"Aachoo!"

"You look ill, Sarah. I told you not to eat ice-cream again."

“But, Mom its just common cold. I’m not seriously ill. There is nothing to worry Mom.”

“Sarah, why do you take everything so casually? Sometimes even common cold could be...”

“Mom! Look out!!”

“What! Oh my...”

BANG!
Slowly months passed. Anne and Tom would spend hours and hours talking with Sarah. Sometimes, when Anne would go to meet Sarah, she could see Tom already present there talking and laughing with her...

300 years later

Anne could sense that something was not right with her younger brother today. The sandwiches that she had prepared for him lay cold on his plate. He seemed to be lost in a world of his own. She decided to bring him back to her own world again.

“What’s the matter, Tom? Not hungry today?”

“Huh? Oh! No! No! Anne! I’m fine,” said Tom taking the sandwich. “I’m just a bit nervous today, sis.”

“I can see that Tom. You know, you can always tell me. May be I could help?”

“Hahah! Anne you’re a biologist. You deal with living things, where as I deal with the dead. How could you help me in this?” asked Tom.

“So, this is related to your work, Tom. Hmm! What is it?”

“Well, Anne! Do you remember me telling you about patient Number One?”

“Oh! Yes! I do. I remember that it was the first patient ever brought into your lab.”

“Today is its day Anne! Today we’re going to bring it back to life again. And, I have been chosen for this task. That’s why your brother is so nervous today.”

“Can I accompany you to your lab today, Tom?”

“You mean like our Mom used to accompany us when we had the toughest test in the school,” asked Tom.

“Oh! Anne! I miss Mom so much sometimes.”

“I miss Mom and Dad too. Well then, finish your breakfast fast, and then let’s go.”

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To Anne, the inside of a cryonics lab looked like a college dormitory. It was like hundreds of students sleeping in their respective dorms. Maybe for this reason, thought Anne, each cryopreservation room of the patient was known as ‘dorm’ here.

Placing a thick file on Anne’s hands, Tom had just entered the dorm of patient ‘number one’. Anne could see him and his other colleagues operating through the glass walls. Then, she started moving to the end of the corridor.

Anne always loved coming here. The lab was like a second home to her. Her brother, Dr. Thomas Albert, worked as a senior cryonics scientist here. Her Mom and Dad were here too. They were themselves once scientists here, but now had donated their bodies to the lab for experimentation.

Anne could see her Mom and Dad sleeping serenely through the glass. She pulled up a chair, and sat there looking at them. It was then she became conscious of the file she was holding until then – Number one’s file. She started going through its pages.

Name: Sarah Davies
Age: 19 (at the time of admission)
Reading it further, Anne learnt that Sarah was brought here in a critical state with some head injuries that needed immediate attention. She was in a coma. But, the technology at that time wasn’t so advanced to deal with those injuries. Instead, she was kept at low temperature to save her for some more time. And, this worked as a wonder! Her head injuries were arrested at that present state and there was no further damage to the cells.

Her father, who was a rich businessman, provided all of his money to fund this lab, so that she could remain in that state for many, many years. Later, thanks to technological advancements in the field of cryonics, her body could be cryopreserved for 300 years. Once the lab’s first patient, Sarah had now acquired the status of a star in this lab.

Finally the ‘resuscitate operation’ on Patient number one was over. Anne could tell from everyone’s faces that it was a success. Tom went straight to Anne. He hugged her.

“Anne I did it!”

“I always knew you would be able to do it my brother,” said Anne smiling to him.

“Well, I’m happy for one more reason actually. We wanted to have someone with patient number one to socialize. Actually, she is now waking up in an altogether different world. It would not be possible for her to adjust with it so easily. Her Mom and Dad are no more here, so it’s us who have the responsibility to make her feel at home. And, I recommended your name. And, they all agreed.”

“Wow! Thanks Tom! I’m dying to meet her. I’m sure we would be best friends very soon. You don’t worry, I’ll manage it. You know, I’m good at socializing with people,” exclaimed Anne.

The next morning, Anne met Sarah. And as time passed, she was able to make Sarah understand what happened with her, how her mother died in that car accident, why she was here, what her Dad did for her, and how she had woken up after 300 years in an altogether different world. But, her body had only aged about three years, because in cryopreservation for every 100 years the body only ages 1 year.

She explained to her how the present world was much more advanced than her 20th century world. Diseases were scarce now as most of the diseases had been eradicated from the earth altogether, and the average age of people was above 100 years. But, in other physical aspects they were still the same, though there were slight changes at the genetic level now.

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Slowly months passed. Anne and Tom would spend hours and hours talking with Sarah. Sometimes, when Anne would go to meet Sarah, she could see Tom already present there talking and laughing with her. She could sense love in the eyes of Tom for Sarah. There was always a charm on his face whenever he was with Sarah. Anne too liked Sarah a lot, but she still didn’t know what Sarah had in her mind, so one day she asked Tom if he could bring Sarah to show his home. Tom was very glad to hear this.

So, one fine Sunday morning Sarah was sitting with Tom and Anne eating homemade pancakes and sandwiches.

“It looks like it has been ages since I ate such a delicious food,” said Sarah.

“Well, Sarah, it actually has been ages. Weren’t you sleeping for 300 long years... hahaa,” teased Tom.

“Tom! Now, don’t you start teasing her in front of me. Well, Sarah, tell me what do you want to eat today. You just name it, Tom will bring it for you,” said Anne winking at Tom.

“Umm... can I have some ice-cream. I’m sure you guys still have ice creams! It would be impossible to imagine the world without them,” said Sarah greedily.
Anne looked weaker now. Her eyes could barely open. She wanted to say something, but no words came from her mouth. Sarah could not bear to look at Anne anymore and she came back to her dorm and shut herself .... You guys brought me back to life when I was supposed to be dead some 300 years ago....

"Haha.. We have them Sarah. Well, you two just wait, let me bring it for you guys," offered Tom.

Soon, he was back with three big cups of ice creams. When Anne swallowed the first bite, she felt in heaven again. By the end of the day when Tom dropped Sarah back to the lab, she had already consumed five cups of ice creams.

When Anne went to meet Sarah next morning, Sarah was suffering from cold. Anne had to come alone that day because Tom was away attending a conference on the "Future scope of Cryonics" in London.

"How are you today, Sarah?"

"Aachoo! I think, I have cold today. I could not bear to look at Anne anymore and she came back to her dorm and shut herself off to the outside world. She knew it was she who was responsible for Anne's condition. Her mother had once told her that even a common cold could be a dangerous thing. But, she never listened. And, now she was facing the consequences.

She switched on the digital screen she had in her room. It showed the widespread transmission of the 'common cold'. It had already reached the European countries now. And, a few reports showed that some Asian countries were also affected by it. There was a sense of panic in the world. In Britain, people had already started dying. Ten deaths had already been reported, and many hundreds were reported to be critical including Anne.

Sarah just cried and cried that night. She knew she had brought chaos in this world. She had infected this world with a virus she was carrying from her own world. She was now a monster, a monster that had already taken 10 lives, and was waiting to take more. She no longer wanted to live. Soon she fell asleep.

She woke up, when she heard Tom entering her dorm. He looked pale. She didn't have courage to ask him about Anne. But, he seemed to have understood her questioning looks.

"Don't worry. Anne is okay. Doctors are really trying hard."

But, she sensed there was something still worrying Tom. She waited for him to speak.

"Sarah! I need your help."

"I know Tom, what you are going to ask for. I thought about it too all night. I'm the cure of this disease. My body has antibodies to fight against it, while you guys don't have it. That is why it is producing havoc in your world. I'm ready Tom to give each and every drop of my blood to save everyone. You guys brought me back to life when I was supposed to be dead some 300 years ago. I owe this life to you. So, I'm ready to give this life again for you."

"Sarah, I love you. Sorry, I couldn't say that yesterday.

"I love you too, Tom. I'm very happy to meet a guy like you."

They embraced each other for one last time. Then, Tom's colleagues entered the dorm and started preparing Sarah to make her sleep for forever now.