

## Chapter 19 - Tunnels

Zara's POV

Levi flew through the forest like a bat out of hell. He was obviously excited, but he also seemed rushed, and I could not help but be curious as to what was causing him such excitement.

I trailed after him, playfully nipping at his wolf's tail.

"I am still faster than you, Beta," I mused over the mind-linked as Kaya ran past him. She hasn't even reached her full speeding potential, giving Louis a run for his money.

I smiled as I imagined what an observer would see if they witnessed us playing and running in this manner.

Would all they see go past them be a silver line?

"I am not trying to win," Levi mind-linked me.

"So, what are you doing?" I asked, coming to a stop.

"You will see," he said, running past me.

A few yards away, I could hear the roar of the water, and the edge of the forest was marked by sunlight peeping through the dense canopy of trees. We were close.

I caught up with Levi when I reached the end of the forest. He was patiently waiting for me, looking a bit more relaxed now that we were almost there, and we quietly strolled across the rocky terrain and into the sun.

The water in the river was crystal clear, and I could see fish swimming in it.

"I find it surprising that no one went out fishing today," I said. "It is such a beautiful day."

With a nod, Levi's beast set off in the direction of our cave.

As soon as I entered the cave, I had a feeling we were not alone.

Levi shifted back and got dressed, acting as though nothing was wrong.

I pointed my nuzzle upward, took a deep, long sniff of the air, and moved farther into the cave.

"What are you doing?" Kaya jumped out of fear when Levi asked behind her.

"Seriously, Levi!" Kaya snarled and flashed her canines at him. She was so focused on her senses that she failed to notice Levi's approaching.

"What?" He asked innocently. "I did not do anything wrong."

"Apart from acting suspiciously!" Kaya replied. "It is really getting on my nerves!"

"Whatever!" Levi said, rolling his eyes at her. "Zara, are you not going to shift back and get dressed?"

Why was Levi purposefully not answering any questions?

Who the hell did he think he was?

I let out a sigh, and Kaya disappeared further into the cave so I could change back and get dressed.

Still, I could not get rid of the feeling that we were being watched.



Kaya gave me control; I shifted back to human, hurried to get dressed, and headed back to Levi.

In the center of the cave, Levi had started a fire that lit the rest of the area.

Despite the fact that we were wolves and could see perfectly in the dark, we still relished the fire's warmth. It was particularly chilly in the cave.

I looked over at the ratty couch against the cave wall. It had seen better days and was one of the few pieces of furniture we had down here. My mother threw the old couch out and bought a brand new one, so Levi and I decided to salvage it and bring it down here.

The old couch would tell you tales of our cavern adventures if it could speak.

I sat down on the worn-out couch and drew the pillow and blanket closer together. Perhaps as a result of all the excitement today, I felt a little cold.

I watched in silence as Levi descended to the spring that runs along the cave's edge, filled the kettle with water, and then returned to hang the kettle over the fire.

"Do you need me to remind you that there is nothing edible or drinkable down here?" I stated. "Would you like me to go get some snacks from the kitchen?"

"That is not necessary," Levi answered. "Our small pantry was stocked a few days ago. Take a peek."

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That caught me off guard.

It was always my responsibility to make sure food was available down here.

I stood up, went over to the old kitchen cabinet, and pulled open the shattered doors. I was shocked to find that all of my favorites were in the cabinet.

"Oh, Levi-boy!" I exclaimed as I took out one of our favorite snacks. "You are a man so close to my heart!"

"And here I thought I was the man in your heart." Alpha Nicholas's voice boomed behind me, echoing through the silent cave.

I froze, my eyes wide, and let the pack of snacks fall to the floor.

"How? How did you?" I turned around and stammered.

Levi drew nearer, laughing with amusement.

I hesitated when Alpha Nicholas opened his arms to embrace me. He might be my mate, but he is trespassing. I had no doubt that my father was not aware of Alpha Nicholas's visit.

Since the Silverado Pack was heavily guarded, nobody could just walk in without authorization. My father made sure to double the border patrol in anticipation of the impending war.



How did Alpha Nicholas get into the pack without being noticed?  
Was Levi the one who gave the order to allow him to pass through  
the border?

I dismissed that thought. I would be aware if someone was granted  
entry.

There has to be another way Alpha Nicholas got in, but how?

How did he find out about our cave?

How did he know about coming here?

How could he have known that I would be coming here with Levi?

I suddenly looked over at Levi, who was standing there with tears of  
laughter in his eyes.

"You!" I snarled at Levi. "You had this planned?"

"It was Alpha Nicholas plan." Levi stepped back and threw his hands  
defensively in the air. "I simply did as my future Alpha told me to."

Future Alpha? Have the two already discussed my future? Does that  
imply that I have been accepted as Alpha Nicholas' mate?

Alpha Nicholas laughed, tossing his head back to enjoy the irony of  
the situation.

"Why are you so afraid of this little kitten?" he questioned, giving Levi  
a playful nudge.

Levi shot Alpha Nicholas an incredulous look in return.

"You are not aware of her level of fierceness," Levi said, his eyes wide. "Beyond her adorable and soft appearance, she is a formidable fighter, possessing sharp claws and the ability to bite."

"Is that so?" He asked, turning back toward me, and his eyes darkened. "I would be interested in learning more about that for myself."

My face flushed instantly, and Levi bit his lip to contain his laughter—bloody ass. He is meant to rescue me from such predicaments, not make them worse!

"What are you doing here?" I asked, finding my voice.

"It is evident that I came to see you," he remarked, moving in closer to meet my eyes.

My mind went into overdrive, and my heart began to race.

Did he sneak in to reject me? Was that the reason he came here without being noticed?

"Stop being so paranoid!" Kaya chirped. "He made the trip to visit you!"

"Yes, but," I countered. "Who in their right mind enters a pack without permission?"

"A person who is aware of your secret and is attempting to maintain it that way," she answered. "Take a look at him. He is not here to harm you; his purpose is simply to see you. He desires you."

"I hope so," I said, looking back at him with concern.

Alpha Nicholas had a smug smile on his face and was silently staring at me like a lost puppy.

"What is the secret you used to sneak into the pack?" I asked, and Nicolas furrowed his brows in response.

"I used the underground tunnels," he declared proudly.

"What underground tunnels?" I asked, taken aback.

I was unaware that our territory was above a network of tunnels. That raised questions about safety. Is my father aware of it?

"I believe Alpha Nic's talking about the tunnels your father banned us from exploring when we were kids," Levi said.

"You are unaware?" Alpha Nicolas said, knitting his dark eyebrows together and his eyes crossing over with a mixture of surprise and worry.

"About what?" I asked, looking at him as if he had grown two heads.

Taking a deep breath, Alpha Nicholas shook his head in irritation.

"I cannot believe you do not know of this," he eventually stated. "It is part of the silver-blessed pack's history. There are five caves that connect to the heart, including this one."

"Heart?" Levi inquired, with his head tilted to one side. "What heart?"

"What are you talking about?" I snapped. I was now so confused. I had no idea what he was going on about. Did my dad fail to tell us this important piece of information? Was there a reason he did not

disclose it?

Sighing, Alpha Nicholas ran a hand over his face. It was obvious he was irritated that he had to give us a history lesson.

"The heart is a sacred place centred under the lake in my pack," Alpha Nicholas started to explain. "The tunnels connect each blessed pack to the heart. I just used that to my advantage to come to see you."

My jaw dropped to the floor.

We have been using the cave as our den for years, and never once did it occur to me that we might have been linked to the other silver-blessed packs.

What other secrets was my father hiding from us?

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