

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 91

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Colton comes at me, lifting his claws in the air for a final blow and as the sun glints on the red stained mess of his sharp talons I look at his face one last time. His human form, the face of the boy who devastates my soul with just a look and even now, it melts all my defenses away. I've missed this face, even if his mind is not behind it.

That tanned perfection of a handsome male, the straight dark slash of eyebrows over unfamiliar soulless eyes. His squared jawline, his subtle etch of dimples, even though he's not smiling but scowling instead. Even like this, about to deliver a last blow, I can't hate him. My heart belongs to him and fills with the fresh ache of finally seeing him as his own face once again, after so many days, and I start to softly cry. Resigned to a goodbye and glad that it will be this sight I leave the world with.

Colton makes his move, no hesitation in his purpose, and I squeeze my eyes s*** tight as I tense and prepare for the piercing pain of a delivered blow. I hold tight, my breath paused and my insides pulsating, but it doesn't come. A whoosh, a snarl, and then a voice rings true as something sweeps over my cheek with gentle furriness. A familiar presence sweeping away my loneliest moment.

Over my dead body, you a**hole!

I yank my eyes open as a yelp sounds out and heat and warmth covers my head and arms with fresh new blood. It's not mine, it belongs to a wolf overshadowing me and putting themselves right in Colton's way to take his full rage. He's embedding his claws in the side and shoulder of my protector, ripping sideways to worsen the injury and they slump back almost on top of me, pushing me back with a hind leg to keep me safe. It's only then I realize I recognize the scent, even when tinged with the heavy stench of metallic blood.

From the back most wolves are hard to distinguish apart, and as this one bleeds out all over me, their life fluid dampening my clothes as much as my own, I know who it is. They hold off the bearing down of a second attack from my enraged aggressor and turn slightly while their amber eyes lock on mine in an almost smug flicker.

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You think I wouldn't keep my promise, huh? My life fades before yours does, Luna.

I'm rendered silent in shock, knowing her return means she couldn't pull Sierra with her but wouldn't leave me to fight alone. She came back, she came to protect me.

Carmen turns away again as quickly, seeing her chance as Colton retracts to go for her again with extra vigor. Irritated that his slashing her to almost shreds hasn't fully taken her down from her protective stance as my shield. Carmen reacts, swift as a knife and launches herself at his throat. Putting her all into the fight, even though she's still trying to heal from the first impaling wounds she counteracted for me. With blood flying through the air, the deafening noise of body thudding to body, ripping and crying out, they entangle in a terrifying movement of fierce. Colton insta-transforms into wolf once more, annoyed that as human he isn't easily winning, snarling at a new opponent and black fur flies with increased aggression.

"Carmen, no.... He'll kill you!" I scream out after her, finding my voice even if all else fails me and I try to get up to offer her some aid. My emotions are all over the place, my heart thudding painfully and even though I should be focusing on my own body and how close I am to death, my mind and soul are with my sister. I struggle into a sitting position on my a** and arms and put all I have in me to sit up and attempt to muster any kind of energy. She's being mauled to pieces, under the fast and horrifying skill of my Mate and I can't bear it.

He ragdolls Carmen around like a bloody scrap and yet she holds on and defies the possibility of what I'm seeing here. It's like she's possessed with an unwavering need to not give up, no matter what he does to her. She stays persistent and despite her cries, her whines, and the way he's breaking her body one bone at a time, her eyes never lose that shining light of devotion to her cause. She's buying me time, she's sacrificing herself to give me precious seconds more, just in case. She's counting on fate taking over.

Colton picks up the limp and torn body as my sob catches me in my throat and chokes me with the heartache of seeing her so broken. My hurt trembling all over my body that this girl, who's come to mean so much in such a short time, is giving everything to see me safe.

I can see Carmen is fighting to heal and stay strong but he's not giving her time and she's not superhuman. Wolves need a moment to recover before new wounds are formed, or they can die, just as I'm doing now.

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He wraps one hand around her throat with callous precision, pulling her nose to his so he can look her dead in the face while she hangs in the air as a torn mess. His second hand is still against her chest, his claws digging deep around her heart in her rib cage and she's clinging to his wrist to hold off the moment of jerking it from her body. Fighting him until the end and I completely break into hysteria. Eyes blinded by my tears and body shaking with the sheer force of my emotion.

"Colton, please...NOOOOO!! I beg you. Not her, please, stop..... don't hurt her..... Carmen, you're my sister. Don't give up. I need you too." I cry it so venomously it rasps and splices my throat with burning agony.

A mighty boom shudders through the air like a blast from a bomb and reverberates in every pore of my body like a sonic eruption. I'm thrown down as a wave of energy shudders through the lands and seems to cut through every soul

standing. It's a whoosh of air, a travelling movement of visual disruption while pain and noise pulls my breath out from me and darkens the sky for a moment. Physically it seems to rip through every single living nerve within this forest and shakes senses like being splashed all over with icy cold water. A virtual slap across the face.

I blink as light starts to return with the sky opening back up to reveal the sun, wondering if this is what death is. If in that moment of despair, I finally crossed over from the living side and only I witnessed the extreme happening of our environment.

I gasp with the release of heaviness on my chest and spine, screw my eyes shut as the light painfully blinds me with sudden increased clarity and clutch at my stomach in an attempt to make this end faster. I thought death would take away the hurt but maybe I'm still pa**ing through and my body hasn't fully cut the strands of my essence from the living world.

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I stay paused waiting... waiting.... The pain of what that was fading as I slip out of consciousness slowly and I know I can't hold on any longer. I've lost so much blood and whatever that was, it's pushed me to want to sleep now, to let go and find my peace in the silence of the darkness. Maybe this is all how it's supposed to be and maybe I'll finally see my parents one more time. I know Colton and Sierra will follow close after me, so I'm not scared. Colton and I will be together on the other side, where spells can't keep him from me anymore.

I'm only glad that he isn't going to be the one to give me the final blow and end us. It's not going to go that way My body is opting out first. I sigh with the knowledge it won't be long before he comes to me and I get to wrap myself around all that I have missed.

"Lorey?..... Lorey, baby?" a panicked familiar voice tugs at my hearing but I can't open my eyes, the heaviness pulling me down so smoothly. Yet a warm smooth touch splays across my face, trying to keep me in the light as I'm tugged up and yet can't respond. "Baby why aren't you turning? ... Lorey...f***.... I got you... I got you, baby. Hold on." His voice is a dream, it has to be, or maybe this is his confusion and suddenly finding himself following me to the underworld where magic can't touch him anymore. I don't understand how he can be on the other side before me, waiting, helping. Aren't I meant to die before my bonded family do?

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I'm confused, my muddled mind losing its grip on reality as I clutch so desperately to keep some sense of awareness, but that's Colton's voice...I know that voice, but I can't see him and the warmth of his touch it can't be real. Because he's a wolf and he's the one killing me.

A tingling sensation starts at my arm, another on my throat and spreads to my chest as it feels like my body is pulled up into a strong cradling embrace and a weight is hauled from me. Against all my expectations, my eyes flutter open as darkness starts to recede and a pair of amber eyes in a familiar face are only inches from mine, reflecting a blue glow that brings my sight down to where it's coming from. My brain so cloudy that I stare numbly, with no sense of recognition for a second.

Human hands... blue healing glow on my arm and my upper chest and the armor, its laying beside me, dented and curled and slashed and yet I can't get my bearings at all. I don't know what's happening anymore.

"Colton?" I whisper in dazed confusion, knowing this is a dream. So weak, it sounds like the softest pitter patter of rain on the forest floor. Gazing up into the familiar face of the person I have wanted most all this time.

"I'm right here..... you're going to be okay, just stay still. Let me do this for a minute." It's his voice, my mate's husky, perfect, and beautiful voice, and my strength is coming back to me. The pain receding and my fogginess pushing back to clear my sight and my mind.

The first thing I see around his lowered head is the lack of mist around us, the brighter day minus the smog. With perfect clarity, the face of the person I have pined for most hovering over me, concern and despair etched into that cute boy face and those incomparable features. His voice trembling with the sheer intensity of his pain at finding me this way.

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"I don't what happened or why we're out here...I ...I.... baby, I'm so confused. Who hurt you? Why didn't I stop it?" He pulls me to his throat to cradle my face against him, his words strangled and it's clear he has no idea, still keeping one hand around my body and half hugs me. Never breaking the way his healing magic is pushing through my body and spreading to every inch of me as he restores everything to what it should be and yet more. His power revives my energy, renews my blood in ways Sierra never had a chance and brings back every ounce of my gifts to within my grasp. Every second brings me to reality and further away from a step into the underworld.

"I'm not dreaming...I'm not dead?" I utter breathlessly, finding the use of my own arms and wrapping them around his waist while gripping on tight, suddenly unable to get close enough even though we are pulled together, touching in several places. I close my eyes and inhale him, the familiar scent, with a need to be sure this isn't a dream and it's really him. I squeeze him with ferocity, my body trembling with happiness and try and bury myself into his warm safety as he chokes on a half cry half, half laugh and crushes his cheek to mine. He seems startled by my sudden needy possession of him, wrapping on, holding tight and unable to release him to let him breathe.

"God no....I would never let you die, baby. Lorey, what the hell happened? Who did this to you? How did I wake up here with no idea how I even... why didn't you turn? What's going on and why is the pack.....Carmen?" his confusion sobers me

fully, lifting my face up to stare at him, as he glances at the now intact femme who saunters close enough to lean in and check on my progress. It seems his presence isn't her focus, but the making sure she sees me being restored to a state of zero damage. I look down to see the last of my wounds fading into memory, along with how much it hurt. My head clearing and my energy zings with happiness. I shake my head, so not able to tell him he's the one who did this, because I know it would kill him and we still have something else to focus on. I shrug, sighing, and reach for his face instead, sliding my arms around his neck so I can pull him closer to me. My heart fit to bursting with the joy and love and overwhelming feeling of being back in his arms.

"I've missed you so much." I cry into his embrace when he fully lifts me against his chest and onto his lap, pulling me so snug I'm fitted like a glove into his body and back where I belong. I'm home, wherever he is always feels like this. He holds me tight, breathing against my ear rapidly, as his own emotion gets the better of him, feeding from my own overwhelming chaos of happy and needy and I can tell it dampens his confusion but also raises more questions in his head.

"Missed me? I only left you minutes ago... I sent you back to the house, after Carmen and Meds. Why did you come back?" He presses his nose to mine, inhaling my scent and seems to try and grasp at his own memories, screwing his face up to understand what he woke up to. I want to kiss him so badly, but I hold back, knowing if I do I may not stop and let him go. My cravings for his intimacy, his touch, his nearness, almost start driving me to insanity now I finally get to hold him again.

Colton's memory is of the last seconds before the fog and I pull back to blink at him, aware that Leyanne broke the spell but this isn't over. As much as I want to relish in having him back, at staring at the gorgeousness of his brown eyes and sweet face, I know we can't right now. Our witch and our wolves are in that mountain and might need help to get back out.

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"We don't have time right now, just trust me..... we need to get up and go get Meadow and the pack. They went into the mountain. The vampires won't let them go without a fight and there's only half a dozen of them."

"The what?" Colton's eyes widen in shock, pulling back rapidly but not letting me go and he darts a look up ahead of him at the looming rock in the distance, through the dense trees as though trying to visualize a scene before him. His pupils dilate as his brain kicks into gear and his entire body stiffens as I feed on his sudden panic and heavy confusion. Hesitating, as he looks down at me and then to the armor, before flicking a questioning glance at Carmen who stands silently nearby watching us. It's only now at looking past him I can see human wolves wandering around, mumbling to one another, all with dazed expressions and questions. Talking, looking this way. None of them remember anything.

"What aren't you telling me? Why didn't you turn?" Colton hits my eyes with his, slightly ambering as his feelings spiral and I can tell he's raking his memory for answers. I don't get a chance, just clinging to him to stop the shaking of my body.

Reassuring myself that his touch is real, that his warmth is real. I missed him so much.

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"What the f*** is going on?" Cesar falls onto his knees at the side of Colton, cutting into our reunion with his own tone of angry misunderstanding and hauls him by the arm. "Cole the entire f***ing pack seems to be out here..... I have no idea why. And no one has any kind of clothing, so we all came out here and turned?!?!?! Why are you here, Luna? You left!" Cesar looks over me and then narrows his eyes on the fact I do have clothes and yet they are blood soaked and torn, and there's a lot of chain mail on show and a discarded breastplate that's seen better days. I can almost decipher the questions forming behind that sharp gaze.

"Get up. Cesar, Meadow is in the mountain with rabid vampires who fancy a wolfy munch for breakfast, we need to go get her." It's all the words he needs as his eyes widen and his expression tightens. Carmen's haughty way of explaining does a better job than my pleading lame commands could.

"Hell no, those f***ers touch my girl over my dead body." He's on his feet turning in a flash, no hesitation or doubting what she says. He needs to protect his mate against all costs, and with a howl, seems to rally the troops around us and tears off in the direction of the mountain as Colton moves me to a seated position on the ground beside him. I can feel his indecision about leaving me. He's rattled because he woke to find me close to death and something in him seems to be rooting him here instead of going with Cesar to take the lead.

"I... ITurn and stay on my tail, don't leave my shadow. We'll get them out, you can explain after. Just don't stray away, okay?" He makes a move, let's go of me gently as I sit myself straighter and gets up onto his feet, but stops when I hesitate, and turns back to me. He has no idea how it feels to see him again, that he's here, and he's him and the spell is gone but at the same time..... my desire to stick to his a** and follow him isn't realistic.

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"I can't ... leave me here...go ... I'll be okay. I can't keep up like this and I don't need to now you're here. I'll follow, I promise. Go please, save them." I plead, begging with my eyes that he stops delaying.

"I don't understand, Lorey.... I'm not leaving you here after I found you like that. I never leave you. Get up, come with me. Mates stay side by side." he reaches a hand out to me, but I push it away, hating that I only just got him back and I'm urging him to leave me. I have to, their safety is priority now.

Without the wolves in the woods there is no immediate danger here anymore for me. It's daylight and a chunk of our pack is inside that mountain fighting to get

out again. Besides, despite Cesar taking off like a bat out of hell with all the ones around this immediate area, Carmen still stands quiet and on guard, making it clear she stays with me.

"I won't be far behind you, I'm slower right now. Please Colton, there's too much to explain, just go where you're needed and bring them out. Carmen's here, she won't let any harm come to me." I point out with a bright smile, trying to soothe his unease.

I see the torn decision in him, the way his eyes shift from me to her and the obvious mistrust that what I say can be true. I mean for him, Carmen is a sobbing mess whose mom just died and hates me, right? How can I trust her to be my bodyguard when I have powers that are stronger than hers. Why am I not just turning white wolf and savagely kicking Vampire a** by his side? I can see it all spinning through his head, trying to put the pieces together and understand nothing.

His inability to choose between the need to go and do what I ask. To save his pack from whatever he doesn't understand, but also the need to stay with me because waking up to me like that has clearly shaken him to the core. He's afraid of what he doesn't remember has happened. Afraid I'm not safe and he can't fathom why my gifts are failing me.

He doesn't need to make any kind of call as a howl ahead is followed by a link, and in a blink the decision isn't required, and he turns instantly. I hear it too, the call for help from our own wolves inside the mountain and the alpha in him takes over. Wolf materializes before me as he leans in and rubs his huge face against the top of my head in a show of tender affection. It's his way of saying I love you, but I need to go.

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I trust you. Follow. If you need me, link....You know I'll come to you.

In a flash he's gone, hightailing after Cesar in the direction of the call and I pull myself up to recover. I need a moment to myself to let all this catch up and I instinctively check my body for any signs of wounds and find nothing at all. Colton has fully healed every single tiny scratch and abrasion and I can already tell I'm so much stronger from his attentions. His return has brought back my safety, security, and peace of mind. Inhaling heavily and shaking my limbs to test them, I'm still not quite letting it sink in that he's really okay, and this is almost over. We have them back, our strongest – our alpha. Our sub pack. We can't fail now we outnumber the vampires this way too.

"You okay? Really?" Carmen comes to my side, kneeling down beside me and takes a minute to check for herself, pulling my underclothes from my breastplate aside to check down my neck and chest. A stern expression as she meticulously looks for herself and seems satisfied by her examination. She pulls the shield piece over and bends it back to the shape it should be and slides it to my body in a swift motion to once again clip it to the chain mail.

"I don't need it anymore, and yes, I feel healed and....." I can't put into words how much my soul is soaring; my heart is swelling, and my sanity is returned. Healed and reborn as my love is returned to me fully. There's no other feeling like this and adrenaline overtakes me with a squealing happiness. It feels like the past week of heavy depression has gone and the sun is shining brighter than it has in days.

"Good, and don't argue. It still serves a purpose, and vampires can't splice metal like we can" She's stern, bossy, and despite my being HER Luna, she puts it back on me and tugs the straps into place to secure it. I gaze at her stubborn little face and can't help but begin to smile at her, warmth overtaking me.

"You're so..... don't change." I sigh happily, ignoring the way she squints at me and then tosses her hair back like she doesn't care. I see it though, the soft little flicker in her eyes and she turns away and looks to the mountain with a nod as a way to evade the moment.

"We should go. Meadow needs us." She reminds me, avoiding any further bonding, and dodging my words. I nod, knowing she's right and give myself a two-second breather and then haul off the ground with a little help from her before I smooth my hand over my stomach to check for any kind of pain or discomfort.

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"Hold on in there, not much more and we're home free. Daddy is okay. We guys are okay.... hold tight, babies." I smile to myself, feeling Carmen's gaze but there's no hint of envy or jealousy, or even heartache. She stares clearly at my belly and a smile touches her face that chases away the pointed cold aloof that is always ever present. A hint that if she ever let someone remove that icy wall, a beautiful and warm soul exists inside. I sense only her desire to do what she said. Keep my unborn safe. The promise she made me.

I turn on my toes and go sprinting after Colton at hyperspeed, following his scent and renewed with energy and vigor with the fact our pack is restored, and my mate is back where he belongs. I know my energy will lapse again, but for now, I have his power in me too with the efforts of his healing and I can run faster than before. Once again in control, chasing vampires and kicking the a** of the right creatures instead of us.

Let's see how they fare now we ruined their plans and reunited our pack.

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I zoom past trees, skim over fallen logs and under overhanging debris, aware I'm slower once more and I tire faster, but I fight on anyway. I need to see this through and be there to lead my people home when victory is ours. I owe them so much and from what I can see as all remaining wolves head hard towards the

mountain in one wave, our numbers vast. We didn't seem to lose many to fighting our brothers. In fact, as I skim the faces around me, I can't feel the sense of loss that I did earlier, and I wonder if it was merely their pain and not death.

Not one single wolf death. We did what we set out to do. Break the spell without any losses.

Carmen mind links me, seemingly understanding why I'm looking around as we run and I blanch, my heart rising in delirious happiness because I truly thought there would be an aftermath of grief and despair when they turned found out they killed some of our own. That our victory would also be the start of mourning the losses. Instead, we just need to make sure it's the same outcome at the mountain now.

It looms up over my head like a foreboding shadow, making me aware I have never ventured this far, or come this close to this beast of a grey rock. The stench and vibrations of vampires overpowers me as I get right to the overhang where we always suspected the entrance was. I can feel them, in their droves. Moving, fighting, hissing in the depths of their caverns, and as my pack start to single file into the narrow tunnel entrance which has been ripped open wide by wolves in their fury to get inside, I push my way past and make a dash to get in ahead of the next wave.

Carmen's stuck to my side, as my personal bodyguard, my mind and focus on following my mate's scent. Like a bright shining path in the dark, I can feel him close, smell where he's been and tremble with the force of his aggression exuding through the air as he fights for his pack within the mountain. I can sense Cesar, the sub pack and Meadow too, all within these walls and doing what they do best.

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Seeing it's their Luna am*** them, some move and get out of my way, still unsure why I'm in human form, but they don't ask. They follow at speed, flanking me like an army, knowing this is where they're needed for sure.

The inner coven den is almost pitch black once I get away from the open entrance and my night vision takes a moment to kick in. I can still smell Colton in the air, even though the stench of blood and sweat and those rabid creatures overpowers my senses and use it as my guide as I feel my way along damp cold walls. I stumble on badly scr***d, and uneven, gritty floors, cursing under my breath that my footing is useless as a human. Carmen slides beside me to offer support and I cling onto her fur instead and use her as a walking aid.

It's been dug out carelessly, and makeshift, like they never really intended this to be more than a temporary lair. There's no home comforts or hints of human living, just a damp and cold cave. Like wild animals sheltering in the darkness and not creatures capable of civilization, like we are.

My eyes adjust, bringing the surrounding shapes into view and blood curling screams further up the incline, coming down cut off tunnels on either side of me fill me with dread. It's one thing to fight them out there in the open, see them

coming, and have the space around you to anticipate their attack, but another entirely to be in here, claustrophobic with poor vision and opportunity for every tunnel to be a pounce point. This is a labyrinth of cold stone and damp. Even with night vision and extreme senses, it's still a terrifying place to try and navigate and the noises echoing around confuse the mind to where battles are ensuing.

I move fast and follow the screams that are loudest, ignoring my own pounding heartbeat and shaking limbs. Sensing Colton, sensing Meadow in the air, and surprisingly I feel Sierra behind me almost as soon as I step into a wider area of open rock that cuts off in front of me into an almost cliff like drop.

Alora, I'm with you. I'm sorry I couldn't get back to you.

She's panting like she's been running hard and I'm guessing after she got free of wherever she was she came bounding back to find me and then got lost in the chaos of the broken spell. She probably heard the help cry and knew I would come this way before picking up my scent again.

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Stay close to me. I won't leave you again.

I nod, needing no explanations as I know she wouldn't have left me had she been able to control it. I saw what the battlefield was like, how chaotic it was and how badly we were struggling against them. How easy it was to separate us and lose one another. I'm hoping she sees it, feels that I'm okay and now she's here, I'm fine.

Sierra presses to my other side, so her and Carmen flank me fully, my hands skimming the fur and feeling a sense of security, despite my vulnerable state as human. At least I have my gifts back, even if they are powering on less than fifty percent of my abilities because of my babies. It's better than nothing. And now I also have my femmes, and my small entourage of pack wolves going to meet our most ruthless ahead of us. Nothing can happen to me this time. I know that I need to stay safe and that now Colton is here, I won't be in the danger I was before. I can relinquish the reigns and let my mate be everything I know he can be.

We shuffle along left, the narrow walkway away from the sheer drop and find the winding way down where all hell seems to be breaking loose. This mountain is almost hollow right in the center and all tunnels and walkways seem to wind into this one walking space which twists down to the depths below. The echoes and cries I heard all over, they are concentrated inside this cavern and flowing out in all directions.

The battle below is vicious and loud, and the flying fury of fur and pale creatures makes for an almost stormy sea like movement across the depths. I can't see who is who, but my attention is drawn up as something flies past me and crashes into the overhanging rocky ceiling above before plummeting back down in speed. It's scares the s*** out of me, my heart lurching to my throat and the three of us jump back against those behind us and inhale swiftly in perfect sync. Freezing as we stare at whatever that was and eyeing it warily.

“What the hell?” I recoil in horror as another makes a break for it and for the first time ever, I see, some of the vampires have wings. Like huge, oversized leathery bat wings and my jaw drops open.

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“Why the hell have we never seen this before, and what in the actual.....” My mind turns blank and I blink, trying to adjust to this sight and believe what I’m seeing.

They’re trying to get out, escape, but the suns up..... They don’t seem to care that getting out will be death. They know they’re losing and they’re frantic to die any other way than by our claws.

It’s a wolf coming up towards me, meeting us on our path. A familiar voice of one of our experienced sub pack sentinels, one of our warriors. One of the fog enchanted, as he follows up after another flying creature and happened to come upon us gawping upwards. He bows to me, makes it clear he’s not staying, and then proceeds past me at speed to take off towards the ceiling to catch any that go up. His smile and enjoyment at finally getting to rip these creatures apart gives me shivers, but I know most of our warriors have been waiting for this day. Ever since we moved into the shadow of these beings and had to watch our every move. Our fiercest have longed to invade this place and eliminate the threat. Even Colton, but his need to see our people safe always overrode the urge to scourge the mountain clean.

We should break through up there, let the light in. Change the game.

Carmen cuts into my shocked thoughts and grabs my hand gently with her mouth, hauling me back instead of down to follow the sentinel. It takes me a second to catch up with what she said but it’s a smart idea and I follow at speed, not caring if she just once again decided for me. Turning on our heel to trace out the steps moving skywards and Sierra and some of our pack follow me. The rest head down to help with the fight.

“Up there.” I point to the way the narrow walkway cuts off at the other side, to one going up into rock and gesture we should get as high as we can if we’re going to break some kind of vent to let the sun fry these freaks. From this angle, with all of them down below, we can kill so many with such a simple act and help our fighters below. They may be winning, but this mountain is full of these creatures and this may take hours yet to defeat them all. I know Colton, he’s come into their lair and he won’t leave until every last one is dead. He’s had too long staying away and keeping us safe, now is his opportunity to rid this place for a while and he’ll take it.

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Carmen grabs two wolves on the pa**ing, both strong sentinels from our pack, pushing them with me. Seeing as they are heading up anyway in chase of more flapping creatures and they see me and obey.

“Come with us.” I command, knowing they recognize me right away and get instant head bows as they do. I lead the way at speed as we climb higher and look for weak points with thinner rock formations around us. Look for ways to break to the outside.... Thinner patches, crevices. Tiny cracks or even tunnels formed by nature which are small. There has to be areas we can break through... I mean strength is our gift and our claws were built for this. A wolf can rip through most terrain and our ability to do it with ease and speed is incomparable to most in nature.

I point out a patch where the rocks indent away from us, and slight cracks of faint light seem to permeate on areas almost undetectable if you were not looking for them, and know we found it. A weak point where the hollow is close to the outer edge and with some effort, we can dig through. It would cast light across the center of the hollow catching all the creatures flying upwards, and hopefully flood below with enough light to help.

Even though I can't use any of my wolf gifts, Carmen takes the lead and starts digging, scr***** and hauling rubble out of a nearby crack as she turns and gets to work. Other wolves piling in see what we are doing and immediately understanding the plan, so help.

It's not unlike the forest, being up here. The sounds travelling and making my skin goosebump, my inner angst grow. When we were in throws of violence, eerie screams, and chaotic noises. Thuds, thumps, cries... ripping, screeching, smashing. The scent of blood filling the air of both Lychan and Vampire, but I know both species have healing abilities, and this isn't going to be as quick as taking down a small patrol out there in the woods. There are dozens of them in here. Maybe even hundreds.

“Alora.... Move.” The familiar voice of the witch comes at me from far behind, shocking me into a moment of disbelief and I spin to see her striding this way. A bright white light in her hand as her mode of seeing where she's going once again, and she smiles at our attempts at clawing through solid stone.

“If you want it done right... you do it yourself. When will you wolves learn, the witch is always a better option.” She smiles, that arrogant demeanor on show but I can't fault her for it. Afterall, she broke the spell and my respect for her abilities have grown by a thousand-fold. My wolves look to me and with a nod I make them clear the way and they all turn back and flank me instead.

She throws me a smug twitch of her lips and tosses her light at the wall in front of us with a simple flick of her wrist. Absolutely no effort and for a moment, I wonder what a small glow of nothing can really do for a huge expanse of mountain wall. I expected something a bit more dramatic and with a lot more vavoom. For someone so powerful, this was like tossing a match into the sea.

It's a boom of light, like a large lightbulb shorting out and we are hit with pitch darkness once more, without very much of an explosion at all. I stand looking

rather deflated as my eyes adjust and wonder what that even was, expecting more.

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The air that whips around me catches my breath so suddenly, I'm startled for a moment. An after effect, like a storm in a teacup brewing and there's a pause of inhale. Almost like a silent stillness for a second, and I realize as something grows in the air around us, I should never doubt this witch. A growing groan, an uneasy sense of atmosphere tingling around us as if I'm suddenly feeling gravity changing direction and it stirs up my instincts to be afraid.

A weird noise of shifting earth, the mountain shudders and groans again and then the full side rips out away from us with the release, like a silent blast as though a giant person grabbed a handful of rock and ripped it out. The full front before me crumbles outwards and collapses down the outside with a crescendo of noise that can be heard for miles around and echoes back on us. Birds in the distance from our newly acquired view s***ter from trees for miles of endless forest canopy and animals scurry in panic. The rubble bounces down until it meets forest and rips down trees in it's wake.

Daylight floods the space around us so that we blink to adjust, filling the cracks and the crevices and gleaming bright, illuminating all below.

"You couldn't have done that already and saved half a battle?" Carmen asks drily, c***ing an eyebrow at the witch as two equally cold and sa**y women lock eyes. A tingle of energy zapping through the air.

"I was a wee bit busy, killing witches, my pet. Do you want to add a wolf to the death toll?" Leyanne snaps right back with a salacious smile, and I wave my hands at them in a 'shhh' motion to calm the brewing hostility. My eyes now locked on the fruits of her labor.

It's with this new light I look down to see the clear way to go and realize how high we are and how narrow those walkways are. In the dark it was not so terrifyingly steep, because we couldn't see how far a fall it would be. In light it's a deep and crazy long hollow that stretches beyond the imagination, yet the dazzle still makes it all the way down from this impressive hole that is still crumbling wider from the witch's magic and tearing down the side to let more in.

The screams and burning smell of flesh, catching fire, soon fill the air with clogging thick smoke that makes us choke, and gasp, and pull back, as winged creatures crash from wall to wall in a bid to escape. Their panic is their demise, writhing in burning agony with scolding light, they fly right up into the fullest part of it and combust like a puff of dust right before our eyes. It becomes chaos and confusion, and we all pin ourselves back against the walls as the hollow fills with frantic wings and shield our faces from explosive dust particles.

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I've never seen them die this way and the howls below as many perish instantly send the ones shaded or shrouded in shadow reeling into tunnels to escape. Only more wolves await them, in every nook, due to our sheer numbers present as the entire pack have filtered in now, and their death is imminent.

I spy Colton when I look down into the drop off, standing proud in the center, light shining on his black fur as he throws his head back and howls a successful call. The shadows around him are eerie but only make it look like he's standing in a spotlight.

That long blood curling message to our pack, that we have overthrown an enemy's leader, and even if it confuses me, I still focus on what he's got. Holding up high, a dead vampire corpse in his claws before he tosses it aside and I don't hesitate in making my way down to where he is. Confused that this is a leader when I know the source should be Varro. I don't doubt his call, I just don't understand.

He isn't my gentle loving Colton at this moment. Standing huge and formidable on hind legs, towering over all around him. A sight to behold as an enraged black Lycanthrope, his eyes glowing so bright they look like flames. A battle cry in his throat and his fur caked in the blood of our enemies which just adds to his sheer warrior like power.

He's Alpha of the Santo pack, a once feared and unrivalled pack who began crumbling under Juan's reign, but has hope in a new leader. I get goosebumps staring at the king who will make our people great again and know when he's in control, there will be no stopping our people from taking back what's rightfully ours. Losing him made me realize how capable and invincible he can be, and I won't let anything take him from us again. I am wowed by his presence, pulled to him by my need to be with him once more and not at all swayed by his filthy furred body, or the pile of carca**es around his feet, that build him higher on a podium made from death.

Wolves take off after the escaping few, but I can already tell that compared to what we have seen in the forests, this mountain has way less than I anticipated and wonder where the hell they all are. The stench in here reeks of thousands of crammed vile souls, but all I see is a mere hundreds in terms of bodies s***tered all around. Not even high in that count either.

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"Where are they all?" I turn to Leyanne feeling her on my heel as we carefully descend and keep scanning where I'm stepping so I don't fall as her light once again shines the way. Carmen pushes in front of me to watch my step, while Sierra stays on our rear, both femmes close and forming a shield. Sierra seems

quiet, lost in thought and I wonder if this brings back unwanted memories of battles of old.

“It seems this mountain only held a small amount in recent days... I’m guessing Lord Varro has pulled them where he needs them, and it wasn’t here. It was half empty when we got in and made finding the witches way easier. Your Meadow, is quite the soldier.” Leyanne seems impressed by that and not at all phased by her first statements. Although I spin on her in alarm.

“And the witches, they are where?” I blink, reeling thoughts splaying out, remembering that she had to take them on alone to break the spell and as of yet I’ve only seen vampires. If they are a threat in here, I want to know about it. Will they now be something else to have a showdown with?

“Dead.... They weren’t much of a challenge. Took all seven of them to make that spell, but faced with me, and panicking, they didn’t achieve much before I disintegrated them. Such pointless wee beasts they were. Quite disappointing really.” She sounds almost guilty for a second, or maybe truly deflated, and I flash a look her way, catching an odd moment of somber I wasn’t expecting and then it’s gone. It also confirms that despite not seeing much evidence of it, she is obviously as powerful as Sierra told me. Seven witches who managed to hold so many of our pack hostage for a week, and yet she blows in and takes them out without messing up her outfit or her hair.

“I’m sorry you had to kill your own kind.” I try to console, feeling I should, but she shrugs with one shoulder. That cool demeanor back in place and that care no less expression firmly on that attractive face. She still reminds me of Carmen in a way, only brunette, with dark eyes.

“You have to weed out the bad to benefit the many sometimes. They were practicing things they have no place to mess with. They were no sisters of mine; they were something the world could do without and the high council will agree when I present them with my findings on why I rid them of an entire coven.”

She seems to want to end the conversation and moves past me fast to flash bomb a creature in the face as it stuck out its stupid head into where we are moving. So fast Carmen didn’t have time to react even though it was right at her side. It’s semi shadowy here, it obviously didn’t expect a blinding light to expand its face all over the wall in a dramatic and disgusting fashion.

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I recoil in ‘ewww’ and dodge the flopping body before I make the last speed dash down to the final floor below, skipping over and seeing even Carmen grimace with the up-close body showering she just got from its blood.

“Thanks for that!” Carmen mutters sarcastically, back at the witch and shakes herself to try and remove the worst of it. I jump back so her spray doesn’t get to me then realize it’s pretty futile. I am covered in my own blood and god knows what else, I can’t even imagine how I truly look from all angles.

"You're welcome. It's not like you could smell any worse." Leyanne bites right back and I eyeroll at the constant power struggle of personalities. Sighing at Carmen's snarling growl and push her onwards to stop them.

When we get lower, Colton is already gone and heading down tunnels in hot pursuit of what's left of the enemy. When we get to the ground floor fully, I gag on the smell down here. It's thick, vile dust, overwhelming stench, that coats every surface. The ashy remains of fried vampire and I notice the throne, crude, and carved without skill, as it sits in one corner and seems to be the one form of seating in this place. I gesture towards it and Leyanne narrows in on it too, Carmen walking over in wolf form to sniff at it and recoils as though the scent is painful.

"Covens have lords. This one was no different, but he was another halfling and your mate already took care of him. I think he was newly promoted." Leyanne points at the unbreathing evidence and I turn to the lifeless body slumped in the corner that Colton discarded. Still intact due to not being in direct light but it has no head. One sure fire way to end a vampire is to take its head clean off its shoulders and I know from experience it's Colton's preferred method. He's strong enough to do it with just a little flick of the wrists. It's also why he's covered in blood as it's probably the messiest way to kill one.

I also note how most of these vile creatures are naked and nothing like the ones we encountered in the woods who were more human than these. They are nothing compared to Darrius in any way and I wonder how many sub species these things have. I thought from what he said, there was them, and these. Yet, this is something entirely different. We have never seen them fly at all.

"These are different, and some have wings." I point out, in a questioning tone, leaning down to peer at the so-called leader, then straighten up to push it over with my foot and have a proper look. It has remnants of clothes that look like they were shredded from its body a long while ago, and all ribs and protruding bones all over as though it was malnourished. The ones we have fought were dressed and not like this, I'm sure. Well maybe, but we never saw them naked. From memory they definitely didn't seem this skinny and almost alienlike.

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Long nails, yellow and brittle looking, but fiercely sharp. Waxy white skin, covered in a soft down of ugly hairs, on arms and legs and weirdly oversized rib cages that are not in proportion to their bodies in any way. They're uglier than I thought like this. Bony, no connections to the human qualities of Darrius.

"Various degrees of DNA dilution. These are m***rels. Or as Darrius would call them, Gutter rats." Leyanne points out as Carmen and Sierra turn to human to join us. "Wings are common in pure, just not so much in rats."

"Meaning?" Carmen asks with genuine curiosity as her and Sierra find their places by my side once more and look down at the mess at our feet with pinched expressions. The smell is so bad in here it's hard to breathe properly and we all shield our faces with palms to cut out the worst of it. Not that it helps much but it's better than inhaling ashes of remains.

"Built for one purpose alone... ma** making an army. Lord Varro didn't care about the purity of their breed, or even fixing out the flaws. He wanted numbers and feral instincts. The perfect instant way to fill your ranks and create killing machines." Leyanne steps over and prods one with her foot as though checking out if it's truly dead, or god knows what witches do with morbid things like this. She's a weird one even on a good day and seems fascinated to be able to inspect so close.

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 97

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"So, not all vampires are like this... some are like that Darrius? More human like... less. Ughh." Carmen didn't get a good look at Darrius that day on the road, but I guess she saw enough to see he was more like a strong human with toned skin and normal lines of a muscular body. She didn't see his red eyes, and I doubt she saw that his fangs were more in keeping with a Hollywood heartthrob vampire than these grotesque 'Hills have eyes' freaks. These have fangs which far extend their mouths, much like the ones in the orphanage that day. While Darrius had tiny pointers that slightly showed between his lips. I wonder if his can extend then shake it out of my head.

"These are not vampires... they're halflings. Don't confuse the two, especially not within hearing of an actual Vampire. It's the worst of insults. I doubt you have battled a real one in your entire existence." Leyanne wanders around, stepping over them and surveys the damage around her with literally no expression or care in the world. She's definitely not squeamish and the smell seems to have no effect on her, given I guess our sense of smell is way more fine tuned than hers. "The pure bloods haven't lifted a finger to aid these wars in over five thousand years. Lord Varro has only ever used these rejects... that were once human. As diluted and flawed as you can get and nothing at all like what I know the vampires to be." Leyanne leans down and touches the naked foot of the dead master near her and then rubs her fingers together like she's testing something. I grimace at the fact she touched it and has no way of washing her hands. "He's damp and cold and feels like pig skin. I'm guessing it's a sixth or seventh dilution of genuine vampire DNA. They get worse the more they create from one another. It's no wonder they are no match for wolves. They're probably closer to human in terms of abilities, besides wings." She sighs, seemingly irritated by this fact.

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"You're saying true bloods are....? Stronger? Faster?" Sierra asks but doesn't finish as her words tail off. I frown, looking from her, to it, and back again. No longer doubting what Darrius said in the car and trying to remember what he told me.

"Put it this way. If the true bloods were the ones to stand up and take on the war... your species for the second time in history would almost be extinct. These don't have their gifts... where do you think yours comes from, Luna. Your strength, your power.... Did you never wonder why it in itself was stronger than these creatures you fought for months." Leyanne walks over the mess and comes

back to my side, making me aware of the complete lack of wolves in this space as we hear the faint noises moving away. They are spreading out around the tunnels to catch the last of them and I can still sense my mate within these rocks. Somewhere fighting to end this battle. Being his capable self, while I stand here suddenly secure and no longer worried at all about our victory. Colton has always been invincible.

"I just thought my wolf DNA made it so." I shrug, only half invested while I link him to feel his presence, but then leave him be in case he's busy. Just feeling him is enough and his return second of connection tells me he felt me too. We do this sometimes, connect but don't talk, just to touch base and say 'I'm okay' and 'I feel you'. I smile, instantly warmed by the knowledge he's really truly with me again. One word and he would appear, like he always does. I leave him alone, my silence telling him to do what he's doing, and I'll be fine wherever I am. No doubt his senses tell him exactly where I am, and he will have had someone link him my whereabouts. I know Meadow and the sub pack are with him, they won't be far from his side. He's with the most competent and is as safe as I am.

Leyanne laughs, breaking into my thoughts as though I'm the most amusing thing she has never known. Pulling my brain back into our conversation and I sense Carmen bristle with hostility that this b**** dared to mock her Luna. I pat Carmen's hand and pull her arm into mine to make her calm down. Sensing her softening but she stays put, and her glare stays stuck on Leyanne's face.

"No. Your gifts come from the source and trust me, as strong as you seem, you are way down the ranks of what a true blood can do. Darrius for example... he's a Shadow Knight, actually the high commander of the Shadow Knights. One of the most ruthless hunting machines in existence by any species standards. Him alone, could take down maybe twenty of yours by himself, without breaking a sweat or wrinkling his impressively tailored wardrobe. Even if your alpha was one of them. So, it's a good thing, he doesn't waste his time chasing wolves." Leyanne chuckles, a slight sense of admiration for that creature. "Probably also one of the most indifferent and cold b*****s you will ever meet, who has no time for other people's drama. I sort of admire him."

The silence from the three of us as this sinks in makes it clear she has shocked us, and she pats me on the shoulder with a rea**uring smile. I swallow with a loud gulp, a little torn with this insight into what half my bloodline is. Or why she even likes him.

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I knew Darrius gave off weird vibes, but I didn't think he was this impressive. We have little suggestions of Shadow Knights in the grimoire library, but the facts are so few and far between. Hard to really say if they were myth or real, or just scarem***ering from witches who wanted us to avoid all vampires. What we did read had made them seem like Devils on earth and untouchable by any species. If this is true, and they do in fact exist, that means Vampires still sit on top of the food chain am*** all of us. Wolves always thought themselves to hold that t**le, but then our history books aren't really honest.

“The lords and the coven dwellers with pure blood.... they stay away from any kind of people. They like their existence quiet, and calm, and as long as their needs are met, they don't care what goes on in the outside world. Their a species who have been around since time began. There's a reason wolves' dwell in the human world, never far from them, even if you try to avoid them in life. It's the only way your kind felt safe to repopulate after the pure bloods left only a handful of you alive. That long lost hatred of the species, they avenged what they wanted to avenge. Everything since has been halflings created for personal vendettas by rogue lords like Varro.”

We all stare at her for a long moment in silence as it sinks in, what she said, and it makes sense. All our lives, despite avoidance with humans, wolves populate near them, and interact when we have to. We always find packs not far from human civilizations, yet no one has ever questioned it or looked into the past to find out why. There are plenty places in the world where we could live away from them, yet we choose not to. It gives truth to what she says.

“That's why you said I can end it. Because the high lord, he can recall Varro and pull him to heel. Finally put this to bed.” I add in, pulling the conversation to something more productive as we stand in this echoey place. It sends shivers down my spine being here, but I feel for now, it's the safest place. While our pack scourge the rest of the mountain and catch their last drops of these m***rel's blood. They can't go out, so they're cornered and being wiped out.

“Yes. Of course, until the next lord finds reason to hate you. I'm sure with your species popularity skills, it'll happen eventually. But Varro is next in line to rule, so maybe you might have peace for a couple of thousands of years once he puts his own vendetta to bed.” Leyanne shrugs and dusts off her dress, fixing her long black cloak and seems unfazed about any of this. I guess living for three thousand years means, there's nothing she hasn't seen before.

“That would be nice. Maybe we might have a chance at something normal for a while.” Carmen chips in and nudges me when returning figures draw our attention. We sense them, tingle with their presence and a wide smile moves across my face as my mate's aura looms back in on me.

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Wolves are pacing back in, smeared in blood and remains and I know without asking, because I can feel it, that all the vampires are dead. All my senses, my connections to these creatures, they can already tell me not one single heartbeat remains.

It's over.... Really over, for us, here right now.

We won and our mountain is now clear of the enemy at last.

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 98

/ Awakening- Following Fate (Book 2) By L. T. Marshall
Lorey, what in the hell is going on?

Colton walks to me in the open hall space and closes the gap between us, pulling me to him and focusing full back on me. Finally looking for answers now he's done what was needed and I catch sight of Meadow and Cesar turning human and embracing several feet behind him. My heart happy with the sight of her, okay, and reunited with her mate. My heart swells to bursting and I can finally feel at peace, feeling that my pack are all intact and safe. My gut confirming it.

Colton pulls me to him as he stays in wolf, linking me mentally and cradles my face in his hand, careful not to hurt me with his claws. Being so gentle it just breaks down my last defenses and despite his filthiness, I curl against him and hold on tight. Embracing one another for a moment, feeling the high rate of his wolf heart and the excessive heat coming from this mountain of a body. He pulls me backwards to look at him and I just gaze adoringly, drinking him in, aching all over with the disbelief that we did it and he's here. This seems like a dream and I bask in the happiness of his touch, never wanting this feeling to be lost to me again. Even in wolf form, I love him so much.

I know the only way to get him up to speed and stop questing is the one way he's going hate himself for seeing, but I can't put it all into words. And I know the quickest way to get out of this hellhole and leave, is to explain and go home. Already wolves are evacuating from every tunnel and clearing the space around us in a bid to leave behind the mess we made here.

Colton notices his mom and his obvious shock startles her. She smiles and shrugs then darts off towards Carmen's side as though to avoid being scolded by her own son, and he turns back to me, locking amber eyes on my green and I sigh, knowing it's the only way.

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Meadow throws me a look and then gestures Carmen and Sierra to her side, pulling them with her and towards the narrow walkway and gesturing Leyanne too. I think she knows I need Colton alone for a moment because he's not going to take this well at all. There's so much I know he will explode over, and so much he will feel is all his fault. I'm expecting him to react in a million ways all at once.

I sigh, swallow nervously because I don't want any of this to hurt him, locking my eyes on amber fire in black fur and smile softly. I rub my fingers through the softest patch on his chest before sliding up with a stretch, despite his crouching, to meet that huge head and bypa** terrifying teeth in his impressive jaw. One arm sliding halfway around that neck, so I struggle to meet his height, but he leans further and kneels down to me. I can tell he's too riled to turn human and that's why he hasn't turned. He needs to be calmer, to let the best let go.

I lift my fingers to his temple, finding the magic spot and brace myself for what's to come. My nerves sizzling in anticipation and my heart stands pounding against my ribcage again. Blood running cold and I swallow loudly.

I close my eyes; focus on the section of time he missed and transfer the memories as quickly as I can so it will pain me less about doing it. From the second we parted after Tawna's death, until now, and hold my breath knowing that little revelation in there, standing out am*** all the rest, will be the one which I want the reaction for the most.

It takes only a few long seconds before he finally leans away, and I break the contact and stare at him to watch as it all registers on his face. Letting go of him to stop myself stretching so much and lean back on my own feet to give him a moment. It seems the shock of learning, kills his wolf fury in one swoop as he transforms and shrinks to an impressively tall human form. His amber eyes fade to brown, his face back to what I love most, and his eyes are rooted on my face in utter disbelief. His posture stiff and he doesn't say anything, just stares at me with confusion and pain etched all over him.

I can almost decipher which memory is being churned over by the expression of shock, regret, guilt, anger, shock again, and then a soft disbelief and an open gasp before his face crumbles back to devastated regret. A million emotions in one fast change and it's like I experienced this whole week all over again just by feeling him.

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"I..... we're.... you..." he's too overcome to form words and clutches my hand tightly, pulling it first to his cheek then to his lips before hauling me into his arms and squeezing me half to death. It's an instinctive reaction born of shock, guilt and maybe a little surprise. His emotions are all over the place and tinge mine too, and I start to mist over with the intensity of so much all at once. It's heavy, yet dizzying, sore, yet happy. He's clawing for sanity and seems to be growing through the thoughts all over again to see it all to be sure.

"We need to get the pack home and talk... all of us. This isn't the place." I utter softly, caressing his cheek and inhaling him to drown out the smell of what's around us. I can sense his indecision, his lull of logical thought as he swallows this all down. Colton's trying to process but he's unable to when it's so much all at once and all he's doing is clinging to me like I might implode if he let's go. His breathing heavy by my air and as much as I could stay this way forever after yearning for him for endless days, I really don't want to stay here.

Colton continues to hold onto me, silent and pondering before he scoops me into his arms like a bride and starts carrying me towards the path that leads up and out into the woods. His face says it all, that blank expression yet it doesn't shield the war in his eyes and his lack of verbal response means he just can't right now.

I know my mate too well and his guilt will be taking hold over everything else, even the news that I want him to acknowledge. That we're pregnant, yet I know not to be hurt by him saying nothing. I can see it in his face, feel it seeping from him. My boy's in shock and his instinct to take me home where it's warm and safe is overriding everything else.

I curl up against him, sliding my arms around his neck and pull myself up to his jaw to inhale him and cuddle in. He's stiff, solemn faced and giving out all kinds

of weird vibes as he processes the memories, I gave him. Set on a goal – getting us out of here as we follow the last signs of our pack mates. He’s closing me out to save me from being emotionally ambushed and I don’t like it at all. The ebbing away as he closes back our link and doing what Colton does when he wants to protect me from his pain, his suffering. He cuts the bond as much as he can and tries to bear it alone.

“Say something” I nudge and tense when his jaw twitches. I expected some kind of outward verbal of some kind and not this weird silent thing he’s doing. It’s unnerving me that he isn’t reacting in quite the way I expected.

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“I’m sorry, baby..... I’m so f***ing sorry.” He stops dropping me to my feet and hauls me bodily against him, pulling me in so hard he almost wounds me and wraps me up in his arms tucking me face under his chin and squeezing. His voice breaks as a torrent of pent-up emotion breaks and I feel a tear p** form his cheek to mien that almost breaks me. “I could have killed you... I almost..... the doctor that’s the first port of call. To get you checked, then checked. You should never have been in this fight, not pregnant, Lorey... Do you realize how stupid that was. How close to dying you were?” He pulls back. His tone from soft and sorrowful, to instant rage as his last words are delivered loudly, with aggression and I flinch in reaction.

Okay anger I didn’t expect and as he lets me go and picks me up again because I am so obviously not allowed to walk. He furrows his brow, blinks away the show of tears and that determined but pissed as hell expression covers his face once more. He bites on his lower lip to curb his urge to scold me and instead starts stomping through the forest, turning semi wolf to make it less painful on his human skin to be naked. His emotions are strong, the wave of fury and fire coursing through because he’s mad as hell for many things, but mostly because I put myself in danger for him. In so many ways.

“I had no choice...I need to lead.” I whimper softly, not wanting our reunion to be like this and recoil when he snaps back.

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 99

[/ Awakening- Following Fate \(Book 2\) By L. T. Marshall](#)

“No you f***ing didn’t. That’s what Meadow is there for when I’m not. She’s my beta...the one who deals with war and battle. You’re the Luna, you’re my f***ing life, Lorey.... I don’t care what is expected of a Luna, it doesn’t count when it comes to you. You always put your safety first, over everything you hear me...That’s a f***ing order!” The biting attitude and he actually alpha tones me in his last two sentences and enrages me on all kinds of levels. He swore he would never ever alpha tone me again as long as we lived, because he knows how much I hate his use of it over my free will. The angry growl he exudes and yep, he is really pissed about all of this despite the fact we just saved his a** and broke a spell. “If anything has happened to those two babies. I’ll never forgive myself!”

His last words tear me open inside, dampening my own growing rage as it sizzles into nothing like water on hot coals. I lift myself back to his face and pull his jaw with clasped hands to look at me. Pulling his eyes to mine even though he tries to fight me at first, but then relents when he catches my gentle expression and the misting of my eyes at his being so mad.

"I had to bring you home, or else those two babies were not going to have a father...and I wasn't about to leave you out here. I couldn't live without you." I try softly, attempting to soothe him with my obvious devotion, but he squints his eyes and turns away from me. His jaw clenching, showing he's still highly emotional and not really in the soft lovey mode of communication. My sweet talking never works when he's in pig headed and overprotective mode.

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"Your life trumps everything. Your safety comes first. I can't believe my mom even allowed you to do this, what the hell was she thinking?" he rages out loud, throwing out a Colton tantrum into the air around us. Stamping across the foliage like a bad mooded bear and I close my mouth and cling on in the hopes the walk home will help him vent a little.

"That my daughter was more capable than you give her credit for!" Sierra's voice cuts in, almost making Colton drop me as he realizes she's still wandering around here without an e***** but walking along beside him inside this retched forest. She has dodged Meadow and carmen and found her way back to us and probably has Carmen going mad with looking.

"Don't even, Mom. You don't know what you missed back there when you lost her. Jesus Christ, I go mentally off the charts for a week and you two start running around the forest taking on vampires! What the hell, mom? The two most important people in my life, and you're out here acting like all this is a walk in the park and neither have any chance of being hurt." He shouts at her too, and I flinch and curl up into a tight ball in his arms. He never raises his voice to Sierra, ever, in the whole time I have loved him and yet here he is, scolding her like she's another unruly pack member and not the Rema. I squirm to get loose but the death glare he snaps on my face tells me to stay still and let him carry me all the way home. He's not to be screwed with in this mood.

"I know this may be really hard to comprehend Cole, but I'm your mother, and I was doing far more dangerous things before you were born or old enough to lead a pack. I can hold my own, and your mate...the fates wouldn't give you someone who wasn't able to fend for herself. She made it out, didn't she? She's here, unharmed, and so are your children." Sierra pushes us out onto a well-worn path that leads back to the homestead that I guess the vampires used and we catch sight of others in the woods heading home too. Some trying not to eavesdrop, but I guess the alpha going at his mom and mate are something worthy of listening to. It doesn't happen ...ever.

We make our way into the sunny clearing of freedom and stench free air, inhaling to clear our nostrils and Sierra darts fast to wipe her blood-soaked hands on the gra** by the opening of the forest canopy where light becomes bright enough to see. "God their blood is disgusting. Sticky and ughh." She mutters

absentmindedly and I tense as my mate's body gets a degree stiffer. His mood inching higher. I swallow down the inner angst that I know he's not even close to being done.

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Colton looks even more unamused if that was possible and then shakes his head, hauling me higher in his arms so he pulls my face into his neck and almost crushes my body into a tight grip that has me clinging on for dear life. He turns to look down on me and I blink with a hopeful look of innocence. His eyes amber once more and it's clear I'm not winning with loving looks or sweet smiles.

"You two... vampire blood, battles, road trips and f***ing witches. Don't bet on getting outside of the stead any time soon, or ever again... not happening. Letting you out of your rooms for the next decade, not likely. And letting you have any say in what we do concerning future attacks... don't bet on it. House arrest, grounded, locked up.... whatever you want to call it. I am drawing a f***ing line." He grinds out through clenched teeth in a low and hostile, hoarse tone, Eye's burning in rage as he zones on mine and I flinch and look away from the rage I see there. Maybe mind linking wasn't the best way to explain and I might have had an easier time omitting some details from this back story.

He's in full on protector mode and I can't really say I'm mad about it, even if he has me trembling under his fury and feeling apprehensive about getting home to be alone. It's kind of a relief to not make those decisions or have to think about leaving my bedroom ever again.

I mean I'm pregnant, I'll happily stay in bed for the foreseeable future while groveling for his forgiveness. I can sleep as long as I like and not worry about the safety of my pack. My mate is home, well almost, I mean we still have to walk the several miles to get there, but for right now, the danger has been annihilated.

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He won't be mad at me forever. Once he calms down, and lets it all sink in and ensures the pack really is okay and that I'm unharmed and our babies are healthy... Maybe in like, a month, he'll finally stop growling at me. Maybe.

I didn't fall in love with just gentle Colton, but this stubborn, aggressive, crazy protector, who is physically hauling my a** home and looks like he might be about to eat me. That right there, is the guy who makes me feel the safest. I just hope he's hungry and tired because I could use food and sleep.

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 100

[/ Awakening- Following Fate \(Book 2\) By L. T. Marshall](#)

The homestead is eerily silent since we returned. There's been a strange atmosphere in the whole Homestead and even the village out back seems still

and devoid of noise. Everyone is home licking their wounds, absorbing the reality of what we just did and went through, and homes are filled with warm reunions and an aura of hope. The air is lighter, brighter and the fog is completely gone. It feels like something huge is now settling to dust yet spirits are high despite the need for peace.

Colton is sat on the bed drying his hair after the third shower he took to rid himself of a weeklong buildup of debris, grime, and of course, Vampire blood. Something he does when he needs to think for a while, and I know he probably wanted space from me to let the remainder of his anger fizzle a little. Even though now, I'm laid on the bed behind him and he seems so much calmer than before.

I'm resting after a soak in the tub in our other bathroom where I took time to rid myself of all the vileness of our hectic adventure. It was weird taking time apart to get clean, but he's been reserved since we came home, simmering from anger to sadness and a lot of up and down mood swings. I know he's probably going through every memory a dozen times to really take in the fact he lost days of his life, when to him it was seconds of a blink of an eye. I know he's processing and thinking it all through and I'm waiting for him to come out of his head before I approach him again

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He stayed close, even though he needed space and he hasn't been cold or anywhere near as mad as he was on the walk home, but I can tell he still has so much brewing and for my own sanity I am leaving him be.

Meadow is avoiding him too as the two of them are no longer talking. On returning home they had a huge showdown in the study, venting, arguing, stubborn meeting fire, and I know it was his way of letting everything out. His self-guilt, his feelings of failure and the knowledge of everything we have done without him here to protect us.

I know that seeing how he hurt me is killing him, his obvious distress and pain is overwhelming me, no matter how hard I try to rea**ure him that he couldn't control what happened. He hasn't said much about my pregnancy since things diffused again, but I guess given everything he has to process that maybe he doesn't know how to react. I mean what could he say after the doctor checked me over and said I was perfectly fine. He looked relieved, held my hand, and then silently brought me up here to clean up and rest, making sure I was brought food even if he was still inwardly raging my way.

It's hardly great timing and with my abilities held back and making me vulnerable, it only adds to his worry that I might get hurt or that worse could have happened out there. I get why he's being like this, I do, but it has me so on edge and really not how I thought he would be when I got him back. I guess knowing just how overprotective and a*** he is about my always being safe and pampered is confirmed with how much sulking he's doing and how much he yelled at his Mom and Meadow. Colton has always been one to aggressively lash out when he was in the most emotional turmoil, even my way and now he's brooding. I hope it

doesn't last long given how much I just want to curl up and be like we were before any of this happened.

I know him only too well, and as I watch that muscular body, now in sweats and fresh as a daisy despite being t*****, I can still see how tight and rigid his muscles are. Carrying his tension and stress and I want so badly to smooth them out and roll up in his arms to relieve him. He's avoiding touch too, to punish me for putting myself in danger, lugging my a** to another state, and heading a war against our own warriors. I'm majorly in the doghouse even though he did admit out there that the spell being broken wouldn't have come about any other way.

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Every one of the sub pack have gone to their rooms to clean up, after a brief emotional reunion downstairs too. Now they've gone to eat and rest before the arranged grand hall meeting where Colton intends to debrief the pack and tell them what happens now. Time out is where we are at and then we come together to talk about the future of the pack and the possibility this might be nearing the end of the Vampire battles. There's just so much.

"You're never this quiet for this long, you're scaring me." I finally break when he rests back on the edge of the bed away from me, my nerves and anxiety too much to bare anymore. I lift my foot and nudge him gently in the b***, pulling his attention back to me with a coy smile and a look on my face that I hope tugs at his heart strings. Full on puppy dog eyes and pouty lips because he's being so distant and quiet, and I don't like it one bit.

He turns and looks at me for a moment, making me hold my breath and I tense, wondering what's to come next, but he sighs, and I find myself doing it with him. A sense of letting go in the air as his emotions finally merge with mine and some of that wall comes down a little, making me relax a touch. He pulls himself up and instantly crawls up the bed and lies down beside me, making the mattress dip so I roll towards him.

Stretching out to meet my position, he puts his palm on my abdomen gently, a stillness to his manner and I hold still and wait for him to make the moves, because I'm so unsure on how he'll react. His eyes move to where he's holding and yet his face is so hard to read and he feels me looking at him and avoids my eye contact. He pushes his face towards me, ducking down so I can't see him, nuzzling in against my shoulder as his breath plays softly over the skin on show from my light nightdress. His presence alone warms me to my core and calms some of my inner anxiety, sinking against him and exhaling heavily, even though I know he's unwilling to fully uncurl.

"There's a lot..... My heads a little fried. I'm also sort of shellshocked about this." he gazes at my stomach and blinks back the instant damp sheen on his eyes and exhales heavily once more. My heart skipping a beat or two with the slightest worry that maybe babies are not something he's actually happy about and that's why he's being evasive and strange. We have never really talked about it and we were using precautions to avoid exactly this.

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My heart flutters with the very real possibility that this isn't just down to his guilt gnawing at his soul, but the fact he's going to be a father and maybe it was never in the plan for him. I swallow heavily and try not to dwell on the slight chance, he's devastated about it.