

Chapter 3: Mate, Maybe

Yorick

I'd smelled her exotic scent. Or more accurately, Thad had smelled her and nearly threw me to the floor trying to get out of our room to find her. She has a rich, earthy scent with hints of leather and smoke that should smell masculine, but on her, it smells exotic, almost like amber or musk.

When I finally see her, she looks just as exotic as she smells. She has long auburn-colored hair and blue-grey eyes. And under her enticing, exotic scent, is the scent of Alpha. She's perfect.

Thad hadn't given me a moment to even say hi before he had her pressed against the wall, kissing her and demanding that she give him what he wanted. Her.

I'll admit, I got lost in the kiss. Her scent, her taste, the feel of her arms sliding around my body all made it impossible for me to pull away. Until she pushed me away.

I stepped back, panting as people moved around us, giving us looks like we're acting crazy on the first day, and it doesn't bode well for us.

"I'm sorry. I lost control of Thad. I didn't even introduce myself," I say to her.

"It's fine. That's fine," she says, pulling her bags over her shoulder and moving to step around me.

"I'll help you," I say, grabbing the bags off one of her shoulders.

"That's not necessary," she says, trying to tug her bags back.

I growl softly at her. "And yet, I will carry them for you. I'm Yorick, by the way."

"Alas, poor Yorick. Are you a man of infinite jest?" she asks me, loosely quoting Shakespeare.

"You know your literature," I say, smiling. I love an intelligent woman. My family is filled with them. "I believe you'll find me to be a fellow of most excellent fancy," I say, continuing the quote. "And what is your name, mate?"

"Cyra," she says simply.

"Cyra. What an unusual, beautiful name," I say. "It means noblewoman, right?" I ask her.

"I prefer the easier translation of throne. I don't sit on it, I AM the throne," she says, making me smile.

"And what does a throne hope to achieve here in the Warrior Academy," I ask.

She stops at a door and turns to face me. "To become the best, the highest-ranking warrior in the werewolf community."

"That's a very aggressive statement considering how elite this school is," I say.

She shrugs, reaching out to take her bags from me.

"And yet, that is my goal. It was nice to meet you Yorick. I'm sure I'll see you around. Hopefully you won't end up six feet under as your namesake implies," she says, opening her door and stepping in.

Before she can close the door in my face, I put my foot in the doorway.

"Are you really just going to walk away from me?" I ask her, feeling hurt that she's not as excited by our mate bond as I am.

She sighs, as if I'm asking a lot of her to give me her time.

"No, you're right. We should get this over with now. Do come in," she says, opening the door.

Get this over with? If she thinks I'm going to rush our marking and mating, she is sorely mistaken.

I step into the room and she drops her bags on the bed then turns to me, pushing her hair out of her face.

"I, Alpha Cyra Teymoori, reject you, Alpha Yorick ... what's your last name?"

"Hill," I growl. Thad is howling in my head at her instant rejection of us.

"I, Alpha Cyra Teymoori, reject you, Alpha Yorick Hill as my mate and Alpha," she says, looking at me expectantly, as if she didn't just rip my heart out of my chest and stomp on it while I stood by helplessly.

I step up to her, taking her chin in my hand.

"I, Alpha Yorick Hill, reject your ridiculous rejection. But I do want to know why? Why would you reject me when you don't even know me?" I growl.

She looks shocked, like she thought that I would accept her rejection when she hasn't even given me or our mate bond a chance.

She pulls her face out of my hand. "We cannot be mated," she says, not looking at me.

"And yet we are. Do you really think you know better than the Moon Goddess herself," I growl.

I watch as sadness flashes across her face and just as quickly, she schools her features into a mask of indifference.

"It isn't about the Moon Goddess," she says.

"Then please, do tell me, what is it about?" I ask, still hurt enough to let my anger bleed into my tone.

She looks away, taking a deep breath, then turns back to me.

"My father entered into an alliance bond one year ago."

I begin shaking my head. I know exactly what an alliance bond is and I also know that if she's here as a first year, that she was underage when the deal was made, meaning that her father was never willing to give her a chance to find her fated mate, to find me.

"I should have already been marked and mated, but I applied here instead. You need to accept my rejection. There is no future for me except the one that my father created. Without it, the packs will go to war..."

"I don't fucking care! Your father had no right..." I yell. Thad is snarling in my head, ready to go kill her father and her betrothed so he can have her.

"In that, we agree, but it doesn't change anything. I have been promised to another Alpha. You need to accept my rejection and give yourself a chance to find a second chance mate."

"I don't want a second chance mate. I want you! I refuse to walk away from this. There has to be a solution, one that you and I can agree on," I say.

"There isn't, Yorick. In one year, I will be mated to another Alpha. And if you don't accept my rejection before then, you will feel pain much worse than you would feel now, if you just accept this," she says, her eyes filling with tears.

She's breaking my heart. I'm furious with her father. So incredibly angry that he did this to her and to me, but more than that, I can see that she doesn't want this. She doesn't want the arranged bond that her father has created for her.

I step up to her, sliding my hand into her hair. My hand lights up with the most incredible tingling feeling, and it spreads up my arm and into my heart.

"You're right about one thing. We have one year. We have one year to figure this out. Don't reject me yet. Get to know me. Let's talk about our options. We'll find a way. I come from a family that believes in the mate bond above all things. You are the woman for me. No other woman will ever be enough for me, because she'll never be you," I tell her honestly, swiping a tear that falls from her eyes.

"Give me the year," I say, putting my forehead against hers. "Please."

"Yorick..." she pleads, the tears beginning to fall.

"Please, Cyra, give me the year," I whisper.

She nods in agreement, and I lean forward, taking her mouth in a much gentler, but no less dominant, kiss.