

A Short Story

Chapter One: There was no bright side to this.

The yellow paint hit my canvas violently as I continued to flick my paintbrush towards the white void. Since Mr. Tate had left to go grab something from the teacher's lounge, no one else was in the art room. I had complete freedom to paint as roughly or lightly as I wanted to. I was currently in the middle of an abstract painting, one that somehow showed how I had been feeling today. The whole day I had been feeling anxious, like something bad was going to happen. I touched my rose quartz necklace and took a deep breath.

"Leave it in the hands of the universe, Sage," I said.

"Yeah, Sage, whatever you're worried about there is no need to fear! For your handsome knight in shining armor is here to take you away from your anxieties!" Ollie, my soulmate, said, as he walked through the doorway.

I instantly felt relieved now that he was here. As he walked towards me our red soulmate string got shorter, and my anxiety grew smaller. I used to laugh at people who said that their soulmates had a calming effect on them, but now I understand completely. He wrapped me in a tight hug and kissed the top of my head.

"Mary and Will are waiting outside for us, are you ready to go?" he said, smiling down at me.

I nodded and smiled at him. He looked amazing today, just like he does every day. I grabbed my bag and we walked out the door hand in hand.

"There's beauty and the beast!" Will said, as we walked out.

"Hey, don't call my girlfriend a beast!" Ollie said, before grabbing Will and play fighting with him.

Mary and I laughed at our boyfriend's child-like personalities and kept walking towards the exit. She seemed upset, so I wrapped my hand around hers and gave her a small smile.

"Are you okay, dear? Do you need a tarot reading? Or maybe some crystals? I can lend you my-" I said, before she interrupted me with a small laugh.

"I'm fine, Sage. Will and I got in a bit of a fight again, so that made my mood drop a little, but I will be okay," she said, with an unconvincing smile.

Before I could protest that she obviously wasn't okay, Ollie scooped me up and sat me on his shoulders. He did this a lot since he was involved in so many sports and needed to stay in shape, and because, as he says, "A beautiful princess such as yourself should not have to walk anywhere!" He is the biggest romantic I know, and such a dork. I giggled and ran my hands through his hair.

"What's on the schedule for today, princess?" Ollie said, as he bent down so we could walk through the exit without slamming my face into the top of the door frame.

"I was thinking we should try to rob a bank, none of us have a criminal record yet and that's just not right!" I said.

Mary and Will laughed and walked behind us as we crossed the road. We began walking through the park, as we do every day. It takes longer this way, but it's just so beautiful. The park is in the middle of the woods, and if you listen closely you can hear all the birds chirping and the river that's close by. But, usually, you only hear the kids. I looked over towards the park and saw that no kids were there, which was odd since it was after school and a Friday. I tapped Ollie's head twice, signaling that I want to be set down. He set me down and I looked behind us to see that Will and Mary were arguing again. I grabbed Ollie's hand and looked towards the park.

"Darling, did you notice that there are no kids at the park today? Isn't that odd?" I said.

"Yeah, that is strange. Maybe they are all busy. Or, maybe they are hiding behind the trees trying to scare us! You can't scare us, you little ankle-biters!!" Ollie yelled, looking out at the trees.

I laughed and squeezed his hand. My anxiety was acting up again, like whatever bad thing that was going to happen today was right around the corner.

"Did you notice Mary and Will have been fighting a lot lately?" I whispered.

"Yeah, apparently Mary wants to get a dog they can share like the dog we have, but Will doesn't want to. It's been causing a big strain on their relationship. Will was complaining about it during chemistry," Ollie said.

"Well, that's not too big of a deal, I'm sure they will be able to figure it out. They are soulmates, after all, they have to. I'll do a tarot reading about it later and see what the spirits have to say about it."

"You are my favorite witch ever, do you know that?"

"I'm not a witch! But, yes I know, you tell me every day."

He smiled at me and squeezed my hand. Mary and Will finally caught up with us, seemingly done with their argument. I could feel the tension in the air and so could Ollie. I looked over at him with a pleading look that said, "Please break the tension before I die from it."

"So, are you guys excited for Saturday Night Live tomorrow? Maya Rudolph is hosting, I know she is one of your favorites, Mary," Ollie said, and winked at me.

"Oh, I am so excited! She is so funny and she hasn't been on Saturday Night Live in so long! I wonder what characters she is going to do and if she will-" Mary said, before getting interrupted by Ollie yelling.

"Look, someone left a pair of Jordan's underneath that pile of leaves! I hope they are my size," Ollie said, before running towards the pile of leaves.

Time suddenly slowed down as the next events unfolded. Ollie picked up the shoes, only to find that there was a body attached to them. He quickly moved the leaves over and flipped the body over to help the person. As he flipped them over we saw all the blood running down their body, staining their clothes red. It was everywhere, it looked like a horror movie. Their throat was slit, and I assumed that was where most of the blood was coming from. They looked so pale and cold. Their eyes were open, staring up at the sky. Those eyes would never blink again.

Mary screamed, but I barely heard it as I sunk to the ground. Tears filled my eyes and my hands started to shake. I could faintly hear Will calling 911 and screaming at them to hurry. I looked over to see he was holding Mary, she was crying too. I looked over at Ollie as he desperately tried to find a pulse. He kept whispering the same word over and over, please. Ollie always tried to look on the bright side of things. But, I knew he was dead. There was no bright side to this.

Chapter 2: Aliens don't look like that.

I hate the sounds of police sirens. I have hated them since I was a kid, I hate most loud noises in general. The police came soon after we called and quickly moved us away from the scene and towards the park. They thanked us for finding him and said we weren't in trouble for tampering with the crime scene, since we didn't even know it was one. I sat on the swings and looked at the scene. The tape, the police, the paramedics, and the reporters were all frantically running around. The reporters asked us if we had a moment to talk, and of course, Ollie and Will said yes. Will loved any kind of attention, and Ollie needed a distraction from all of this. Mary and I sat on the swings and did a pathetic attempt at swinging.

I gave up on trying to pretend this didn't happen about twenty minutes ago. We had found a dead body. It had sunk in and now I was past the initial shock. He was a man, not much taller than Ollie, with black hair, blue eyes, and freckles.

Jupiter isn't a murderous town. In fact, no one has ever been murdered here, before today. We only have about one thousand people in this town. Everyone knows everyone. We take care of each other when bad things happen, we are a community. We are all good people. There are no drug dealers, murderers, or sex offenders here. Jupiter is our own little slice of heaven on Earth. So, who would do this?

Will and Ollie finally finished being interviewed and sat on the swings with us. Will was still rambling about who could've done it, being the conspiracy theorist he is, he had a million ideas.

The sheriff walked over towards us with a sad look on his face. That look confirmed what we all already knew, the man was dead.

"Kids, the man you found is dead, we did the best we could, but he was dead hours before we got here. I'm so sorry you had to find him and see that. Is there anything else that you saw or heard that might be able to help us while trying to solve the case?" he said, hoping to get any kind of suspect for the case.

Mary, Will, and I shook our heads. Ollie cleared his throat and looked up at the sheriff.

"Did you find a soulmate mark on him? When I was checking for his pulse I noticed he had no soulmate string or mark. That's impossible isn't it?" Ollie said.

The sheriff sighed and took his hat off, running his fingers through his hair. I looked at Ollie confused, he hadn't said anything about this to me.

Everyone is born with their red soulmate string. If someone's soulmate dies, a circular red mark wraps around their left-hand index finger where the string used to be. But, there's never been a person born with no soulmate string or mark.

"No, our John Doe does not have a soulmate mark. We don't know why, we still have a lot of questions about this case. It's getting late, you guys should head home. If you have any

other information you think could help us, please don't hesitate to call my office," the sheriff said, before giving us a sad look and walking away.

We all sat there in shock. No soulmate string or mark? How is that even possible? Finally, one by one we all stood up and started walking home. We walked in silence, as if talking would make the situation feel more real. As soon as we were out of the woods, Will started spewing conspiracy theories again. Usually, we would all be annoyed by this, but we knew this was his way of coping with this. We finally got to Ollie and I's street, we looked at Mary and Will trying to think of a way to say goodbye without it being extremely awkward.

"Maybe he's an alien? There have been a lot of UFO-" Will said before Ollie interrupted.

"Aliens don't look like that," Ollie said.

And, with that, we all went our separate ways.