

[Sae arc] [2] [Excessive Sleep Syndrome] [96??]

Rev 1

Excessive sleep syndrome.

It was a terminal illness that killed hundreds every year in Andromeda cluster. No cure had been found and no cause had been found, either. It was a rare illness that affected very few relatively speaking since the total population of Andromeda cluster was assumed to be over seventy billions.

The illness was officially called excessive sleep syndrome, ESS in short. However, it was more known as “Morosis”. Morosis was the first man to suffer this illness and died from it.

In a way, Morosis was similar to sleep paralysis except that Morosis was terminal.

I am Tane and I am a doctor.

I run a somewhat large hospital on Heaven of Order. It was inherited by my father who was also a fine doctor in his own time.

Being a doctor in this era is more like being a counselor. Since almost all internal illness can be cured by pills, what a doctor really did is surgery: broken arms and legs, internal bleeding caused by car accidents and such.

My hospital is a six stories building, and there are more than five hundred of rooms available for patients. More than two hundred rooms are assigned for morosis patients. There wasn't any room for morosis patients until recently. Not all hospitals were required to accept morosis patients and my hospital was one of those who refused to take such patients at first. But it changed few years ago...

Despite of what others have been saying about Morosis, it was a painless concern for me. Furthermore, I even thought that it was a good disease. Morosis had no pain. Morosis was more like sleeping disorder that made you fall asleep forever eventually. No cure was found. No treatment was created, either. All there was left for Morosis patients was sleep, nothing more and nothing less.

I was one of the doctors who refused to even look at Morosis patients. Why would I even waste my time for them? I wouldn't be able to treat them anyway hence my decision to refuse accepting them. But the fate works in mysterious ways. One day, my wife called me urgently.

My two sons weren't waking up for school. My wife even beat them hard... or so I was told. But they wouldn't walk up. They woke up few hours later. It was a typical sign of Morosis in an early stage...

Morosis = Excessive sleep syndrome

Yes, they had them. My sons, my precious treasures, had Morosis. They were only seven and eight year-old. I was shocked and so did my wife. I simply didn't know what to do at first.

I did what I could. I ran scans on them. I tested their blood. I even took samples of their flesh. There was no sign of abnormality. The only symptom they had was they were sleeping two hours more than they usually did, and that once they fell asleep, they would not wake up no matter what even if they had to pee on bed. Even cease of breathing would not wake them up...

Morosis... I thought it was a painless disease. I was wrong. Knowing my sons would sleep forever without being able to wake up one day began to stress me

and give me pains, unseen pains, voiceless pains. My wife also suffered from the same kind of stress as I did.

Doctors can only be calm if they know what they are dealing with. With today's medical technology, as long as a doctor knows what they are dealing with, any illness could be dealt with.

The fact was that I simply did not know what I was dealing with. There were no clear facts to the disease. There were a lot of theories, but none of them were backed up by a solid proof. I didn't need speculations, but that was all I had.

Three seasons passed without accomplishing any. My children were sleeping twelve hours a day. Compared to how much sleeping was required before, their sleeping period had been extended by fifty percent. I quit their schools, knowing that they would ultimately die by sleeping. My wife didn't say anything about my decision.

"Broken" was the perfect word for the illness. It broke people. It broke my sons. It broke my life and wife. It broke everything I had for granted.

Among so many speculations I received, for a price mind you, I came across a lead that seemed to be less surreal than anything else I had received. It involved an individual, a rather infamous individual.

Sae the little witch was how she seemed to be known as.

It was an old report, but it said that this person was a host for morosis, meaning she would not be harmed by morosis. I had no clue whether it was true or false information. However..., it seemed it didn't matter. If this report was true, she was the only clue to fight against this deadly illness. I had nothing else. This lead was the only one I could actually trust.

However, it turned out that it wasn't very easy to locate her, let alone meet her in person. She was a wanted criminal within the union. She had millions of credit bounty on her head. Thankfully, it seemed she was residing in the freedom colony. So, my first action would be to go to the colony.

I was looking down on my wife who was unconscious on a bed. She had received and suffered from so much mental stress that she is no longer herself.

Let me rephrase. She had gone insane. She became too violent and unpredictable while she was awake. Therefore, most of time, she was drugged to sleep. It was way too ironic. She didn't have morosis but she might as well have it since she slept all the time.

"I will be going away, honey," I said to her, and of course, there was no respond. I bended down and stroked her cheek. "I will find a cure. I cannot... swear, but I will do what I can."

I left management of my hospital to my fellow doctors, and left my home. As soon as I left my house, there were two men in black. They were agents obviously. They looked at me with some hostility.

"Dr. Tane?" One of them asked me quietly and slowly.

"Yes, I am."

"Come with us."

I didn't need to ask who they are because I had a feeling that they would not answer me anyway, and resistance seemed to be futile, so I chose to follow them quietly.

They had a car parked nearby and drove away with me inside. Where they had taken me, I had no idea since windows of the car was pure black. They placed me inside of what appeared to be an interrogation room. Since I did not believe I had done anything wrong, I tried to stay calm, but it was hard to stay calm.

"Dr. Tane?"

A woman in a formal ware entered the room.

"You already know who I am," I told her. I was cranky at the moment.

"I apologize that we have taken you here. We mean no harm to you."

"Am I supposed to be thankful?"

"Well, I apologize, and that is all I can do."

"So, what am I here for?"

She had a file. Putting it down on a white table in front of me, she opened its cover. The title clearly said "Sae".

"So, it is her file. How do you know that I was looking for her?"

"Your sources are our sources as well. They informed us."

"I do not believe I have done anything wrong... Or have I?"

She shook her head firmly. "No, you have not," She replied. "Why we've taken you here is to ask you to cooperate with us."

I tried to get my hand on the file, but she drew it away from me at the moment she noticed my intention.

"Sae, class S hybrid. She has assassinated various important politicians," She said, "That's all you need to know."

"ESP and hyper-human at the same time? Is that even possible?"

"Theoretically, no, but when there is an actual example, theories go down into a trash can."

I was disappointed not being able to see the file, so I decided to get out of here as soon as possible.

"So, what do you want from me?"

It turned out that they had run out of excuses to enter the freedom colony. Therefore, they had been unable to chase Sae anymore. They were looking for a legitimate excuse to enter the colony. And I was to be their excuse.

They gave me two so-called bodyguards and put me on a public transport to the freedom colony. Even though it was a public transport, they purchased business class tickets. Therefore, I was given complete privacy and my own room.

As I saw my home planet, Heaven of Order, zooming out from my view through a small shielded window, I struck my back deeply into my chair and let out of a deep exhale.

I didn't get good sleep on that day. I kept having nightmares about Morosis and how my sons would die. I struggled pretty badly on a bed and woke up in middle of night. In space, there was no distinct difference between day and night, but ship's internal clock adjusted light depending on time. I wanted to eat something; I donned a coat and left my room.

"Where are you going at this hour?"

A voice struck me from behind as I left the room. I almost had a heart attack. Breathing rapidly, I looked behind. It was one of the agents.

"Geeze!" I bellowed. "God, what the hell are you going here in front of my room?"

"Isn't that obvious?"

To keep eyes on me, I suppose.

"I am not running away, and why should I? I need to save my sons."

"Where are you going?" He insisted.

"I am going to cafeteria to get something to drink. Leave me alone."

I must say I was insulted. They were treating me as if I am a prisoner which I was not. Trying to argue the point would be pointless however as people like them would never listen to others unless they were their superior officer.

Trying to forget the event, I ordered a bottle of vodka from cafeteria. I set myself at a table by a window and started drinking.

It was a rather long journey. It had taken two weeks to reach the colony. The freedom colony was an independent entity. It was free of any government authorities. Furthermore, the colony was run by a group of highly skilled people. In other words, there was no government or any kind for the colony. It was run by few elites, aristocracy so to speak.

I heard that someone named Aedy Freedom was the founder and creator of the colony, and he hadn't been seen by anyone for decades so far. It was uncertain whether he was still alive or not.

The colony itself was a gigantic man-made structure in space. It was even larger than Moon itself. Furthermore, the colony hosted tens of thousands of small fighter crafts called "Freedom fighters".

I was ready to leave the transport as it docked safely. The two agents approached me of course.

"Just act normally, doctor," One of them told me from behind.

It wasn't like I was going to run around and shout that I was being "escorted" by two agents anyway.

"Doctor... Tane..., you are?"

Nicely dressed female officers were checking on passengers' passports as they left the ship.

"Yes, I am."

She looked behind of me, the two agents.

"We are his bodyguards."

Saying so, they gave her a pack of files to prove their identity and purpose.

She went through every piece of documents they provided which took a good two minutes.

"All documents seem to be in order," She concluded and smiled at them. "Have a pleasant time in the colony."

So, I entered the colony at last. I was in what they called the transit module. It was a short walk toward a railbus station which seemed to be the most common way to travel around the colony.

"We know where to go, and you will come with us," They told me.

I hated how they talked from my back in a slow and low tone. However, my priority was to find any clues on cure for Morosis. For now, though, I had to comply.

Meanwhile, I found that this transit distinct very ... live. It was full of life in here. People had vigor. Sadly, I wasn't given time to enjoy the scenery as my so-called bodyguards "escorted" me to an office where I was rather forced to sign something I didn't even get to read.

To tell you truth, I was getting tired of this whole deal... I wanted to get rid of them ... somehow.

While they were taking me to “somewhere”, I noticed a man walking toward me. His outfit reminded of a playboy from nightclubs. He was wearing a tight black leather pants with half-open white shirt. Needless to say, the guy was in shape to look good in that even. He casually approached me at once and hailed me very casually as if he knew me.

"Yo!"

Then he had his arms around me.

"Long time no see!"

I had no idea who he was.

"Who are..."

"Dude! Have you forgotten me?! It's me!"

I really had no idea who he was, then he suddenly turned his attention to the two agents behind me.

"Come on, will you excuse us? Give us some privacy."

The agents frowned. "We are to escort him."

The strange man laughed and then shouted.

"Attack!"

When the strange man suddenly yelled "Attack!", he disappeared from my sight. He was literally breezing through air.

Few other figures joined him as well. The next thing I heard was screaming from one of the agents. His eyes were bleeding. The strange man had apparently cut his eyes. He was wielding two knives. They seemed very deadly by just looking at them. It had a curved edge, and blood was on its edge, dripping.

The few other figures seemed to be guards as I saw some sort of tags on their left chest. They had rifles and firmly aimed them at the agents. I had believed that the council would have sent skilled professionals with me... And they were seized too easily.

I noticed that they showed no hostility towards me. They seemed to be only interested in the agents.

"All seized, you've got some nerve coming here even without hiding your identity."

The strange man talked them while they were being seized, then he turned to me.

"Now, who are you?"

"I am Dr. Tane."

"Doctor? Why were they escorting you?"

"Before I tell you anything, could you at least introduce yourself?"

"Ah-," He scratched his head. "Fine, I am Reed."

Reed, I've heard of that name before. ...Yes, Reed, Gvew's son, Reed.

"Reed..., Gvew's son?"

When he heard of his father's name, he frowned.

"Yes, that is who I am."

Mr. Reed told me that they were after the agents. He firmly believed that they were here for no good cause. It seemed the lady back in the docking bay took her time to report.

I knew Mr. Reed was working for the colony, so he had a good chance that he knew where Sae was. Therefore, I just had to ask him straight away.

"I am here to see someone named Sae. I am desperately looking for her."

Mr. Reed looked up and down at me.

"They were escorting me for the same reason I have. I believe they were trying to track down her, Sae," I added. "But I am different. I mean no harm. I simply seek a cure for Morosis."

Reed touched his comm. bracelet. "Ashuta? Has Sae gotten back from her mission?" He nodded along few times. "I see. Thanks."

"You are in luck, Mr..."

He forgot my name already?

"Tane," I told him. "And I am a doctor if you have forgotten."

"Alright, Mr. Tane -"

I just told him that I am a doctor...

"You are in luck. Sae is in the colony, but I cannot take you to her just like that. It'd be too easy, wouldn't it?" He beamed some sort of sarcastic smile at me. I didn't understand him. It wasn't like I was seeking profits or anything. I was merely looking for a cure.

Maybe, he didn't believe me which was understandable.

"What am I supposed to do now then?"

"I will take you to the administration center. Someone else will take you from there," He told me.

And so, I was taken to the administration center. To be honest, my situation didn't change much. I was still being escorted against my will after all. Where Mr. Reed took me was a small building. I was very doubtful that he took me to this so-called "administration center". I was getting afraid that he might be trying to kill me.

Fortunately, my doubts were wrong. As I entered the building with Mr. Reed, I was faced with a lot of human activities. It seemed to be some sort of progressing center. He led me to an elevator, and that was as far as he went with me.

“See you, Mr. Dane,” He told me, waving as if he was glad to have gotten rid of me.

The elevator went down for a considerably long time. It took about twenty seconds. And when it finally stopped, I was greeted by two female officers in traditional office uniform. As soon as they saw me, they looked surprised and immediately pulled out their pistols at me.

“Feeze!” They shouted at me.

Without hesitation, I raised my hands. “I didn’t do anything!”

They seized me and took me to a barren room where there was nothing but a bed and a toilet. To be honest, ever since I arrived at the Freedom colony, I had been under constant misfortune. However, I considered it as a part of my ordeal to find a cure. It was, in fact, pretty much the only reason I was still pressing on. If it wasn’t for that, I’d have been down at some random pub, completely soaked in liquor.

I remained calm and cool. Eventually, a woman entered the room I was confined in.

“Hello, Dr. Tane. I apologize for the trouble. You are free to leave,” She told me.

As far as I knew, I was in their base of operations, meaning I was one step closer to meeting Sae the little witch. I was not going to leave.

“So, you now know who I am. I’ve actually come here to find someone named Sae. I am positive that you know her.”

She nodded right away, saying, “Yes, I do know her. Why would you need to meet her?”

I explained to her about my situation and desire to find a cure for morosis.

“Sae has morosis?”

“According to my research, yes, she does have morosis, and she is a host. In fact, she is the only known host for morosis.”

She was nodding along as if she didn’t care much. “Alright, let me contact her and will ask her about setting a meeting up.”

My face brightened.

“However,” She said, “If she refuses to see you, you won’t be able to see her and will leave. Deal?”

I shook my head repeatedly. “No, no, I must see her. I told you. My children are dying.”

“Then I won’t contact her.”

I felt a strong urge flowing through my chest to my throat. “Lives are at stake! My children are -”

She cut me off and told me boldly. “I don’t care. People die every day.”

“How heartless could you be?!”

“I am just being realistic. If you were in my position, you might understand.”

And what she said ticked me off. It ticked me really off. I rushed toward her and was about to grab her by collar but my hands were pushed away by an invisible force.

Yes, she was an ESP. She tapped her bracelet and spoke to it.

“So, were you listening?”

A rather high-pitched voice responded. “Yeah.”

“So, what’s your answer?”

“Okay, fine, I will meet the guy. You owe me for this.”

“As long as you can get this guy off my hands, sure, I will let you owe me a favor.”

I wasn’t sure what was going on.

She looked at me and said, “Okay, mister, Sae will meet you.”

But she talked to a girl of perhaps pre-teen. At least, that was what I thought when I heard the voice. A pre-teen girl cannot possibly be the notorious Sae the little witch with millions of bounty on her head.

“She will meet you at the clarity park”

I didn’t even know what that was. I had never been to the colony prior. Perhaps, she read my mind or simply used common sense that this was my first time visiting the colony.

“I will have someone to take you there.”

I was soon released from the room and was being escorted, again, by an officer. The officer said not a word as he led me out of the place and went onto the park. We walked through few blocks and he said not a damn word.

He stopped in front of a long spiral of stairway. “Here you are,” He finally spoke. “Excuse me now.” And he left.

It was a really long stairway and, at the end of it, I saw the park where few trees were.

Despite of all the crap I went through, at least I finally had a chance to meet Sae. It was going to be some workout to reach the park, but I didn't care.

Apparently, the park wasn't as small as I thought. It was quite extensive in scale and there were many more trees further ahead when I finally reached the top. I also saw numerous people seemingly high on ground and benches. I didn't smell anything suspicious but they didn't have any eye focus and was aimlessly staring at air. In addition, it was somewhat foggy.

"Where am I supposed to see? This is not a small park," I said to myself.

Suddenly, I heard a voice in my head.

Go left.

It was telepathy and I immediately assumed that it was from Sae by the high-pitch voice I heard before. She continued to give me instructions and eventually I saw a pre-teen female child on a wooden bench alone. Crossing her legs and arms, my first impression about her was arrogance. She was even chewing something in her mouth. Her dressing was very colorful. Her clothes were mostly pink with occasional black touch here and there.

"Here I am. Why did you want to see me?"

I twisted my head slightly. "You can't be her. You are, maybe, ten years old?"

"Well, duh, I am Sae, the very one you were looking for."

Was I tricked again?

"Get the hell out of my sight if you don't believe me, jackass."

I looked up and down on her. I did recall reading her being a little odd and that her figure was rather small, but I had no idea she'd be this small. Anyone would mistake her as just a pre-teen, provided that she didn't speak that was.

“So, you really are the notorious Sae the little witch.”

She smiled at me this time. “Yep, that’s who I am. What can I do for you?”

Now she sounded suddenly formal. What a colorful personality she had.

I cleared my throat to set my tone and finally, at last, asked her, “You have morosis, don’t you?”

It took her a bit to answer me.

“Yes, I do.”

My face brightened at once. “Do you realize that you are a host for morosis? Do you also realize that you may be the only host in the whole clusters?”

Her voice darkened somewhat. “I knew I became a host for morosis. But I did not know I may be the only case.”

Despite of the awkward start, she was actually answering me properly.

“As far as I am concerned, and I assure you I’ve done a very throughout research, you are the only known case.”

“Yahoo, I am unique. Thanks.”

Her sudden joke disturbed the moment a bit, but regardless I continued.

“I am sure you overheard the conversation. My sons are in dire need of a cure for morosis.”

“And?”

“I would like to examine you.”

Then there was this awkward uneasiness between us.

“Many doctors are hypocrite,” She stated with a cold voice. “They reject patients for stupid reasons. And I bet you were one of them.”

I realized why her personality was “odd”.

“How dare you! I have not...!”

Then it hit me; I did reject previous morosis patients – simply – because I did not think they were worth my attention.

She smiled as I went silent. “See?”

“And now that your children have morosis, you want to cure them.”

I bit my lips and spoke to her. “I know I was wrong. I know I was being selfish.”

“Oh, don’t misunderstand me. There is absolutely nothing wrong at all with being selfish. If everyone was selfless, humanity might just as well commit mass suicide and end everything.”

“Are you asking for a price for your examination? If that is so, I can arrange a handsome payment.”

She sneered. “Money isn’t the issue here.”

“Then what is it?” I slightly raised my voice. “What is it that you want from me?”

She became silent again. Taking off her cap, she scratched her head.

“You see,” She said with a chuckle. “I am quite dead.”

I did not quite understand what she meant by “quite dead”. And I believed that she was being odd again.

She probably knew what I was thinking and said, “Or maybe fully dead. You probably won’t get anything out of from examining me.”

“Let me examine you at least. It won’t take long. I won’t bother you ever again after the examination. I give you my word and heart on that.”

She appeared troubled. This time, she poked her ear.

“Fine, have your way. I will take you to a state-of-art medical room.”

I was so glad that I had some tears. Finally, I could possibly find a cure for morosis.

We went back to the same building where a man named Reed took me to previously. We went down through the same elevator and arrived at the “State-of-art” medical room. It was indeed state-of-art medical room... It had a single medical examination bed and that was it. There were actually two lab researchers inside who were arranging tools.

Sae told them, “Hey, kids, get out of here. I need some privacy.” And they complied at once. She jumped on the bed and stretched.

“I am ready,” She said.

For the first step, I went over a surgery table where I needed to grab surgical instruments to extract her flesh tissue.

“I am going to extract a small sample tissue.”

“Be my guest. Enjoy it while you can because it won’t last long.”

I didn’t know what she meant by that. But soon I found out why. As soon as I cut a small skin tissue, it immediately healed, and the cut tissue literally vanished.

“That’s really fast healing,” I told her. “Do you mind if I extract a bigger sample?”

“Sure, go ahead,” She said pleasantly.

This time, I made a rather big, thumb fingernail size tissue cut. Just as I lifted the skin tissue, I saw it kind of evaporate and her skin was fully healed as the sample tissue was evaporated.

I realized; it wasn’t healing. And I realized another fact. There was no bleeding at all.

“What’s this?” I uttered.

Sae raised her upper body and told me, “Let me make this clearer.” Having said that, she took a surgery knife from my hand and violently pushed it inward on her

arm, and then she pulled it downwards, cutting down her own flesh mercilessly. I could even see her bare bone through her self-inflicted wound. And in a matter of seconds, I saw the wound move on its own and closing up.

I looked at her at once. "What are you?"

"I told you. I am quite dead. Extracting a sample will be impossible, let alone examining my tissue."

"Has morosis made to become like this?" I really had no idea. It just did not make any sense.

She laughed. "Ha! I wish! See this." Then she cut her own throat. It almost gave me a heart attack. She did it so violently that her head almost fell off. However, the fetal wound closed up soon. She even disconnected her spine in her neck but the wound healed anyway.

"What do you think I am? You are a doctor." She seemed to be enjoying the situation whereas I was in blank. I didn't know what to think.

"I, uh..., don't know... I, uh..."

"Check my pulse."

Feeling utterly confused and blank, I mindlessly followed her order and checked her pulse. For a while, I didn't feel any. Then there was one faint pulse.

"One pulse... about every sixty seconds," I said.

"Yep, so I am quite dead."

I stood still, not even knowing what to think. I stared at something vacantly and said nothing as if I was dozing off.

"Hey, snap out of it." She slapped me gently. "Wake up."

My consciousness went blank at that point.

When I opened my eyes, I saw trees. I was at the clarity park with Sae looking down on me. Actually, she was on me, riding me.

“Hey,” She beamed a grin at me. “You woke up.”

Seeing her made me recall what happened. As she got off me, I stood up slowly.

“What the hell are you?”

“I was wondering you could tell me that.”

No human could live with just one heartbeat every minute. Even in hibernation, it required more than one pulse a minute. And no human would be able to heal fetal wounds just like that. Some high class ESPs and Hyper-humans may just be able to do that which incidentally Sae was a class S hybrid. Even then, they wouldn't heal a fetal wound just like that especially when spine was damaged.

“I don't know what you are. Did you even have morosis?”

“I did,” She answered firmly. “And I was dying from it.”

“H, how did you become like that?”

“A long story and a secret.”

I just realized that I had failed. I hoped to find some kind of clues to make a cure for morosis, but there was nothing here, nothing but secrets and illogical questions.

Time and efforts were simply wasted. I could have continued my research although I highly doubted that I would have accomplished anything either way. I felt utterly powerless. I just left the colony soon after.

I didn't know how long it took for me to get home, let alone what I did during the flight. The moment I came to myself I was standing in front of two coffins.

My wife had apparently committed suicide along with her children. But one of the children survived and was in a deep coma.

“I am terribly sorry,” My fellow doctor tried to comfort me.

My wife was to be kept asleep by drug, but she somehow escaped, went a patient room where my children were and set the room ablaze.

In brutal honesty, I didn't feel much sadness. Perhaps she did the right thing by putting them out of their misery as well as her own.

Even my surviving son never woke up from his coma. I believed he might have woken up if it wasn't for morosis.

Alas, I had lost everything.

Three seasons after my son died, I started to accept morosis patients.

Some people and even a local media praised me for doing so, but I could care less. It wasn't for them. It was for me. I wanted to find a cure for this damned curse. I didn't care whether my work may help curing the patients. It was none of my fucking concern. On surface, however, I sucked up for the media and for the patients.

Call me selfish or whatever the hell you want, but I will not fall until I find a cure for this, and when I finally do, I am going to pour the solution onto their grave stones.

- Fin