

THE TALKING CURE (EXCERPT)

Written by

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DR. STONE
Look, I'm trying to let you down
easy here, but... I don't know. I
don't know.

Dr. Tannis stares at his desk, avoiding eye contact with Dr. Stone.

DR. STONE (CONT'D)
But I'll think about it. I really
will.

Dr. Tannis still looks down at his desk. Dr. Stone quickly leaves and shuts the door behind her.

Dr. Tannis finally looks up. He rifles through his files to find Gabriel Wrightson's file.

He flips through it again, as if something new will magically appear. It doesn't. He shuts the file and slams it down.

CUT TO:

INT. GABRIEL'S ENCLOSURE - DAY

Gabriel sits in his cell, face staring at the ground, unable to be seen. His cell is bare, no personality about it.

The sounds of FOOTSTEPS make his head jerk up immediately.

Dr. Tannis approaches the door to his enclosure.

GABRIEL
Hello, Dr. Tannis.

DR. TANNIS
Hello, Gabriel.

GABRIEL
Are we going to continue our
sessions?

DR. TANNIS
Not exactly.

Gabriel pouts in an almost childlike manner.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
I promise we will one day, but I
wanted to ask you something first.
Why do you talk to people?

Gabriel smirks a bit.

GABRIEL

That's a very odd question. I mean,
who doesn't talk to people-

DR. TANNIS

No. I mean, you talk to people out
of the blue, and they listen. Why
do you think that is?

Gabriel ponders this for a moment.

GABRIEL

I think that some people just
really want to listen to what I
have to say.

DR. TANNIS

And what do you have to say?

GABRIEL

Depends on the person.

DR. TANNIS

What would you say to someone like
me?

Gabriel looks down at the ground, deep in thought.

GABRIEL

You seem lonely.

Dr. Tannis lets out a small chuckle.

DR. TANNIS

Tell me something I don't already
know.

GABRIEL

Oh. ... You seem afraid.

Dr. Tannis moves in closer.

DR. TANNIS

Afraid?

GABRIEL

Of failure. You feel like you're
failing at... Something. I don't
know what, but I just want to let
you know that it's okay. It will be
fine. It will work out in the end.

Dr. Tannis looks at Gabriel, trying to mask some kind of
dread that's formed just under his skin.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, did I upset you Doctor?

DR. TANNIS
No, it's fine. I just wanted to let you know that you may have another conversation soon.

GABRIEL
Really?

DR. TANNIS
Not with me, but with patient. His name is Kevin Maguire and he's a catatonic schizophrenic. Do you know what that means?

Gabriel is flustered for a moment.

GABRIEL
No.

DR. TANNIS
It means he doesn't speak. He doesn't do much of anything at all. He's an extreme case that we've looked after for quite some time. I thought... Maybe you could talk to him for a while.

Gabriel lights up with excitement.

GABRIEL
Oh boy!

DR. TANNIS
Don't get your hopes up just yet. I said it might happen, it's not set in stone-

Dr. Tannis stops to admire his own pun.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
But I thought I'd let you know. Because I think you might be extraordinary Gabriel. Did you know that?

Gabriel shakes his head.

GABRIEL
I don't know if I understand.

DR. TANNIS

I know that I don't understand. But
I'm hoping I will, and soon.
Goodbye Gabriel.

Gabriel watches Dr. Tannis leave. As soon as Dr. Tannis is gone, Gabriel goes back to staring at the floor.

A new angle shows his face. His eyes are wide open, and colored completely black. He blinks a few times. As he blinks, the world around him fades away...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE VOID - UNKNOWN

Gabriel stands in a dark void, completely alone. Various points of light populate the void in random places. When Gabriel speaks, his voice is distorted and strange, like it floats on wind.

GABRIEL

They're watching me closely now.
How should we proceed?

EXT. PAUL'S PUB PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dr. Tannis' car is in the parking lot again. Another car pulls up next to it, a Honda Civic. Dr. Stone gets out of it, and walks into the Pub.

INT. PAUL'S PUB - NIGHT

Dr. Tannis sits at the bar, this time drinking a Black Russian. Dr. Stone sits down next to him. The bartender slides her a glass of seltzer water.

BARTENDER

I'm jumpin' the gun a bit, aren't
I?

DR. STONE

Yes, but I do appreciate the
gesture.

The bartender walks away. Dr. Tannis is barely paying attention to her.

DR. STONE (CONT'D)

Look, I've been thinking about it,
and... I'm still not sure.

Dr. Tannis takes a sip. He's not acknowledging her presence.

DR. STONE (CONT'D)
I didn't realize it meant so much
to you-

DR. TANNIS
It doesn't.

He finally looks up at her.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
I mean, it does, but... You haven't
been doing this as long as I have.
I've been beating my head against
the wall hoping I was going to help
people, it's what the oath is
about, you know? And I haven't
really helped anyone since I
started this damn job. But...

Dr. Tannis takes a glug of the Black Russian.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
I think that Gabriel can. I mean,
it's worth a try, right?

Dr. Stone begins to sip on the seltzer water.

DR. STONE
I guess.

Dr. Tannis finishes his Black Russian. Dr. Stone looks at the
finished glass.

DR. STONE (CONT'D)
Jesus.

DR. TANNIS
What?

DR. STONE
Are you an alcoholic?

DR. TANNIS
No. Not yet anyway.

He prepares to raise a hand to motion to the bartender for
another, but Dr. Stone jerks his arm down.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
Hey-

DR. STONE
Just talk. Like, actually talk.

DR. TANNIS
Okay. About what?

DR. STONE
About what's wrong.

DR. TANNIS
What's wrong is that I'm a lonely
asshole in a profession that has me
literally talking with crazy
people.

He raises his hand for another, Dr. Stone unable to keep his
arm down. The bartender obliges, and Dr. Stone releases her
grip, frustrated.

DR. STONE
Dammit.

DR. TANNIS
I mean, I know I took the oath and
that I probably don't sound like
much of a doctor, but I wanted to
be. But I'm not. I'm not curing
anyone.

The bartender slides him a new Black Russian. Dr. Tannis
begins to nurse it.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
Isn't that what a doctor's supposed
to do? Cure people?

DR. STONE
No. We don't cure people. Mental
illness isn't smallpox. You don't
just "cure" it. You work with it
and find a way-

DR. TANNIS
I know, I know. But it's not
enough. It just isn't.

Dr. Stone begins to focus on staring at the glass of seltzer
water, ignoring Dr. Tannis.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
Why don't you drink?

DR. STONE
I just don't like the taste of
alcohol.

DR. TANNIS
Got an alcoholic in the family? Or
did you have a friend-

DR. STONE
I just don't like the taste of
alcohol, nothing more, nothing
less.

DR. TANNIS
Huh. Weird.

Dr. Stone almost has a spit-take.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
Oh my God are you okay?

DR. STONE
I mean, that's weird? Not the part
where you want to sit down a
catatonic schizophrenic across from
someone we know nobody about for a
little chat.

DR. TANNIS
Fair enough.

Dr. Tannis takes a gulp.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)
Hey... You still want to talk with
me? After this?

Dr. Stone finally looks back to Dr. Tannis.

DR. STONE
Yeah. I do.

DR. TANNIS
You sure?

DR. STONE
Yes.

DR. TANNIS
Thanks.

He raises up his glass and gestures towards Dr. Stone. She laughs, and raises up her seltzer water as they clink the glasses together.

DR. TANNIS (CONT'D)

Look, I know I'm kind of a pain in the ass right now, but I do want to thank you for coming out here at all. I said that we don't tend to talk to each other, the staff. But I wish we did. 'Cause this is nice.

DR. STONE

You think so?

DR. TANNIS

Yeah. We should keep doing this, just come out here. It's been a while since I had a-

He stops short of finishing that sentence.

DR. STONE

A friend?

DR. TANNIS

Yeah. I guess.

Dr. Stone pushes her glass of seltzer water away.

DR. STONE

I'll set up Kevin Maguire tomorrow. I'm very interested to see what happens.

She gets up to leave, but Dr. Tannis grabs at her shirt a bit. She stops.

DR. TANNIS

Leaving so soon?

DR. STONE

Well, I figured since I just granted your wish, I could make a graceful exit.

Dr. Tannis nods.

DR. TANNIS

Fair enough.

DR. STONE

I mean, is there anything else you want to talk about?