

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 121

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I blink open my lashes and look around and adjust to my night vision before I notice the sitting figures dotted around the room, all seemingly poised yet do absolutely nothing at our appearance. My heart drops and my insides flutter at this weird anticlimax. I do not trust these men and I feel like this is way weirder than I could have imagined and gawp at the fact they remain as they are and don't even blink at our arrival.

"Welcome.... You finally showed up." Juan's blood curdling, husky voice comes at us from the far corner of the room. By the huge four poster bed and my eyes are drawn to the figure sprawled out like a lording king in his domain. He doesn't seem phased at all by us, in fact he's sprawled out, one arm propped under his chin, so he's semi sat up. His glowing amber eyes coming at us out from the darkness of this room and I wonder why they have no lights or power in the manor at all. If this is to cloak them and give advantage or if there's something wrong with the electrics.

"You were expecting us?" Radar bites back with a sardonic laugh, moving to the front of our party and putting himself directly in front of Sierra in a protective manner. That c**y confidence on show of a seasoned warrior who is ready to go at it in a blink.

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"I was expecting my son, but his b**** and his mother are fine by me. Guess I just have to deal with you first." Juan laughs and the sound is almost manic, blood curling, and so not like the man I remember. He seems to have changed so drastically since the last time I laid eye son him and I wonder if he really has lost all sense of sanity in recent months. His eyes are wild and burn with something terrifying in the depths. I shudder and break contact with him, looking across at Sierra instead who is locked on in a death glare and has no intention of relinquishing.

"All these years haven't been kind to you, Juan. You look old and haggard and have lost any kind of alpha energy you once possessed. You're a sad old wolf with hopes of grandeur and zero ability. Give it up before you hurt yourself!" Sierras words cut through the air like a knife, dripping venom and Juan just laughs at her with a throaty cackle.

The air in here is stale and sparks with heightened tension. A feeling in this place of unease and I shift closer to Carmen who is now beside me. She grabs my hand and yanks me to her side before clawing up and fully encompa**ing my fingers like a shield. She is making it clear she isn't going to let me go and that Sierra is trying to stoke the embers of a fiery fight.

"Maybe like you I should have slept a decade away and left my son to fend for himself, huh?" he sn*****s at his own words and I catch a glimpse of Sierra

shifting forward before Radar steps in front of her and pushes her behind him once more. Her anger flaring and losing her own sense as despisal fuels her.

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"We're here to take you outside. The Vampire lord wants to see you. You can either come easily, or we can do this the hard way. I have no doubt you won't be the victorious one in this." Radar moves closer to him to shorten the space between them and leave Sierra where she stands. I flinch, eyeing up the other wolves in this room, all eyes honed in on us but yet they don't move at all, in fact seemed uncaring about trying to. I nudge Carmen to eye them up too and as she scans the rest of the space, she too furrows her brow at the lack of motion from his so called loyal. I knew he would have some here, but I expected some sort of attempt to shield their alpha.

"Try. You think I didn't expect this?" Juan laughs again, that mighty and snarly sound as though he's in possession of some great superior secret. His noise curdles my blood and I start to perspire with this invading nervous energy that tells me to be on full alert. The inner powers inside of me swirling because I'm afraid.

My guards move out from our circle of protection, linking to Radar for direction and I watch as they move towards the figures around the room, preparing for them to intervene while Radar and another wolf head right for Juan. A tactical move to position themselves between them and their Luna and Rema. I don't understand why this seems so easy, why he's so smug, or why his protectors are motio

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nless and watching. It's all a little too simple.

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"Wait. I don't like this." I strut forward fast and grab at Radar's arm from behind, yanking myself free from Carmen to do so. The witch however seems to get irritated with the pause and waves her hand sin the air with a huge sigh .

"Oh, for god's sake, Juan, whatever trick you have planned, get on with it so we can move and get home before dawn. This is tiring." She walks brazenly towards him, pushing from between us easily, like we're made of paper, and his eyes narrow as he focuses on her face. Instant recognition lighting him up now his attention is on this dark cloaked figure who had been standing behind us.

"So much for being a neutral to the species, Leyanne. Long time no see. Are you going to make this an unfair fight by intervening with your powers? There's no fun in that and I thought it was against your rules, your highness." He mocks her

and she only shrugs with one shoulder as though she expected him to say something so juvenile. I however squint at what he just addressed her as. Highness?

“Not if I don’t have to but at the end of the day, preserving a species sometimes needs a little intervention. My goal has never changed. I will always be neutral, but never inactive when it comes to keeping this world in check and balance. Your species needs to be rid of toxic influences to thrive. Don’t call me that anymore, it’s been a long time since I resigned from the high council.” Leyanne shuts him down with a bored tone and haughty response as she adjusts her outer robes. She means business and walks with confidence towards him, no fear at anything he can do because I truly believe she is above being harmed by any creature on this planet. She’s not like any witch I have ever heard of and her constant unwavering calm tells me she knows she is invincible. I have heard of the high council; it’s known to be a collection of the most powerful of the species and exists to keep us all in check. I find it strangely unsurprising she was once one of them, but I wonder why she isn’t anymore.

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“Hmmm..... shame you’re immortal. It would make my day to see you of all people fall at my feet. The great and powerful Leyanne Cruden, deserter of her own position and back turner of her sisterhood. So high and mighty, yet so self-absorbed and alone..... Now were all gathered here.... Do you want my presents? Let’s make things fun!” He shifts up from his lounging position, having no affect on her at all, and all around minus me instantly shift to wolf form from the threat in his tone. They all sense the incoming danger and I recoil behind Sierra automatically, shielding my abdomen with the gut feeling this is about to go off. Leyanne on the other hand just brushes her hair from one shoulder and gives another disinterested shrug.

“I didn’t know you knew the meaning of the word fun, Juan.... Also, you’re too selfish for gift giving. So, what is it?” Leyanne mocks him right back.

“I knew I could never take out any that came for me, so I prepared a parting sentiment. I just expected it to be a gift for my son and yet the coward doesn’t even show face to his father...HAH..... This is an end to all of this, but my b**** mate will have to do instead. She always did put herself in front of children anyway. One life takes four, right?” Juan snaps, sudden anger in his sardonic tone and jumps up clutching something in his hand. Something dark and clunky, as he springs to his feet, suddenly virile, still the only wolf apart from me in human form, and it happens so fast it’s like a blink. I don’t get a second to think or take in his sudden shift.

The unmistakable click and pop that despite never hearing in life, I know instantly what it is. It seems so nothing and unreal yet flips my heart inside out and I lurch with the fright as it dawns on me that it’s the noise of something firing. The object in his hand smoking, as his eyes glare bright and amber with disdain, and I’m transfixed on what he’s holding. Everything around me halting in an instant as time ceases to progress and I’m focused only on what he just did.

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The long, cold and terrifying silhouette of a pistol gripped in his large hand, the scent of silver and wolfsbane permeating the air around me as everything moves into slow motion. I watch in despair as a bullet takes slow flight through the shadowy air and careful aim right at the forehead of Sierra. She's leaping through the air towards him, right in its path of destruction, everything frozen in a moment of time suddenly and I have no idea why. Somehow, it's as though only I can see this happening without restraint of my own actions and all those around me have become almost still as seconds slow to minutes.

All I know is that I'm seeing it this way, the descent of death upon Sierra, the slow-motion movements of my entire guard as they fly for targets and the looming figure of that snarling and smug Juan before me. I lift my hands in impulse, shocked that I can move freely and normally, an orb of translucent energy forming around my fists as instinct takes over. My weapon of destruction and the only thing I have within me to protect my Rema. I lift my fists above my head and throw everything I have at that bullet, that lingering shrapnel of evil that hangs in the air between him and her.

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My energy blows out like an explosion and takes everything in its wake with it. Uncontrolled due to my sheer fear, mounting hysteria, and suddenly time ceases to cling on in the slow mo. Wooosh, the clock restarts and everything in my wake is thrown wide like the after implosion of a nuclear bomb.

Sierra, Radar, the bullet and Juan are all catapulted away from me with force. Flying into a chaotic crash landing of limp bodies against the far wall behind the bed, taking a pillar and the canopy with it, in a crashing chorus of thuds and growls. It's a monumental fallout from something that I didn't mean to deliver so viciously.

I have no idea where the bullet has landed or if I manage to set it off course and I scramble forward to unravel Sierra from the mess of bedding and debris around her, shielded by the hunched over wolf form of Radar. Even in freefall eh somehow managed to cling to her and protect her as they went down.

I sense Juan pulling himself up, slightly dazed, from my left, against the wall and throw another energy ball of anger his way that throws him another few feet towards his subordinates. Concentrated despisal in a specially wrapped package just for him and the crunch of his bones as he collides with a dresser gives me some deep satisfaction.

"Stay over there and don't try that again! Next time I will throw you out the window!" I snap at him, appeased with the ashen look of disbelief and pain etched on his face as his nearest minion helps pull him to his feet. His body already beginning to heal and confirm this room is protected from the weapon against his own people out there. I don't think he expected my reaction or my ability as he has never really seen what I can do since I left the Manor many

moons ago. I turn away from him in disgust, more than confident he's too startled for a repeat right now.

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"Sierra, are you okay? Radar, what about you?" I scurry towards them, Carmen on my rear as the Luna's guard move with us and form a shield in a semi-circle while facing all eyes on the other wolves in the room. I get to the two huddled figures as a groan is let out and Radar seems to roll to his side, revealing a completely unharmed Sierra in human form as she pulls herself up into my awaiting arms. I give her a brief hug, the relief sweeping through my body like a wave of warm euphoria.

"Now, now, Juan, what kind of cowardly attempt was that? A gun? Silver bullets? Really.... Oh, how the mighty have fallen. Are you that desperate to win, even if you die with her?" Leyanne mocks him from her position where she was already, unmoved and unphased and then smirks at the pathetic figure as he finds his feet to face her. Despite all the mess around us, she is like a statue of perfect posture in the midst and only brushes herself down to rid the falling dust from her black attire.

Radar draws my attention with another groan, this time a whimper in its core, and the sudden scent of blood pulls my eyes to him in alarm. The unmistakable scent of our own kind.

"Radar?!?!" Sierra must smell it too and is faster than me to click on what's wrong. Pushing me aside so she can move to him and throws herself on the ground to kneel beside him as he returns to human. His shoulder is covered in red oozing stickiness as it pours from a fresh wound and starts dripping on the floor at an awful rate. Now that he's a fraction of the size as a person, the amount of blood is alarming and clear as day on human skin. Dark and oozing as his skin pales out.

"Oh my god..... the bullet hit you?" Sierra wails, and hauls him to a sitting position, eyes scanning his body for more damage and then focuses back on his shoulder as tears prickle up in her eyes. I shudder in shock and follow suit to dive down beside him, pulling his body against me too and examine the bullet wound in despair. I can't see it inside as it's deep, but there is already swelling with a faint blue tinge from a combo of the two properties on earth which can harm us.

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"The bullet was silver, and I can smell wolfsbane, we need to get it out or he won't heal." I command at my Rema, needing her to help me so I can lay him down and find something to get the shrapnel out.

"Move.... Worse than not healing, he can die...you know it's a lethal combo and doesn't take long to become irreversible. I'm sure Radar knows that more than most." Leyanne is quick beside us, taking her eyes off Juan who is no longer my main concern. Radar closes his eyes, his expression becoming calm even in pain, and oddly still, and I wonder if he's reminiscing about the scar to his face and his near death from this same poison in the war back then. My heart aches for him that of all the wolves, he's the one to experience this again.

“That was the point!” Juan cackles out loud, sounding demented and not like the Alpha I once trembled before. I think he really has lost his mind and his sole purpose in luring us up here to this space was to kill his own son even if all four of us died with him. He knows he’s defeated and that was his last straw. He can’t win against the army of vampires nor can he take down the fractured pack on our side, so he chose the coward’s end of vengeance and suicide to feel like he won. He really has fallen from grace and given up on any future.

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It pulls my focus for a second as I flicker round to glance his way and the room erupts in seconds before I have a chance to blink at him. The minions who seemed lifeless and subservient spring up, almost as though they have been waiting, and fly at my guards. Juan turns in a flash to huge and fierce wolf before lunging straight towards us and the glow of many amber eyes in the dark are only outshone by the show of white teeth gnashing our way.

“Move” I push Leyanne harshly towards Radar so that she falls over on top of him and throw my hands up with a fiery glow of energy, pulsating in a second, thrust his way as a counteract and barely manage to keep myself upright with the kickback of my own sudden power throw. It’s a frantic attempt to shield and yet it’s effective even if I lose control.

The room implodes. Wolf against wolf and his men do not seem to be affected by the frequency downstairs the way the others were. I wonder if this room has sound dampeners that stop them being hit with the frequency outside. It would explain why they settled to sit in here and wait, even with so few. It was his only fighting chance, to weaken us as we came here while he sat with full powers and energy in a bid to tilt the balance. Colton not coming was the only part he didn’t plan. He must have known we would show, or that the vampires were coming, and I wonder if it was chance and they stay here endlessly waiting, or if this was all preconceived and he knew it would be tonight.

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I try to keep my head as all out aggressive warfare erupts around us and Leyanne and Sierra pull Radar’s body to the corner to tend to his excessive bleeding. I focus on Carmen who is in the thick of it and fighting fearlessly alongside the guard. She would be better downstairs still dealing with the frequency for our wolves outside and yet I can’t get near her to tear her away and send her back down.

“This is going to sting.... A lot. Bear down” Leyanne’s voice cuts through the noise of snapping teeth, snarls, growls, swiping claws, and breaking furniture and I’m torn about what to do in this moment. Carmen jumps up in the air and delivers a pounding fist to the top of a skull, giving her all, yet it’s all too compact and muddled for me to effectively help with my power. Bodies and fur flying everywhere at the speed of light and I’m stuck between them and the efforts to

save Radar. My head scrambles for a plan and yet my eyes are consistently drawn back to Juan in the muddled battle before me.

“Stay with me, Radar.... You’re going to be okay.” Sierra’s soft voice claws at my heart with evidence of her panic and tears as she hauls Radar’s upper torso onto her lap and cradles his head against her abdomen to help hold him steady. He has his eyes closed from the pain of what to us is a toxic venom flowing through his body and sweat is collecting across his skin surface rapidly. “You said you would stay by my side for the rest of my life..... you can’t break that promise, you hear me?” Sierra begins to sob as Leyanne pulls out a sheathed dagger, ornate with inlaid jewels in the exquisite handle from somewhere under her cloak and begins to cut out the silver bullet. Slicing into his skin with the focus of a professional surgeon and doesn’t seem squeamish at all with what she’s doing.

Radar lets out a muffled groan and twitches as the blade cuts deeper, and he clings to Sierra’s arm as he tries to stop himself from tossing around. The witch is digging around to find it with the tip of the blade and I can’t bear to stand here doing nothing.

Carmen.... downstairs....go back to what you were doing! We need to disable the frequency. I link her across the room and with a subtle woosh and push of my energy balls I manage to separate her from the wolf she is clinging to while delivering a vicious claw stab to his shoulder. She seems startled for a second and then reads me loud and clear and takes off without hesitation, dodging wolves and heads back for the door. Her eyes focused on her direction and I turn to check on the three huddled figures.

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Juan follows my gaze, catching the corner of my eye with his sudden halt in fighting and I can sense his urge even from here. He let’s go of one of my guards that he had by the fur off his neck and takes a running jump towards me in my standing position. I lift my hands in readiness knowing he’s no match for my ability to throw out a shield to hit him, but he heads straight for the back of Leyanne and I miss him by mere millimeters.

Sierra seems to sense it too and looks up in time to see him coming down on the back of our witch with claws extended and a definite desire to impale her. I gasp a loud Noooo and turn in an attempt to intervene, but Sierra does it for me. Jumping up and changing mid air she hits him head on in a clashing collision of ma**, and send him hurtling backwards with her smaller self-clutching like a leech. They tumble backwards, roll across the floor through broken despair, swiping two wolves off their feet as they take out their legs and end up crashing into the edge of a wardrobe nearby. The crunching, cracking sound of bones snapping and then they come to a dead halt. A moment of pause before the real fight begins.

“Sierra! No!!” Radar yells at the top of his lungs, almost deafening me as it also comes through the pack link in amplified unison. My brain almost explodes with the ferocity of his despair.

I'm after them in a second, heading her way, but Sierra and Juan are fast and seem to recover so quickly, they lock on in a grappling fight and she's hauled to her hind legs to meet him eye to eye. Fierce meets fierce and even from here, unable to do anything while they are close together like that, I can taste her desire to end this with him. Sierra has finally come to meet the man who kept her locked up for a decade and my heart plummets and knees weaken as she turns her head slightly to me with a strange still calm to her aura.

I know we're not bound anymore. I'm a witch remember. Some things I just know and being a seer meant you would never be able to hide it from me. Take care of my son and my grandbabies. I love you. Now get out, all of you. This is between us.

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Sierra's voice rips through the link, silencing everything, and my blood and heart stop cold in my body as I am gripped by the fear of her words. Strangled instantly with emotion, choked to a rooted spot and yet not shock...because somewhere deep down I already knew this. I could feel it in her earlier, her aura changed, her warrior stood up, and in my heart I already suspected. I wanted to ignore it and have hope she would cling to life to protect us, but now it's suffocated down, and I am faced with the fact that Sierra came here to end Juan and die in the process.

She knew..... We shouldn't have unbound her. She already figured it out.

Oh my god, she knew.

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A cold wave takes over my body and once again time seems to slow at an unnatural pace as I take in all that surrounds me. Radar in the corner, being held down by Leyanne as she tries to remove the metal in his body that can kill him while he's reaching out, trying to get up. The desperation in his eye as the love of his life takes on her enemy but the toxin is already removing any strength he has left. He's powerless to do anything in his state.

I turn my head as the collision of wolf on wolf am*** the guards and Juan's own continues in bloody chaos, tearing at one another and throwing claws and punches as they grapple and roll around me. Noise and debris clouding the air and yet I am rooted to my spot.

In the midst of it all, Sierra stands nose to nose on hind legs, raising her smaller frame to what was once our formidable alpha and the I am fixated on the two joined bodies as they grip onto one another, eyes locked in fierce battle, claws submerged into each other's bodies. The tension and sheer malice between them reverberates in the air like a vibrating frequency and I can taste the venom. Sierra pulls herself up to meet him closer to his sheer size and I can tell she has no intention of backing down or making this easy on him. Juan seemed amused

that in his last hours of his life, it's his once weak mate who chooses to target him.

I cry out as Sierra makes the first move, throwing herself with all her might into him, thrusting claws and fangs at his body so she knocks him back from his stance and while unsteady she has the upper hand. She withdraws one bloodied set of claws, pulling from ripping flesh, swipes straight for his face and catches him across the muzzle in a piercing grip. I blink and almost miss the sudden speed as my senses return and the clock spins forward.

Juan fights back, holding no punches even against a femme and hauls her from his body as he attempts to lift her into the air for a body swipe. With his strength, speed and skill in battle I know Sierra is leading a futile battle against an opponent she will never beat. She was never a match for him, and now in this fast-paced moment, I know I only have one option to pull them apart safely. She won't stop any other way and Radar won't quit fighting the witch unless Sierra is removed. I know there's only one thing I can do that will help her even the odds and bring much needed back up and space to fight this out properly.

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A thought suddenly hits me that this was the only reason I was here at all, that these gifts were for this moment when I cannot physically jump in and defend her. I am all but useless, save my ability to thrust my pack around. Watching in agony as Sierra and Juan slash at one another, snap and grapple and she slowly loses in every move he makes.

I pull my palms together as his talons aim straight for her heart and throat while gripping her by the scruff of the neck, knowing this fight between them has no bounds and neither will stop until one dies. They both know that it's the end for them whoever wins, and I can't let this happen. Sierra has to be saved at all costs.

Colton, please be close. Your mother needs you at the manor. Now!

I send the link out as I close my eyes, shutting the free flow of tears into the darkness with me and put all of my energy into my palms. I pray for precision and enough gusto to send them flying. Pushing my love, anger, betrayal, loyalty... desire to save Sierra into the one thing I can do for her.

"I'm sorry.... don't be mad!" I utter towards her as I open my eyes and release with a forward thrust, all that I can muster at the two bodies, caked in blood and hatred. I sent them with a visible pulse of energy, thrusting them both forward with a violent assault, right through the balcony windows far behind them. Smashing glass as two dark furred shapes are blown like they were hit with a torpedo straight out of the top floor balcony of the manor, and I cross my fingers and hope to god they heal quickly before the frequency has any kind of effect.

"Sierra!!" Radar growls in agony as he clutches out at the disappearing figures and Leyanne has to use all her might to slam him back down and continue whatever she's doing. I squeeze my eyes shut, pray Colton heard me and push towards the window to see where they landed. It's nothing but darkness and shimmering shards of glass in the eerie night.

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The smashing open of the double layered solid doors also lets the sound in that was previously held at bay and Juan's minions all retreat in panic as they realize I have opened up the elements and they will now suffer the same fate as the rest of the wolves around us. Their weapon will be used on them in the same way they have used it on the pack and their gifts will suffer soon enough. I have faith in Carmen down there trying to stop it, but for now, I can even feel the slow effect at this high height where the sound is closer and louder. It makes my skin goosebump and all my hairs stand on end.

A scuffle of claws and scr***s of shoved furniture see them abandoning my guards mid fight and they run as fast as they can. They exit via the main door and take off at speed, some of the pack following while two go to radar's side to help.

"Stay with him... I need to go out there and find Sierra" I throw my command and turn to head after the rest, but radar's voice hits me hard.

"No you don't! Stay f***ing here. This is all going to s***. For once do as I tell you or else Colton will have my soul." His hoarse and angry words pierce me guiltily, I can taste his pain as he struggles to sit up and Leyanne leans back with a satisfied snort.

"You're healing, stay still, for god's sakes. I got the bullet out, but the toxins are already spreading and need to be reversed. I need more time to work on you to be sure to stop any long-lasting damage." Leyanne appeals to him but it's clear she doesn't expect him to agree. He is on his feet in seconds, rubbing his shoulder and smearing blood across flesh absent mindedly before he shifts to wolf and fur covers the worst of it. His gaze locked on his goal, and I can already tell his brain is out that window.

Stay!

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He links me a command with a snarl, and with a flash, takes a leap right out the window in the direction of Sierra and disappears into the darkest air. Barely a gush of wind or noise.

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Not a second of hesitation, no regard for his weakened body or his still bleeding wound and yet I sigh with relief that he's able to go after her. I may have delayed the fight by throwing them outside, but it was a temporary measure in the hopes of pulling Colton here to protect her and intervene. He still hasn't linked me back and my heart shudders with the sudden realization of why. My blood running cold

and nausea spreading fast as I put two and two together at his lack of linking me back. It's not like him to not respond, not matter what's happening.

The frequency...it weakens the gifts the longer they are exposed, so maybe Colton can't link anymore because of it. And if he can't link, then maybe he can't use his strength or speed...maybe even his other abilities and alpha tone. He's out there fighting a strong enemy in a state not too dissimilar to Radar.

My knees give out and my body crumples downwards as fear roots in my heart and yet my figure hits soft fur as one of my guards catches me. He pads the fall and promptly returns me to my feet with a swift flick before he leans me against his side to support me. So smoothly done that I am suddenly lightheaded. A reminder that I am not myself and so easily vulnerable.

Luna, are you okay? The concerned unison of my guards and I blink back tears of fear before turning to them with a façade of calm and strong.

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"The alpha hasn't linked back...I don't think he can. We need to do something. We have to help Sierra, help the pack." I'm overwhelmed suddenly with all of this flooding my brain but Leyanne stands up and brushes off her clothes with that precise manner and freakish calm. Strangely a**uring yet also really unnerving in such a contradictory combo.

"Well, you know he's not injured or else you would be crying like a bairn and rolling in agony. He's clearly not dead. I can see you standing here just fine. So, think, Luna. What are you going to do now, in your condition?" She has an annoying point and I blanch at her in total bewilderment. If I wasn't pregnant, I would have followed my Rema as a wolf and helped kick Juan's b*** into a cage. I would be in the thick of battle and facing my that's it.

"I have to find my father and brother!" I yelp out, suddenly tuned in on the fact they are still a possibility to end all of this without any more loss or suffering. Radar won't let Sierra fight alone and he sure as hell won't let Juan die because of her. With him taking off after her, I can relax a little in the knowledge Radar will put her life before his own, even in his weakened state. He should heal slowly enough to regain some of his gifts and make sure he buys me some time.

"Go help Radar, protect the Rema, don't kill the alpha! Take him as prisoner until I call for him." I command and shove my nearest guard away from me in haste. I know the others are chasing Juan's men, but I have some here still and they hesitate before nodding my way. Two of them leap straight out the broken debris of the doors. Disappearing into the night, a large grey behind me steps forward and pushes against my side to support me. It's only now I realize my body is sagging on trembling limbs still and my ever-attentive guards don't miss a beat.

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"Carmen will work on the frequency until it's done, but we have to find Lord Varro, leader of the vampires out there. Without dying in the process." I voice

loudly and feel Leyanne's eyes burning into mine with that ever-smug look on her face. I can't tell if she agrees or is just interested to see how I am going to manage that. Sometimes I would love to poke her eyes out for those looks she throws.

"Lead the way." Leyanne smiles somewhat softly, a strange misty look on her face and extends a hand towards the door in an overly polite gesture. Still, even after all of this, I get the feeling this witch should never fully be trusted. Despite how often she has come to our aid, there's still that aura around her that she does things for her benefit and won't stay loyal unless it suits her. I can't pinpoint exactly why I feel this way, but I think it's in all her almost sarcastic mannerisms and expressions. Her all knowing eye, her unshakeable demeanor, and right now, seeming to always be one step ahead no matter what's happening. I can't decide if it's mistrust or wariness because she's a huge mystery.

I turn on my heel and shake the doubts away, suddenly homed in on a semi plan and trying to ignore my own nervousness. Closely flanked by the remaining guards and head into the hallway at speed. Leyanne is fast to light up the corridor with her magical light and sticks close to my side.

Colton, Can you hear me? I ask again desperately via the pack link, in the hopes one of the pack pick it up out there.

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There's no response and I instead wrack my brains as we skirt down the passages on how the heck I am meant to weed out the great lord and ruler of the attacking army, when surrounded by feuding creatures and a frequency fit to disable any strength I have.

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I finally hit the marble surface of the ground floor and skid to a halt before I reach the main door, a sudden thought hitting me right in the head which falters my steps. It's so obvious and yet I facepalm myself for being this stupid and slow to even pick up on it until now. Instead of running around in the dark like a headless chicken, I have the means under my nose to bring Varro to me. I spin on my heel to face my nearest wolf, suddenly enlightened on the easiest method for an outcome.

"Let's go to the security room where Carmen is." I nod the command, raising a brow, only get a gruff wolfy snort in response before my guards turn and push me along the darkest part of the house. No argument when their Luna commands, because Radar isn't here to question anything and no one outside the sub pack would ever dare. "What is with the lack of lighting in here, can one of you not go find the generator?" I snap in frustration, knowing this is not even a point but already my nerves are taut, and I am all out of whack with tension. I follow closely, one wolf in front and the other falls back to my heel to keep me flanked. Ever

aware of keeping me safe and yet it doesn't help settle my inner turmoil at all. My mind br***** with scenarios and thinking this might be the best way to do things quickly and possibly limit the damage to my pack out there.

We get to the room where Carmen has holed herself up and push the door open quickly, sliding inside. She's sat typing away like a maniac, a furrowed brow and determined expression as she chews on her lower lip and nods to signal, she knows we walked in. Her whole aura screams of intense concentration and mild agitation, And I can tell how furiously she has been working to get the frequencies separated already.

"If you want an update then don't get your hopes up. The file was recorded at one time with both sounds, so I cannot pull them apart. I need to try and find the original deterrent file and replace what I have but Juan has the system so locked up I can't get into anything. I need more time." She snorts as if disgusted, rams a few more keys with heavy prods and keeps on tap, tap, tapping like a maniac as she squints at the only illumination here. The monitor: and I wonder how the back up power is still connected to tech but not to anything else in the house. I wonder if he re-routed all remaining dregs to the security room to make sure his weapons stayed in place.

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"It's not why I'm here. The sound system outside for the frequency.... does it also work as a PA system?" I push up beside her, pulling out a swivel stool and drop down to her level pulling her attention for a second.

"Of course, it's what's used to send this sound over the valley. All the speakers outside are connected and playing this on a loop at all hours." She doesn't seem to understand why I'm asking, not clicking on what I would want a PA system for so I cover her hand with mine to get her to focus for a second.

"Is there a mic in here for me to make an announcement?" I press on. My plan is simple.... Call my father out in a way he's sure to hear if he is really here. Bring him to me instead of running around like an idiot trying to find someone I have never seen. A loudspeaker shout out that says, come see me. Carmen's expression straightens as she thinks for a second and then nods towards the desk to the right side of my tilted body.

"Ummmmm...announcement? Are you going to politely ask the vampires to stop doing what they are doing?" A sardonic tilt of the brow and she squints at me as though I have lost my mind. I flick her in the forehead with an utter sigh of frustration and sometimes wonder if Carmen pretends she's dumb, or if she sometimes really is.

"Carmen, honey... I say this with utter adoration, but, Meadows right...you are not the sharpest tool in the box..... I am trying to call my vampire father out and find a way to end this. I want him to come to me!" I say it slowly and precisely while widening my eyes as though she's having to translate a foreign language she doesn't know.

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"Ahhhhhh. Yeah, huh. I see." Carmen scratches her head, throws me a little sarcastic smile of embarrassment and being dense, and then her face drops immediately to a blank expression.

"Does that mean.....that maybe Jasper....?" She falters on her own words, her voice husky, swallowing hard and then pulls her hands away from mine to go back to furious typing on the keyboard. Her whole posture stiff and defensive in the blink of an eye as she reverts to that inner cave inside her head where no one can hurt her. I can feel the change in her mood and the slight tremble to her lip as she tries to push away the obvious pain that has struck her heart.

"I don't know. Maybe." I avoid her eye and turn to pull a small standing mic from the shadows of the desk towards me and wave my hand airily toward her. "Show me how to turn it on so it can be heard across the valley." I try a subject change and press the importance of this. I feel for her, I do, but right now this is more important.

"Here. It's already set to sound out on every available speaker from here to the other side of the mountain. Hit that b***on and hold it in while you talk. I will add the mic to overlay the frequency, so I don't have to turn it off." She taps some keys, pulls up some new screens and then nods at me to say I am all set. Her whole demeanor on the defensive and I know her brain is once again transfixed on my idiot brother but she's trying to ignore it.

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I clear my throat, inhale with a nervous tremble and pull the mic so it barely grazes my lip as I lean into it. I press the b***on with my thumb and close my eyes before I start. No time to doubt or hesitate, I just need to do it and be firm.

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"I'm Alora Santo...Dennison. Daughter of Marina and Lord Varro. I know you can hear me, and I know that you're aware that I'm your biological daughter. I am asking you to come to me and put an end to this stupid fight and mindless violence. These are my people and you harming them, harms me in ways you can never comprehend. Put down your hatred and come to the manor on the south side of the valley where I will be waiting out front for you. Please. If there is any kind of love for me as your child. We need to end this, and I have the wolf you are really looking for with me. I will not stop you from taking him, but I have a condition we need to discuss. I'm waiting." I let go of the b***on when the last of my words fade out, fully shivering with the sudden high level of anxiety and nerves I invoked, yet strangely calm too. Contradictory but somehow a part of me feels like this may actually work. If he did all of this because of what I am, maybe he can stop it when he finally sees me.

"Do you though? Have Juan, I mean. Judging by the fact there are only three of you here..." Carmen tilts her head to me and nods at my scarce guard number. A flicker of serious doubt in that questioning look.

"Radar's out there with Sierra and more of the Luna's guard. If they haven't subdued him then at least he's in the open where Varro can pick him up himself. They're all exposed to the frequency now so it shouldn't be hard." I snort a sudden flash of worry about Radar's condition and Sierra's safety, knowing that the longer they are out there, the weaker they get. My stomach in instant knots and I push it away, trying to focus on the here and now. I need to get out there to make sure Sierra stays alive.

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"I recorded your message. Do you want me to repeat it every few minutes until they show up?" Carmen cuts in pulling me out of my own head. I guess she can sense the sudden doubt in me and her suggestion is smart for once.

"Hmmm." I nod, absent minded for a second, pulling myself up to my feet and gesture for the guards to move first and let me out. "I can link you for now, but it seems the pack has lost that ability outside this house so we might too. Keep trying with the frequency, it's disabling them slowly." I pat her on the head with a light touch and move away, holding back the sudden urge to cry and swallow it down to put my fierce back in place. I feel like we're losing control of this situation and cut off from Colton I somehow feel even more alone and vulnerable and uncertain about what to do. I wish I was as strong and capable as a Luna is meant to be but all I ever seem to be now is a useless lump who can't do very much. My own wolf is not even useful and my gifts are limited due to pregnancy tiredness.

"Be careful out there. You may be Varro's child but it doesn't mean his creatures won't take a pop at you. Remember how vulnerable you are right now. Don't take risks." Carmen scolds me with a soft tone but a serious glint in her eye and I can't resist the sudden need to hug her. The girl has this knack for pulling out a need in me to show her affection when she's being her bossy self.

Stepping back in an abrupt manner, I throw my arms around her neck from behind to semi strangle her with genuine love. All my emotions boiling up inside and I realize how desperately scared I am as I cling to the last one of my circle who gives me security. No meadow, no Colton, no Radar or the subs, no Sierra... and Carmen is needed here. My entire bubble is not going out there with me to face Lord Varro. I have to go it alone and stand on my own two feet to face someone that I am terrified of meeting.

"You're getting weirder the longer I know you." Carmen wriggles free from my embrace, her face screwed up with an 'ewww' expression, her energy warm even if her tone is harsh and I smile at the show of prickly from her. I have long learned that when she is being her most abrasive, it's usually because she is at her most emotional. She likes me and my hug, even if she will never admit it. "You got this, Luna. Don't disappoint me by going out there and making an idiot of yourself. I'll pretend not to know you if you embarra** me." A wry smile thrown my way which pulls a genuine one from me and I blink back the tears forming in my eyes,

swallowing down all that turmoil. Loving this strange girl for all the cold and stiff she exudes.

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"I can do this." I say it aloud, more to myself than her because I truly have to believe it, and before I have any other doubts I turn on my heel and march out the door with my guards in tow. My head set on seeing this through and my purpose clear. I have to make Varro stop this before I lose my pack and maybe even my life if my mate falls out there. My hearts telling me Sierra is okay right now, Radar is there, and I just need a little time and space and for Varro to show up like I asked.

We make haste and within no time at all we are out in the cool night air, shadows dancing around under the moonlight and already wolves are fighting wolves. I can only see fast moving outlines and glowing eyes as a battle inches closer into the compound around me. I sense Sierra off to my left and turn to see her rolling around with Juan and Radar in a three-way fight and inhale sharply at the scene before me.

A gruesome and vicious battle of three, and it's hard to tell which is which or who has the upper hand. Teeth gnashing, claws flying, and bodies joined. I instinctively step towards her and raise my hands and have to haul myself back again. Reeling inside and knowing my addition of gifts won't do anything except hurt radar and Sierra too.

I'm tugged sideways by gentle teeth, knocked off my feet so I stumble in an awkward tumble and pulled into a circle of fur as my guards shield me. He stops me from falling and I'm supported against a strong solid body, I glimpse at what they saw as my night vision begins to kick in. My eyes scanning the scene before me as the true intensity of fear runs through me at a cold speed.

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Vampires scaling the fences around us like a liquid flow of cascading movement, with wolves on their a**es. The battle from afar has flooded this way and everywhere as far as the eye can see the dark ground is a flow of bodies and chaos, no space left clear as the invasion begins.

I press back against my guard, my body turning cold and my heart almost stops when faced with the true terror in my vision. Hundreds upon hundreds of these foul beings, swarming to the place I thought I could patiently await Varro.

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Luna, stand your ground, the guards are pulling in!

One voice comes at me through my sudden hazy fog of a mind, and I am pulled back to the present and snapped out of my stunned shock. Aware of my wall of warm fur moving around me and then accompanied by more as the Lunas guard seem to appear from nowhere. I guess their fight with Juan's minions has finally come to an end, and they are back to performing the duty assigned to them.

I turn my head and scan the faces of so many while I search out Radar and Sierra, barely able to catch a glimpse as the living wall of bodies collide around me in a massive circle like something out of a Hollywood battlefield. The only light comes from a full moon above and even with its full illumination, the land around me is like a creepy moving forest of aggressive groaning.

Noise is deafening and it almost blocks out the speakers transmitting my message to Varro, to the point I inwardly panic that he may not hear it at all. I mentally cross my fingers and pray that Carmen is getting somewhere with the frequency and that despite this mayhem, Varro will come.

"We can't just stand here like this! We need to do something!" I harshly push a gap between the wall before me of warm wolves and push myself between them, desperately looking for a higher vantage point in the hope I can see my mate or my brother. Maybe Varro is out there looking for me too, but with the darkness acting like a heavy cloak and the unrelenting fight closing in on us, I can't see a thing.

I turn just in time to catch a glimpse of a wolf hurtling my way at speed and realize it's flying through midair, it's back to us and it's on a collision course with my body. With its giant size and formidable weight, I am no match and brace myself to deflect it.

I cower instinctively, hands flying to my abdomen and screw my eyes tight, conjuring up my energy to create a forcefield around me as the wolf shield closes. My guards catch the torpedo like wolf and brush him aside with precise skill, so he skids across the ground in dramatic fashion with a grating swoosh. Rolling and bumping and scr***** to a halt so his face comes at a point where I can open my eyes and see him through the legs of my coc***. In my line of vision, his head turned to me and completely out cold.

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I blink at the still figure for a moment, trying to recognize the face behind the mess, and realize it's Radar and that he doesn't look so good at all. His wolf form is filthy, disheveled, and matted, flattened in places and so dark from his own blood. I can tell his wound is still bleeding because Leyanne wasn't able to finish what she was doing, and I have no idea where she even is now. I haven't seen her since I left to look for Carmen and I haven't seen her down here at all. The witch is good at disappearing when I need her the most.

"Radar! Pull him in here!" I command to my guards and reach out for him in panic, but he's tugged away by the legs so fast I fall forward and slap my palms on the ground in front of me where his hand was a moment ago. In the blink of an eye,

he was taken right from my grasp and I clamber out of my curled-up position to look for him.

Crawling at speed underneath my nearest wolf to watch as Radar is dragged some mere feet from me, by Juan, backwards and into a clearing of space. I shove the legs of my Lycan aside in a bid to make them move and only just catch sight of Sierra taking a flying leap into Juan's back as she sinks her teeth into Juan's right shoulder, and he lets out an agonizing roar. The battle between the three is relentless and now he's disabled Radar it looks like Sierra has gone full feral mode and now willing to back down.

Leave him alone! Sierra's link comes through loud and clear, that raging snarl, and she hauls Juan down to the ground with her by kicking at the back of his hind legs with her own clawed feet. Swiping him down so she gets the upper hand and clings to him like a leech. Why don't you just die! I'm so sick of you! What's left for you to fight for? You destroyed everything for your own greed and there's nothing left for you to do except die and leave my pack alone, you filthy b*****. Sierra's venom comes through in the pack link, so venomous I feel it, and Juan rolls to try and dislodge her.

Oh sweetheart, my intention is to do just that and take you with me! It's all I have left. Taking my mate and leaving this world together so our souls are forever intertwined in the next world. He cackles within the link, that once authoritative and deep tone sounding more like a mad man and higher than I ever recall.

Screw you. She stays with me and you will suffer in a cage until you die of old age, regretting everything you ever did to her and this pack!

Radar regains some equilibrium, coming back to his senses, pulling himself up to intervene between the feuding mates. He seems to use the last of his strength to deliver a brutal blow to Juan's face and neck, gouging at him with all the hatred he has. I can feel his energy waning, knowing the toxin in his blood is sapping all he has and the frequency is starting to affect everyone out here. I can sense my pack around me struggling hard to stay on top of the creatures they are fighting, to stay in lycanthrope form, and I frantically look around for a sign of Varro or Colton. Beginning to feel panic rising in my stomach as we race against the effects of this damn weapon.

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My own guards meet a collision off feral beings as three of them rush at us and I am pulled away from the scenario between Radar, Juan, and Sierra and must help defend with my own powers. Throwing vampires back and sending them s***tering while trying to be careful not to hit my own with my bursts of energy throws. I grasp handfuls of energy like pops of boulders, tossing them out through the wolves, hitting, pushing, driving back these ugly demons. It takes all my concentration and with every single throw, I lose a little of my energy as tiredness begins to drive in at me from all angles.

My full focus is drawn to helping, fighting my own fatigue that comes upon me faster than before and I know the sound is having an effect on me and my gifts. I struggle to hold on, but my eye is yanked back to Sierra as she appears in the left

of my field of vision, this time free from Juan and instead she collides with a huge, winged hybrid as he takes her down mid run. I can't ignore it, as it's bigger than here even in wolf form and seems stronger than the things we intercepted at the forest battle.

"Sierra!" I cry out, turning my attention to her and muster up a ball of energy as big as a soccer ball and throw it right at the vampire's head. Using my left hand to reach out and grasp with my telekinesis ability as the vampire is thrust sideways, I catch him, lift and hurl him away from my Rema with invisible touch. Palming my hands together in a slap, I yank them apart and split a pathway of bodies in front of me, sliding everything side, so I have a clear route to Sierra. My instinct taking over and boosting my power for me as I move without thought, my whole head on keeping her alive.

I take a run for her, so intent on being by her side and helping protect her, when Radar skids across my path in front of me, shifting back to human and I'm halted by the sight of him. His body drenched in blood, and sweat, and his wounds from claws are not healing as fast as they should. He's pale, almost lifeless as he slumps on the debris strewn ground, spent of life force, and I focus my gifts on him as a vampire takes a potluck shot at leaping towards him. I throw it back, throw my hands wide and s***ter everyone closing in on Radar, tumbling them like dominoes with this new burst of intense power I seem to have found. Sierra is fast and, in a flash, she sprints to his side, pulling him into her as she too turns human and cradles him in her arms, shielding him protectively.

"Leyanne, where the hell are you??" I scream out into the havoc around me, losing my cool, my voice hoarse and raw with the instant wash of intense emotion at seeing Radar this way and quickly have to go back to s***tering any who make a move on him. Juan appears to my left, running fast and takes a leap right at my human pair. Putting his all into a flying a**ault as he thrusts his claws forward with deadly intent. I lift my arms, muster all I have left to form a body sized orb and thrust it towards the man with vengeance, over the top of the two people I must protect against all costs.

Juan is hit face on, startled to a midair stop and then momentum hurtles him backwards like he was just smashed with a freight train. He is blown tens of feet backwards into the heaving crowd of battling enemies and disappears into the chaos. Like being swallowed into a sea of moving darkness.

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"Stay with me. Hold on I can heal you a little." Sierra's weeping voice comes through at me, despite everything a**aulting my senses, it's clear as a bell. I run quickly to slide down beside them, crunching to a halt on the gravel of the dirt track, stones biting into my knees and shins. My guards following to create an ever-present barrier and they flank around us in a circle to stop the ever-attacking creatures on all sides.

"Let me see. How bad is it?" I push Sierra back a little to find her cradling Radar like a child in her arms, huddling him against her body as her tears drip down her face and land on his naked torso. Creating small rivulets of exposed clean flesh through the bloodied mask that covers his entire skin and it almost kills me. He's a mess. Covered in slashes, and bites, and his exposed skin has that awful blue tinge of slow silver poisoning as it continues to spread. I know it's a combination of the wolfsbane and the frequency and he's dying in front of me a slow and painful death.

"Tell me what to do.... How to help." I beg Sierra but she seems lost in her own head while staring at him, like she's about to breakdown and lose all control. Her panic and pain ebbing my way. I am on the verge of all out hyperventilating, terrified of losing radar this way.

"Ummm.... Heal...I.. I...I don't know if I can heal this. It's bad, real bad. We need Leyanne." She sobs a little, stuttering her words, shaking as she grips him, yet pulls her hand from his and ignites her blue glow slowly and surely within her palm. Despite not thinking she can do this; I know she won't give up on Radar and will try with all her might.

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Her light is duller than normal, and it takes time for it to extend to the full hand and then up her arm before she places it over his chest where her fingers cover his heart. Splaying them out and pushing what she can through to him in the hopes it's enough to undo the poison. I stare, suddenly still as a statue and hold my breath.

"Radar.... Open your eyes. Look at me." Sierra begs him, pleads with a raspy and broken tone, her tears falling freely and yet he seems lifeless. I grip his other hand in mine, pulling myself to the opposite side to Sierra, and we both lean over him to shield him from what's going on around us. Creating a protective barrier of calm so she can do something to help him recover even a little. I curse under my breath and pray that the damn witch comes to us.

My wolves are giving their all, fighting on, some to the death, and yet here we are in an almost quiet space. Trapped in our own little place as if this is the only important thing in the world right now, and somehow padded against the atrocity happening around us. The three of us, in the eye of the storm.

"You can't leave us." I whisper to Radar softly, leaning to his ear, holding his hand in mind with a gentle looseness. His palm is clammy, yet his fingers are cold, and I have to bite back the tidal wave of emotions threatening to break from within me. I'm scared. I'm inadequate in this moment and I'm mentally screaming for my mate to come and be the leader he always is. He would know what to do.

"Sierra..." Radar's voice jolts me out of my blank zoning out and I blink at his face as he tries to move his body a little. Coming to from what I a**ume was unconsciousness and flutters his lashes as his eyes begin to open. His face is a mess, covered in dirt, grime, and blood, but his scratches and cuts are slowly receding as her magic does its work. Even thinking she's too weak to undertake something like this, Radar's skin is pinking up and his deepest wounds are

starting to close albeit very slowly. I guess having the kind of love for him has an effect to how potent her skills can be. She is literally giving it her all to save him. I almost cry in joy as I watch a deep gash over his white eye close fully.

"I'm right here." She whispers softly and tilts her head so she can look at his face, brushing his hair from his forehead as she lowers her chin and stares at him with unconcealed adoration. My heart jolts at the obvious love in her eyes and the gentle affection of her touch on him.

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Radar sighs heavily, fully opens his eyes and looks directly at me before flickering his gaze to the one leaning over him. A moment of pause and hesitation as he realizes he is wrapped in her arms and his head is in her lap. He seems surprised for a moment, shifts his body to pull himself up and avoid her eye like he always does, but Sierra is too fast. She firmly catches his jaw in her free hand and yanks his face to her, before leaning down and shocking us both with a feather like peck of a kiss on his lips. It's so fast that neither of us saw it coming and Radar's eyes snap open wide in utter shock and alarm as it registers what she just did to him.

I swallow hard and let out a half-choked cough and laugh at the sheer boldness of my mother-in-law. I shouldn't feel happiness at a moment like this, but I am both impressed and mentally air punching her a high five. It's about time she showed Radar that she has him in her heart.

Go girl.

I know she's overcome with emotion and seeing him start to heal was obviously a catalyst for this sweet kiss. She doesn't let him loose, instead pulls his face towards her to keep him locked in position in her grasp so she can continue healing him.

That's when their eyes finally meet.

And then something I never expected could ever happen in this lifetime, especially with a marked wolf. It hits in the whirlwind of this battlefield as both jolt in shock and fall apart with the sudden blow and I witness something for the second time in my life. Something you can't misunderstand when you witness it as I do.

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Radar and Sierra imprint right before my very eyes.