

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The doctor removed instruments I was unfamiliar with from his bag and laid them on the chair sitting next to the one he was in. He set the black bag down on the ground next to his feet.

"Raya, I need you to relax as best as you can. You know this procedure is not easy to perform. Again forgive me if I cause you any pain."

He picked up a long strip that was black in color and tied it around Raya's upper arm. I caught the scent before seeing it. I knew what it was even in the dimly lit room. I had already hunted so the pull of it was not as strong. The doctor reached into his bag that was dark inside and removed a pouch darker in color than anything else he held in his possession, yet I was vexed by the strange item.

"What are you doing Dr. Stanger? I would like you to be as detailed as possible about what you're doing and why. I did not introduce myself earlier, but my name is Fallun. Raya tells me that there is no cure, is this true?"

"I am giving her a blood transfusion. What has Raya told you of her condition? I'm asking so I know what to tell you and how to approach the details of her condition?" The doctor queried.

I watched as the doctor placed the dark colored pouch on the settee. The pouch appeared to be black, but to my eyesight I could see that it was a dark crimson. Immediately, I knew it was the blood I craved so much. I listened intently as he talked to me. However, in my head I could feel his words beating like that of my own heart.

"Raya was very vague in the details of this condition affecting her. She says it affects her blood in some way, draining her of life, causing her to

require new blood daily! The blood given to her is from other humans."

"Yes," the doctor said as he cut me off from speaking. "That is what I'm doing just now. I have to insert a needle into her vein where the blood can quickly be injected into her body and be allowed to mix with her own."

Little did he know or even comprehend, I had seen blood outside the body before, usually it was from the victims of my prey. I had learned to loathe it in its entirety; this sight in front of me was altogether something different to me. The sight fascinated me.

I watched as he inserted a long thin tube into Raya's arm. She did not flinch even though I could see she was visibly shaking. Then he connected a clear plastic tube that was much longer to the long thin tube which I assumed was referred to as the needle. After this, he connected the dark pouch to the clear plastic tube, he raised it up as he stood erect. His complete focus centered on his task at hand as he gazed briefly in my direction.

"Now, we wait." He started. "What would you like to know?" I looked at him. I looked at him and noticed his features clearly in the dimly lit room. He stood next to the settee and I could see he was close to my own staggering height. His hair was dark in color and chopped short close to his head. His eyes were a stark contrast to Raya's; a hazel blue color with red specks near the pupil. His nose was prominent, yet not overly elongated. The lips forming his mouth were perfect cupid's bows, giving him the appearance of a beautiful full mouth. His mouth was surrounded by hair that was neatly trimmed. I could see he wore a black overcoat, complimentary to the modern fashion of the times. Underneath the coat he wore a white shirt and pants that matched his coat. The doctor appeared knowledgeable despite his youthful appearance. The transfusion was finished with little to no efforts at his hand, I was



relieved. Not for my sake but for Raya's. The sickness itself was taking its toll on her making it a wonder that she was able to function properly without much effort.

As I looked at Raya, I could see her eyes were closed. I knew by her breathing she was not sleeping.

"Why do we wait?" I questioned, more out of my own curiosity than anything else. My own lack of knowledge vexed me. I directed my attention back to the silently waiting doctor.

"Well, to be honest, in my hand is blood. This is the blood she needs to live as I'm sure you are aware." I waited for him to continue. "Well," he continued as he cleared his throat. "I haven't shared this information with Raya, but if you feel you can help her then I don't see the harm in sharing it with you. To answer your earlier question, it is correct that there is no cure, at least one that we know yet...Not to say one can not be found."

"So you're saying that it is possible for a cure to be found?" I asked cutting him off in mid-sentence. I asked my question unsure of it even asked it left my mouth. "How is this possible? What needs to be done? Who can I talk to so I can better help her?"

"Hold on a second, one question at a time. I understand your eagerness to want to help Raya. Your rushing things won't help her situation. You need to do everything with a clear, calm way of thinking. This is the best thing I can advise you to do for now. Do you see this pouch?" He gestured toward the pouch.

I nodded my head and waited for him to continue. I was eager to understand everything I could about Raya's illness and knew that this situation needed not only all of my attention but, everything I could offer to it.

"This pouch contain's what's known as NB-new blood. Raya has a very rare blood type that works as a parasite in her body, affecting her body as a whole. Her blood, because its so rare affects what's called her immune system--her ability to stay healthy! In Raya's case, she loses that ability. Her blood type os something called BP1 Negative. This is also called BLOOD PARASITE N. There are different stages of blood levels. However, based on this it is possible for a cure to be found, but we haven't done enough research on each of the stages of the individual blood levels because each person we used in our research has progressed to the final--fatal--stage rather quickly!" He cleared his throat and waited for a moment before continuing.

"So what is the difference between thos who have been used in your research so far and Raya?"

"Well, Raya has been to numerous doctors who are curoius about her condition. For one, she was born with this condition, according to what we know. She is in Stage 2 of the sickness and has been the slowest to progress in her sickness. Everyone dies within six years, yet, for some reason Raya has been able to live through it for twenty-six years. She does not suffer from any of the normal side affects we usually see such as high fever, dizziness, shakiness, loss of blood, and low immune system. She shows signs of these but on a very minute level. She has enabled us to learn more about this condition. I understand that if she is given a new blood type than the one in her body; one that is stronger on a molecular level, this would dramatically slow the process. Possibly even curing her. However, we are very limited in what we are able to do for her." The doctor said.

I listened to his words, trying to fully grasp the reality of them. What did all of this mean? Was it possible that a cure could be found? I knew that



taking Raya with me was very risky because if my plan did not work then Raya would lose her life in the process. Was it worth the risk to her being with me for such prolonged periods of time? There was only one source of blood I knew possibly stronger than the blood she had in her body. The problem was how to give it to her. If I succeeded in that regard, how would it affect her as a whole. I don't know what my face registered just then, but it must have made the doctor take notice because he looked at me with a look similiar to the way I saw Raya look at me when she was at a loss for words.

"I can see you don't know what to think about everything I have said, but Raya is stronger than you realize. I will come by again tomorrow to give her another transfusion of blood--..."

I cut him off. "

"That won't be necessary Dr. Stanger. I am taking her with me later on today so I can take care of her and the child. It has become too much of a burden for her to do it on her own." I stated, my voice holding a sense of morbid finality.

"How do you intend--forgive me for being so frank--but, how do you intend to keep her alive? Surely you don't think without any new blood to give her she will able to survive more than a few days." The doctor asked tensely.

"I would not say it if I could not comprehend the surety of my own words. I have already made all the arrangements on Raya's behalf."

I noticed Raya's eyes open slightly while she looked at me. Her face wore an expressionless mask I could not make out. I knew that she would have much to say once the doctor was gone, if not many questions of her own. I had yet to ask for Raya's trust before; I knew with everything to come, I would need this from her beyond a shadow of doubt.

The doctor cleared his throat to get my attention. I looked at him and noticed the blood in the pouch was gone.

"Raya, I'm finished. Thank you for your patience with me. I know its always difficult for you to have me do this to you! You never show any outward signs of discomfort. It's my understanding that Fallun intends for you to go with him, that further treatment won't be necessary?"

I waited for Raya to answer, wondering if she would give me her complete trust. I knew she must have given his words and the depth of them deep thought because she response held a slight hesitation to it.

"Yes, Dr. Stanger. This is correct. I trust in Fallun to take good care of me. He's been a family friend for some time now, I completely trust his judgement. I know no harm will come to me as long as I am with him." Raya's answer was surprising by the look on the doctor's face. I wondered if was as surprised as I was.

"Raya," he stated as he removed the long tube from Raya's arm and placed it with the clear tube that was stained with the blood and pouch into his bag. "I will take my leave. You know where to find me should you need my services!"

Raya moved to get up off the bed slowly. "I'll show you out. Fallun, wait here until I come back. I'll just be a moment." Raya led the doctor out of the room taking the candle with her. The room became enveloped in total darkness. I was grateful to it, for once. I waited for Raya to return not knowing what to expect.