

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 141

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"Oh, the fun begins. I hope you don't mind my bringing in my right-hand man. Darrius will take charge of our hostage once he's handed over. Don't want an escapee I might have to chase down again in these newly peaceful lands." Varro's chipper tone and almost joking dialogue sits heavy on me, and get's only glares in response from my sub mates.

"What are you going to do with him?" Meadow pipes up, cutting the tension with her sharp question. Hand on her hip and throwing Varro some serious shade. I can feel the distrust, subtle contempt, am*** all of them. The vampire in our midst isn't being welcomed at all but they know better than to show open disrespect given the circ**stances. They are behaving for the sake of peace, but not one of them has anything but hatred in their hearts for this species.

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"Death eventually, but who knows. I have a lot of pent-up aggression over the loss of my love and child... I have two decades worth of anger directed his way." Varro is completely uninterested in their obvious dislike and goes back to admiring his nails.

"Not here. If you kill him then do it far away from us, we don't need any more blood of our kind here. I don't want to tarnish these walls anymore than they are already." Colton turns away, hiding the conflict of his facial expressions and I sense his intense pain.

"I thought some of you would happily stand and watch an execution? No?" Varro smirks, knowing fine well this is cutting my mate deep, and Colton turns and walks off; holding himself in check as his emotions start to unravel. I know he's conflicted. It's only natural given that he once loved and idolized his father. I can't even begin to understand what he feels, even though I too am getting a small amount of it.

"Some of us would, but as he was our alpha, it's not right." Meadow comes to my side and links her hand in mine, pulling me to her side and throws a wary glance Colton's way.

"Here!" The main doors are thrown open, disrupting us, as a heavy figure is tossed into the center of our haphazard group. It's so fast it catches me off guard and we all stare as Juan's bound figure slides across the floor in a dramatic fashion. Sliding to an abrupt halt, as he stops in an almost center stage area of our clearing.

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Bound and gagged, wriggling for his freedom and yet the only emotions coming from that pitiful figure are rage and disgust. I can taste it even from here. He has not a single ounce of remorse or regret. There's no fear in what's to be done to him but rather outrage that we would treat him this way. Juan is insane. I just can't believe he hid it so well for so long while we all lived under his reign.

Darrius walks casually towards Varro and gives him a low bow. Bending and staying put as a sign of respect and I get the chills from his presence in a way Varro has never caused. Darrius is definitely the kind of vampire you know the horror stories originated from. He doesn't have to do a thing to be intimidating.

"The witch held up her end of the bargain. She said she will come to Ladrikmorra for payment in a few days. She isn't needed here anymore." He straightens up, still keeping his eye on the floor much like our pack does to me and Colton.

I blink at Darrius in surprise and then glance at Meadow in confusion. It would be nice if the witch told us goodbye at least, or some sort of debrief after helping us these past days. She can't just have left without so much as a 'see ya'. It actually angers and hurts me to know she just finished her task and left without a word, as though we meant nothing to her.

"Leyanne never changes. Swoops in to do the bare minimum when she feels others are being blatantly thick, then leaves without a word, off to another adventure. Don't expect sweet farewells or tears, Alora. That witch is three thousand years of bad mood and loner attitude. Be glad she did anything to help or was pleasant in anyway. She is notorious for not giving any kind of rat's ass." Varro casts me a smile that doesn't meet his eyes and waves away my frown as though I am being too sensitive to this.

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I'm a little gutted, because I thought we meant more than this. This isn't even truly over yet officially, and she just swoops off into the darkness before sunup.

"To the problem at hand. Now, what are we going to do with you Mr Santo?" Varro turns his full attention to Juan, eyes locking on his prey as they glow to an almost unreal red that finally sends the shivers through my soul. A change in his features as he scans his prey properly and the whole room around us turns deathly silent.

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I can't tear my eyes away from Juan, as he sits helpless in his binds on the dirty floor. All eyes around the room on him, except Colton's. He's turned away and seems unable to bring himself to look at all. A sense of desolation swirling around him like a dense fog. I sense Sierra and Radar entering the room from the main door, followed by more pack wolves and realize we now have an attentive

audience to our ex-alpha's fate. It feels like we are hitting some sort of crescendo in a power struggle that began long ago in this very house.

"You think you've won, just because you have me here?" Juan sneers my way, eyes amber and full of hatred yet he stays in human form, and I wonder why. He's stronger as a wolf and more likely to make a break for it that way, so I don't get why he's sitting human and even seems strangely calm and submissive. I ignore his attempts to bait me and keep my expression blank as though I couldn't care less about his predicament. To me this is already over.

"I think you misunderstand the meaning of winning, my dearest fellow." Varro snorts and walks to him confidently, tall and straight and exuding confidence. Swaggering as his dark robes trail behind him and he suddenly strikes me as an Asian warrior of old. Long dark hair, tailored clothes, under a thick opulent cloak. Like some historical Joseon drama villain and all that's missing is a sword. He's so different to Darrius, with his modern tailoring and short and clean-shaven style. He has old world about him and yet it somehow suits a Lord of the vampires to be this way.

"Pahh.... Look around. I may not be their alpha anymore, but I've left them cowering and forever to remember who I am. The greatest power of Lychan in a long time. I will go down in the history books." Juan smirks, shrugging his large shoulders and seems oblivious to reality. Completely unaffected by the fact he is a prisoner and about to face a fate worse than death from here on in. I baulk at the fact that maybe Juan was always this mentally unstable and yet somehow only got worse as power went to his head.

"We call that delusion. A tale of what not to be." Colton chips in, low and almost unheard, and finally turns this way. His eyes slow to trace a route to his father's figure and he looks away again the second they land on him. The pain etched for a moment on that handsome face. My heart constricts for him, knowing how much of a war must be going on his mind over this.

"Is it? I'll go down in history for"

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"Destroying your pack, ruining your own home, losing the trust and loyalty of many? Which part of that is admirable? You'll be remembered as insane." Colton barks right back, cutting him off and finding strength in his own anger. Unveiled hatred beginning to show once more as his guilt is faded out by his father's arrogant words.

"I'm the king of these people. I say, they do. I growl, they cower. That's power!" Juan can't let go. So lost in his own insanity and blinded by what he thought he had. I can only sigh at how far gone is the mind of a man that the Santo pack once respected.

"Enough, this is boring. I came here to settle a debt, and you don't need to be able to talk to do that." Varro halts all talk with a sharp tone, his eyes aglow so brightly, they almost illuminate his cheeks with a red tint. His fierce on show as he nods to Darrius and in an instant the black figure disappears from my left side.

A flash, a flick of wind, so speedy I almost miss it and he's holding Juan's head back in a powerful grip as he forces open his jaw and cuts out his tongue with a glinting dagger.

It's instant, blink and you miss it, fast. And yet so overwhelmingly gruesome as Juan screams and gargles and Darrius makes quick work of the task he was ordered to do. I gasp inwardly so fast I start to choke and yet can't pull myself away from seeing what's being done. Blood pouring down Juan's face as he's released to wriggle and squirm on the floor, with muffled wails and gasps of agony. Tears stream down his face and I feel the wolves around me reel back in shock at what was just done without any hesitation or verbal command. Silence heavy, emotions chaotic, and I'm unable to tear my gaze away from this gruesome sight.

Darrius throws the dismembered flesh to Varro in a casual toss as though it's nothing but a caught fish. Varro catches it between sharp talon fingernails and holds it aloft in a mocking manner, giving it a triumphant shake in Juan's direction. A smile spreading on that face that changes softer features into something terrifying and cruel that for the first time instills a sense of fear in me. He's completely immune to Juan's pain and bellowing and in fact seems to take pleasure from it. The shock around me is unified. No one moves an inch and yet silence is deafening from all my subs and mate. No Lychan would ever do something like this, but I guess our species are far apart.

"Life will be quieter from here on in, I think. Don't you agree, Darrius?" Varro scoffs, his tone jocular and he tosses the tongue in his hand aside as though discarding trash, wiping his blood smeared hand on his leg and brushes his nails against the fabric to wipe them clean. He tosses his hair back with a head flick and returns to that commanding stance once more.

"Are you going to kill him or torture him slowly?" Sierra appears by my side, her voice shaky and her emotions taut. She seems detached on the surface, but I can feel her pain and fear from within. As much as she hates Juan, she has never had the stomach to watch suffering. She's as rattled by what we just witnessed as I am, despite the years of battles and deaths of hybrids around us.

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"Oh, he'll live for now. In pain, and torment. Why don't you come along and play a little, seeing as you carry as much despisal for him as I do. You are the former Luna, are you not? This worthless sc**s mate?"

"I have no desire to watch him suffer like that. I'm not him. He's no longer my mate and nothing to do with me anymore." Sierras eyes glaze over, and she turns away from the pitiful sight. Radar coming to comfort her and understanding that she has no stomach for this. As Luna you are bred to feel the pain of your Lychans, even the likes of Juan. Whether you want to or not. Even me, right now, after everything, I feel sorrow for what I'm witnessing and want it to end. I don't want to expose my mind to this.

"You mutts really don't do vengeance and revenge all that well, do you? One whiff of a peaceful end and you are happy to let it all go. It's rather

disappointing." Varro walks towards Juan and then circles him, much like a lion looking at it's dying pray, eyes on that still twitching body who has now quietened to muffled whines.

I still don't understand why he's not turning Lychan to heal himself, and spot the weird golden handcuffs holding his wrists together behind his back. Ornate, jeweled, solid gold, and strangely beautiful for a set of hand binds. Varro catches my eye and follows my line of sight with a sudden smile to break up that intimidating expression. His whole demeanor switching in a flash back to that almost gentlemanly presence.

"Nice, aren't they? Bewitched little trophies given a long time ago by our friendly neighborhood witch. They stop immortals from being able to use their gifts. He's basically human with these on." He chuckles to himself as though he finds it highly amusing.

That explains it, and why his pain and suffering from here on in will be worse than hell. I doubt Varro intends to take them back off at any point unless death is imminent, and I don't even want to know why Leyanne would gift Lord of the vampires something like this. Even if it was hundreds of years ago. I can't figure her out at all.

"Can you just take him and leave, I don't want to see this." Colton finally breaks, his voice ravaged and husky, and his eyes ambering as he fails to control his inner turmoil. He's still standing on the sidelines with our quiet pack. Watching, waiting, all holding their breaths for this to be over already.

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"Okay, okay. I can read the room. I see you don't have the stomach for this. I thought you would like a show. Never mind.... Darrius!" Varro clicks his fingers and that black shrouded figure shoots back to Juan's side. Another flash move that is almost missed by the human eye and it's not hard to see how much faster than wolves these pure breeds are. Darrius is moving at the speed of light. If we had gone head-to-head with them in the wars. None of us would be here now. It's a sobering thought.

He hauls Juan up to his feet with little effort, like he's a sack of feathers, his body dirty and scr***d up in it's nakedness. He has blood all over his lower face, neck, and chest, as his wound continues to ooze and I finally see the defeat on his face. The emptiness of his now brown eyes and the pale pallor of a body undergoing pain. His focus downcast and pathetic and I hate the fact it pains me in the chest and pushes my empathy out to the forefront. This man who started everything, destroyed it all, and I feel sorry for him in this moment.

It's pathetic really.

It makes me feel weak and stupid, and I flinch as the grating of movement around me draws my eyes to the silent onlookers. All have turned their faces down and can no longer meet Juan's figure either. That feeling in me is unanimous around me and the hearts of many who once followed him loyally, are conflicted and in pain. Lychans aren't inherently bad or cruel.

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"What about me?" Jasper's voice pulls me out of my head, and I turn to see him leaning against the door frame of the room. His stance is casual, uninterested in this gory scene, but he's oozing aggressive energy and I catch Carmen hiding behind subs nearby and trying not to look his way. Her focus is all on him and I know what kind of agony it can be. She's probably the only wolf in here whose head and heart isn't on Juan in this moment.

"I know dear boy. I promised you some play time with this object, but I feel your time is better spent guarding your sister. I don't think she would appreciate you getting this one's blood on your hands if you are to have a future in this pack of dogs." Varro shrugs, a fake apologetic smirk on his face that grates on me.

"Stop calling us that." Carmen bites out from her almost hide hole behind the twins and recoils back with a flinch, covering her impulsive mouth and shrinks away. Knowing she should stay quiet and hidden. Jasper flinches at her voice, barely noticeable but I see it, and yet remains steadfast in staring at Juan. I can feel his attempts not to sway or be pulled by her bond which are affecting him as much as her. He's stubborn and dumb as hell, but he can't escape his feelings for his mate.

"I won't stay here until I have had a hand in his demise." Jasper retorts, pushing off the wall to stand upright, adamant, but Varro shakes his head.

"No. We are leaving and you're staying. Darrius isn't going to shield you anymore. Your time with us is over. That's what was agreed with your sister and in the long term will be a much better arrangement for all of us."

"Don't I get a say?" Jasper snorts, casting a glare my way as though this is somehow all on me and I can do nothing but stare back blankly, praying that he will accept this and in time come to be okay with it. I can't imagine what he must be feeling but I know one thing for sure. My brother needs to come home and begin to heal. He needs to accept his fate and his mate and come back to his pack.

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"No, you don't. You do as you're told." This time it's Darrius with that tone of command, and despite Varro being the lord and master here, it's Darrius' piercing gaze of blood rest that makes my brother lower his head and bite his words. A submissive puppy in just one sharp verbal instruction.

"I will give you one final parting blow though. Just don't aim for death! Take that as a consolation prize." Varro adds his words in a childlike, mocking manner, an eyebrow raise, and a wry smile, and Jaspers head shoots back up. A glance between the three men as I assume they link in their own minds and Jasper

suddenly visually relaxes. His expression from thunder to lighter in a flash. Whatever was said in private alters his entire visual mood.

"I'll make it count." Jasper smirks, paces forward at speed to where Darrius is holding Juan up and doesn't hesitate in throwing a punch at Juan's abdomen. Claws appearing boldly mid thrust and delivered with a powerful Lychan blow of pure intent. He pierces Juan's flesh, digging all five talons deep into his lower abdomen and twisting cruelly with hatred to really extend the suffering he just inflicted. I tense and gasp inwardly at this violent encounter, suddenly stiff as a board as my emotions bristle and I don't recognize this person as my brother. Jasper was always so gentle.

Juan bellows at being impaled, squirms and tries to pull away as they stay connected in the worst way and I can't look anymore. I turn away and cover my ears to muffle out the sounds. Sudden nausea rising inside of me as Colton finds me from behind and pulls me against him to comfort my obvious distress. Maybe he too needed it as much as me as he wraps himself around me and holds me tight in that safe embrace. He knows he can only watch and never intervene.

I can feel the tension in the room around me heighten as my pack tries not to react to what they are watching. Shifting of feet, turning of heads, and I glimpse Sierra by my side as a tear rolls down her cheek and she burrows her face against Radar's chest. Looking for the solace in much the way I am from her own mate. We aren't heartless.

"Enough. Anymore and he'll die. Darrius take him, I'll follow." Varro breaks the chilling atmosphere and pouts an end to what Jaspers doing, and I breathe in relief as Darrius makes fast work of dragging his victim away and out of the room before we can do anything about it. Hauling my brothers claws out with a yank. Fast and efficient, stronger than most Lychan without even trying. That dark figure will haunt my nightmares in the worst kinds of ways from here on in.

"I'll send word when the treaty is ready. Daughter..... we will meet again in better surroundings and pleasanter circumstances. I take my leave. Take care of yourself and my grandchildren." Varro bows my way and walks towards me. Suddenly all smiles and Mr Pleasant.

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I flinch as an unexpected hand catches mine, raising it towards his face as he places a feather light kiss on the back of my fingers. An old-fashioned gesture as his warm skin hits mine, his lips smooth like my own. I blink in confusion, at both the gesture and the fact he isn't cold like the hybrids putrid touch was, and I'm too shocked to actually react. I didn't expect any sort of affectionate contact, especially not in this scenario. I'm startled enough to be mute and unmoving.

Colton shifts uneasily on his feet, pulling me backwards so we step away from Varro, drawing my attention and sense to how much he dislikes anyone touching his mate. Even the man who is my biological father, and I relax knowing his readiness to battle is right there lingering around me, ready to protect me in a flash. Not that I feel Varro is even a threat. Even after what he just did to Juan.

"We'll be waiting." Colton churns out, that sulky tone of green-eyed monster in there, a hint of revulsion, and all I can do is sigh. I understand his mistrust and I know he can't help it. There's a lot to unpack in his feelings towards my father.

My eyes stray to the pool of thick dark blood on the floor and Jaspers still standing figure right beside it. He's watching us and yet his eyes keep straying to the left where I know Carmen is. He's fighting himself against it and instead settles on glaring at me instead. This whole thing seems surreal and suddenly I am bone achingly exhausted and I don't want to be here anymore. It's starting to feel like a dream as fatigue takes over my brain and I will for everyone to move so we can all go home.

Varro does a small scan of the room, turning lightly and nodding as though a goodbye to everyone present. Strangely respectful for a man who runs a kingdom of beings who slaughtered our kind for the past two decades. He's oddly polite.

There's a weird chill in the air, because this is the craziest night and the weirdest setting. I can't get my head around the fact that it's really over and all of this somehow seems so anticlimactic. No one moves, no one makes any kind of facial response as all eyes fix on the vampire lord as he makes his exit in a smooth manner. Leaving without flair or dramatics, just disappearing into what's left of the night. Jasper flinches as he steps out the door, as though longing to follow and immediately turns his eyes to Colton instead.

His facial expressions are tight, eyes narrowed, brow furrowed. His amber eyes glowing with his unsettled angry mood as he locks onto my mate. Stance full on aggressive warrior, waiting for any excuse to turn rogue.

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"So.... What's to be done with me? Don't expect this to be an easy transition where I fall in line and become one of your pack. I don't recognize any kind of alpha and the only reason I'm here, is because my true lord told me to stay and watch over my sister."

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I watch my brother across the room, listless, and lost about how to approach him. Colton is pacing around, hands gesturing in an angry manner as he thrashes out whatever dialogue the two of them are having and Jasper keeps glaring his way. Arms folded across his chest, face tight, expression grim in an 'I'm not interested' kind of pose and watching as my mate talks about what happens from here on in. Whether my brother like sit or not, he's stuck with us and a life in this pack. I should be over there, contributing, coaxing, but I couldn't stand it any longer.

Sensing Jasper's pain and reluctance to start to let go of a decade of ingrained hatred and hurt was overwhelming me to the point of sheer exhaustion. His head

full of vengeance and blind belief that the only cure to his emptiness is to somehow make the entire Santo pack suffer. To never return to being Lychan am*** a pack who would embrace him as family again. He sees only a name and a bloodline, and the details of the past do not seem to matter. I don't even know how to begin to get through to him at all when he's so far brainwashed into seeing us as only the enemy. He's forgotten his own roots, his own needs as a wolf. Nothing I said dented that giant bubble of refusal that he shrouds around him like an impenetrable fort of darkness. I know it's a form of self-defense but it's not good for him.

He's had years of conditioning, brewing over this pain and fury, with a daily dose of 'we will seek revenge' from his vampire carers. A diet of constant hate and plans of war. He can't comprehend any other kind of existence or path. Can't bring it together in his mind to latch onto the fact that there could be another way to end his suffering. His own wolf gifts are dampened, and his mind turned dark with only the goal of his own vendetta in sight. Lychans aren't built that way and it goes against our very nature to hold onto something so self-destructive. It's no wonder he's so conflicted.

How do you unravel all of that and prove to him that he can live a normal and happy life once again, am*** his own kind, if he just tries? That he has a mate willing to come to him and help him through the worst of the confusion. She's within his reach. Carmen knows the kind of pain and suffering he is experiencing too. She's part of the bigger picture with her own wounds and pain and could be a healing balm to him if he just lets her. Just like he could be what she finally needs to start to repair her own scars.

He needs a ther*****, not Colton issuing orders and his imprinted mate hiding in the shadows for fear of rejection for a second time. Both are dealing with him in the wrong way.

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I'm no better though. A decade apart and he's not exactly the brother of the past that I loved so much and looked up to. We have both grown and changed in our own way and I am at as much of a loss as how to deal with this version of him. The one who was raised by creatures we warred with for twenty years is merely an image who looks like the Jasper I loved.

Carmen wanders in, drawing my eye, and watches them for a second by the door, for the third time with that look of unreadable blank all over her face that hints she is burying intense emotion again. She's turned inward since Jasper appeared and seems like she keeps running away from any kind of face on interaction with him. I know this is what she does. Avoids confrontation when it's painful and deflects to other things. Her emotions are all over the place and even at this distance I can taste the heartbreak and indecision about what she should do. She blinks his way, eyes damp with unshed tears and then turns and walks back outside once more. My heart sinks knowing she is afraid to approach him but every instinct in her keeps pulling back to him. The agony of imprinting and the fact it only gets worse the longer you deny it.

I watch Jasper for a moment and see only a subtle tensing of his shoulders as he senses her come and go. I know he will smell her scent at that distance as he's so in tune with everything that is her since the imprint. He can't deny it's hurting him too, but he's stubborn as hell, maybe more so than Colton ever was, and I think it's going to take more than Carmen shuffling in to peek to make a dent in his armor. She needs to get up close and personal and make it impossible for him not to touch her, cling to her, and want her so badly it turns his head inside out. That's what broke Colton, and maybe it's how I should tackle my brother. Force them into close proximity. Use the bond and it's sheer overwhelming urge to bring him out of his own head and chase after the one destined for him.

The subs are clearing up the fallout of a long night of battle so we are pretty empty in this great hall now. Varro and Darrius are gone, and the hybrids too. Outside is eerily quiet and as a new day dawns, it feels like last night was nothing but a flitting dream. The witch has vanished into thin air and that is still grating on my nerves.

The sun began to rise about an hour ago and just like we expected, turned all the remains of our enemy to dust as they blew away on a gentle wind as if they were never lain there at all. Leaving only our own dead to contend with. Leaving the hanging sadness and silence in the area around this desolate place as we begin the long process of bringing this valley back to something resembling a home. Taking away the evidence of our battle and leaving only the pain of the fallout. I just need one thing to go better today so I feel like this all wasn't so pointless.

"Jasper." I call out with hesitation and only a half-formed plan in my head, but it's like grasping at straws. I just have to take the plunge and go for it. My brother is on top of the to do list, because it's one of the problems which is right here in front of me at the moment.

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Both Colton and Jasper stop their combative narrative at one another, and turn heads this way with a look of 'what?'. So similar in build and pose, both oozing subtle aggression as they hit head on with equally stubborn personalities.

"Go help Carmen scout outside and take in how much damage has been done to the perimeter fences and overall buildings now it's light. She knows this place well and was part of the permanent patrol. Get her to pick out immediate repairs needing taken care of." I try not to give away any kind of expression and look deadly serious, seeing Colton narrow his eyes at my absurd command. He already sent Meadow out to scout and report on damages that need fixed first. And with our Vampire war now hanging to a peace treaty, it's not like we are in any imminent danger that requires the fences anymore.

"I'm sure it doesn't take two, she can probably do it alone." Jasper digs his heels in, bristling up with attitude, eyes narrowing at me, but it only serves to push the stubborn little sister out of her hiding place.

"Like it or not, now you're in this pack and by my side to command. I am your Luna, and you were told to protect me. Do I have to make my mate alpha tone you to fall in line? I'm tired and hungry and I want to go home, so help out and we can do

that before sun's fully up. Do your part!" I grit my teeth, knowing this isn't likely to win him over. He never responded well to bossy and commanding in the past, but he always did have a soft spot for me and wrapping him around my little finger used to be my forte.

"Whatever." He 'pfffts' under his breath, throws his arms down to his side and marches off towards the main door, sulking visibly and with a glare that could melt steel. It seems despite his standing against my mate, I do have some more sway at times. There's hope for him if I can play his heartstrings a little more. He obviously still cares enough about me.

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I link Carmen quickly and tell her to meet her patrol partner outside the front door pronto. If I tell her who it is, she'll run. It's better to let them thrash it out face to face. She will find out soon enough and I know she won't disobey me, even if she doesn't want to be around him.

"You really think that's going to work?" Colton is by my side in a flash, his own fatigue waving my way. Catching my hand and yanking mt to him with that edge of possessiveness because we haven't had physical contact enough lately.

"No, but it's a start. We just have to keep throwing them together, so it breaks down his defenses. Much like what happened to you. Weakened by your love of me when up and in your face." I turn and jab him in the abdomen with my pointer finger, smiling naughtily at his 'ooft' response. Smug with my immature plan.

"Hey, that was completely different. I wasn't against you being my mate, in fact I more than wanted it." He rubs his stomach and bops my nose with his thumb in a cute boy gesture. His dimples come out to play as he smiles softly at me.

"Tomatoe, Tomato..... He needs to keep being affected by the bond, so he stops acting like a schmuck. This is the only way to get them side by side."

"My mates a devious one, isn't she?" Colton slides behind me and wraps his arms around my waist, nuzzling his chin into the crook of my neck and settles himself comfortably around me before eliciting a heavy sigh. The familiar safe haven, and it makes my skin goosebump all over from his touch. Never will I ever not have a full body reaction to my gorgeous other half. He's part of my soul. "I can't believe it's over. It doesn't seem real yet. I feel like we're dreaming and I'm yet to wake up." He sighs again, somewhat bereft. His body deflating slowly, his energy waning and I am more of a pillar to prop against than just a hug. I can feel his very essence fading away and a sign that my warrior needs time to rest and recharge. He carries so much on his plate and a night of crazy battles and self-healing while being weakened by a weapon have taken their toll.

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"Except when we wake up, we still have funeral rites to carry out in the droves. A valley to begin to rebuild and a pack split across two homes. It's not really the end, but just the beginning." Mt heart bleeds at that thought. That the worst is over in terms of danger, but the emotional battle is still ahead of us and may be worse than what last night was.

"It's going to take time, and patience. So many of the valley wolves no longer believe or trust in me as Alpha, or us as a pack. The grief, the pain of everything that has happened has left it's mark and we have so much work to do to bring Santo back to what it once was."

"No.... we won't be bringing it back to what it was! We're starting over and building a new pack, with new ideals, and a new structure. A new moral code and transparency. We'll build a real family pack this time with no more secrets or lies or unfair hierarchy. Where hybrids won't have to hide in shame or be outcast for anything." I lay my head back on his chest and close my eyes to shut out the ruin around us and excel in his safe and warm embrace instead. Trying to visualize the valley of old, when my mother still walked these paths, before I knew anything of suffering and heartbreak and the power struggle of adults. A time when I was happier and nature around us seemed fuller, more vibrant, and life had less problems. I want to create that childhood feeling in our pack again, that sense of peace and tranquility.

"You really have grown into the Luna I hoped you would be." Colton lifts his chin and kisses me lightly on my jaw under my ear. Igniting a new wave of tingles and my body starts to react to his and I have to push it away. Squeezing me for a moment before relaxing back to where he was.

"I never thought I would ever think or feel like a Luna, yet here we are. The pack is always at the forefront of my thoughts now. All that's left is to build, repair, heal..... and welcome our children into this world."

"Hmmm" he answers softly, agreeing and sounding as tired as me with the thought of what's to come next.

"Colton, Alora.... Go back to the manor and rest. We can watch over here and take care of things." Meadow pulls us out of our intimate bubble and we both turn to see her walking in, followed by Radar and Sierra who have linked hands and are looking incredibly cozy together. No doubt desperate for some alone time to mark and finish their own bond.

I squeal as the memory of their imprint hits me with fervor. Throwing Colton's arms off of me as the excitement I had to dampen down on a blood strewn battlefield rises to the surface again and I run at my Rema. Unleashed joy in the form of an over excited Luna.

"Eeeeeeeeh, I am so happy, happy." I throw myself at her, wrapping my arms around her neck so she's knocked sideways, and Radar has to grab at us to support us from falling over. Bouncing like a child as she gets caught up in my excitement.

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“What the ...” Sierra gasps in confusion and then laughs as my hanging onto her becomes a proper embrace, sliding her arms around me too. I spin us and then shake her and somehow manage to end up right back to where we started.

“I have a dad in law!” I turn, letting go of her and poke Radar in the ribs so forcefully he flinches and then slaps my hand away moodily. He sighs, rolls his eyes, and then turns sheepishly as he sees Colton approaching us. My mate isn’t oozing the same overly hyper good mood as I am now it’s sunk in that his mother has a new mate. Radar clears his throat and loses all confidence. I guess mating to your alpha best friend’s mother, is a bit weird between brother wolves.

“Please don’t call him that.” Colton grinds it out, mumbling and then walks to his sub and lands a strong hand on his shoulder. A squeeze with obvious intent as Radar inhales sharply, wincing and ducking down on that side to try and escape the grip.

“Alpha.” Radar lowers his head, instant submission coming over him and only gains another stab in the ribs from me. Pushing him to snap up and glare at me instead. I am so not going to let him fall back into being just another sub wolf.

“Stop that. You’re the Rema’s mate. That makes you the Galma. Grandad wolf... So no more formalities.” I start laughing stupidly at that, even though it’s technically correct and hit the giggling fits at Radar’s unamused expression. He no longer should be bowing or lowering his eyes for either Colton or I, as he’s now our senior. He holds the same role as Rema in being a wise mentor to his Stepson.

“I mean, she’s not wrong... grandad.” Sierra joins in, poking fun at her new mate and Colton’s face becomes more serious and stoic than before which only makes us both laugh louder and harder. His whole aura cooling to icy tones and his eyes glow a slight hint of amber. I choke on my fast inhalation of amus****t and almost bend double trying not to die while having a coughing fit brought on by snort laughing.

“I swear to god....” Colton’s snarls at me and Radar’s face becomes ashen. It’s obvious Colton isn’t all too adjusted to this new development and Sierra stifles her laugh by covering her mouth and tries to return to mature mother figure when faced with a tantrummy man child.

“You will still always be my number one boy. Mummy loves you the mostest.” Sierra gets the words out only just, before snorting at her own ‘cooooo’ tone and patting her son on the head in mock affection. She’s enjoying this as much as I am.

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“Don’t even think about making me call you dad.” Colton snaps at Radar and turns on his heel in a dramatic, sulky fashion before storming off. Colton behaving like a child because he knows he can’t do a damned thing about a situation he actually wanted to happen. Radar hesitates, eyes going back and forth from son to mother before going off after him in an attempt to unruffle his alpha’s fetahers.

“Leave them to figure it out between them. They have a strong bond, I’m sure they will find their new level quickly. Colton just wants everyone he loves to be happy but he will find it weird replacing his father so soon after we

Meadow chimes in and yet trails off, moving in between us now that our little dramatic scene is over, and slings an arm around my shoulder in that casual affectionate way of hers. Her words bringing the somber mood back and I feel a little guilty knowing that maybe this is all equally painful and confusing to Colton. Even as an adult. His father left his mark in his heart and now Radar is meant to take his place after a lifetime of being like his brother.

“He’s not against it. I think deep down he’s pleased, but you know Colton.... Has to seem like a cool and bossy alpha and won’t let Radar get any preferential treatment in case he thinks’ he’s gone soft.” Sierra sighs and hooks her arm in Meadow’s other one, so all three are connected and we stand for a moment watching them disappear out the far door.

I don’t know how my mates feeling, but I know it won’t last. He’s the type to figure it out fast and put it to bed so it doesn’t disrupt his relationship with Radar, or how he oversees the pack.

“Let’s go home. There’s enough sub wolves and Cesar is overseeing what needs to be done here. My Luna needs fed and put to bed.” Meadow squeezes me, sensing my need for time alone to process everything that’s happened, and bumps her temple against mine. “I had the twins go fetch a car so I can take you tow back to the stead. We need to update all those we left at home. It’s going to be a hectic week.” Meadow is tired too. I can hear it in her voice and know last night she would have given her all to battle against those creatures. She may be strong and fearless but even Meadow needs mental space after killing to be able to look at herself in the mirror. Lychans were never borne to be those kinds of beasts.

“Yeah.... The work starts now. Let’s all go home.”

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 146

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

“Is everything ready?” I wander into the new dining room space we cleared and created this past week in readiness for my father’s first official visit. The room which used to be the medbay, although now our outhouse for the clinic is complete, we are freeing up space indoors. The village has come on a lot these past months and even though we know a move back to the valley is in the books, we still want this place to have a use. Some of our pack might want to live out here despite the Alpha and Luna returning to the main homestead. Sierra has already expressed desire to continue here with Radar now that she feels her position as Rema no longer requires her to oversee the reunited Santos. I think in all honesty she wants to relish in her new love and honeymoon period without grossing out her son.

I'll be sad to leave our home behind, but I know this is the start of a new chapter for all of us.

"So clean it's sparkling. The grounds have been refreshed, everything scrubbed, and the manor is in top shape for this royal visit." Meadow drolls with that sarcastic tone of hers. Standing with her head propped to one side as she scans all the details on her tick list. Still not onboard with an alliance between our kinds or accepting my father as a guest, but she's trying. A lot of the pack are still reserving judgement until they see how life continues for themselves. This visit has already caused so much upheaval and mutterings among them.

"And Colton?" I ask, looking around for my invisible mate who has been AWOL since first light. Off doing whatever he does every day.

"Patrolling the grounds with Radar and Jasper. Still trying to acclimatize your brother into the pack and bickering with him at every opportunity. I swear it's become a hobby for those two and they only hang out to argue." Meadow sighs heavily and then goes back to her clipboard.

I can't say I disagree. The past week has seen my brother move into the house of his own accord and spend all his spare time goading my mate into verbal spats. They're always together and always fighting but don't seem to think that giving one another space should be a thing. We offered him one of the village houses on the edge of the patrol line for some solitude, and yet he moved right across from our bedroom just to piss Colton off.

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He was meant to be here to protect me, and yet I have barely seen him since he dropped off his luggage. I guess because I have kept Carmen close by in hopes that their proximity would help things along and she acts as a natural deterrent for his presence. He's still holding out on her, and she's so stubborn and hurt that she's avoiding him like the plague. It's frustrating to have two of them in a small space like this manor and yet see them never get within thirty feet of one another. I don't understand why he's being so certain about this given his acceptance to living here now.

"They'll be here at noon. I have no idea what food we should serve, seeing as they are vampires." Carmen appears almost by magical thought, hands on her hips and looking unusually beautiful in a simple white summer dress which flows around her legs in a carefree manner. Ethereal today and her blonde hair is almost golden like a halo of softness.

"Look, there was a time we didn't think vampires could be out in the sun. Maybe they can eat human food too." Meadow shrugs and both Carmen and I raise a brow in unison at her.

"Isn't that the problem with their species...they eat human food?" Carmen widens her eyes to emphasize the words human and food and I start to giggle at the word play.

"Ughhh, you know what I mean. Let's just serve steak. Leave it raw and they can s*** it for all I care. I mean, who doesn't like steak?" Meadows huffs at her.

"Angelics... they're vegans!" Demi casually wanders in looking mischievous at his quick-witted remark and winks our way. All pale skinned, sandy hair and blue eyes which hint at far off DNA in his past bloodlines. For once no sign of his identical shadow and I roll my eyes at him.

"I guess that gene was missed on you two then." I point out. "You two could eat your own weight in steak in a three-minute sitting." For Angelic mix breeds they lack anything good natured or pure in their genetic makeup.

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"We're Lychans, baby. The wolf DNA dominates everything else."

"Speak for yourself." Sierra appears in the room waving about her hands that are shrouded in a blue glow as if to prove her point and then smiles sweetly as Domi moves out of her way to let her in. She has been walking around with that honeymoon glow, mate mark on show at her collarbone, and making me and Colton seem like we are not even lovers in comparison. I never knew Radar could be such a touchy feely, attentive, and mushy mate if I hadn't seen it myself these past days. Glued together most of the time, and always touching. Sierra is like a new woman. Glowing, bubbling over with brightness, and her magical gifts seem to have ramped up to crazy levels. I guess all she needed was real happiness and mutual love. No more fear of dwindling gifts anymore for her.

"I think as a Lychan pack we pretty much fail. Most of our main hierarchy are m***rel bloods of mixed breeds. And I'm a freakin part human." Carmen plops her a** on the edge of the new long polished dining table and tosses her hair casually over one shoulder, with that sa**y manner of hers that I've missed. No hint of denial anymore in admitting what she is.

Since we made it clear to our pack that bloodlines shouldn't be a shameful secret, instead something to celebrate, it seems so many have come forward to profess their childhood sins of being mixed breeds. All in all, it seems only about forty percent of the Santos can trace their blood truthfully through Lychan only. Another lie we were force fed all these years by Juan and his stupid ideals. It's been refreshing though, to see them embrace their true selves and no longer hide hidden gifts from their own kind. It seems we have so many talented am*** us with unusual abilities that may not always be useful but are what makes them unique. No longer afraid to admit that they aren't only Lychan.

"Steak it is." Meadow pipes up getting us back on track and notes something down on the clipboard she's been carrying. "I'll tell the kitchen to prepare a carnivores feast. I'm sure blood s***ing leec....." She stops talking when she catches my serious eye on her and swallows a little hesitantly. Not amused at her slip to insults concerning my father. "Chica, no offense but, I mean it's what they do." She points out and I shake my head at her with a small affectionate smile, inwardly sighing because she's not wrong. I'm just too sensitive today because of how nervous this meeting is making me. My nerves are all on edge and I haven't been able to eat today at all.

“Not all of those with vampiric blood.” I tap my own chest and wink at her before going back to fixing the floral décor in the middle of the huge table. Letting it go and exhaling slowly to relieve some pent-up stress.

“True. I’ll stop talking.”

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 147

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

It sometimes worries me if my unborn will have tendencies that I never experienced. Nothing is certain and I have no idea if these babies will follow the norm and be more Lychan than anything else. Being twins, I’m not sure if that will affect things but looking at Domi and Remi, who are almost identical in every way with dominant Lychan DNA, then maybe I am worrying for nothing. If Lychan vampire mixes had the traits of both, we would have heard of it by now.

“What’s with the dress? Aren’t you all combat pants and vest tops lately? The Lana Lane of the wolf world.” Meadow’s eyes and attention are on Carmen now, as a subject change, appraising the feminine look of today and it’s only then I spot the minimal makeup and that her hair has been styled differently. She’s put in more than the usual effort.

“No reason.” She flippantly waves a hand at us and starts adjusting chairs around the table, avoiding Med’s eye. She’s also more closed up and secretive than normal. Less chatty and it piques my interest. Wondering if this is a tactic to get Jasper to notice her.

“I mean, I’m not against using your feminine wiles and a**ets to get your man to pay attention. If you need any pointers....” Meadow is all over that in an instant and stops in her tracks when Carmen flicks flower vase water at her in warning to stay away.

“I don’t. And it’s not for him. I’m tired of looking like a beat-up tom boy who has lost all sense of her image lately. I have more pride than looking like a half-baked, decrepit floor broom that’s been used to death and discarded in the dust.”

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“And she’s back. Welcome home, Caremonella!” I pat her on the head with a huge grin and my annoying pet name for her, throwing my arm around her shoulder casually as I come to stand beside her. She exhales heavily, displaying minor irritation at my obvious glee and continues adjusting seats.

Carmen moping and being weird and distant these past days was starting to really bother me. I guess she needed some ‘her’ time to pull herself back together and process all that’s happened these few weeks. We all have. Working on the manor, and the Valley simultaneously, overseeing, organizing and repairing bonds with out fractured pack has been cathartic, but emotionally

exhausting. It's only been a week since the battle that night, but it feels like we have achieved the work of a month.

"About time too, Chica. I know you can't outrun the imprint, but I'm glad you are seemingly back to being the cold and haughty biatch I used to love to hate." Meadow flicks her in the forehead with precision, swings her clipboard up and bops her on the head with it softly before swaggering off with a naughty smile. Knowing sticking around will get some sort of physical retaliation now Carmen is no longer afraid to put Meds in her place.

"I still loathe her." Carmen snorts and crosses her arms across her chest sulkily. I laugh at both of them, knowing that's the furthest from the truth it could be. They have a love-hate relationship, that's warm underneath, and I know either one would sacrifice themselves to save the other. Neither can admit they are sisters now, and friends. Denial is what I expect for the rest of their lives.

"So, noon? Are you nervous?" Carmen turns the conversation back to what we are preparing for, and I let her go. Shrugging in a non-committal way as I go back to prepping the room and focusing on imaginary dust particles I need to remove. My gut has been like washing machine all morning and I have been trying to ignore the chaos of internal feelings for a week.

"Hmmm." I answer in a bland tone and move the flowers for the fifth time today. Using Carmen's method of nonchalance.

"Signing a treaty is enough of a pressure I guess, but knowing you have to work out some sort of future relationship with your father must be messing with your head. Given what he is and who." Carmen has the sense to let me wander off without following. Focusing on straightening pots on the side table instead.

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"I'm going to take it one step at a time. Let things develop naturally once the treaty is dealt with. Colton told me to not rush into any plans and throwing myself into trying to bond with him. Just take it as it comes. That's what I'm going to do."

"Yeah. A bond like that may take years to grow given the dramatic rollercoaster story behind all this. He doesn't get to just step into the daddy shoes because things are clear now. He has to earn your trust." Carmen pauses and looks around seemingly sensing something and then shifts further away to rearrange plants along the wall units. I pause to watch her and then wave it off as nothing.

"Time will tell. I won't reject him. I won't stop him from making contact with me or seeing these two when they are born. I think it's one of those things that can't just be fixed with a meeting and put to rights overnight. I don't even know him or anything about him."

"Getting over what he is will be your first hurdle, and his part in the wars of the last two decades." She throws me an empathetic smile.

"Yeah.... enough about that though. What are you doing about my brother?" I know I shouldn't ask as she normally clams up and pretends she doesn't care, but it's driving me insane seeing no progress.

"Nothing. It's all on him. I'm so tired of marching to the beat of other people's drums. Chasing and always ending up alone. He knows where I am and if he never finds his way to me I'm not going to stop living and hold my breath. I can have a future without a mate. There's plenty to do here and who knows, maybe I can date casually whenever I have an urge that needs fulfilled."

It seems Carmen really is fully pulling herself back together. Giving up even when she is bonded to Jasper; putting herself first. This is more like the girl I used to see. The one who says screw it to the Fates and decides on her own path to follow. The warrior inside the girl who won't break with what the world throws at her.

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"Baby? Where you at?" Colton's voice breaks in as he enters the room from across the other side. Eyes scanning our efforts at making this a place to dine with guests and smiles radiantly when he locks eyes on me. As usual the b***erflies and goosebumps he causes me ripple all over my skin and through my soul and my day gets brighter with him just being here.

Behind him Jasper follows at a distance, still carrying that pensive frown of his and a slight snarly aura to him. I now know what Carmen could feel coming. Back in the early days of imprinting I too was way more sensitive to my waifs whereabouts if he got within fifty feet of me. Thankfully that's dulled down a little and I am no longer constantly hyper aware of his location unless in wolf form.

"Here. All done and now to go soak in the tub while the kitchen deal with the menu for lunch. Everything else is done. We just await their arrival." I slide into his open arms as he gets close enough and snuggle up to him, resting my head under his chin and letting myself relax finally. I have been tense all day, ever since I woke up to a note on my pillow saying he was up and out to deal with some things. I missed him crazily today, but I know he wants everything perfect. Colton's nervous too and his way of getting it out is to stay busy. He has the pack on guard duty just in case, and the ground looking flawless for our royal visit. I think he's torn between awaiting an old enemy he wants to be wary of and impressing his father in law at the same time.

Carmen turns away and pretends to fluff some plants in the pots on the side dresser and I cast a quick glance towards my brother who is still hovering by the far door. His eyes on her despite his efforts to keep looking away and it ignites a tiny splinter of hope in my heart. He's wavering. Being here a week and seeing her from afar, sensing her, smelling her scent...he just needs a little push.

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 148

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

"Carmen, can you take those ones to the library. They aren't needed in here." I nod at the extra plants sat on the floor from when we were styling the dresser and nod towards Jasper's door which leads to the same hall the library is on. She has no choice but to go that way or else it would be too obvious she's avoiding him. She has her pride after all. And I am not against using any method in my arsenal to force my brother's hand. He's deliberately kept away from her because he's weak and I am almost a hundred percent certain he won't withstand any nearness.

"Hmm" she replies blandly, as though not bothered and swipes up the two pots, cradling them against her chest before marching with confidence towards him without looking his way at all. I know it's all bravado and I inwardly applaud her ability to put on that cold front and act like he's nothing to her, just a mere fly in the same room that she has no need to bother with.

I sigh inwardly and wriggle enough in Colton's embrace to hint at him to move slightly so I can watch her walk out. Eyes glued to the s**y sway of her walk and smile gleefully as my brother's eyes latch onto her in that intense focus gaze of a wolf on the hunt. I feel like maybe today is the day he breaks.

She looks pretty today, crazily so. She has her old aura back, her skin is glowing and with her efforts of her appearance, I see the beautiful girl who used to stroll around the valley like she owned the place. Jasper's eyes lock on her face despite himself as she walks towards him and goes to brush past him without a word. I see the shift in him as his inner wolf kicks out and takes over every one of his instincts. Eyes ambering of their own accord and that change in his mood hits me pretty powerfully.

There's a slight gasp noise as a sudden hand catches her elbow in pa**ing and tugs her to a halt in an unexpected manner. She almost drops the plants and stumbles slightly before catching herself. Head swiveling towards him as anger peaks out.

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"What are you doing? Let go." She snaps at him, almost dropping the pot she has in that hand but he smoothly takes it from her with his free hand and places it on the table by the door. Eyes never leaving hers and that yearning aura hitches another thirty degrees.

"Let's go talk." He leans back to try and look her in the face as she dodges him by trying to walk forward, but she turns away moodily, holds the pot even tighter and refuses to back down. He has no idea how much of a wall Carmen is capable of building and winning her over won't be that simple. If anyone can ignore an imprint bond and hold out for a long time, it's her.

"I'm busy. Some other time. I have things to do." She twists her arm to release herself but his grip doesn't loosen and instead he takes a step back, so he doesn't have to lean to look at her. Keeping level with her and I relax, knowing Jasper isn't going to back down anymore. I can see it all over him. He's made up his mind and he's willing to try and figure this out with her. Carmen glares at him with passionate hatred and tugs her arm once more, this time a frown of scorn and warning him with amber eyes that she's not in the mood and will get physical.

"Sis... I'm borrowing your interior designer." Jasper catches the rim of the other pot she is holding and tugs it out of her other hand with precise efficiency. Quick and slick, like a pro as he removes her only weapon. Dumping it on the same table before spinning her around so the arm in his embrace ends up across her body along with his, and her back jammed up into his abdomen and chest. The back of her skull under his chin as he leans down and whispers something in her ear.

I almost jump out of Colton's arms with utter joy at this intimate tackle and Colton shakes his head at me and rolls his eyes. Something tells me this isn't all that much of a shock to him and maybe he knew my brother was softening, giving how much time he's spent with him.

My brother looks like he paid attention to his appearance today too. Tailored black shirt under black leather jacket, over washed out jeans in a whole bad boy biker style. It's not his normal MO, but a more casual and s**ier version of the vampire styling he came home with. His hair is gelled up in a spikier fashion and his whole aura seems a little predatory. That's a Lychan who is overcome with desire for his mate and willing to bow down to have her. I guess the imprint is slowly eating away at him and finally the lust urge is killing that stubborn wall he built up.

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Carmen elbows him in the stomach and causes a loud 'oofft' noise, then groan but he doesn't relent and release her. Instead, he spins her back towards him, bends down and flips her over his right shoulder the second she starts to curse him out and fight back. She erupts in crazy femme fashion and starts going at him with fists and knees in a bid to be free.

"She might be a while.... Maybe a few hours." He winks my way, mischief in the depths and I am finally sure that she will be marked by dusk. He smiles somewhat oddly, and then slides his arm around her legs to stop her thrashing about so much, completing ignoring her a**ault as though she's nothing more than a slight wind flapping against his clothes.

"Put me down. Jasper, I f***ing mean it. Let me go, you a**hole. Put me down!!!" Carmen is reaching ear aching levels as her rage and fury ignite her gift a little, and Colton is the one to sigh and put an end to it. If he leaves it then this room will crumble into oblivion and my ears will end up bleeding.

"Carmen, go with your mate and stop making a fuss. Calm down." He alpha tones her and my mouth gawps open in shock that he would make her submissive in this manner. That he would misuse his ability in this way, but I guess I also kind of applaud him too for being that helpful. Carmen's body goes limp instantly, her

face snapping towards us as she death glares Colton with all the venom she can muster. I know in her head she is cursing him out like a maniac and probably imagining impaling him in pretty creative ways.

This is for her own good and I know she doesn't really want to keep going on like this and not sorting things out. My brother won't do anything against her will, but she does need to spend some time with him and listen to whatever he plans to say.

"I actually hate you." She mutters under her breath in a controlled manner before pulling her arms under her body, crossing them over her chest and sticking her chin in the air. Making it clear she's not happy at all. I should tell him to put her down, but I just can't bring myself to intervene in this case. They need this. I wave instead and throw her my most loving smile that I hope emphasizes that I'm allowing this out of my love for her.

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"I know. Have fun." Colton smirks and salutes my brother in a mock gesture.

"Thanks." Jasper nods our way, still cold and aloof but that glimmer in his eye tells me he isn't taking Carmen off to argue and reject once more. There's a possessive edge, a definite air of male testosterone about him and the way he's holding onto her hints that he's finally giving in to the fact he can't outrun the one person he wants most in the world. Tomorrow I predict we will have another pairing in our pack. Let them go sort out their issues and figure it out.

It's taken a week of longing for her. I only hope she doesn't keep denying it and I don't see either of them again until she bears his mark.

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 149

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

"If you are satisfied with the terms of the treaty then there's no need to delay in signing it. I came here with the support of my coven, and this will put an end to two decades of unrest." My father sits back in his chair across the table and smiles somewhat eerily. I think it's meant to translate to warm and kind but with his eternally stiff and frosty aura, it's not.

"Finally, we get to know what peace is. Something I barely remember in my lifetime." Colton lays the pen on top of it and slides the document to me. I don't need to read it if he has and approved, so I quickly scrawl my name on the bottom and slide it towards Varro. It seems such a minor act for such a huge outcome. My feelings seem somewhat understated considering this is such a huge thing and I guess it hasn't sunk in yet.

"Now all the formalities are out of the way. I was hoping on some time to get to know my daughter." Varro shifts forward slightly, that pointy tooth smile that

makes me uneasy and eyeballs me directly. The mood of our topic changing, and he seems instantly softer.

"What did you have planned exactly?" I ask somewhat warily.

"A walk around your grounds?"

"Just the two of us, or...?"

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Colton's gaze lands pointedly on the side of my face and the instant change in his stable mood sparks through my body like an electric volt. He perks up and the intense 'hell no' hissed in my internal mate link makes me jump visibly so that I cough to try and cover it. Colton is still a firm believer that Varro has a long way to go before he can begin to think about us trusting him. Being left alone with him is not going to happen anytime soon, even if I feel no threat coming from him. Colton still has many reservations about vampires.

"I don't think your mate is all that enamored with that idea. Maybe a stroll, with him and his guards wandering a little behind us. So we can talk, without the presence of others."

"Four feet..." Colton breaks in without hesitation

"Ten at a minimum is a little more realistic" Varro smoothly fires back. Stubborn and unfazed.

"Five!" A snarl this time as Colton's temper rises at the haggling. When it comes to me, he doesn't like to be undermined.

"How about we just see what feels natural and if I need you closer, I can easily wave or link. I truly do not see how a few feet makes a difference given you can jump that in the blink of an eye." I point out sternly, giving my mate that 'please back off' eyebrow raise. He never knows how to tone down the overly aggressive borderline controlling tone when he gets all protective. I don't want this somewhat peaceful meeting to turn sour. We need to show a modicum of trust here.

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"Fine, but only you, Varro. None of your shadow men you left standing in the hall are to accompany you. And I follow with my second in command and the two Luna guards who follow her at all times."

I inwardly sigh knowing there's not a chance of negotiating with him as he thumbs my way with that glowering frown going on. He's been ten times worse since my pregnancy bump started to show a little in the last few days. I'm growing fast now life has calmed down and I can spend my days eating and

resting to my heart's content while my pack restore two homes for the later splitting up of the pack.

Lychens don't carry their young for the same term as humans and we birth our pups after half a year. That means I just hit the phase where I will expand like crazy and experience the biggest changes to my body. It's important that in this time I step back, take it easy and prepare for what's coming.

"Dear boy, I appreciate your love and need to guard your mate, but I am her biological father and started wars in the name of her and her mother. If anyone is going to hurt her, it's not going to be me." He raises his brow quizzically.

"He does have a point." I try to soothe Colton's way and meet only a cold glare as he locks on my face. That no nonsense, I won't relent, look.

"If you have no ill intentions then what's the issue with us following at a reasonable distance?"

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"I second that." Meadow's voice waves our way from the far corner of the room where she had been silently standing all this time as guard and observer. I know she had been itching to say something but held her tongue as long as she could. I cast her a 'please don't' grimace and she frowns straight back at me with a shrug.

"Can you both have a little faith in me, my judgement, abilities, and the sincerity of my father's peace treaty. He came all this way and kept true to his word about bringing no more than his immediate e*****s. He brought the treaty and we have had nothing but peace and tranquility for the past weeks. I am sure a walk unaccompanied is just fine." I stand up and brush down my loose fitted dress, making a point that as Luna I should still have say. Making it clear they won't be stopping me. They have both been cotton wool wrapping me ever since we returned here after that fateful night of turning Juan over to Varro and it's a little frustrating at times.

"Lor..." Colton starts again but I cut him off.

"I'm not asking, I'm telling." I grind it out, that superior no nonsense tone of standing up to Colton and he looks instantly wounded. His expression crumbles a little. The puppy eyes and reversion to young boy almost breaks my stubborn down and that pang in my chest that I have hurt my boy's feelings.

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He knows this side of me too well. The 'I've had enough and want to decide for myself'. He still hasn't ever gotten used to the fact he is not the 'be all and end all' in my world at all times. I sometimes have a mind of my own.

"It's just...." Meadow starts and I snap around to glare at it, cutting her off instantly. She should know better than to take sides in any conversation between me and my mate.

"I'm pregnant, not a child. I can still make decisions for myself as Luna. I can still throw a vampire fifty feet across a room with the flick of my wrist if needs be. I doubt Varro here is going to do anything worthy of testing my abilities." It's curt, to the point and making it obvious I am losing patience.

"Fine. You stay where we can see you on the security camera's and I still follow your path at a distance."

"Whatever...." I sigh, knowing he will never relent but this is good enough.

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"Shall we?" Varro seems amused with this entire interaction and not at all offended or displeased given we are outwardly questioning his motives. He doesn't hesitate in getting up and heading for the end of the table, reaching out his arm in a gentlemanly manner and offering it to me. Rather grandly and I wonder if it's to annoy my mate while putting him in his place. He's old fashioned for sure but I guess being centuries old or more will do that.

I move swiftly, aware of the tense stares and poised aggressive stance of my unamused mate and best friend and ignore their reservations. I feel odd about linking my arm through his, aware my mate doesn't like it one bit, but this is my biological dad. It's no different to him holding onto Sierra.

It's such a strangely intimate act for someone who is a stranger to me, yet the physical contact seems instantly familiar. I can't explain it, but the second my limb entwines with his, I suddenly experience calm, quiet, like going home and I'm back in the years of holding my mother's hand as though it was only yesterday. It gives me an odd sense of painful emotion and brings tears to my eyes that this relative stranger can conjure up this intense awareness that we are bonded by blood.

We walk on, aware of the following Lychans and I try and put them out of mind as we make our way to the hall and out into the open space of a beautifully sunny day. It seems like everything we endured these past months is in another time and place. An almost forgotten memory. Surrounded by calm tranquil beauty of this forest dwelling manor and the peaceful joy of a bright day, filled with birds and the rustle of trees. It seems like a far-off dream, and I don't think back then I could ever imagine taking a stroll with the high lord of vampires.

"I know this is awkward and it will take time for you to feel at ease with me, but I cannot get over how much this feels like Marina is here with me in spirit. I feel like I already know you. You look alike, yet don't. There's something of her about you, in the best way. She would be proud of the woman you have become, Alora. Proud of what you have achieved am*** these Lychans."

His words catch me off guard as we make our way towards the tree line at a leisurely pace. Tugging at my heart and yet further putting me at ease in his presence. He's a complex person and as I walk in time, almost perfectly matched, I wonder how many layers there are to these creatures I used to only think of as murderous blood s***ers.

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"My memories of her are slowly fading away and I can barely recall her face anymore. I forget what her voice sounds like. It feels like it's been longer than ten years since she was last by my side, and I miss her still."

I'm close. If you need me then I'm here.

Colton's mind link distracts me momentarily, and I automatically glance behind me to see the lurking figure of my mate keeping his distance but not losing sight of us. Further back are the two Luna's guard and Meadow. I smile without thought at how much he still loves and protects me fiercely and catch Varro focusing on my face.

"You picked someone that your mother would approve of. He's headstrong, a little c***y, and infuriatingly bossy, but he loves you and would die for you. I can see that about him. He puts you above everything else. A true born Alpha." He nods the obvious compliment Colton's way and gets a narrowed amber glare right back.

"He's the other half of my soul, even when he's being this feral, although I didn't pick him. The fates did. I should thank them for their good judgement." I point out with a cutesy smile, being funny, and turn back towards our destination. Relaxing in the company of this strange man. This unplanned conversation is I guess how one gets to know someone and build something. Letting words flow naturally and picking at topics that come at us without force. I don't feel guarded at all.

"Ah, your Fates. Destiny...whatever you want to call it. I believe that the choosing and imprinting is not an outside force, but comes from within when two of your kind are ready to be together. I believe all creatures have a hand in their own path and are steered by biology of nature. "

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"You're saying I subconsciously chose him?" I laugh at that interpretation of what our kind does and has done for centuries. I doubt I had any part in what happened the night of my Awakening ceremony.