

The Mating Pact Chapter 4

Cora

“Cora! Cora!” I blinked and turned my eyes blankly to the direction of the voice screaming my name. Maya raised her brow at me, her eyes flitting to my front. I frowned and followed her gaze, finding nothing weird in particular.

“What?” I demanded.

“We are way too full today,” She rolled her eyes. “Can’t you see? And two of the waiting staff are already absent. We need to hustle before customers start complaining or the old dog comes in and gives us an earful. So, giddy up, please. Just his voice makes me want to puke.”

She was talking about the owner of this coffee shop, Mr. Kinderman. He was a first-class asshole and everyone, even sometimes the customers, hated him. Reminded me of Scrooge from Christmas Carol.

“Right. Sorry,” I muttered, grabbing my notepad and pen. “I will go and take the orders.”

“Good. We need to talk during lunch,” She shot me a pointed look before trodding off to serve the orders.

Scowling and annoyed with my waywardness, I plastered a smile on my face and started going about my pointless job. In all honesty, I hated this. It was my and Maya’s shared dream to own a place like this one day. Our own place with no dictating, rude Mr. Kinderman riding our a.ss. We would do everything the way we wanted to freely. The decor, the menu, everything according to our taste.

We even have a small notebook where we have collected the cut-outs for decor ideas and written down everything that we want our cafe to have. It was still wishful thinking because every time we applied for a loan, we had been rejected. Maya is still yet to hear from one last application, so I was refusing to be pessimistic just yet. I had put aside all my savings so far for our cafe, but still, it was nowhere close to being enough. All my father’s assets were seized by the fvcking*g pack so I was left with next to nothing. The more I thought about this, the more I felt like strangling someone to death.

“Maya told me you slept with Logan.” I cringed as Derek smirked at me, waiting to take Maya out for lunch and apartment hunting.

He was her mate, another lone wolf like us. Turns out, we don't quite live in the world we think we do because, even after leaving the pack and deciding to live a simple human life, I have encountered several werewolves hidden among the humans and living their lives just the way we were. I was convinced after seeing them and not to forget my own experience that this entire werewolf pack thing was an exaggerated notion.

Anyway, after being together for three years, Derek and Maya were ready to tie the knot in two months. Sometimes, when I look at them, I feel a little envy, of course in a good way. They loved each other like fools and were about to create the most perfect life together. Even though I had not the slightest intention of finding my mate, ever, it still fascinated me to see the beautiful bond and the insane attraction between them. Sometimes they get so loud that I can hear them upstairs.

“I did NOT know it was Logan,” I pointed out. “And no need to look like that. It's done and over with.”

“Is it?” Maya inquired, leaning in to kiss Derek before turning her beautiful dark eyes on me. She was half Indian and half American and was one freaking mesmerizing woman. Her dusky skin and shiny black hair made me jealous to no extent.

“It is,” I said firmly. Of course, she didn't buy that.

“Are you sure you don't want to come with us for lunch?” She asked.

“No. Danny had brought me a burger already. Plus, somebody needs to fill in for you,” I answered with a wave. “Go, find your dream home. See ya, later!” Maya gave me a look again and I waved her away, watching with a smile as she hooked her arm with Derek's and headed out, excitedly mumbling something to him.

“You know, I don't think the whole mate thing is that bad,” Daniel prompted, leaning over the counter. “They seem to be doing just fine.”

“Yeah? Why don't you find yours then?” I inquired, rolling my eyes.

“As if it's that easy,” Daniel made a face. “Remember, I am gay?”

“And gay wolves are not allowed to have mates?” I asked skeptically. “You just need to look hard, Dan. And leave the past in the past. I am sure there is someone wonderful waiting for you right around the corner.” He snorted in response.

We met Daniel some three years ago. Just like us, he was all alone and lost, abandoned by his pack for being homosexual. Not really abandoned because he was the one who ran away from there after enduring all kinds of abuse for years. We immediately found a kindred spirit in each other and now we are a trio.

“And what about you?” He demanded. “You are surprisingly optimistic about everyone but yourself, I have noticed.”

“I will find another Eric.” I giggled even though it wasn’t funny.

“Speaking of the devil,” Daniel grimaced, his eyes fixed behind me. I turned around and scowled as Eric stared back at us, his face hard. I think he was on supply duty today or just avoiding me altogether.

“We need to talk, Cora,” Eric said.

“Why? What is there to talk about?” I muttered, ignoring him as I went about my work.

“Let’s take this outside.” He prompted, grabbing my arm. I shot him a glare but he didn’t seem to be in the mood to back off. Glancing around, I pulled my arm away and motioned him to lead the way. I don’t want him creating a scene here and costing me my fucking*g job.

“Do you want me to come?” Daniel asked. Between Eric and him, I believe the latter had better chances which was why it wasn’t a good idea to involve him.

“I got this,” I gave him a thumbs up and headed out.

“What?” I demanded tartly. “Spit it out, I don’t have a billion years on me.”

“Don’t you feel like you should be apologizing to me?” Eric hissed, looking pissed. I blinked at him, appalled, and I have to say he has some guts to say that.

“Excuse me?” I scoffed. “I caught you fvcking the bl00dy red-head behind my back while b!tching about me and you think I should be apologizing? Do you think I am an i***t? Do you think I didn’t know what you have been doing behind my back? I just didn’t want this to be another epic failure, otherwise, I would have kicked you out a long time ago. fvck off, Eric, before I make things worse for you.”

He glared at me and before I could turn to head inside, he grabbed my hand and started pulling me back towards the alley that leads to the garbage dumping area or something.

“What the fvck are you doing?” I exclaimed, trying to pull away from his grasp.

“You left me fvcking*g humiliated!” Eric snapped, finally halting. I was actually a bit perplexed. I don’t remember I have ever seen him this mad before.

“Seriously Eric, before I k!ll you...let go of my hand,” I muttered, trying to sound nonchalant.

“I am going to teach you a lesson today.” He said, his voice frigid, and I frowned as he waved his hand, shooting me an evil sneer. My eyes widened as suddenly, from behind the boxes and the big garbage bins, four huge a.ss men walked out. And I absolutely did not like the look of them.

“What the hell!” I cried out, shooting them a glare. “Let me fvcking*g call the cops.”

I shuffled around for my phone but before I could, Eric grabbed my hand and landed a tight slap on my cheek. The blow was so hard that I toppled over on the floor and I could hear a weird ringing in my ears. Before I could react, I felt the insanely familiar scent invading my senses.

Musk and pine needles.

No. I must be mistaken. I blinked up and familiar golden-brown eyes peered down at me. His face was hard as stone as he searched mine. Okay, was I having a concussion or what? What the fvck was he doing here? He of all the people.

Logan.

“Who the fvck are you?” Eric demanded, distracting us. Logan shot him a deadly look before grabbing my arm and gently hauling me up. I didn’t like the look on his face. His eyes turned a weird color as he glared at Eric and his goons.

Crap. If he loses it and phases here, we will be in deep sh!t. There were CCTVs all around. How would I explain a perfectly fine man suddenly turning into a wolf? This was not his pack territory. This was New York City for god’s sake.

“I don’t need your help!” I protested furiously.

But I think I was invisible to him or something. He grabbed my arm and pushed me back behind him before taking a menacing step toward Eric. He was tall enough but still, Logan seemed to be towering in front of him. Not to forget that Eric was on the much leaner side when compared to him. He was really so dead.

“How dare you touch her?” His voice was calm yet so threatening that a shiver ran down my spine.

“And who the fvck are you?” Eric sneered. “Wait...you have been sleeping around with him, haven’t you?” It was directed at me and I shot him a dirty look in response.

“Apologize to her right now and I will spare you and your friends,” Logan said, ignoring his comment.

“Don’t do this,” I hissed, grabbing his hand. “This is not your territory. Or any of your business.”

“It is very much my business,” Logan answered, pushing me back again before turning to Eric and his men. “Apologize.”

“He wants a good beating,” One of the guys hissed. “Come here, big guy. Let’s see what you got.”

fvck. They were screwed.

“Fine,” Logan muttered. “Which one of you wants to go first? Or should I take all of you together?”

Eric scoffed and then started laughing, which unfortunately didn't last long. I cringed, horrified as Logan landed a sharp punch on his jaw before grabbing his collar and throwing him at my feet. Like he was not a full-grown man but a bag of Jolly Rancher. I jumped back, my mind black as he walked over and grabbing a handful of Eric's hair, pulled his head back, prompting him to look at me.

"Apologize," he repeated, his voice ominous. "Or I will break your legs next." Eric helplessly glanced at his friends but they looked equally shocked. It all just happened so fast that I assumed their brains were still processing it. And so was mine.

"I...I am sorry," Eric gr0aned, his mouth filled with bl00d. It must have hurt like sh!t. Logan wasn't just strong. He was a bl00dy alpha wolf. Eric or none of his men would ever have stood a chance in front of his inhuman strength.

"Swear that you will stay the fvck away from her," Logan pressed, shaking his head roughly. Jesus, when did he become so violent?

"I will...I will stay away from her. Let me go!" he cried out. Logan made a dirty face and let go of him before turning to others.

"Who's next?" He growled, cracking his knuckles.

"We will leave! We don't want a mess or cops to get involved." One of them muttered, scowling. "Take it easy, man!"

"I am taking it easy," he said, shooting a dirty look at Eric, "Take this piece of crap with you as well. And if I see any of you hovering around her, I swear I will k!ll you all and nobody will ever find out."

I blinked at him as he stood there, all high and mighty, his voice emancipating authority and command that was hard to ignore even by these men who were not supposed to feel the unshakeable alpha command in the first place. Power and authority ran in his bl00d after all. One by one, all of them walked away, carrying Eric with them, who didn't forget to shoot me a deadly look. Honestly, I had no idea he was this vengeful. He always used to act all sweet and funny around me, but I guess Daniel was right. I was attracted to a.ssh0les indeed.

"That was your boyfriend?" Logan's voice was almost sarcastic as he walked over to me.

“None of your business,” I muttered, and before he could say anything more, I turned on my heels and started to head back inside. If the old dog finds me roaming around beyond lunch hour, I am so fired. And I cannot afford to be. However, before I could even take a step, I felt strong, warm fingers curling around my wrist and pulling me back with one swift tug.

Jesus.

“What are you doing?” I demanded tartly, trying not to look at him directly. My stomach was in knots as I clenched my jaw and tried not to overreact like a fool.

“I believe I deserve a thank you,” he said, and I frowned as he held out his handkerchief for me.

“I didn’t ask you to come and save me. Who do you think you are, Dwayne Johnson? Or Captain America?” I grumbled, scowling at him.

“I prefer myself better,” Logan answered flatly.

Narcissist.

I opened my mouth to say something nasty but the words got stuck in my throat as he bent down and pressed the handkerchief to the corner of my lips. Reluctantly, I finally allowed myself to look at him and everything inside me clenched as the familiarity sunk in. It has been ten years. We were two absolutely different people now. And yet, for a moment, it felt like nothing had changed.

“You should leave, Cora. And never come back. You are all rogues now. And I hate rogues.”

It was just a moment though and as reality hit me, reminding me that a lot had changed in my life, and for the worst because of his family, I quickly moved back from his grasp and glared at him.

“What do you want?” I demanded. “Have you been following me?”

“I need to talk to you,” he said, ignoring my question. “It’s very important.”

“I don’t want to,” I replied. “I have work to do. And moreover, I want nothing to do with you,” I gave him a look and turned to leave, but again he grabbed my

arm and pulled me back and this time with such force that I almost crashed into his rock-hard chest.

“What the hell is your problem?” I scowled, for the first time since I met him, allowing myself to look straight at him. It wasn’t a very good idea, I would say. There was just too much of something between us, something that I quite don’t understand. And it was uncomfortable and awkward as hell.

“I need to talk to you, Cora.” He repeated again. “It’s really important, otherwise I wouldn’t have bothered you. I am not leaving or letting you go until you listen to me.”

What?

“You kidding me?” I snapped. “Listen alpha Logan Gray, unlike you, I have a fvcking*g practical job that I need to keep to earn my living. So stop with your nonsense and let me go.” He gazed at me long and hard for some time before leaving my hand.

“Fine. I will wait at your apartment this evening then.” He said flatly.

“No! No way!” I was appalled. There was no way I was allowing him into my shoebox-sized apartment willingly and in my right senses.

“I meant it when I said it’s important,” Logan said, his voice hard. “So you can either do it your way or my way. I don’t have much time on me, Cora. Call me desperate, if you will. If it’s not at your apartment, then I will wait for you at the nearby dinner by eight. I am sure you will get off by then. And just so you know, I know where your apartment is and where you work as well. I will wait for you.”

I was blown. He was kidding me, right? How the fvck can he just barge into my life and order me around like that? He was not my alpha. He has no right to talk to me like that. We, whatever it was that we had between us, it was dead done over with. I was no longer the Cora Scott who secretly worshipped him. I was going to wh!p his a.ss black and blue if he tried his alpha sh!t on me.

“I am not forced to listen to your nonsense!” I snapped as he started to walk away. Logan stopped and I think I heard a sigh as he turned around to face me.

"It's my birthday today," he mumbled. "Consider it a birthday gift? Please?" I blinked at him and I just...I had nothing to say to that. I scowled and, effectively noticing that there was nothing I could say to that, he gave me a nod and, turning on his heels, walked away.

"You i***t," I hissed under my breath. "You bl00dy pathetic moron."

Why does it even matter to me if it was his birthday today? How was that my concern? Jesus. Things were turning into an unwanted mess. Why would I have to go and sleep with him out of all the men in this h.uge world?

Logan was staring out of the window as I scampered into the diner right at eight. I needed to get this nonsense done with as soon as I could. He looked weirdly out of place, dressed in a black jacket, white t-shirt, and black jeans.

"What do you want?" I asked, coming straight to the point as I flopped down in front of him. He turned his golden-brown eyes to me and gave me a small smile. I made no attempt to reciprocate that as I impassively stared back at him.

"Thank you for coming," he said. "How are you?" I scoffed inwardly and shot him a look.

"I will appreciate it if you come straight to the point," I said flatly. Logan blinked at me and I think I heard a defeated sigh before he gave me a small nod.

"I need your help urgently, Cora," he muttered, his eyes fixed on me in the most uncomfortable way.

"Right," I nodded. "Just out of curiosity, what does mighty alpha Logan Gray of Gray Crest Pack want from a traitor, unwanted rogue like me?" I squeezed as much sarcasm into my words as I possibly could. And to my annoyance, it had no effect on him. He took a deep breath and sat back, folding his h.uge arms across his c.hest, assessing me with a look I didn't like.

"I want you to be my luna," he answered simply. I blinked at him and I kept blinking at him as his words seeped into my brain.

What?