

## The Mating Pact Chapter 2

Logan

Hell, does my head hurt?

I reluctantly sat up, feeling like fifty shades of sh!t, and begrudgingly opened my eyes. A string of indecent epitaphs left my mouth as bright sunlight hit my eyes. It took a good five minutes before I could adjust my vision and once it did, I stared around blankly.

Where the hell was I?

This was not my bedroom. And most definitely not the pack house. The familiar scent was missing. This was a different scent. And this place was much smaller than the packhouse or my bedroom. I peeked out of the window and discovered huge buildings as far as I could see. I could hear the traffic, too.

No, really, where was I?

I found myself in a small, scattered, and funny-smelling bedroom. There was nothing else to say. There were several BTS posters on the wall which I cannot help but roll my eyes at. Clothes were thrown around almost everywhere. My eyes widened as I spotted mine lying on the floor. One quick inspection and I realized I was n.aked.

Okay, so I was sleeping n.aked in a stranger's bed in this strangely dirty bedroom. Why in fvck's name? As if to answer my question, I heard the familiar caller tune of my cellphone and after searching around, I spotted it lying on the floor as well. Irritated, I leaned over and grabbed it, relief flooding through me at seeing the name flashing on the screen.

"I am in a stranger's bedroom. Naked. And I do not remember a bloody thing," I said before my younger brother could even speak. "What am I missing?"

"That's why you shouldn't get drunk like that, alpha," Noah whistled. "For someone so high and mighty, you have a pathetic tolerance."

"Will you get to the point? My head hurts like hell and my mouth tastes like vomit. Trust me, this is not the time," I grimaced. "What happened?"

“How the hell would I know? You disappeared last night. I was worried about you, but Asher said you left with some brunette chick. It’s probably her place,” Noah answered.

“Wait...brunette chick? Last night? What are you saying?” I grumbled, pinching the bridge of my nose.

“We went to a club together. To celebrate your twenty-seventh birthday in advance. We are in New York for business. You had way too many cans of beer and a fair share of vodka. Then I left to pee and when I got back, you were gone. Asher told me you were dancing with some girl. Then you left. The end,” He replied. “Rings a bell?”

I let his words sink in. Once it does, blurry images from last night flood into my brain and I stare blankly out of the window, processing it all. Right. That girl. What was her name? I don’t think I caught it. How did she look? I don’t think I caught that either. But something about her was very familiar. That’s why I was drawn to her. I just don’t know what. I remember stumbling into her on the dance floor. And then...nothing.

“Okay, I remember a little now,” I muttered.

“Did you sleep with her?” Noah demanded, sounding bored. I shot a glance at my clothes lying on the floor and added my n.aked glory to the equation. I presumed the answer was a big yes to that.

“I believe so,” I replied, rubbing my face.

“Yay! You got laid,” Noah said sarcastically. “Now get your a.ss back to the hotel before dad calls. If he finds out that you are sleeping around with some unknown human girl instead of mate hunting, you are going to be screwed. And so will we all. And if he finds out that your visit to the Sanguis Pack was an epic failure again...”

“He won’t if you guys keep your mouth shut,” I snapped, my stomach churning at the prospect of facing my father. “And what hotel are we booked in?”

“I will text you the details. Jesus,” Noah sighed. “Be quick,”

I cut the call and scowled. Life was getting messier for me as of late. Gingerly, I climbed down from the bed and gathered my clothes, idly wondering where the brunette girl was. I hoped she had left or something. If she expects

something to come out of what happened last night, none of which I remembered, it would be another mess I had no intentions of dealing with. I already had enough.

Once clothed, I strolled over to the bathroom and quickly splashed some cold water on my face to knock some sense into my fudgy brain. My eyes drifted to my reflection in the mirror above the vanity, and I scowled again. I looked like crap. I felt like crap too. Shaking my head, I wiped my face with a handkerchief and walked out, instantly freezing as I spotted a dark-haired girl sitting on the bed. Her back was to me, so I contemplated whether I should just silently sneak out. And even though her back was to me, there was that innate familiarity crawling into my being again.

The thought was appealing, but I knew that would be wrong. Instead, I decided to act calm and collected as if nothing happened. So we got drunk and slept together, big deal. Happens every day in a city like New York, isn't it?

"Uh, I had to use the bathroom. I hope you don't mind," I muttered awkwardly. "I don't think I picked up your name last night. By the way, I'm Logan." She didn't turn around right away, and I wondered if she even heard me. I noticed her shoulders sag before she squared them again, finally deciding to face me.

Familiar chestnut eyes stared back at me, her lips pressed into a thin line as we appraised each other. Neither of us said anything at all. I don't know what she was thinking, but I was surely in a fair amount of shock. There must be a mistake. I have to be mistaken. This couldn't be her, could it?

I mean, the last time I saw her, she was a tiny fifteen-year-old girl with pimples. I most definitely don't see pimples on the woman standing in front of me. She was taller too, maybe 5'7 or 5'8. Her long dark hair was now chopped into messy shoulder-length waves.

And the girl I was assuming her to be most definitely wouldn't have looked at me the way this woman was. Like she would love to strangle me or something. But how do I ignore the familiar scent that was buried somewhere in the back of my conscience for the last ten years? That was what was familiar about her. Her scent. It was still the same as I remembered, which was weird given her upbringing since I last saw her.

"Cora?" I croaked. "Cora Scott?"

“Hello, Logan,” she said without an ounce of enthusiasm.

“It is you!” I mumbled and, frankly, I had no idea how to explain what I was feeling. I almost reached out and hugged her, but something inside me held me back, and just like her, I stood there with a blank look.

“The door’s over there. I believe you can show yourself out?” She said, pointing towards the door.

Huh?

I had no idea what I was expecting from her, but this definitely came as a surprise. She has changed a lot, that I was sure of. This was not the girl who used to be my best friend at some point.

“This is how you greet your best friend?” I asked nevertheless. “After ten years?”

“Ex-best friend,” Cora said, folding her arms across her chest. “Remember? It’s been ten years, Logan.” I blinked at her, and finally, realization dawned upon me. Right. It’s been ten years.

“Right,” I nodded. “It’s been long. You have grown up, Ra-Ra,” Her face hardened further as she closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

“It’s just Cora and yes, I am twenty-six now so...” she mumbled. “Anyway, good to see you. You look good. Being an alpha surely fits you.” I wondered if she was being sarcastic. Couldn’t tell for sure as she stood in front of me with an absolutely empty expression.

“Thanks, I guess,” I muttered, a bit appalled at how awkward it had gotten between us. What could I expect anyway? “So, last night...it was you...I mean, we?”

“I am assuming yes,” Cora nodded. “But if it helps, I don’t remember a thing, so we are good. Imagine that never happened. Or that we ever met,”

“Why would I imagine that? I am pretty sure it happened.” I grimaced, feeling a little pissed at her cryptic behavior. Or by the fact that it has to be Cora of all the women in this huge a.s.s city. I just had to go and sleep with her.

“Because we are never seeing each other ever again after today. It was a drunken mistake. Why would you want to reminisce about it?” Cora pointed out flatly.

“I am not interested in reminiscing about anything, Cora. Be assured,” I muttered, my voice getting hard even though I had no reason to be annoyed at all. “Anyway, I better get going.”

“Sure. That way,” she agreed, pointing at the door again.

She was eager for me to leave. Why? Was she afraid of getting caught by her boyfriend or something? Did she even have one? She used to be such a huge nerd. Did she find her mate? But if she did, she wouldn't sleep with a random stranger. Maybe, like me, she hasn't found her mate yet?

Hell, how was that my business?

“It was good to see you, Cora,” I said, and it was true to some extent. Regardless of everything, I missed her more than I would like to admit. For some reason, she wouldn't look me straight in the eyes. Her hazel eyes kept flitting everywhere but on me.

Cora didn't reply, and I knew there wasn't anything more to be said. Giving her a nod, I walked out, still trying to absorb the fact that it was Cora I ended up with last night. In New York, of all places. And that too, after ten fvcking\*g years.

What was the probability of that happening?

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“How did it go at alpha Caleb's pack?” My father raised a brow at me, staring back from the other side of the screen. “Their pack has a bloody weird name, so.”

“I did not get around to visiting yet,” I lied. “Had meetings all day long yesterday. I will visit today.”

“Meetings can wait, Logan,” my father said, his voice hard. “You need to find your mate first. It is high time that you took over as the alpha of the Gray Crest Pack. You will turn twenty-seven in two days. People are starting to talk now. Not just within the pack, but outside the pack as well. The to-be alpha of the

strongest pack in the country hasn't found his mate yet. Do you know how that makes us look?"

"It's not in my hands," I protested, irritated. "What sane person wouldn't want a mate? I am trying, am I not?"

"Then try harder. You had better get back with a mate, Logan. Or it will force us to choose one ourselves and I believe you wouldn't want that. We have a lot of desirable candidates. Anyone would be privileged to be your luna. But I understand that you deserve to find your fated mate, so try harder."

He cut the call, and I scowled at the blank screen, his warning leaving a sinking feeling inside. He meant what he said. As if it was that easy. I mean, it was supposed to be, wasn't it? Everyone finds their mate a few years after they first turn. It's going to be a fvcking\*g century since that happened to me. Then why haven't I found mine? There was a good possibility that I was mateless. The thought made me shudder every time I even remotely entertained it. So I don't. I have to have a mate. She was around somewhere. I just need to look carefully, that's all.

"Now what?" Noah demanded, leaning by the door. "You lied again. Do you think Caleb won't tell him you rejected his beloved sister?"

"I did not reject anyone. She is not the one I am looking for." I said, rubbing my face as I tried to ward off the bloody headache.

"Hmm, well, we have little time. So, you have to do something. The annual mating ball sounds promising, but it's still six months away. Father will kill you if you get back without a mate, brother." Noah pointed out. "Your alpha ceremony is next full moon."

Do I not know that?

"Maybe you should just hire someone to save your a.ss?" Both Noah and I glanced at the dark-haired guy lounging in the corner, as always smirking at his phone.

"What did you say?" I demanded. "Asher?" My youngest brother looked up and frowned.

"What did I say?" He asked.

“I heard you loud and clear.”

“Me too,” Noah agreed.

“Ah...that. It was a vague idea,” he shrugged. “It’s supposed to be a joke. You can hire people for everything these days. Just hire a girl who will pretend to be your mate until this ball thing happens. Then you can reject her and say you found your true mate or something. Simple.”

“That’s why we don’t take you seriously,” Noah rolled his eyes. “Can you be any more stupid?”

“I said I meant it as a joke, didn’t I?” Asher scowled. I stared blankly as both my brothers bickered amongst themselves, a plan forming in my head. The more thought I gave to it, the more plausible and perfect it seemed.

“I think it’s perfect,” I smiled at my brothers. “Thanks, Asher!”

“What?” Noah exclaimed. “Come on, you can’t be serious. Did you even hear the douchebag?” I grinned at him and nodded my head.

“I am serious. Very serious,” I said firmly, standing up. “I am going to hire a mate for myself.”

“And where the fvck would you find a girl?” Noah inquired sarcastically. I turned to my brother and nodded.

“I have already found one.”