

Chapter 172: Lorenzo

Tereshan

After speaking with Holden, I had gone to Dane, Jesiah and Weston and told them about the need to carefully monitor the tunnels and keep our patrols on alert.

It was only a couple of days after seeing the doctor and confirming that Claire and I were having a boy, that her stomach popped out. Now, every night, I place my hand on her stomach, waiting for the day when I will be able to feel my son, our son, moving around in her belly.

We began training omegas. In the end, all three Alphas agreed to the training and surprisingly, Nicholas and Adam each agreed to have a group of their omegas receive tutoring with our pack while they build a joint school on their pack lands. Elio is trying to work out how to rotate his omegas to my pack for training and education, while keeping up with his own farming needs.

We've just begun to settle into a routine, when the tunnels are breached.

'Tunnel breach! Tunnel breach!' the patrol shouts in the mind link.

'Where?' Weston asks, taking charge. The tunnels are his thing.

'Central territory,' the patrols say, and I can feel Weston

rushing that way as I move to follow.

"Tereshan, please be careful," Claire says.

I stop, taking a moment to kiss her before I race out of my office toward the central tunnel. We had found three, one in the northwest, one central and one south. It looks like whoever was trying to get in today, was trying to sneak in behind the lake.

'Alpha, there's one caught in our trap. Do you want me to wait for you, or bring him in?' Weston asks.

'Wait for me, I'm on my way. Stay alert in case there are more,' I tell him.

I arrive at the tunnel, making my way underground. When I do, I see the trap that Weston set. It's actually a net that must have been attached to the ceiling of the tunnel. It must be connected to some sort of mechanism that was sprung, causing the net to fall on the intruder.

When I arrive, he's moaning and writhing under the net that is obviously made of silver. I can smell his flesh burning everywhere it's touching skin.

I squat down near the man's face.

"What's your name?"

"Lorenzo, Alpha."

"Why are you here?"

"Alpha Roman sent me to spy on your pack lands."

"How many more are there?" I ask.

"Just me, for now."

"Will more be coming soon?" I ask.

"Not until after I report back," he says.

I stand, nodding to Jesiah to follow me. Weston stays, standing over the man on the ground.

"Continue watching the tunnels and get Holden down here."

"Yes, Alpha," he says, running off.

I turn back, squatting in front of the man again. He's face is getting the brunt of the netting, his cheek and neck sizzling under the silver.

"Can we pull this off of his face?" I ask, looking up at Weston.

He pulls on some gloves and lifts the net away from Lorenzo's face. He breathes a sigh of relief.

"Thank you, Alpha," he says.

"Don't thank me yet, I haven't decided if I'm going to kill you or not," I tell him.

He looks up at me and all I see is sadness, the same sadness that used to be in every one of my pack member's eyes. "You would be doing me a favor if you killed me, Alpha."

I hear footsteps coming quickly down the tunnel behind me.

"Lorenzo?" Holden says, rushing over. He has mostly healed,

but his body will always be riddled with scars because of the silver.

"Beta Holden? You're alive?" Lorenzo asks, looking astonished and...hopeful.

"I am. What are you doing here."

"Alpha Roman sent me to spy of Alpha Tereshan."

Holden looks at me. "Can we release him? Lorenzo isn't one that is following Roman by choice."

Lorenzo growls. "That fucking asshole. I'd kill him if I could."

That gets my attention and I nod to Weston to remove the rest of the netting.

When he does, Holden helps him to sit up.

"Roman sent you to spy? What is it that you're looking for?" Holden asks him. I sit back and let Holden take the lead. This man still acknowledges Holden as his Beta. He'll respond better to him than he will to me.

"I can't...." I watch as Lorenzo fights to speak.

"Roman gave you an Alpha command to not give your reasons if you were caught?" I guess.

He nods.

Holden looks thoughtful for a moment.

"Were you sent to watch a person or persons?"

Lorenzo doesn't move.

"Were you sent to look over the pack lands?"

"No," he says immediately, and I look at Holden. It's a smart interrogation tactic. What Lorenzo can't tell us will tell us what we need to know.

"Were you sent to spy on Alpha Tereshan?"

Nothing.

"Were you sent to spy on Luna Claire?"

Nothing, which makes me snarl. I will be putting Jesiah on Claire's guard duty full time from now on.

"Were you sent to see if there were any survivors from the slaughter?"

"No," he looks up at Holden hopefully. "Were there others?" he asks.

Holden reaches out, putting his hand on Lorenzo's shoulder. "I'm sorry Lorenzo. I was the only one. Your brother didn't make it."

He nods, looking down. I knew Holden's story of how the pack was ordered to beat and leave the ones that challenged Roman to die. I hadn't made the connection that this meant that every one of those individuals was a brother, mate, or son to someone in the pack. Roman basically forced them to murder their family members. No wonder this man has so much hate for him. The others will too, and he'll send them here, not caring if I slaughter them.

"How many are following Roman willingly?" I ask him.

"Now? Very few. There are some, but he's mostly made them his ranked members. The rest of us? We're just their sheep to do their bidding, to guard and serve them like they're fucking royalty and we're a bunch of fucking dogs."

"Why don't you renounce him as your Alpha? You're off his pack lands, you can do that now. He'd feel it, but he can't get to you," I say.

He begins laughing, a horrible, mirthless laugh. "He forbid it, as my Alpha. Before I left, he forbid me from renouncing the pack. Gave me an Alpha command that I can't say the words to renounce him or the pack."

Roman's depravity goes even deeper than I realized. He's basically enslaved his people.

Holden turns to me. "Is there anything we can do for him? Short of sending him back to that hell?"

I look at Lorenzo a long moment then turn to Holden.

"Would you bet your life and reputation that this man is being truthful?" I ask him.

He doesn't hesitate. "Yes."

Lorenzo smiles up at him. "Thank you, Beta."

"I'm not a Beta any longer," Holden tells him.

"You're still MY Beta," Lorenzo tells him.

"Well, if you agree to what I'm about to suggest, that won't last long either," I say.

Both of them turn to me.

“Roman forbid you from renouncing the pack. He forbid you from saying the words, right?”

“That’s right.”

“Did he forbid you from accepting another Alpha and pack as yours?”

I see Holden grasps what I’m saying instantly. There ceremony of accepting an Alpha is common, but it’s not the only way to accept someone as your Alpha. I’ve heard it happen on battlefields where members of one pack will join members of another before the fighting is done.

“No, he didn’t,” Lorenzo says to me.

“Then, if I were to slice my hand, you could drink my blood and when I asked you if you accept me as your Alpha, you could say yes. You can only belong to one pack, so your bond to Roman would break and your bond to me would form.”

I watch as his eyes widen.

“So, knowing that you can’t actively agree to this, I’m going to ask you to tilt your head back and close your eyes.”

He does what I say, and I extend a claw, slicing the palm of my hand. I hold it over Lorenzo’s mouth and let the blood drip in.

“Do you, Lorenzo...,” I look at Holden.

“Bale.”

"Do you, Lorenzo Bale, accept me as your Alpha?" I ask.

"Yes," he says, swallowing my blood. I feel the pack link snap into place and Lorenzo's head falls forward.

"Thank you, Alpha," he says, his voice thick with emotion.

"Come on, let's get you inside. Now that I'm your Alpha, you should be able to tell me everything that Roman is planning."