

The Mating Pact Chapter 3

I knew this was a long shot. In fact, probably one of the stupidest plans anyone has ever thought of. But from my perspective, it seemed perfect. If...if I can pull it off, that is. It was not going to be easy. Unlike human relationships, we as werewolves work in a much different way. Faking a mate bond would need an impeccable level of acting. Anyone, especially the elders, could see and tell if there was even a tiny crack.

But I was desperate. Literally desperate. And desperate times call for desperate measures. I was stepping into twenty-seven in two days. To humans, that might be nothing. But in our world, and for someone like me, an alpha, that was a time when you are ready to become a father. Or were already a father in most cases. But here I was, still mateless. Forget about children.

I turned the moment I stepped into sixteen, so technically I should have found a mate a million years ago. When I crossed twenty and still didn't find a mate, my parents assured me that it could be a bit late for some. Just like puberty. But as years went by, everyone started to get wary, especially my father, and now people were starting to talk behind my back, which was a shame for me and for a pack like mine.

My father was still serving as the alpha regent because I was yet to take the oath. I cannot be an official alpha and rule without my luna beside me. Neither of my brothers, Noah twenty-five, and Asher twenty-three, had any intention of finding a mate either so that one of them could take over at least. Noah had his reasons and Asher would rather fvck around than be with someone for the rest of his life. And neither would my father accept that. He has trained me in particular to be the next alpha of the Gray Crest pack. The responsibility was immense and I did not want to fail him.

I needed a luna. ASAP.

"Do you even hear yourself?" Noah exclaimed, looking bewildered. "You want to hire someone to pose as your luna. Wait...did you hear that now?"

"I heard everything loud and clear," I answered. "But do I have a choice? We have to head home soon. My trip to Caleb's pack was again the perfect failure and, just so you know, I am still mateless. Did you not hear what father said? I had better get back home with a mate, Noah. He meant it,"

“This is still insane,” Noah protested. “Tell him you will wait till the mating ball. What are six more months?”

“People are calling me mateless,” I said silently, cringing as the words left my mouth. “If I go back, that would be confirmed. Maybe no one will say anything in front of me, but words will spread. Not only will it hinder our reputation as the leading, most powerful pack, but it will also give enemies an opportunity to think we are weak. Remember, alpha is nothing without his luna. And what’s the guarantee that I will find a mate at the mating ball? At least by doing this I would have some excuse to cover up for myself. A mateless alpha...how does that sound to you?”

“But...” Noah scowled. “This is crazy.”

“I don’t see why it’s so bad,” Asher commented. “I mean, it’s just six months. They will fuss for the first few weeks and then nobody gives a damn. All he needs to do is train the girl, that’s all. Act all lovey-dovey and I don’t know all that stuff.”

“And where the fvck will he find the right girl?” Noah demanded, raising a brow at Asher. “On Tinder? Do you think a mate bond is something to make fun of? Do you think a human girl will be able to understand the complexities of our world and the duties of a luna? The moment the word werewolf leaves his mouth, she would be running for the hills, Ash. And where the hell will he find a she-wolf in this gigantic city?”

“He said he had already found one,” Asher pointed out, glancing at me.

“He is drunk,” Noah rolled his eyes. “He just woke up n.aked in some stranger’s apartment a few hours ago. What do you expect?”

“Woah...really?” Asher exclaimed, looking excited. Between the three of us, he was the womanizer, the spoilt youngest child. Noah was way too serious for his age and I simply did not have the time.

“Yeah,” I nodded my head. “And yes, there is someone. I think she would be a perfect candidate. Or maybe not. I don’t know. She’s my best bet. That is all I can say.” I couldn’t feel the conviction in my words, but she indeed was my best bet. There was no one who could fit the role as perfectly as her in such a short time.

“Huh?” Noah frowned. “What do you mean? I don’t understand.”

“Today when you called me, I was at...Cora’s. Apparently, she was the brunette chick.” I answered and I couldn’t help the reluctant smile that spread on my lips at the mention of her name.

Little Rara is all grown up now. A long silence spread through the room as Noah and Asher blankly stared at me. It was understandable because that was exactly what my reaction was. It’s been ten years since we all saw her. And to find her in New York of all the places, I was still yet to wrap my head around that.

“Co...Cora?” Noah broke the silence first. “Cora Scott?”

“Rara!” Asher exclaimed, eyes wide. I slowly nodded my head.

“Yep,” I nodded. “All grown up now though.”

“fvcking*g hell,” Noah whispered. “What in...here?”

“That was what I am surprised about as well,” I said. “I was blown away when I saw her.”

“Oh, it’s been so long,” Asher murmured with a smile. “I missed her so much. I want to meet her too.”

“I don’t really feel she would like to meet any of us,” I mumbled, scratching my head as I remembered her behavior towards me earlier.

“Could we blame her?” Noah said, giving me a look. “Did you forget what happened ten years back? It was disgusting. And in that case, what makes you so sure that she would agree to this arrangement of yours? She might not even want to be anywhere near us, let alone spend the next six months with the pack pretending to be your luna.”

“I don’t know,” I shrugged. “I guess I have to beg her or find out some way that she has to agree to it somehow. Maybe for old time’s sake?” Noah let out a scoff at that.

“We can plead too if you want,” Asher added. “Unlike you, she might not say no to us.”

“No,” I shook my head. “I don’t want to overwhelm her. It’s been ten years after all. I will deal with this. I just need to make a few calls and see what

would be my best option. I might also need a contract to be prepared. Something tells me she would want that if she agreed. Chart the terms and conditions of this relationship. What I get out of it and what she does.”

“This feels like a movie,” Asher guffawed, shutting up as Noah shot him a look.

“You are really determined about this,” Noah said drily. He wasn’t half as enthusiastic as Asher. And that was understandable because Noah was more sensible. He knew how this entire plan could blow up straight in my face. But I had no other way. I gave him a nod.

“Yes, I am,” I replied. “I am going back home with my luna. If not fated, then...rented.”

Trodding into my study, I shut the door and dialed my secretary, Harper White. Apart from managing a pack, I had to look after our various businesses as well. Unlike the pack where all our duties were clearly divided down to the last in the chain, the omegas, when it came to our businesses, all three of us, that is me, Noah, and Asher were equally responsible.

The money from the business, of course, went to the welfare of the pack, in expansion and strengthening it. After all, it was not some small pack comprising of a handful of members. Gray Crest was the strongest, largest and wealthiest pack in the country. The reason is that we had some kind of royal lineage or something. I slept through most of the history lessons anyway. The only other pack that gave us a fight was that of the Lycans ruling in the south. We don’t mess with each other. They were Lycans. The reason was obvious.

We weren’t literally royalty anymore, but when it came to assessing the net worth of all the packs, nobody has ever surpassed us in the last several decades. It was something to be proud of, but clearly, that also meant we had more enemies wanting us dead than ever, more backstabbers and uncountable haters. All the more reason why I needed to find a luna for the pack before someone could use this small liability against us.

“Sir,” White muttered, his voice as always blank. He was a human but he was aware of our identity and has gotten used to it now. He was paid more than enough for that.

“I need you to find information about a girl. Everything you can,” I said. “Her name is Cora Scott. Daughter of Anthony and Fiona Scott. She lives here in the city. I didn’t catch the address but I believe you can take care of that.”

“I can,” he answered.

“How long will this take? I don’t have much time on me,” I muttered.

“Half an hour, sir. Anything else?” White demanded.

“Uh...” I didn’t even want to say this. “Well, I would need you to go as in-depth as you can. I er...I am looking for...something...to use as leverage if you may.”

This was so uncomfortable and wrong. After all these years, this was not what she deserved. Even though she did owe us in some way or other for the mercy my father showed to her family ten years ago. Still, she did not need me to barge into her life when I was the one who asked her to leave. But I was really at the very end of desperation.

If there was anyone else who could be half as suitable as Cora, then I would never have done this. Because there was no way the pack would be thrilled about having a rogue for a luna. But there was no one and I didn’t have the time to scour New York City. Cora knew the pack rules. She was acquainted with most of the things. With a bit of training, she would make a perfect luna, even if just for pretense.

“I understand,” White said. “I will get you everything as soon as possible.”

“Thank you so much,” I muttered gratefully and cut the call.

Sighing, I sat back on my chair and rubbed my face. Inwardly, I tried to think of what I would say to her when I saw her again. She had no intention of seeing me again, clearly. I was pretty sure she was as drunk last night as I was. Otherwise, there was no way I would have ended up in her apartment.

Did I really sleep with her? I had no idea how I felt about that. And a part of me was glad that I don’t remember anything. Cora and I grew up together right from the time we were babies. I was never as close to anyone as I was to her. We shared a bond that was not quite explainable in words. She was like a soulmate who knew me better than I knew myself, but all in a friendly way.

There was never anything more. I have had my share of girlfriends and flings and Cora knew about all of them. But for us...it was just pure friendship and yet not quite that. And then one day, just like that, the bond was shattered forever. The long-lost memories brought a sullen discomfort inside me.

How in hell was this going to work out?

“Did you find what you were looking for?” Noah demanded, pushing a glass of beer towards me as we went down to the bar later in the evening.

Asher has disappeared somewhere. No need to ask, he probably found some random hook-up on one of the million dating apps he had on his phone. I had no idea why he cannot just focus on finding his mate rather than fvcking*g around.

“Yep,” I nodded. “She lives alone here. Works at a coffee shop on Amsterdam Avenue as a waitress with her best friend, someone named Maya Sanchez. That’s pretty much it. No relationship or anything.”

“And precisely how do you expect to drop this proposal?” He inquired, tilting his head to the side. “You are a true businessman, so I believe you are going to use something as leverage?” I cringed inwardly at the sarcasm and nodded my head. He knew me very well.

“Her best friend and she are trying to open up a cafe,” I muttered, taking a long sip of the chilled beer. “But their loan isn’t getting approved. Defaulted credit score as per the New York City rules.”

“Okay, I get it, no need to say more. You are going to give her money to pose as your mate, isn’t it? You are going to use her weakness and pull her back into your life. Do you remember you were the one who asked her to leave?” Noah grimaced, making a dirty face.

fvck.

“It doesn’t matter what I said. The decision has already been made. You know what happened,” I exclaimed. “There was nothing I could have done. It was father’s decision. And a right one at that. If anything, she does owe us. Did you forget the loss we had to face because her father betrayed the pack?”

“You really believe that? Jesus,” He scowled. “Well, good luck.” He sarcastically raised his glass in a toast.

"You have no idea how hard it is," I snapped. "So, you can judge me all you want, but I will do whatever it takes to uphold the responsibility given to me. You stand by my side as my brother or not."

"I am not judging you," Noah sighed. "It could go wrong in so many ways. What if someone finds out? I just don't want you to get into a mess. Or Cora. Once again because of us."

"Nobody will find out. It will stay between the three of us. And Cora...if she agrees," I murmured, rubbing my face. "This plan is perfect."

"And what if she doesn't agree?" I didn't want to hear the obvious. Listening to Noah say it out loud made it all the more probable. Of course, she won't agree. I knew her well enough to know that. But I needed to try. And try I will.

As hard as I could.

"She has to agree because I do not have an alternative," I answered firmly. "I just have to be tactful."

"Again, good luck then." Noah gave me a pat on the shoulder. "I do hope she agrees because I would really love to have her back." I glanced at him and he had a smile on his lips. Noah barely smiles.

Clearly, he still adored Cora.

The cafe she worked at was a pretty big one. I stood on the other side of the road and recited everything I would have to say in my head once again. As I waited for the lights to turn green, I noticed a young man dressed in a waiter's uniform stalk out and, if I was not wrong, following after him was...Cora. They were too far for me to hear, but it seemed to me that they were casually trying to have a heated conversation. If that made sense. After a moment, he grabbed her hand and dragged her somewhere towards the back. I didn't feel like she wanted to go.

Just as the lights turned green, I jogged over and instead of heading inside and waiting for her to come back, I found myself following the duo towards the back instead.

"You left me fvcking*g humiliated!" An annoyed male voice growled and when I peeked over I was surprised to see a guy glaring at Cora, tightly holding onto her hand.

“Seriously Eric, before I k!!! you...let go of my hand,” Cora muttered, sounding bored.

“I am going to teach you a lesson today.” The guy hissed and I blinked as he made a gesture with his hand and a few other men emerged from behind the big crates and dustbins shoved around. They looked anything but normal to me.

What was going on?

“What the hell!” Cora exclaimed. “Let me fvcking*g call the police.” She started to fidget for her phone but before she could, he pulled her back and landed a tight slap on her cheek.

So hard, that she lost balance and landed with a thud on the floor, right in front of me. Fury flooded through my veins instantly. Like a sudden rush. I bent down in front of her and, without a second thought, lifted up her face. My veins almost felt like they would pop with rage as I noticed the bl00d on her !!ps. Her mahogany eyes were wide as she gazed back at me, looking surprised.

“Who the fvck are you?” The guy demanded, distracting us. Grabbing her arm lightly, I pulled her up and moved her behind me.

“I don’t need your help!” Cora protested, but I don’t think I was in a mood to listen to her.

Rather, I was in the mood to break some bones.