

# Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall

## Chapter 10

"Right. We see what's up, then we figure out our next move. I need to patrol the village and see if we can squeeze more space out of the building works for those we've settled in the house, today. We need to keep them moving out so we can accommodate the incoming, for now. There are still three times as many wolves at the mountain than we have here.... We need to really think about this. We're at capacity almost and from what you said, Carmen thinks more will run soon." Colton stands and makes it clear he's dismissing the sub pack, ending this conversation for the time being, as though they are all somehow agreeing to leave this as is, they get up to move. I linger, waiting for Colton as they nod their respect and leave in an almost single file until only Meadow trails behind.

"I know you don't want to fight our people again. Or him. I know how much it hurt to have to do that.... But sometimes, Hermano, you have to do horrible things for the greater good." She pats him on the shoulder, rubbing his clavicle with her thumb for a second before kissing me on the cheek feather soft, and departs with a sad smile. We watch her go before Colton turns his attention to me fully.

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"She's right... I don't want to fight my people again. It was hell to do it once, I can't even get my head around doing it again." Colton breathes out when we are alone and his despair washes over me instantly, tainting the air I inhale. Always at the heart of his decisions are his pack, even the ones that are not technically ours. My heart bleeds for him, a tight heavy pain that constricts my ribs, because I understand. I don't want to hurt our people any more than he does. Most of them never did anything to deserve this.

"You heard what they said.... the people are turning. The memory being shared. I don't think Juan has the command to make them fight like he did. Only his loyal would take up arms and they're a lost cause anyway. When you take down the king you have to take down his circle of trust, or you leave betrayal as an opportunity. Didn't you learn anything from the history teachers." I nudge him lightly with my shoulder against his and he relaxes a little, that cute boy half smile coming my way as my words amuse him.

"How did I get so lucky in finding a mate who's beautiful and smart.... You make every day easier; you know that?" Colton leans in and brushes a kiss across my lips, warmly soft and yet he still ignites b\*\*\*erflies; lingering a moment to rub his nose against mine and my insides melt and combust all at the same time. It never ceases to amaze me how responsive I am to his touch and I hope it never stops being this way. Six months on and he still gives me fireworks.

"The fates knew you needed someone to keep you in hand!" I giggle, running my fingers over that squared off clean shaven jawline and melt a little when he smiles, all full-on dazzling dreamy.

"Really? Keep me in hand... I think that's a little backwards. I most definitely run dampener on your temper sometimes, baby. My feisty headstrong Luna." He kisses me again and I can't say that I can argue with that, losing myself in the pressing of his lips as he lingers longer than the last one. Colton draws back without pushing it further and fixes a serious look on me.

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"Are you really not okay with Carmen being here?" There's a serious glimpse of unease in his eye and I exhale breathily, making a show of sighing dramatically and shrug. An inner war cascading around and green-eyed jealousy showing face as I try to rationalize my feelings.

"I don't know. I know she can't come between us; I know you don't have feelings for her.... It's just .... It was a time that s\*\*\*ed, and she was a major part of it. Maybe I need to get used to her being here. I know I have nothing to worry about at all, that she can't do anything to hurt us, to separate us. She won't be half the b\*\*\*\* now that I'm Luna and she knows her place.... and the consequences for disrespecting me." I growl lightly with the last six words, venom infused in the real threat I put out there and Colton chuckles at my show of fierce.

"Baby, that temper, ouch." He touches me and makes a mock sizzle noise before blowing his fingers dramatically. It does nothing to dampen my fury.

"Well, she better take note, because I will tear her a new one if she annoys me." I smirk, simmering, and Colton holds up mock defensive palms. His eyes alight with sudden laughter, seeing as his everyday hobby is to tease and taunt me and it always brings back his sunnier side.

"Scary! You're cute when you're a little feral. Wanna make out?" Colton disarms me with his humor and playfulness, a wink, and aims a grab on me that bursts the mood completely and gets me giggling. He pins me down on the podium, flipping me onto my back so he can lay on top of me and starts nibbling on my neck and jawline, heading for my face as I squeal and fight him with futility. It's hopeless as he's stronger, faster, and completely relentless when he wants to be, plus he weighs twice what I do. I was never a match in human form for this heavy, solid, Latino lover.

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"Do you ever manage just one hour without needing to molest me?" I bat his face away as he goes in for a kiss and then give up completely and kiss him instead with a chaste peck to cool his jets. Pressing face to face and smiling as our lips collide. He grins despite being joined at the mouth and chuckles.

"Hour? I can't manage ten minutes, baby."

## Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 11

Colton is preoccupied most of the day with overseeing the new buildings, checking in with the sentinels on patrol and keeping himself busy. We have fallen into a routine of doing what we need to do separate first thing in the day and gravitating back together by lunch, or after, to do things together. Today was exceptionally busy I guess as I had lunch with Sierra, like we always do, and then checked in on the school and some of the smaller workshops without laying eyes on him once.

The wolves have started getting life back on track again. With the kitchens being used as both a mess canteen and a bakery to provide for the village, we have started to bring in some animals to graze on the surrounding lands to fill our meat, egg, and dairy needs, although occasionally vampires kill a few. We have managed to get them within the boundary for nightfall most of the time, but animals like to wander.

In the evening the school is used to run arts and crafts workshops, drama, and other small hobby interests to keep the people occupied. They know they can't leave the boundaries if they want to stay safe and many have adapted to small town living pretty smoothly. I would say that despite the constant threat from our fanged neighbors, we have somehow created an almost peaceful existence and the rune boundary enables us to sleep well without fear of invasion. We're in a safety bubble where nothing can penetrate and we're so much luckier than surrounding packs for it.

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At the mountain we had free reign of not only the vast space, the valley but also the surrounding human towns and all beyond, there was never need for this kind of prison like existence. So it's been an adjustment for many, especially those Santos who did have a life, work, and school, in the human world and now are confined to our peaceful bubble. I have to say there hasn't been many complaints and they all just try to get on without fuss. Most are just grateful to Colton for bringing them somewhere safe and happy to live out the days.

We try to keep this as safe a haven as we can and keep disruption to a minimal so the young ones and the elders can have a trauma free existence. In the fight at the mountain, we maybe gained several of the fiercest sub packs, but we also gained the land loving peaceful families, lots of femmes and children. So the majority of our numbers are those who want to spend their days in quiet living and never face vampires. Those ones wouldn't know how to fight unless their lives depended on it and even then, I don't rate their odds highly. Much like my family, they are farmers, not warriors.

Our sentinels are all sub packs with battle experience and Juan lost some of his best who followed and respect Colton. He made a mistake dismissing Colton's right as alpha that day, as those governed by our laws and pride in the pack, the strongest, were those who followed him. They provide our security and without them I don't think we would be half as capable at dealing with our enemies swiftly.

I cross the open gravel drive towards the tree line when I come back from the village rounds to oversee the details. I do this sometimes to see if I can feel

anything out there, sometimes to flex my gifts a little and blow off some steam from days of not using my abilities. I feel like since becoming Luna, I have better control of them, yet sometimes, less need of them. I'm so bubble wrapped by Colton sometimes that having gifts seems a waste as he's Mr protective, and over pampering, and I get little chance to use them.

I've fought the vampires with Colton by my side multiple times in six months and I have to say that not using my gifts is also a little down to me. We've killed many of their kind and each time it felt awful. I can't explain, like even though I know it was us or them, and they are the enemy, somehow it was wrong deep down inside of me. Maybe it's that part of me is Vampire and I somehow connect with them on a weird psychic level, but every death has weighed on me heavily since we took them down and I can still recall the many faces and smells of these creatures that died by my hand.

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As opponents they are not equally matched to Lychens. On their side they have speed, some strength, and can be vicious. I was shocked to find most vamps possess very little in the way of unique gifts like we do, in fact barely any at all. Only their purest, oldest, seem to possess abilities like mine and with their own hierarchy they never come out to use them. Or show face. That means every Vamp we have come up against has been easy to take down with little effort. I always thought they would pose a bigger threat but maybe they have vast numbers and in a battle between two species, in all our glory, maybe they would be deadlier. Outnumbering us. Once they realized we had counteracted their weapon with our own frequency and stayed within our border to ensure it, they have been less eager to try and invade. It sort of hints at the fact that they know they are the weaker of our two kinds. It makes no sense to me why they still pursue a war.

It's no wonder they have come to the witches then to try and get a level playing field. Wolf on Vamp sways to our side more than theirs in every scenario, and even with our lesser population, we have been slaying them anytime they try to come at us. No match at all. Now they have witches in their midst though I have no idea what that will do or even means. I know very little about witches and magic, in fact, only what I have seen from Sierra and Colton and neither are purebreds. They lean heavily to wolf in daily life and only have their gifts as add ons rather than their sole being. I haven't ever met any real pure witch before.

I stand on the edge of the gravel, facing the dark succulent tree line of our natural wall and spread my hands out, watching the sway of the trees as I move them from right to left softly, and then gently back as I push them out. My gifts are like breathing nowadays and I'm still discovering my limits every day. The absorption side of me is something I never really need to tap into, not when my telekinesis is strong enough to disable most things, push out of my path, or create a short-lived protection bubble around me if needs be. This however is almost therapeutic, manipulating my environment which somehow frees my mind and helps me relax. Watching the waving of the trees under my command helps ease the tension from my shoulders as I make them dance for me in the afternoon breeze. The rustle so subtle and yet calming as it surrounds me and drums out the noises of the village in the near distance.

Colton devised a way to first combat the noise weapon when we first started getting invasions of Vamps and they disabled us when we chased them out. He would cover my ears and block out the sound so I could use my gifts to build an eternal ball of energy. Then much like a sonic boom I would let rip, exploding outwards and it knocked out every device in a 5-mile radius, thus rendering their weapon useless as long as I was with my pack or until they got it running again and we had to repeat. Since the Doc came up with the alter frequency though, even that is used less. The Vampires abandoned their weapon as t was pretty much useless against us and I know Juan has something similar at the Mountain to deter them there.

I watch as the ripples through the trees and foliage move in satisfying patterns with every turn and twist of my hand, sighing loudly that it's become this easy, so second nature, and doesn't thrill me like it did in the beginning of honing my gifts. The downside to having them is the ability to feel other's emotions, beyond Colton. Whether I want to or not and that too is heightened in the past few months so that I constantly have to dampen it down. I hate feeling what anyone near me feels, just form being within ten feet. Unlike when Colton and I share moods, and emotions, it feels more invasive somehow, but it helps me deal with my people. Feeling when they are hurt or sad, or afraid, and I am able to put them at ease or help in some small way. It's like being psychic in a way.

## Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 12

"Who knew you would turn out to be this gifted?" the familiar snooty female voice behind me startles out of my absentminded manipulation of the trees and I turn in surprise, bristling slightly, to face Carmen as she stands behind me. Hands on her hip as she stares at the forest over my head and seems almost impressed for a moment. I was so engrossed and honed in on what I was doing that I neither felt her or sensed her which I guess is not a good thing. I tune in on her and sense her tension, locking my eye on her pale blues as she hesitates and looks away submissively.

I experience a ripple of satisfaction and a small glow of smugness that at least in six months she has learned who not to mess with. The tables are turned and now I am no longer fading in her shadow. I'm a force to reckon with now.

"Yup, who knew?" I respond drily, hostility br\*\*\*\*\* and unsure why she seems to have sought me out. Or if she has just wandered here and accidently bumped into me.

It's rare I get any time alone, and the front entryway to the homestead is usually my go to for some head space, as no one but the patrols venture out here normally. The village is out back, sheltered in the homestead shadow, and where all life and soul thrives. I focus my full blank attention on her sharp and pointed but annoyingly pretty face, hoping for intimidation and a huge flashing 'back off' vibe. I am in no mood for her and the bubbling green eyed me is in there trying to slither up and slap her down. Her fair hair shields half her delicate face as she moves her hands to cross over her ample bust on that slender figure and I

honestly hate the fact she is actually attractive as a femme. At least I can see what Colton dated her for.

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"Look.... I know you and I have had our ups and downs. I just wanted to say that I won't cause any problems. I know how things are. You're mates, it's done. I'm just another femme from the pack now, and I respect your position as Luna. I'm sorry for everything before. I just want a calmer life and no drama, and I don't intend to create any." Carmen lowers her eyes and nods, to show her submission, her posture loosening as though trying to act like she isn't as stiff and stressed as I can feel, and I frown at her warily. My gut tightening in knots because this is the last wolf on the planet I would ever willingly shake hands with. Well, besides Juan!

"Are you being nice because you're afraid of what I'll do if you disrespect me, or because you have actually realized what a b\*\*\*\* you were to me?" Direct and blunt, to match my mood. No attempt at being hospitable when really, she doesn't deserve it at all. I know I don't have to be civil to her if I don't want to be, there are no rules saying a Luna has to love all. She's staying with my pack, but it doesn't mean I have to like her, and it's not like anyone will challenge me on my coldness. She deserves way more than a moody Alora!

"A little bit of both, I guess. I'm not suggesting we become best friends, I'm just saying.... I'm thankful you let me in and didn't turn us away, and I don't intend to give you reason to be sent back to the mountain. The past is the past, I'm not proud but you have to understand how heartbroken I was. I've had time to let it go." She turns her face back to me, no hint of deviousness in those pale almond shaped eyes, Her cheeks are naturally rosy as though she's blushing, or seething inwardly, and yet there's not a hint of malice or bad feeling coming from her at all. I think she's being honest.

I don't want to dwell of any of the before, I turn my face away and shrug, indicating I don't want to dwell on it either or talk it out with her. It was another time, feels like a lifetime ago and I don't want to revisit old hurts where Colton is concerned. We're happy now, we're together, that's all that matters. She just needs to stay on her own side of the line and leave us on ours.

"So what motivated it? Weren't you a sworn stayer in Juan's army?" I ask b\*\*\*\*ily, not sure I like Carmen's attempts at playing nice when I don't trust her at all. Not softening in the slightest, even with apologies and oaths to play nice.

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"I was always going to follow Colton; I was there that day and saw him defeat his dad. I tried to leave with the pack but my mom, she wouldn't leave with me, and by the time I tried to convince her my dad showed up and put an end to it. My mom isn't strong, she lives in his shadow, she's naïve and maybe a little too innocent. I couldn't leave her with him to be ground down and trampled over. You don't know how he is." Her clear, almost husky voice, cracks a little and I blink her way seeing a tiny chink in the confident armor she wears like a shroud.

I waiver a little in my coolness when I see that soft warmth in her eyes when talking about her Mom, and yet there's something raw and almost painful when she says the word Dad. Although the most surprising part is how hard it is to believe someone like Carmen came from someone sweet and feeble. She's a born b\*\*\*\*. I can't imagine she came from someone weak.

"And now?" I fix her with a direct stare. Not moving an inch in my stubbornness or me haughty tone. Not really wanting to dig apart or figure out the puzzle sin her emotions. I just want her to walk off and leave me to my trees.

"She saw the truth.... One of the pack pa\*\*ed on the memories of your wolves; I guess we had an infiltrator. Then my mom confronted my dad and demanded to see the past in his own minds eye, he refused but my mom has a gift... she can extract memories of the sleeping and dead without their consent and I never thought she would be brave enough to do it." She looks down at the ground in an instant wave of emotion, her eyes br\*\*\*\*\* with sudden tears and she swallows hard. "We saw what they did to your family, to your pack.... The actions of one, spreading its poison to the many in the people we trusted. My mom couldn't take it. She broke and I knew if we stayed my dad would send her someplace to make sure she didn't do anything stupid... like end her own life." The tear rolls down Carmen's cheek, her body bristling as she feels it and she stubbornly straightens up and wipes it away harshly. In that second, she looks like a lost child, trying to act tough in the face of adversity and despite everything. I am moved.

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The curse of the Luna in having compa\*\*ion for her people, and my own gift of feeling her emotions out. Her pain bruises my heart and winds through my veins like a prickly cold icicle, aching, and hurting me deeply. Reminiscent of grieving my mom and my family and I reach out instinctively and touch her shoulder. Cursing myself inwardly for this insane compa\*\*ion that grows in me the longer I lead our people. I swear at myself mentally for showing her softness.

"She's lucky she has you. To care for her and bring her here. You did the right thing." I soothe, moving into maternal mode of appeasing and gentle with my tone then bite my own tongue for being a weak a\*\*ed b\*\*\*\*. I really disappoint myself sometimes. Who knew Luna gifts would be my nemesis when it came to this girl.