

The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores

Chapter 4

“The idea of a soulmate is beautiful and very romantic to talk about in a movie or a song, but in reality, I find it scary.”

Vanessa Paradis

I hardly slept that night.

When I did finally doze off, I dreamt of a man.

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I couldn't spot his face or hear his voice, but I saw his hands they were large, with long, nimble fingers that could've belonged to a pianist and visible veins running from his knuckles down to his arms.

I could make out his forearms too, but more specifically, the large tattoo that covered his left forearm. It sort of looked like a bird, but the body was something else

a panther or a lion, maybe? 3

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The shrill sound of my alarm woke me before I could get a closer look.

“Clark!”

As if the loud beeping from my alarm wasn't enough, I had a second alarm today: Lily.

“Clark! Turn that shit off, it's been beeping for more than a minute!”

What a perfect way to start my Monday morning.

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I didn't need to open my eyes to notice that Lily was glaring at me from my doorway. She was even less of a morning person than I was, and everyone in the house knew it. We'd all faced her early morning wrath more than once, but me (and my loud alarm) was a frequent target. 2

“Okay, okay, I’m doing it,” I mumbled sleepily, and I fumbled with my phone until I hit the snooze button. I rubbed my face a few times before peeking one eye open. Just as I’d expected, Lily’s sharp glare could’ve cut glass.

“Is there a reason you need to set your alarm so loud?” Lily snapped, “I could hear that thing a mile away. It practically makes my ears bleed.”

I was too groggy to argue with her not that it would’ve done any good. “Sorry, Lil,” I yawned, “I’m a heavy sleeper. Not everyone has sensitive wolf ears, you know.”

“Whatever,” Lily rolled her eyes, “Just get up. I’m supposed to meet Ashley early by the lockers today, so if you’re not downstairs in twenty minutes, I’m leaving without you.” She stomped off before I could reply. 5

As much as I would’ve loved to have laid in bed a little longer, I knew it wasn’t an idle threat. If I didn’t make it downstairs on time, Lily would take the Jeep and leave me to walk to school. Her and I shared a Jeep, although she used it more often than not. The girl collected extracurricular activities like books – if it wasn’t cheer practice or warrior training, she was bouncing between parties or friend hangouts. 2

So as not to get left behind or end up walking to school, I got dressed as quickly as I could. My outfit of choice was my favorite well-worn jeans, a blue tanktop, and my favorite cotton zip-up hoodie. I didn’t bother with makeup, but I did pull my thick, red hair into a ponytail and give myself a final glance in the mirror.

My hair was probably my best feature, although it distinguished me from the rest of the family. I had the same hair and eyes as my mom: dark brown eyes and long, frizzy red hair that I could never manage to completely tame. In fact, it was more than just my eyes or my hair. My mom and I also shared the same pale skin that burned too easily and scattered freckles on our faces. (6

As a kid, when I still lived with my mom, people used to comment that we were identical. When I showed up to live with him, my dad had made a similar comment. He’d told me I was the spitting image of my mother.

I still remembered the moment I saw my dad for the first time. I was eleven.

My mom drove us to his house, although she never say we were going to see my father.

All she’d told me was that she was going away for a little while, and that I was going to stay with family. That wasn’t unusual. When my mom said she was “going away for awhile,” it really meant that she had met a new guy and they were going to run off to god-knows-where and get high together. Even at eleven, I knew that was happening – and I knew the various friends that my mom pawned me off on while she was gone weren’t really “aunts” and “uncles.”

When we ended up on my dad's doorstep instead, I assumed he was just another friend of my mom's. He had looked shocked to see her. His whole face went white, and he barely managed to stutter out an invitation inside.

Grace had been there too, and we made chocolate chip cookies in the kitchen while my mom and dad talked in hushed voices in the other room. They were in there awhile, long enough for the cookies to bake and eat them out of the oven. D

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When they did finally come back into the room, my dad still had that same shocked look on his face, and he looked like he was on the verge of tears. This time, I was the one who got pulled aside. He explained to me that he was my dad, and I'd be staying with him for good. He'd said my mom was leaving to figure some things out, and I wouldn't be seeing her for awhile. @

He was right.

Seven years later, and I still hadn't seen my mom again. (4

She disappeared that night, and my dad and Grace had been the only parents I'd known since. Q

I took a shaky breath and turned away from the mirror. I tried not to think about my mom or that night too much, but sometimes, it snuck up on me anyways.

I had been so confused then, although my dad tried his best to break things down for eleven-year-old me. He was very angry after that night – not at me, but at my mom. She had never told him about me, so he had no idea I existed until that night. He told me several times that I would've been living with him sooner had he known, but since he hadn't, we were just going to have to make up for lost time.

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I had never known about him either. I'd asked my mom questions about where my dad was a couple of times, but she had always deflected. She told me that he wasn't around, that he was apart of a whole different world I didn't need to be involved in.

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To be fair, she had been right-my dad was apart of a completely different world. I later learned from Sebastian that I was the result of a drunken one-night-stand between my mom and my dad.

It was the only time he ever cheated on Grace – that one night he met my mom in a bar and went home with her. He'd already come clean to Grace about the encounter years before I ended up on their doorstep. They were mates, so of course, she forgave him – although I doubt my presence helped her forget.

Not only did I look just like my mom, but I was a breathing reminder of the fact that Grace and dad's relationship wasn't perfect, that my dad had done something awful that caused a lot of hurt.

Grace never said these kinds of things to me, but I still felt them. Q

She tried to include me in the family as much as possible, but there were still times when I'd catch her looking at me with this dejected expression on her face.

I took another deep breath, and pulled on my jacket.

Way to set the mood for a Monday, huh, Clark? Just rehash the past until you depress yourself.

"Clark! Last call – I'm literally leaving this second."

"I'm coming! Just hold on!" I grabbed my backpack and took the stairs two at a time. Lily was positioned at the front doors, keys in her hand, and the same angry

scowl on her face.

"I told you that I had to meet Ashley early today," she grumbled as we walked out the door, "I literally haven't seen her all weekend. If I'm going to be gone next week, she's got to fill in for me as cheer captain, and that's not easy, so..."

I turned out Lily's lecture about my tardiness as I climbed into the Jeep, and we headed towards school.