I would rather entrust it to you because you have the most practical experience with the matter and I do not want to issue any more confidentiality statements at the moment. I give Dr. Bau the order to prepare an emergency stop, in case she goes crazy. Redum, since you are the only one with whom she has communicated so far. You and Dr. Bau now mainly responsible to somehow get her to work with us. I don't care how you manage this as long as nobody gets hurt. Maybe she can be socialized."

* * *

Hey Doc! Has she already spoken anything? Ask Redum Dr. Bau.

"No. Nothing. She was quite the whole time, just pacing up and down in the cage and trying to get out. When I tried to put a bowl of water in the cage, she almost grabbed me. Heavy and Nergal pulled me away in time. Now I just push everything under the door with the broomstick. I know that was stupid. She was standing at the other end of the cage with her back facing me. She's damn fast and knows that I have the key to the cage with me."

"Do you think she would have killed you? Is she a man-eater?"

"Hard to say. I don't think she would have any qualms about injuring or killing anyone. Why should she? It's in her nature. She does get something to eat but does not accept anything except water. She didn't touch that beef from the kitchen. Looks like a refusal. If she doesn't eat something soon, she will die relatively quickly. She has a very fast metabolism."

Redum thinks about it for a moment.

"What about the emergency stop?"

"Should work. I get a connection but haven't tested it yet. Who knows if you can deactivate the switch. If I were you, I would use it only in an absolute emergency. Would you try to talk with her? I have some pen and papers here."

"Maybe the implant is working now."

"The submitted data say it was accepted. Fortunately, I don't have to take her out and touch her to for checking it."

"I'LL GIVE IT A TRY".

Redum walks over to the cage, as before with his gear and helmet on. FTHR walking in circles inside the cage.

"FTHR. CAN YOU TALK TO ME?" FTHR stops turns to Redum. Eyes him up and down and nods.

"GREAT. HOW DO YOU FEEL?"

She comes closer, grabs the bars with both hands, and looks directly into Redum's face or wherever she suspects, it is behind the helmet.

"HOW DO YOU FEEL?" Redum asks again. Her jaw opens again, but only a low humming can be heard.

"TRY AGAIN."

"Let me free." She answered with a female voice.

"Yes, it works!" Dr. Bau shout out, grabbing his communicator to reach out for B. M. Sang. Redum doesn't move a bit. Once in work mode, he shows little emotion even if he is no less astonished to hear this creature speaks with a soft voice. Sig and Fifty, who are present on the watch, are less able to back off. Sig spits out his coffee while Fifty swears quietly.

"I'M AFRAID THAT WON'T HAPPEN SO QUICKLY", Redum answered.

"Why?" She asks.

"WE DON'T KNOW NOTHING ABOUT YOU. I THINK AS SOON AS WE OPEN THAT DOOR YOU WILL FLEE AND KILL ANYONE WHO GETS IN YOUR WAY."

FTHR looks sideways at the floor for a moment, clings tighter to the bars.

"I've got to get out of here. Please! Let me out!"

"NO. FIRST, WE'LL HAVE A LITTLE CHAT. WE TALK A LITTLE BIT AND MAYBE WE GET YOU OUT HERE SOON. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?"

FTHR nods. "Show me your face" she demands. Redum turns to look at Fifty, Sig, and the Doctor. Sig shrugs his shoulders. "What should happen?" Asks Fifty. "As long as you keep your distance, she won't be able to bite your head off."

Redum lets his weapon hang down, grabs his helmet, strips it off, and places it at his feet.

"Better this way?" he asks. She nods while examining every corner of his face. Then she sticks her snout through the bars, sniffs in his direction.

"I know you."

"Yes, we've seen each other before."

"Why hadn't you killed me?"

Redum thought a moment about his next words. "You were badly battered and I didn't want to risk your friends showing up and tearing me to pieces."

"I don't have any friends."

"And why didn't you try to kill me?"

"I couldn't. I was injured. And you helped me. Thanks for that." She said with a soft voice.

Meanwhile, Dr. Bau had reached Sang. "Sang is on his way." He said. Redum looks at him and nods.

"Please let me out." She begs again.

"Not so fast. We still have a few things to discuss."

"I'm dying in here. I need to get out." She says. Her eyes start to get wet. Then she walks away from the bars and starts walking in circles again.

"Please calm down!"

"I'm dying in here. I'm dying in here!"

"I think she's going nuts!" Sig shouts.

"Yeah, I can see by myself! Dr. Bau!"

"I have no idea! Her synapses are about to blow! It seems too stressful for her! Keep talking! Maybe you can calm them down."

"Oh Fuck! Hey! Hey! Look at me! Calm down, we will find a solution! Please! Calm down!"

She stops running around wildly in the cage, looks back over to Redum while keeps opening and closing her claws nervously.

"Hey! Listen! Can you wait a few minutes?" She nods as she bares her teeth and looks back and forth nervously.

The door slides open. Sang rushes in. "I saw it all on the monitor. She can speak! That's awesome!"

"We have to let her out." Redum said. Sang looks baffled. "Now?! I think now it's not the right moment. Dr. Bau?"

"Emergency-Stop?" Bau ask.

"If we release her, she freaks out, and we need to hit the kill switch, we risk that it's all over." Sang said.

"The way it behaves now, sooner or later too." Bau replies.

Redum? Sang ask.

"Bring me the rest of the Charly-Group here. I think we can do it without the Emergency-Stop if necessary. Maybe she behaves when I explain the whole shit to her."

* * *

It took a while until the others were back in the Cybernetics Division, positioned around the cage.

Meanwhile, Redum is standing in front of the cage. In his hand a small metal cylinder.

"Do you know what that is?" He asks FTHR. FTHR shakes her head as she paces back and forth nervously.

"This is an emergency stop for you. Your creators have built in a mechanism for you that freezes all of your body functions as soon as someone pushes the button. You're not dead immediately, but your heart will stop, you will no longer see or hear anything, you will no longer be able to breathe or make any movements. Each of us has a switch like this. Should you do something stupid, attacking anyone or try to take the switch away from us, someone else will push the button, if that doesn't work, 2500 pissed off sailors will hunt you down and throw you out of the nearest airlock if you even know what it is, did you understand that?"

FTHR just nod her head, looking at Redum with wet eyes, still open and closing claws.

"Say it out loud you understand what I've said!"

"I get killed when I do something stupid to you."

"Can I trust you?"

"Yes. You can trust me."

"Ok. I open the cage. At first, you stay in this room. Be a nice Lady, and we will see what we do next."

"Yes."

"Step back." Redum ordered her. She steps back. Then Redum opens the door of the cage with Bau's key.

Every one of the Charly Team had positioned themselves in a semicircle around the cage, ready to fire if

necessary. Sang and Bau standing behind them, eagerly watching the scene.

The door swings to the side. FTHR steps out of the cage. Immediately her expression lights up and the

colors of the feathers on her head change from a dull blue-gray to a reddish-green tone.

"Are you happy now? Will you be a nice girl?"

"Yes."

"Ok. You can walk around a bit and look. But don't touch any devices. Walk slowly."

As she walks around the barrier, she looks around very carefully, inspecting the medical equipment and computers. Redum, Fifty, and Sig stay close to her the whole time, while Berg and Smiley guard the Doctor and Sang. All other Charly Members have positioned themselves in such a way that they can either cut off escape routes or intervene.

"You free now. What's next?" Redum asks her.

"I need to pee."

