

# Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 101

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"Talk to me." I nudge him, needing something more than quiet, and nuzzle closer. Inner anxiety growing as my insecure self shows face. My heart rate increases, and my palms get clammy as I try and appear neutral emotionally. I don't want to burden him with a spew of feelings when he's having a hard enough time deciphering his own, but it's hard.

The spell had fallout for sure and Leyanne did warn me that he may need an adjustment period to get his head straight when we got home. That mind control and being trapped somewhere in a state of timelessness would affect them on some level, even if it only lasted a week. I don't know how much of that is this.

I smile impulsively when he lets go of my belly and wraps his arm around me instead, gesturing for me to lift my head so his other one can slide under it and gives me his bicep as a cushion. A familiar Colton move, one that soothes me a little and I try not to overthink this and instead focus on his touch. I snuggle in greedily, needing him more than air, his legs wrapping around mine until every inch of us touches intimately and he buries his mouth in my hair and tucks my head under his chin.

"Where to start.... You went to New Mexico, you found your brother, brought back a witch..... Lead our people into a crazy dangerous battle that might have ended all of us. Had a one-on-one fight with me where I tried to kill you, more than once. And that's just to start...." He lets out a long strained breath and squeezes me closer, his surge of chaotic emotions finally seeping through to me and I can feel just how messy his brain is.

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"I know." I mumble guiltily in a low voice and stretch my arms around him as much as I can, clinging on so needily.

"We're also going back to the mountain to finally deal with that chaos now we have reason to believe the vampires are receding... and you're pregnant.... we're pregnant! I'm going to be a dad." He breaths out heavily as though this fact is still taking its time to filter through and is obviously the major one for him that's giving him a hard time. The woosh of words, the extra hard exhale as he got to the final point and yet I so cannot read a single emotion accurately to tell if it's a bad sigh or a shocked one.

"I know, I know... Carmen imprinting on Jasper... meeting a vampire, finding out my dad's not my dad.... I know there's a lot. I get it, I lived through it and I still haven't really absorbed any of it. I just hate when you clam up and I can't tell what you're thinking, while your emotions are not helping me any. I can tell you're sort of shocked, but there's a lingering something I can't decipher. I can feel it, it's making me nervy and uptight and yet I don't know what it is." It comes out in a ramble, my heart pounding as my feelings get the better of me and turn

me into a jittering wreck. I want to so badly just ask him if he hates the fact I'm pregnant, but I'm too scared to hear the answer. My heart is literally hanging by a thread, terrified of what pain he can cause with one simple rejection of what grows inside of me.

"Disbelief.... that's what that is. It's not one thing, it's many... Like, are we really ending a war that's plagued us our entire lives? Are we really going to be parents in the midst of all this? Is this all gone from never ending threat to nothing in the blink of an eye. And what about you? Your father is royalty am\*\*\* ... god, our enemy, Lorey. You're a freaking vampire Princess and that just blows my mind. I'm not trying to close you out, I'm just... overwhelmed." Which I guess is exactly how he has me feeling. Overloaded, anxious, and weighed down with a thousand emotions all at once. Sometimes sharing that is too much and it's hard for me to swallow even though I know he's trying so hard to shield me from the worst of it.

"Leyanne thinks that me being alive will pull Varro back from attacking our people so I guess, yes, the threat is going to end. We just haven't had any word from Jasper or Darrius to confirm it, but the mountain had way less vampires than we both know were there before. So where did they go? And him..... once he knows I'm alive, what if he wants to see me?" I dodge the baby topic, sticking to something less traumatic to my soul.

It is something I've thought about, my father, and honestly, I don't want to see him. I don't want to face the reality that my dad, the one who raised me for ten years, the father I loved, was not even my blood at all. That some lord, some creature out there, that I've never met who waged wars because of me is who I belong to. I can't absorb it. I can't get my thoughts in order to really accept it.

"I did think it was half empty considering how many we've chased through that infernal forest for months. Or maybe there was always less of them and we a\*\*umed more. Maybe they just spread out and used the same patrols over and over. God knows. We defeated them so fast, it's like they weren't even trying to hold us off." Colton sighs and instinctively squeezes me again, inhaling me as though he's glad to be home again even though his reality meant he never left me. It's odd. I guess him having my memories now means it's messed up his timeline and he shouldn't miss me because it was only today he left me, but his memories are making that confusing.

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"Leyanne said that when vampires lose leadership when their coven lord abandons them.... they become useless. Like they have no direction, and their abilities are stumped or something. She thinks whoever the lord was, left them and the one you killed, had tried to take the place as coven master."

She told me all this downstairs when we first arrived back in a hurried conversation while Colton issued orders to the pack and dispersed them to their homes until eight pm. Then went nuclear at Meadow and Sierra and ended up storming off to the study.

The order is to rest, regroup, and meet to talk about everything, including what we found out when we went to New Mexico. And now in the eerie calmness of a

bright sunny day it feels like the events of dawn are a dream and the last week already becoming a blur that never really happened at all. If it wasn't for the witch still being here, I would think that I imagined it all. In his arms, it feels like he never left me, despite the tension between us because of his mood and my dying need to know what he thinks of our baby news.

"That suggests your father... the vampire one, is really pulling them back, but why leave any at all? Surely he would take them if this was over."

"What else is he going to do with them. They were made to fight and excess to needs if he no longer wants to. He probably took the strongest and left the rest behind knowing eventually the wolves would deal with them and get rid of his problem." I got the impression from Leyanne's conversations that vampires see halflings as dispensable and worthless and a lord wouldn't think twice of leaving them to die. So not like wolves at all.

After meeting Darrius, I see that we have only ever dealt with these crude half-bred demons all along and the real enemy, the ones like Darrius, are something we should always fear. We never really knew our enemy at all. We would never have stood a chance had the pure bloods been out here ready to take us down.

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"I just can't relax into this idea that this is all ending. It seems too easy, too clean. Maybe because he left any at all. Maybe I just need confirmation, I don't know. I can't shake the feeling that this is far from over and it's not as simple as it all seems." Colton releases me a little and pulls my face up to him with a gentle finger under my chin. Leaning in to graze his lips over mine and it makes my heart flutter and flip over. This is first he's calmed down enough to show this kind of intimacy since we broke the spell. I greedily push my face to his to draw more, throwing all my doubts and questions aside when faced with my desire to have more of him. I've craved him so much it almost made me insane and one little peck is nowhere near enough.

Alpha, we need you downstairs.

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Cesar breaks into our head link, running my plans and Colton lifts his head and frowns at me. Both of us knowing this can't be good if we're being disturbed already. It's only been an hour or so since we came up here.

Cesar never encroaches on our private time together, no one does. It's the one major rule that Colton has. That when he wants to be with me alone, it's a cardinal sin to interrupt us without him first giving the signal that they can. Colton gave strict orders to leave us be unless it was an emergency and Cesar

wouldn't disobey that if it wasn't. My heart sinks and I almost pout at the loss of his lips near mine as he pulls away.

I'm coming.

Colton links back and let's go of me fully, jumping to his feet to retrieve clothes and yanks a long warm robe out of the wardrobe for me. Despite my disappointment, my insides soar at the fact, even being aloof and strange, he's still wanting me by his side. Still my normal Colton in there after all, the one who expects my constant presence and panders to me in anyway he can.

I put on a comfy nightdress after my soak, so a robe is a must and I get up and let him help me into it with a smile. Pushing my feet into slippers, blushing when he kisses me on the back of the head tenderly and follow him as soon as he throws his upper clothes on. I feel like we're back to dating or being shy somehow, and I don't get it at all. I know it's probably one sided as he seems like he always does concerning being touchy with me, grabbing my hand and such, but I feel nervous and restrained. I guess it's because of that burning questions that's digging a crater in my soul and needs a real answer before I can relax.

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We head downstairs quickly and can tell by the scent that the sub pack are already convening in the study that used to be our room, away from the hall, in cozier confines. I pick up on every one of them as they recently pa\*\*ed through and follow Colton to our preferred nook for sub meetings. We have never migrated from our small private space for the original sub pack. Some habits die hard.

They are all inside, including Leyanne which I'm surprised to see, given how protective of this room they can be and the twins seem to be a little enamored with her. One sat either side of where she is and she's making it clear she may remove body parts if they get too close. There's an unmissable air of warning in her stiff upright posture. Her hostile glare at one and then the other as they throw her charming smiles makes me giggle and I bat Domi on the head as I pa\*\* him and move to the seat where Colton guides me.

"Behave" I warn and then nestle down in the seat when Colton moves past it for me to sit and he stands beside me. Always nearby, always guarding me instinctively, even in our safe spaces. He's the ideal mate, even when he's being a distant a\*\*hole.

"What is it?" he asks, looking around the seemingly happy and calm faces, getting to the point with a domineering tone and its only then I notice that Cesar is pacing and the only one, besides the witch, that looks serious.

"We're all here?" Cesar turns to us, a quizzical expression on his face and I note Meadow isn't here yet.

"No, what about Med...." I start but he cuts in and silences me with a wave of his hand.

"She's coming, she's getting Carmen." Cesar seems unusually stiff and brisk in the way he responds, and Colton's furrowed brow tells me he's wondering what the hell is up. In the absence of Colton then someone always stands as pack head of security at all hours. I guess Cesar was on that duty before we were called down, despite the fact he should have been am\*\*\* the resting.

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Colton, Meadow, Matteo, Radar, and Cesar are usually the only ones who make sure everything runs peaceably around the clock and have the authority to call a meeting like this before reporting to Colton. He still treats them as semi equal in all things. So a gathering like this isn't unusual but given the witch is here and now they even requested Carmen, I feel unsettled in my stomach. Given today's events and everyone's need for down time, my gut says this isn't good at all.

Leyanne sits still and silent but even in the short time I've known her I can tell she has something to say and isn't looking as joyous and chill as the others. Her aura screams of dissatisfaction and maybe slightly annoyed. I don't get why. Maybe that's just her though and I'm being sensitive.

"We're here. Meadow appears with Carmen in tow and they both head straight for a seat and sink down onto the sofa, although Meds is perched and upright and starts tapping her foot in agitation. Carmen glances around then catches my eye with a questioning frown, and I can only shrug in response. I have no more idea than she does.

"Someone gonna tell me what's up?" Colton snaps, his tension getting the best of him and Meadow breaks instantly. Her expression bleak as she locks eyes on him and despite their ongoing standoff, I know their close relationship is stronger than a tiff, and important things will push aside bickers. Meds and Colton are like siblings and will never fight for long. They never do.

"They're moving against the mountain... the witch got word from the vampire..... the missing vamps, they have been gone since yesterday. This isn't over by a long shot... blood is to be spilled on the valley and the Santa pack there is in serious danger."

"Wait what? I thought you said this was done... isn't that....?" Colton's confusion matches mine and this time, as I snap my eyes to him and back towards meadow, panic rising in my throat as his question dies on my lips. Despite all eyes turning to Meadow for explanation on what she just stated it's Leyanne who speaks. Cutting in smoothly knowing she needs to expand on those minute details.

"The lord has held onto this for a long time..... he wasn't so easy to sway. Even with news of his child. He pulled the strongest from the mountain and he plans on eliminating all who had a part in Marina's death." She looks to me, her expression almost blank as though this isn't news to her or even a concern. Honestly this witch, she doesn't seem fazed at all. It irks me on a serious level, and I glare at her, somehow feeling anger that she cares about nothing at all, even after fighting for our side. I don't understand how anyone can be so detached.

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“Tell him the rest.” Meadow snaps as though the witch is annoying her too, although with avoiding something important and I screw my face at Meds for her harshness. Out of character especially when Leyanne has done so much for us these past few days and they had created a mutual understanding of respect.

Leyanne stands up and dusts down her clothes, straightens her layered skirt and walks to the fireplace before leaning against it. Infuriatingly calm and non-rushed. Still clearly not all that invested in what’s unfolding when we thought the worst was over. Graceful, poised, oozing power in her mannerisms. She could be royalty if you didn’t know her.

“This wasn’t a war of two kinds this time around..... it was little more intentional. I didn’t think it was an important detail but none the less..... the only state having battles with vampires is this one. The only pack under attack is Santo. I know, I’ve travelled and this war as you call it, the only repercussions are all here around your two mountains. The wolves are not under threat.... just your bloodline. None of the others even know there’s any kind of trouble at all.”

That revelation sinks around us like a lead ship and as eyes widen, and we look to one another, I suddenly see it all click together and make sense. Why out of all the packs in the world, our valley, the orphanage, was the test place for their weapon and why we were followed here.

“This was always about us?” Colton’s shocked breathy reply makes my blood run cold. The realization sinking in numbs my skin and sends a creeping crawl of ants across my face. My heart hammering at her words. Somehow it seems worse to know that this is a focused attack, and we are alone in terms of defending the valley, especially knowing Lord Varro is like Darrius and both of them will be heading there to settle this debt.

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“Ten years ago, it was about all wolves... a species that dared to kill his woman and his unborn child for merely existing. When he found out she lived and died at the hands of the Santo pack and he thought his child too, he concentrated his hatred on one pack alone.” Leyanne wanders casually across the floor, shrugging as she goes, and all eyes follow her. An awkward quiet around the room instantly as we all digest this.

“That’s why the fog stayed only with us and them ... nothing further out. We saw no vampires in our entire trip to find Leyanne.” Meadow fills in the blanks, adding to what I guess she spoke to the witch about, and brings my mind to the truth of her observation. Outside the Santo domain, we never picked up on a single vampire in eight hours of cross-country travel. Not one sense of them, no scent in the air at all. It’s why Leyanne didn’t care about leaving us out in the darkness

alone. She knew we weren't in danger so far from the mountain because vampires weren't hunting any pack that wasn't Santo. It makes sense now.

"Correct. Because there were none. I told you; vampires dwell where people don't and only venture where wolves are when they have a bone to chew. This time, that bone was buried in your father's garden. Under his patio..." She seems almost smug at her euphemism, smiles with a hint of sarcastic glee, and dusts the mantle as though she's merely made a small joke. That accent of hers making it sound more like a mocking sentence than a pretty important proclamation. Her calmness grates on my growing nerves and I shuffle in my seat.

"So, the attacks on the home, the tests with the weapon? We weren't just unlucky.... we were always the target!" Cesar pipes in, repeating the obvious and Leyanne nods, turning slowly to face us as a group and moves back against the mantel to get comfy. I stare at her with a sense of surreal, feeling like this is all a weird dream and digesting it slowly.

If only the vampires knew how ironic that was, what they did. That they almost killed the reason they were even there in the first place. My father would have seen me dead at his own hands was it not for Colton and his pack saving me that night. It's almost funny.

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Their weapon, their tests, hit the home that concealed his child for almost a decade and yet the pack he hated protected me. If only he knew how close he was to taking down his daughter, the Santo heir, Juan and their Luna at the same time. My death would have ended it all, by taking the three of them with me. Yet it wouldn't have balanced anything at all. I would have died at vampire hands.

"They're shadowing us here.... because of our bloodline. No wonder they never left. They stalked us, they persisted. And yet the war never progressed. They were waiting and biding time, even if that took years to get past our boundaries." Matteo runs a hand across his face, his voice deflated as minor shock reverberates around the stillness of the room. I sense Colton tensing beside me and glance up, catching his eye on me as he swallows noticeably and then he turns and looks at all the faces, locked on the witch and the eerie pause to our normally humdrum group.

"There was no war intended. It was always about avenging Marina and Alora. And now he knows about her, which means he focused his efforts on avenging her mother instead. He knew I'd take care of the witches in no time, and that the m\*\*\*rels he left were no real threat to his child. With Alora's brother in tow, and his need to avenge Marina too, they aren't walking away quietly as we hoped. He still wants to address the balance. Darius warned us because he knows you have people there that still shouldn't be part of this, and Vampires don't lay down grudges when vengeance has been their path for decades." Leyanne sighs heavily.

"Why would he warn us? What does he care?" I finally find my voice and question the motives of that dark weirdo. He didn't seem all too invested in wolf lives back at that road.

"Darrius is a strange one, honor bound. He's a Shadow Knight commander of the highest order and he's never agreed with Varro's need to crush your kind in revenge. It goes against his code, so he stood back and lifted no finger in the war of the past and kept the Shadow Knights out of it." Leyanne's voice softens and I can tell, despite her cool manner and indifferent tone and Darrius' obvious darker disposition, she has respect for him. Even if she makes it out like it's a flaw that he has morals.

"What do we do, Cole... those are our people?" Radar sits down suddenly as though shock weakens his legs, pulling my attention to the eyes around the room and I swallow hard as I try to compute all this. I feel like crying and yet something more terrifying simmers inside that we should really be worried about.

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"He doesn't know that if Juan dies... I do." I point out, mumbling it loud enough for those around to hear and Colton slides his hand over mine and sits on the arm to press close to me. Giving me his comfort because he can sense my anxiety, confusion, and fear. Leyanne exhales heavily, an expression of minor irritation crossing her face as she focuses on me.

"It's not a detail Darrius would have excluded but that won't stop Varro wiping out everyone else who's there and making Juan watch. I don't think Juan's death is his goal..... it's vengeance he seeks. Even if he has to kill everyone to get to him and then lock him in a cage for the rest of his days. Varro is cruel and torture is better suited to his personality. I believe he'll make Juan suffer until the end of his days." Her words soothe and yet horrify me at the same time.

"We can't let them kill everyone at the mountain. There's so many innocents." I choke out the words, my head bombarded with so many faces, as my eyes mist over at the thought of losing them, because of my mother. These were people she fought alongside to protect. How was she to know the war was because of us.

"I told him that, but Darrius, he's not exactly the warmest of souls. His response was merely that many innocents had died in the past, what was a few more if we wanted an end to this. All Darrius cares about is that he no longer gets dragged along watching his future king waste his time on an inferior species. He wants him back where he belongs, back where he is to eventually rule. He warned us so we know what's coming, but he won't sway Varro either way." Leyanne shrugs with one shoulder, making it clear that Darrius is not really going to be of any use to us in this. He's an information pa\*\*er at most and his loyalty is with Varro, even if what he's doing is against Darrius' code.

"Son of a b\*\*\*\*! That's what you get for trusting a cold-blooded monster like them. f\*\*\*ing vampires, man!" Remo is the one to explode, throwing his arms out in agitation but Leyanne doesn't seem to look offended at all.

I dare say she doesn't trust Darrius any more than we do and he's more of an acquaintance for her benefit than a friend. I'm not even surprised that cold blooded demon doesn't give two craps about innocents. I got the impression he doesn't feel at all; like he has no humanity. He can stand back and watch many die



over these decades and do nothing, when he has an army of his own that could have intercepted in some way, so many times.

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Shadow Knights... pffft. What good are they? It's as much a crime to stand idle and do nothing as it is to be part of the attacks and killing innocents.

"If we want to save them. Then it has to be done by us. We have to go to the mountain and protect them ourselves. With us they stand a chance, without us... they die." Colton gets up, letting go of my hand and starts pacing to match Cesar. Both seemingly intent on pa\*\*ing by one another as they walk back and forth on the rug.

My anxiety elevates thirty million times more just watching the restlessness of the two most tactical minded am\*\*\* us. I know his head is in overdrive as he thinks this through, and I squeeze my eyes shut to get my breathing under control. Knowing what he says is fact and that they don't stand a chance as a fractured pack. We took the strongest and they don't have any real leadership left with them.

I thought we were done with fighting and now less than a day later we'll have to do it all over again. Only this time my brother is on the other side. We'll have to side with Juan against everything we feel, for the sake of the people and march out there to unify. I can't believe this is what we're even contemplating but I know in my heart that Colton's right.

"And when we get there.... can we be sure that Juan won't mount an offensive against us, even if we're trying to help?" Radar the one who always sees flaws in our plans, points out the discrepancies, and questions the angles. I look to Colton with a nod, that it could be a very plausible outcome and we should seriously take time to think about this before we decide. Juan vowed to never let his son take back his power... Juan won't see us as anything but an enemy if we go home. Even if we fight to save them.

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Colton fixes his gaze on me, stalling in his pacing and exhales loudly. His whole posture stiff and tense and I can feel his stress levels hitting the roof, even at a distance. The weight of his emotion pulling my insides tight.

"We can't keep ignoring what happens to them. We've done it for too long and this time, if we do it again, none of them will be alive by morning. I can't fail them anymore.... what kind of an alpha does that make me?" He drops his chin to his chest, breaking his focus on me and I catch the moist sheen over his eyes from here as he battles with the turmoil of this situation. His guilt heavy because I know that he's struggled all these months with what to do about the ones we left behind. It's plagued him endlessly.

"We could warn them, make them leave... get those out that we can in daylight. I mean they still need darkness to attack, right? So we have time?" Carmen this time, trying to find a solution with a somewhat upbeat tone as she perches on the edge of her seat. I sink my head into my hands and rub my temples in defeated exhaustion. My brain throbbing from all of this and emotions strangling me at the same time. Anxiety growing and hemming me in at the wall and hard place we find ourselves lodged between.

"If they want them that badly, no matter where we take them, they'll still come. And we don't have room here, not for the long run. If this is what he needs to end this, there's no outrunning it. Colton's right. We have to go there and protect who we can and let Varro kill who he needs to while making sure Juan isn't one of them." Meadow is the voice of reason as this all swirls inside my head and makes me dizzy. I know that this is because of me and I can't accept that the losses and deaths, all of this, came out of my being conceived. I can't process it.

"Son of a b\*\*\*\* ... f\*\*\* stupid mate bonds." Radar snorts out through gritted teeth, his anger flaring in his raspy tone. He storms off towards the bookcase before slamming a fist into a row of them and sends them s\*\*\*tering to the floor with a clattering noise, giving me a jolt as he does so. My heart hammering as I recover from flinching at his sudden aggressive display, but it only adds to my uptight tetchiness. It's no guessing where his anger is focused and that in itself makes me feel worse. If only Radar had been Sierra's fated mate, then maybe everything would have been so different.

I exhale and throw my head back on my chair and try to relax my sprawled body, inhale slowly as nausea rises around me and pushes out the deafening guilt that's building. I only end up stiff as a board and unable to release the tightness of my shoulder muscles as tears fog out my vision. Hormones are making this worse and I'm already exhausted to the point that I can't think straight.

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"There's maybe a chance I ..... if I can see Jasper and my father. Maybe I can talk to them, stop this. Maybe I can somehow...." I don't even know. I'm deflated, grasping, consumed by the responsibility of all this and I feel completely useless. This is partly about me, so shouldn't I be able to fix it?

Didn't the fates pick me because of all of this? Why don't I have the answers if they have been guiding me all along? What good am I? Or my gifts that can't be used. I don't get why it seems just when I might have a purpose, the fates throw in a curveball and render me useless all over again.

Knowing I was alive didn't even stop this, so what really am I here for? What is the point of me being what I am when I feel shackled and useless.

"You heard Jasper... Santo is the enemy, and he won't stop until he takes revenge. Not even the mate bond could make a difference, not his sister being alive, and certainly not pleading." Carmen sounds bitter, pulling me to sit up slightly with her tone and I look to her. Catching her eye and biting my lip on the surging pain as I recognize her inner sadness. I'm not ready to admit defeat when we still have hope, even if she seems to be. She deadpan locks her gaze on mine

and unflinchingly shakes her head at me, as though telling me this is not a solution.

"Maybe the two of us, there, ready to stand in front of him and die... maybe that will make a difference. I know my brother, he's not evil. He's not a killer. He's in pain and he has a stubborn head and a loyal heart, and he thinks this is what he needs to stop the agony in his existence." I mumble, attempting to appeal to her, trying to send some sort of begging message, hoping to invest her in this a little more. I can tell by her closed off expression and her bleak and cold aura that she isn't buying it. I know what she's thinking. That this is futile, and she won't be a part of being humiliated for a second time at my brother's hands when it will change nothing.

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"Well, I guess I better come along and try and do damage control. I mean, I was planning on heading out, but as the vampires hired me to solve the issue of Varro returning home, and I'm not quite done with that.... guess we march to your mountain." Leyanne cuts in abruptly, bringing everyone's attention back to her and her steady and nonchalant tone. She really doesn't seem like anything in this world phases her at all. It's like she just announced we were going grocery shopping and not taking control of a decision to go fight in a battle to the death.

"You can stop him from killing Juan right.... if we fail, if all goes to s\*\*\*." Colton is the one eyeing her now, homing in on her usefulness and I can tell by the surge of hope he gives off that he thinks the witch might have influence. My heart sinks, because I know him so well. Nothing will sway him from marching there now his mind is made up, and despite everything, he will fight to protect his people even if they turn on us when we get there. He already knows it's what we'll do and he's already planning. As much as I don't want to do this, I know it's happening. She shrugs at him and then exhales slowly and heavily.

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"Yes... I can protect your sniveling weasly old man if that's what you need. It won't be too much of an inconvenience... You know, if Sierra hadn't used one of my spells to bind her life to Alora, this would have been an easy fix." Leyanne gestures the twins to move their legs as she looks like she's planning on leaving the room by walking past the couch where they're sat. Her faint smile on show, and that indifferent vibe once more. "Just saying." She adds with a hair flick before she wanders off, obviously done with this meeting and she knows what her part is in it. She doesn't seem like she wants to sit and mull it over now she knows what role she has.

I scowl at her parting words, along with most sat present, and disagree with her silently while separately glaring after her. Tied to Juan or not, Sierra should never be put at risk. That witch really is a cold and heartless one if she thinks sacrificing a life is the answer to everything.

"f\*\*\*, f\*\*\*, f\*\*\* ... f\*\*\*ing, f\*\*\*!!" Colton's spew of expletives and his hostile and loud elbow ram into the bookcase near him startles me and startles the room once more with the sudden outburst. "We need to recall the pack, pick out the strongest, apologize for making them do this all over f\*\*\*ing again! Then head to the mountain before dusk. God dammit. f\*\*\* my life..... Most of them haven't had a chance to recover and now I'm asking them to put their lives on the line all over again." He vents and kicks the wastebin across the floor with an impressive thrust, to the desk leaving it dented as it attempts a wonky roll under a chair. All eyes following and quietly understanding his need to get the aggression out.

"The pack will do what's needed. Not for you, but for them. The ones we left behind. They're our familia, we won't abandon them this time." Meadow soothes him from her seated position, but the heaviness in the air is suffocating and I know everyone feels the same way.

We always intended one day to do something about the split pack on the mountain, I just didn't think it would be like this. We thought we had time to come up with a plan. We have to protect them, they're part of us too. We can't watch them die when most of them had nothing to do with what Juan did to my family. They're only crime was staying behind. And the reasons for that are not a simple case of loyalty to father or son or even choosing a side.

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"We have zero time to plan, to even think about this. It's now... happening, and we can't ignore it." Colton lets it out, the stress he's been holding and sinks down on the arm of my chair where I automatically lean forward to rub my hand up his back to console him. My touch softening his rigid posture a tad and he leans in to scoop my other in his and pulls it to his lap to cradle tightly. My touch is his harbor sometimes, even when I feel like he's locked up inside his own head.

"We have half a day.... We can rally what we need. Pack the trucks and sit at the mountain waiting for dusk. Juan won't attack us if vampires are invading. He'll be too distracted, so we can focus on the people. Separate them.... Juan's loyal from the rest. Maybe if we divide two camps and just work our a\*\* off to keep them safe, then Varro will do what he needs to do and realize we won't back down." Meadow is determined and I nod almost numbly, seeing the logic in her words and daring to hope. If we stand up for them, not standing in his way with regards to Juan, then maybe we have a chance. If his efforts are focused on one camp, then he may leave ours alone.

"I think with me there.... With Carmen there... we might have a shot at swaying them once they take down all Juan's men. Juan, they can have him, as long as they know he has to live, and they can take him away so the rest can be free." I chime in, knowing somewhere my words will be hurting Colton but he doesn't react or look my way. It's still his father but he knows it's what he deserves.

"No, they'll torture him... if they do that, you will all feel it when he's close to death. You'll feel extreme pain, They can't put you all through that." Cesar is drumming it over while tapping his thumb on his leg and Meadow gets up and goes to him. Wrapping her arms around his waist as he envelopes her in and hugs her back. Pulling her onto his lap as she curls up tight and for once, looks

vulnerable in his arms. I'm so used to seeing strong, s\*\*y Meadow, that this sudden need for her mate's rea\*\*urance and the coiling up in him makes me even more determined that I have to protect my pack. We're all scared of the outcome and yet here I am.... with the means to really end this. Simply existing.

"When will this all end? I feel like I've spent my life killing and fighting these damn creatures and one day I just want to settle down and think about puppies. Half the sub pack is already retired because they have their own...I want to be like that one day too." Meadow starts to cry, shocking us all with the show of tears, and without meaning to my eyes fly straight to Carmen who glances away and bites on her lip. I curse myself for the reaction, but any mention of babies and I can't help it, she's the first thing I look at. Guilt sweeps over me and I stare at my hand in Colton's instead as the heat from my cheeks engulfs my face.

"We just have to get through this.... I told you didn't I, your papi will give you the best pups when life is more stable. Maybe this is the last hurdle. We have so much time left Princessa." Cesar leans in and kisses her gently on the temple, and I caress my stomach absentmindedly, catching Colton's eyes move to follow my motion and a steely expression floods his face as his warrior side shows face. That air of stubborn comes out of nowhere and he stands up, letting go of me and stiffening aggressively.

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"You know, screw this. You're right. This is the last hurdle and then after.....a stable life to raise my kids. We just got to s\*\*\* it up, do what we got to do, and then be done with this s\*\*\*. All of it. The vampires, the feud with the mountain, my father's shadow, living in fear....it all ends if we do this right and sort this out tonight. I will hand my father to that vampire myself if I have to. In a cage, bound and gagged, if it means this ends, and we all get to walk away alive."

My breath catches in my throat and my pain aches with the way he just came out and said it.

His kids.

In one little reaction he told me what I've been waiting to hear since he found out. That he wants them, that somewhere he's accepted they exist, and he is ready to protect them. He was never one for emotional chats or opening up too much when it came to feelings. Especially when he was carrying so much else on his shoulders, so this is enough for me.

I get that happy joyous reactions are a no, given our circ\*\*stances and the way he was fired with a mult\*\*ude of facts in one go, but this tells me what I needed to hear. He is happy. He's just holding it in check until he can relax, knowing we're safe and he can let out his feelings about the fact he's going to be a dad. He can prioritize them when his responsibility to everyone else is dealt with. I know him well enough to see that this is what this is.

"With the vampires attacking, we can at least separate out the ones not loyal to your father as he'll be focused on saving his own a\*\* anyway." Matteo who's been quiet finally cuts in and throws Colton a rea\*\*uring look that we got this, and we

have nothing to worry about. He's right too. Juan won't care about the people, only himself. His attention won't be on the valley or anyone that can't shield him.

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His loyal will protect him and look to him alone, while they let the rest die. It won't be hard to see which wolves we should be there for.

## Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 106

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

"Darrius and the Lord are the only two vampires with any kind of real strength that we should fear, and neither will harm me. Darrius won't even lift a finger. If he took only the strongest from the mountain and left behind the weak then it'll be tougher than what we just did, but not impossible. Wolves have defeated halflings before, we will again." Carmen brings the voice of certainty out, somehow finding that inner fire I know is always just within grasp, even when she wobbles. The quiet nods of agreement seal our fate, as we all understand and agree what's to come.

She seems somehow stronger in this second, determined, and there's a look in her eye that tells me she isn't about to go down without a fight. A moment hits me in the stomach, a tiny little tremor that had I never come back to Colton, I think she would have been a Luna in her own right. She maybe isn't the warm and approachable Luna in the traditional sense, but maybe in time she might have grown that way if she had felt secure in her mates love. She's a warrior for sure.

The pack isn't done fighting yet and tonight, before we even have time to catch our breaths once more, we will face a battle we've been putting off for months. It's time to go home and save our people, and maybe this time, the problem that is Juan might get some sort of resolution.

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"Witches are no longer an issue; my only responsibility is what the vampires first asked of me.... To get Lord Varro to give up this vendetta and go back to where he belongs to begin learning to rule. I can achieve that tonight, and your people, will see an end to a twenty-year fight once and for all. So, I'm coming, and I can possibly offer a little protection where it's needed." Leyanne's voice cuts in from the open doorway, surprising me, and I realize that despite her leaving, she didn't actually go far or she's come back. She is lazing against the frame, seemingly bored and looking out of place in such a casual manner.

Despite not being sure about Leyanne, I feel like we can rely on her and trust is growing when it comes to which side she fights for. She keeps people at a distance much like Carmen does and she has an aura that she doesn't care too deeply, but I guess at three thousand years old she has cared about many and had to watch them die. Maybe the repeated loss of people growing old and fading around you made her not want to soften towards anyone anymore. She doesn't

seem bad; she seems disconnected, lacks feelings, yet helpful because it suits her to be. I cannot imagine the loneliness of her existence at all and I could maybe forgive her lack of heart when I think that maybe she's just bled one too many times.

"I guess we do this. Meds call an early meeting in the hall; we need to see what numbers we're taking and prepare. Radar, you are the commander of the Luna's guard and that's what I need now. Form the ones you want to shield Lorey and my mom, make sure they're worthy. I don't want any mistakes... she stays safe in this. They both do. Matteo, go sort out transport for as many of us as possible, the rest will have to travel on foot. We need a map of the mountain and a tactical plan of where we wait and where we launch an attack. That's on you Cesar. I have to go see my mom.... Leyanne you do what you need to do, we appreciate the help. I guess we just.... hope and fight and see where this ends." Colton scrubs his fingers through his hair, his voice strong but I can feel the tiredness in his tone, his fatigue obvious and stress weighing heavily on him. This is what he was born to do and I doubt anyone else would be able to do it the way he does. I know his father is sitting heavily on his mind, because either way, tonight Juan will be the focus and finally this will be the end. It's why he wants to see his mom, because he knows as well as I do that she will want to be there whether he wants her to or not.

She was his mate; she is linked to his soul and she has just as much right to hate him and want to see him suffer as I do. She lost a decade of her life as his silent prisoner and her future is empty because of her bond to him. It's only fair that she gets a chance to see him shackled and caged and led away by a species that will make him live in agony without death for as long as he breathes. She wouldn't want to stay here and see everything she suffered for happen without her.

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"There's one thing... I have a possible solution to a problem of yours Colton. Seems I do have a trick up my sleeve. I'll have it ready by the time we need to leave. I just need to make a few adjustments." She holds up a book she didn't have with her before and I guess it's where she went. To get it from the grimoire library and came back because she found something. I eye her with interest and let my gaze sway to the leather-bound ancient book held loosely by her side with interest.

"What solution to what problem? Colton blinks as he stares back at her, also flicking a glance at the aged book in her hand. Leyanne moves to leave and stops with a self-satisfied smile and gestures towards me with a flourish.

"A life bound.... only mates should hold that power. It wasn't ordained by the fates, but by magic's touch and with magic's breath it can be undone. Especially when the source is standing right here. Although I don't think you want to tell your mother about it.... who knows what ideas she might get if her life no longer endangers yours." She shrugs with one shoulder as my mouth falls open and I gasp in realization at what she's saying.

"You mean unbind me from Sierra? So that her death is no longer mine?" That means Juan's death would not take us from this world...only Sierra.

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My blood runs cold as I realize why she doesn't think Sierra should know and Colton looks instantly afraid. His mind going the same place as mine and coming to the same conclusion. To rid the world of Juan, and to end her bleak future, she would sacrifice herself. Like she once did to ensure my survival. We both know Sierra would do it without hesitation and the sudden chill of Radar's aura sweeps my way as his emotions overwhelm the space with the same realization.

## Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 107

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

"I do. I happened upon some helpful hints in a grimoire or two in my luggage that gave me some answers. We're lucky enough to be in a part of the world that grows what I need, so I'll be back before we leave.... I have to go find some very rare plants." That upbeat tone of a woman who is smug with her new discovery and confident in her own remedies.

"Wait." Colton hesitates, grabbing her arm as she moves to pa\*\* and my heart stops in my chest, which is already hammering like a war drum. I know he's hesitating about whether he wants this or not. He probably has the same thoughts swirling in his head as I do about the outcome should Sierra be free of my life burden.

"This is a good thing, Cole.... Sierra and Alora unbound. Sierra is already so far through her life cycle, Alora has barely begun ..... you know when Sierra's time comes, Alora will leave too if they are still bound." Meadow is the voice of reason even if that time is a long way away in our life cycle. She's right though. Being connected to a much older wolf, reduces my life span no matter how we look at it. I will leave when she does, and so will Colton. Now we have babies to think about, suddenly that thought terrifies me. Every day and moment I have is precious and shouldn't be bound to another life form for an expiry date.

"My mom, she'll..." he chokes on the words and I reach out for him, taking his hand in mine to offer comfort once more. Feeding on his sudden lurch in anxiety and fear and swallowing hard on his emotion as it clogs in my throat.

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"Then it's one secret we keep....and she'll never know. No one in this room will tell her. To keep her safe, to stop her doing anything dumb...right?" I raise my voice and sigh with relief at the unanimous chorus of strong 'right's' that come our way without a second of hesitation. Radar's being the loudest. The witch nods in agreement and it gives me a sense of calm that we're all thinking the same way about what she would do if she knew I was free of her. "She won't feel it will she? She won't know?" I ask meekly, needing to be sure that Sierra wont



suspect. Not even a hint, just in case. I know her heart and her will to take Juan out of this picture, even if she has to die to do so. She's ready to self-sacrifice all over again.

"No. I'm not a sloppy worker. She won't know if I don't want her to. Let her live her life thinking she is bound to you if that's what you want, BUT... .. If Juan falls, because I can't be sure that Varro won't go there..... at least you won't fall with her. You, your mate, will live. The world isn't done with you two yet; you have something to do for the future of your species." She nods at my stomach and my body stiffens at that, prickling all over my skin. My head coming to a halt from its racing thoughts.

"Meaning?" Colton's tight tone and furrowed glance her way heightens my tension as he too focuses on her tumble of words.

"Two tri-brids from strong gifted wolf parents.... An alpha witch and a Vampire Princess. We've never seen that happen before. Three species... all at odds with one another in turbulent times. Who knows what these two will achieve when it's their time to shine." Her words silence not only me and Colton, but the entire room as we absorb what she's saying, my head spinning with the reality that she's right. My children are a first of their kind. Witch, Vampire, and wolf, all rolled into one. I can't even imagine what gifts they may be born with and what their future will hold. With the Santo bloodline, and mine, they won't be weak that's for sure. I just hope their future isn't as littered with tragedy as mine has been.

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"My mom is just as important to their future as we are..... my father cannot fall. THAT is the priority tonight. His loyal, I don't give a s\*\*\* .... But he's mine. I'll put him in an isolation tank myself. My mom stays safe. Stays alive, no matter what! That's what's happening!" Colton's cold tone and determined frown, the increase in his heartrate make me anxious and I slide into his arms to calm him. His fury and fear engulfing me instantly. His body stiff and furious with the intensity of his heightened emotions.

"I'll do my best to ensure your wishes are met." Leyanne smiles, a smug sort of confidence that she carries annoyingly, most of the time, and then turns with a nod and finally leaves again as if she didn't really have a reason to linger. The room falling eerily still and quiet with her instant departure.

"Everyone with the program?" Colton turns to the subs and they all nod in silent and tense agreement. "Good, now get to it. Go." He gestures them to move, takes me in his arms and turns us to the door before pulling me with him so we leave first.

His body is stiff, and tense, and his heart rate is faster than normal. His somber expression and wired mood cause me to stay quiet and I allow him to lead the way into the hall and upstairs to Sierras wing as quickly as we can.

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I know how he's feeling. The whole sub pack had the same nervous energy as they filed out and it beats inside of me too. The fear, the apprehension. The knowing this is far from over and yet we are standing on a cliff, a precipice to something big. A start or maybe an end. I don't know, but I'm scared to death of what may come in the next few days.

## Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 108

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

The day passes like a blink and it feels like time is sand in my fingertips, that I can't stop from filtering away no matter how hard I try. Clinging on with anxious determination, yet it slips right through. Like an awful countdown to something I don't want but can't run from, and I know this is inevitable and everything before was leading us back to this moment.

To the mountain that was once our home, to the man that started everything and the fight we have been avoiding, to stay alive. Fate really did make sure that we had no choice but to come full circle, ready to battle and put things to rights in the oddest turn of events. The wars, the prophecy, the people involved in everything that came before.... we are all convening in the place where it began. The mountain. The Santo Valley.

Jasper is coming back to the place that I watched him walk away from with my family a decade ago, to avenge their death, whether I want him to or not. Everything different to what it was on the day of my awakening, yet it all falls into place so neatly. Tonight, is the end, but also the beginning. Problems can be resolved so we can start a life that we hoped for but didn't know how to achieve, minus the war, minus Juan's lingering shadow.

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We just need to get through, stay safe, hope for the best and try to protect as many of our pack as we can if we can't stop the attack completely.

"You okay?" Colton's voice pulls me out of my own head, sat in the balcony of our room where we came for some quiet time before we leave. The cool air trying to penetrate the consuming fire raging in my soul and doing little to calm its volcanic fury.

He spent hours downstairs earlier sorting things out, issuing commands, and sent me to nap. His overprotectiveness kicking in and it made me smile for a moment, amid the chaos. I wanted space and some time out while he got his thoughts in order, our details finalized after dinner with Sierra earlier, and as the time comes to go, my nerves are all over the place and my apprehension is almost choking me. I can't verbalize the anxiety but the whole house is reverberating with the tension.

"Yup." I clench my teeth trying to appear relaxed, but I know it's pointless. He can feel it, shares the emotion, sees it, knows me well enough to hear it, as he comes at me from behind. He hugs me into him by leaning into the chair where I'm sat and buries his face in my neck. A warm and necessary contact that melts my body in an instant. Sighing against me and I physically feel his tension ease too at the touch he tells me always makes him feel better. When everything is stripped away and it's only us like this, the world seems so much better.

"Nothing will get near you. I won't leave your side and Radar and the Luna's guard will flank you and my mom every step of the way. There won't be a second that you're not protected and not a single hair on your head will be harmed. It won't be like before; I won't leave you. I know you have to be there, and she wants to, but I honestly would rather you both stayed here where it's safe." Colton squeezes me to reinforce that he doesn't intend to let me out of his sight, and I relax, still so needy for his touch after the last week without him. It still feels like a dream and I am scared I wake up and he's not here. I close my eyes and savor every sensation that his presence brings me and find a kind of calm in knowing he's my safety net.

"You know I can't. If we have a chance of stopping Jasper and Lord Varro.... it's on me to make it happen. He needs to see me there. Jasper too, and maybe with Carmen there, it'll pull his focus and give me enough leverage to reason with him."

Colton pauses for a second and I can tell the gears in his head are working. Thinking this through. His stillness is re\*\*uring.

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"You really think he will reject Carmen from now until the end? I gave the order that nothing happens to him, no matter what. His life is bound to hers and he's your brother. They know he shouldn't be harmed. For both their sakes." He nuzzles against me again and traces a light kiss on my throat before pulling his fingers through my hair.

I warm at Colton's reminder that he is always thinking of every detail and yet I sigh too, because nothing is ever simple. Carmen, the girl I never thought I would ever give a crap about, is now in danger of dying and I don't want that to happen. Her life, my brother's life, matter equally to me now. And it's not because of their bond.

"His hatred of a bloodline is stupid. Even though I used to feel the same. You're not to blame for your father, and neither are the pack. I don't blame any of you anymore. They would have stopped him had they known; they're good people. His loyal should pay for their sins but not the rest of us and Jasper needs to see that. He needs to see that Carmen's innocent too, she's not involved, and until the second she told him she was Santo he wanted her. He accepted her and asked her to go with him. I don't think he wants to reject her; I think he's blinded and in turmoil and that when he has nothing left to avenge, maybe he'll see clearly." My words tumble out in an exasperated gush.

"I hope you're right, for her sake and ours. Jasper is your family, that makes him mine. His place is with his pack, and his mate, whether he accepts Santos or not. Carmen could do with a little good in her life. Not this... not rejection. Not after everything that she has gone through." He sighs and his sadness for her tinge son my mood too. Colton knows about the baby; he saw it when I shared all my memories, and I felt the pain then that he had for her suffering. The regret at pushing her aside and leaving her behind. As her ex-mate, as her friend, as her Alpha. Colton carries the guilt even now.

I know everything that happened before somehow makes it feel like this is her karma for her sins of the past, but I really don't want it to be. She's not who I thought she was and in the past few days I've begun to understand her a little, see through the armor. I care about her.

She's lonely. She pushes people away. She never had anyone except her mother who really needed her, and she was a burden that held her down with her own weakness. She never sheltered her as a mother should. She left her at a time when she needed her most. Carmen's in pain and I consider her my friend whether she agrees or not. Her actions when we went to find Leyanne showed me that there is more to her than I ever thought there could be. She loves in her own way and she doesn't deserve to live an unhappy life. She needs security and someone to lean on, to show her she can trust those around her and that she has worth.

"Baby, turn around. Come here." Colton releases me from his almost upside-down embrace and pulls my chair to coax me to him. Instead of spinning I get up and slide into his open arms as he pulls me close in a tight bear hug that envelopes my small body perfectly in his. Surrounded by muscle and that unique scent of Colton.

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"What?" I blink innocently closing my eyes automatically as I find my shelter, tucked under his chin and within that secure hold that can wipe away the darkest of days. Submerging and inhaling that familiar him. We haven't even spent one night together since I got him back and I long to be laid in the dark, nestled together, and back with him intimately as soon as this is over.

"I love you...." His hoarse voice reverberates through my body and a wave of deep emotion surges between us. Pain and need and a hint of regret. "I'm so sorry about everything.... not just this..... but every ounce of pain I've caused you since the moment we bonded. And then before... for everything you went through at the hands of my father." His voice breaks and tears fill my eyes at this sudden apology that I never needed from him.

"Colton, you don't..." I try to soothe him, but he shushes me with a squeeze.

"You're my life, my soul, my reason for getting up every day..... and I never even told you what you being pregnant means to me. I've brushed it off and focused on all of this for my own sanity and you don't deserve that. I'm sorry, baby. You deserve me making you secure, telling you how happy you make me, how happy I am that you're pregnant. And I am.... crazy happy. You have no idea." He gives me

an extra squeeze and almost winds me. "I wanna yell it from the rooftops, I'm that ecstatic about it. I'll do anything to protect you and my babies. I'll do everything in my power to give you the life you all deserve with me. You make my life complete." Colton pulls my chin up with a gentle finger under it and sinks a tender kiss on me, stealing my breath away and silencing every doubt and nerve in my body. The emptiness and pain of the last week finally fades away and I melt into him like hot liquid, so quick for the pa\*\*ion to ignite between us and I kiss him back with fervor. Pushing my tongue against his and notching up the desire into instant fire.

## Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 109

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

Colton surprises me, being he's the one who always wants to push things to s\*\* at any opportunity, by pulling back and cooling the tempo with a sudden pause. Toning down our make out session back to simmering sweetness.

"We shouldn't.... not until it's safe. Three months, right? Do we even know how far on you are?" He traces my kiss swollen lips with his thumb so gently that I can't be mad at him for stopping this. His eyes glittering with emotion as he focuses on my face and that smile bringing out his dimples, radiating genuine happiness. Always protecting what's his, always attentive to every detail.

"With everything that's happened, no. I haven't even had a chance to properly be seen by the Doctor." I admit with a blush, knowing that saying it allowed makes me sound uncaring.

"We have time. We could go down now... we could ..."

"No!" I catch his hands as he tries to la\*\*o me to move and pull him back a little aggressively. Instant tears hitting me for no apparent reason with his sudden need to get me downstairs to the med bay, and emotion overwhelms me so suddenly. A lurching of my heart and a neediness hitting full throttle.

"I need you here with me alone, for now. Just us, until it's time! I missed you and I need you to stay here. I don't want to go down there yet or deal with that.... not with this hanging over us, coloring it this way. After, I promise, but not now, please, Colton. When it's done, when we can focus on these..." It's almost a whining wail and tears blur my vision. I have no idea where this came from.

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I rub my hand over my flat abdomen and look down at the life I know is growing in there with a soft sniff to catch my stupid tears back where they belong. Colton patient and quiet as he listens to me and strokes my hair as a way to say he's not moving us. His eyes locked on mine and that mature and calm expression he gets when he knows I need something from him and he should take note.

“That’s when we do it. Whatever is needed, and it feels special, not rushed. For right now, I just need you to hold me and tell me that everything is going to be okay, like you always do. That we can do this. That we will get through this.” It’s what I needed most when I didn’t have him. His dependency, his solid confidence, and ability to make everything right in my world. Colton always finds a way. I needed my protector and now he’s here, I want to let go of everything and go back to being sheltered for a moment.

“Baby.” Colton slides me back against him and tucks my head under his chin with a large palm, once again wrapping me up in his strong arms against that chiseled body and applies a little reas\*\*uring pressure. “You know I will always do whatever you need. It’s my life’s mission to make you happy.” He soothes me, stroking back my hair and makes me feel like everything is safe once more. That he won’t slip away the second I close my eyes and that we’re not being rushed to part anytime soon.

I don’t even know where this sudden insecurity sprung from. I was fine earlier when he went downstairs to make sure everyone knew the plan and talk to the pack, but it’s maybe because the sun is starting to fade, and I’m scared of what’s coming. What we have to do. Emotional because of what he said and how he’s being. His apology felt like something more.

I almost failed in the forest. I wasn’t as strong or as able as previously and I almost died. I was useless, and even with Carmen and Sierra trying to stay with me, I wasn’t what I thought I would be. I disappointed myself. I guess somewhere in the back of my mind I thought being some sort of prophecy meant I was invincible, and nothing could pull me down, yet out there, facing my own mate... I couldn’t fight him like this. Pregnant, weak, restrained. It was pathetic.

I would have died and so would he; our babies, Sierra, if Leyanne hadn’t broken the curse when she did. I was so close and now there’s a fear deep inside of me that tonight, I will only let my mate and my pack down. I’m not worthy, not in the way I thought I was meant to be. I don’t know if the prophecy really has the right wolf after all. I think after the events of the last week, a part of me is afraid that Colton will disappear again when we go back out there. That somehow, he isn’t safe and that maybe we might lose our pack in some freaking magical way again and I’ll be just as powerless. If that happens, I feel like it will all be my fault, because this all started with my mother and then me.

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I grip him so tightly and hug him half to death, burying my face against that familiar feel and his strong chest and just hold on to the last ounces of sanity.

“Lorey?... hey?...” Colton nudges me on top of my head with his chin and it draws me out of my dark cavern of safety, pulling back so I can gaze up at him. My eyes wet with dampness, even though I didn’t think I was crying, and he smiles at me. So sweetly, full dimples and white teeth, charm and s\*\*iness personified and it makes me smile too.

“What?” I sniff out, so close to properly sobbing and melt a little at how goeey my mate makes me with one perfectly pulled cute boy gesture.

"I believe in you." He says it with authority, and I realize he has been absorbing my fear, my doubts, and read me like a book. Knowing what was going on in my brain even while I was trying to hold it in. I sigh and sink against him once more.

"I wish I did too."

"Hey. Have a little faith in the fates, right? Isn't that what you told me. That they put us on these paths because they have a plan." He pulls me back again and slides his hand between us and cups my abdomen softly. Gently moving it in a soft rub that sends goosebumps across my skin. "They most definitely have a plan. They wouldn't have let this happen otherwise, not now, unless they know this is going to be okay." His words soothe me, knowing it makes sense, and I exhale with heaviness.

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"I guess." My hand moves to cover his hand as he laces my fingers between his and pulls them under to fully entangle them without leaving my stomach.

"Leave the fighting to us. Your only job is to talk to Jasper and Varro, from a safe distance, behind the shield of your mate and your pack. Nothing else. I don't want to see you lift one finger to do anything except that. Swear to me Lorey!" He bumps his head against mine and locks his beautiful coffee brown eyes on mine, both sighing in sync. Making me powerless to disobey or reject the cotton wool padding he is already wrapping around me now he knows about the babies.

"I swear." What else can I do. I know myself that I'm vulnerable now and that fighting isn't going to keep these children safe. My powers drain quickly, the forest showed me that, and healing is something I have to rely on Colton and his mother for if I get hurt. I saw how easily we got separated and I can't be too confident that the same won't happen at the mountain. Even though I know Colton will do anything in his power to make sure he stays with me. It's why he has brought the Luna's guard back into play. In case anything goes wrong and he can't shadow me like he wants. Always thinking of the details and covering his angles.

He knows just like I do that this is going to change everything and there's a chance that some of our pack won't see tomorrow.

## Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 110

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

I steady my hands on my lap and screw my eyes shut forcing myself to calm my racing heart and breathe as slowly as I can, nerves eating me inside out and I am trying not to show it.

Sat in the dark interior of one of our trucks, in the rear, listening and waiting patiently as the sun goes down. Colton and the twins are out running the perimeter of where we wait to get as close to the mountain as possible.

We have a convoy of a dozen trucks all nestled together in a deep dark forest on the far eastern side of the valley below the mountain. A place that took us half the day to get to because of our long detour to go all the way around in a wide berth to a part that Juan can't see from his position. We needed to be close before sunset and yet we needed to be hidden in case Juan got any ideas about starting a battle before the real threat arrived.

We know from some of our pack that the mountain too had been released from the fog spell at the same time as we were and their confusion and exhaustion has hindered them enough to make it easier for us to get within mere miles of the manor. I am guessing Juan and his people have no memory of the week of their lives they lost, because everyone here was affected and no one had the memories left behind like we did in our protected shell. As far as they know, they woke up after a second of seeing the fog and it was gone. Some know more has happened due to linking to family in our pack but none of those people would dare report to Juan. He would know then that they were contacting us and be seen as traitors. I guess in a way, it's an advantage for us as that most of them are dazed and confused and have no clue about the danger heading their way.

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The only upside to Varro's army are that halflings can only walk in the dark. Leyanne told us the pure bloods don't need darkness or to hide from sunlight. They can walk around plain as day am\*\*\* us if they desire, but only don't because they cannot conceal their teeth or blood red eyes. Varro's army are all halflings, so we don't even have to worry about the possibility.

We had time to be ready and sit here waiting for the inevitable, watching the mountain for signs as the light fades and tension rises around us. We've seen nothing so far and I jump when the door is yanked open suddenly and Domi hops inside with a mischievous grin.

"Sorreeee..... I was in stealth mode." He winks and Remo and Colton appear behind him, leaving the rear doors open and exposing the next truck to view, bringing some needed illumination from the fading sky. We have been silently inside here; Me, Sierra, Radar and the Luna's guard with Meadow up front in the driver seat, just waiting. No one speaking because we are lost in our heads and focusing on what's to come. The witch is out front, standing meters away and staring at the vast mountain looming up in the sky to our left and has been for hours. Gazing into space with a huge black raven sat on her shoulder. She makes an impressive visual with her long-hooded cloak and boho style swaying skirts that move around her ankles in the breeze.

"It's like everything has stopped. I don't know what the hell is going on but the valley, the manor, the guards. No one is moving, no one is doing anything. The villages are almost dead and yet we could feel the pack. We could hear them, but it's so quiet and peaceful I guess they have no idea whatsoever that Vampires are



even coming." Domi slides beside me and props his feet up on a bag sat in the central area of the van.

"Didn't anyone warn them after the links returned?" Sierra blurts out, casting a side eye towards me and then Colton and he shakes his head.

"We forbade the pack from pa\*\*ing on the message in case it got to dad and he did something that might hinder us. He will know when they arrive, and by then, we should be ready to protect those we need to protect."

"We did manage to figure out that the pack is split in two," Remi is the one to voice the intel this time as he stretches and flops down on one of the metal benches we are occupying and sighs loudly.

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"Village that Juan built in the valley looks like a prison camp now. It seems everyone who stood against him is confined to a fenced off barrack of sorts."

"Juan and his loyal are holed up in the manor and have a perimeter fence around most of the valley, making it more like an army base than the home we knew. It's not hard to scale but they have loudspeakers all around, like maybe they have been using the weapon to counteract vampires in the same way we have." Domi finishes his brothers' sentence and Colton looks lost in thought, gazing at me without focus as he visualizes what they saw.

"It's not the home we knew. It's ..... he's lost his mind and our people are more like prisoners, than pack. It was hard to see it and stay away." Colton's pain erupts in my own heart as I feed from his emotions and he locks eyes on me properly, a sheen to their surface as his raw pain shines through.

"We always knew he was capable of so much more than we had seen. I guess without having to keep up an act, he finally showed his true self." Sierra bites out harsh words, her voice rasping as she makes it clear that she detests that man with a vengeance. She may still be bonded to him, but her mind and soul have a venom that overshadows any love she may be forced to carry. Even bonded to a mate and made to care, we can still harbour resentment and something close to real hatred when a relationship breaks down. Maybe it's because of the love that the anger and hurt can become so much more potent when we no longer want our chosen mate.

I catch Radar shifting slightly and pick up on his tense stature and the way he keeps his eyes on the floor even when sat right by Sierra's side. He has been her shadow since she came down from her room this morning and stuck by my side. Radar as attentive as always but yet still cannot look his Rema in the eye.

"We think we know which direction they'll come. We rounded as far as we could to scope out without being seen and we think they will head in from the west point. There's a shaded forest that leads in far from the outer roads. A trail wide enough and long enough to conceal them at first. Everywhere else is too open unless they take this route the way we did." Colton continues briefing us.

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“And if they do?” my heart pounces into my throat and I lock my eyes on my mate, fear rising up in my stomach that we may encounter them head on and intercept before they hit the valley at all. It may be better that way for those in the valley, but we are hoping on added numbers from the villagers if we get there first.

“Then we have you. And the witch. And the hope we end this without a fight.” Colton winks at me, showing a confidence I know he isn’t really feeling, and it does nothing to console me.

“That is not going to happen, Master Santo.” Leyanne’s voice wafts our way as she climbs into the back of the truck and all eyes are diverted to her. The twins immediately go all gooey eyed and turn to her adoringly but are met with a deadpan blank gaze as she wafts past them to nestle firmly in the centre. Leyanne seems intolerant of any kind of lust aimed her way from males.