

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 5

"Go on..." Sierra encourages. Colton hesitates, screws up his face and blows out air as though the very words are painful, and I can feel it ebbing from him. The upset, the heartbreak and I listen intently, holding on for what he has to say.

"I was standing still, in human form, but my hands were clawed out like I was half turned but had no intention of fully doing so. Covered in blood even though I was uninjured, and I knew it wasn't mine."

"Maybe it was a past vision, we've been up against the vampires and had their blood on our hands so many times these past months" I interject as his emotions start clawing at my insides, his sense of elevated anxiety making me jittery and I wriggle in my seat.

"No, this was different. I didn't feel like myself, I felt I can't explain, but it was like I was above and looking at me, but it wasn't me. I was blank... emotionless and disconnected. There was nothing going on in my head and I tried to rouse myself to some sort of response. There was nothing but this shell of me, going through the motions and he couldn't seem to hear or see me, and then I saw you." Colton's eyes drop to his lap and he turns his head away from me shaking his head. His sadness and pain hits me full pelt in the stomach like a s***er punch as he sees it in his mind's eye, and I know that's not a good sign.

"What was I doing?" I blurt out impulsively, afraid of what he saw if it's cutting him this way. Colton remains silent for a long moment to compose himself and Sierra and I exchange concerned glances.

"Would it be better if you shared it with me and I can see for myself?" His mother interjects but Colton flashes back to her with a brutal headshake.

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"No!" I don't want it in either of your heads. The hostility in his harsh response is so out of character.

"Then tell us...." I coax him, pleading to know what he saw that has him this way, while ignoring his outburst. Colton pulls his hands away from us and runs both through his hair in agitation, leaning back so his chair balances on only two legs at a precarious angle. I curb the urge to correct it and let him be as he scrubs his fingers on his scalp and sighs loudly.

"You were lying on the forest floor about ten feet from me, partially concealed as though you had crawled to hide. Human, still dressed like you hadn't even tried to turn..... you were bleeding." Colton chokes on his own emotion, leaning forward sharply to place his face in his own palms as he leans on the table, his chair slamming down, rubbing his temples then wiping a palm over his face as though to shake what he sees. "You were looking at me, crying..... You were

scared. Of me! And I walked towards you, so empty, so...unfeeling.... I could see you were hurt and yet, I didn't seem to care or react. And you said 'Please.... don't', as if it was down to me or because of me, or you thought I would hurt you and I woke up" Colton tenses, shudders, and then stands up quickly to shake the memory out physically as I blanch in open eyed apprehension and Sierra frowns sternly. He stalks to the patio doors and opens one for air and shoves his shoulder against the frame to appear at ease, despite it being obvious he is far from it. I can feel his confusion, his pain and it renders me momentarily mute as chaos swirls in my brain to try and dissect his vision.

"You think you were the one who wounded her?" Sierra shakes her head at me as I move to get up to console him, telling me he needs space as she notes his eyes glowing amber before I do. He's wound up, better to let him get it out in his own way and I settle back down. Sometimes when he's riled his wolf hates being touched, even by me.

"I would never.... but why was she afraid, why wasn't I reacting? Helping her? Why wasn't she turning? None of it made sense! It's like she couldn't turn wolf." he's back to pacing and I watch him with a heavy heart, unsure what else to say as I try and decipher the dream logically. If he was half wolf in the dream, then there was no reason I couldn't turn. It makes little sense.

"You said not all the dreams and visions are literal, right? Maybe it's more symbolic. Maybe it's that you feel somewhere inside that you aren't protecting me enough, or maybe feeling the witches last night somehow made you feel like there's danger lurking more than before, and you're scared I won't be safe. That you somehow are watching, powerless, while I'm hurt." I try to explain what he described, clutching at straws and he turns and narrows his eyes at me thoughtfully. A slight change of expression as he grasps at reason in my explanation.

"Maybe...that sort of makes sense."

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"Sometimes they may seem like visions, but are our intentions, warning of a path we may take, and the possible outcomes. Maybe sensing the witches has stirred up chaotic emotions and like Lorey says, you're dreams formed this visual to voice what those are. You're afraid as leader you will fail against a new threat and your mate will be left wounded and unable to defend herself." Sierra sounds out my reasoning to strengthen the possibility and Colton relaxes even more. Seeing some hint of logic in the words and I guess looking for a reason to explain what he saw, that wasn't him hurting me.

"I guess" Colton's distracted, not fully believing even if he seems like he's agreeing. I know him better than that and the worry in his eyes betrays that this isn't an answer for him fully. I did think he was a little quiet when we woke up and he made love to me this morning, rather than crazy morning s**. He seemed subdued before we came to breakfast, overly touchy feely and attentive. I thought he was tired, having one of his calmer days of reflection that sometimes happens. I never knew he was harboring all this and picking apart the meaning.

Since starting to get visions he's found it both a blessing and a curse and often frustrated with the cryptic confusion they can cause. They are hard to separate from dreams sometimes that have no meaning and he has started over questioning every single night terror he has. His powers are growing, but he feels like instead of harnessing them, they're getting more chaotic and invasive, and most definitely more frequent in recent months.

He's learning to heal with his touch too, much like Sierra can. He can close wounds, cure minor sickness, not that he's had any Guinea pigs to try for more. Wolves are all too good at healing themselves and the children don't often have anything serious. He's spent time in the medic room practicing on cuts and bruises, childhood viruses to see what he can do, under Sierra's gentle hand, and he's pretty great at a blue glowing wave of healing perfection. The worst he has had was the odd broken bone from a clumsy fall of a pup.

"Maybe it was just a dream, and not a vision." I point out but Colton frowns heavily.

"I never used to dream at all...ever. Not even as a kid. They only started after I unbound my gifts." He shrugs in irritation and slumps back down in his seat and picks up his fork absentmindedly. I know he's told me this before, but it still silences me, and I stare at my food with a little defeat. I don't know what else to say to put his mind at ease.

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"Maybe Alora's right though, it might be that by binding your gifts, I bound your natural ability to dream and work through your problems in the sleep state. Which is normal for all people and now you can do it. Maybe this is nothing more than Alora symbolizing your whole world, your people, our home, me, your responsibility, this land, and you feel responsible for it all. That in your disconnected state it was somehow highlighting you feel overwhelmed with the huge responsibility and maybe feel that one little taking your eye off the ball will result in your striking down your heart...your world. Which she was in your dream. Dreams don't have to be more than that, even visions sometimes." Sierra must sense his unease too and her soft smile and confident expression seem to bring him some peace.