

Awakening Following Fate by L. T. Marshall Chapter 31

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

She opens her eyes but keeps her hand steady as the chain manipulates itself and tugs the stone towards a part of the world to her left. She follows gently, allowing it to guide her as though somehow, it's now a little life of its own, a dog on a leash pulling it's master home with impressive strength for such a feeble little object.

We watch in awe as it tugs her until it reaches the American states and draws up nearer to where we are in the north, pulling up past the border. It lingers around New Mexico before pulling the tip down and planting with an aggressive dip on an area within that section of the map. It's just left off the center of New Mexico on this map and at least in our part of the world and not overseas in Scotland!

"She's not that far. That's like a seven-hour drive if we don't stop." Meadow chimes in, squinting at the map carefully and obviously a little frustrated we don't have a more specific and detailed map to get a more precise location. We have a vague spot on a map that condenses the entire world and she's right. Arizona to New Mexico is not that far but we will have to drive.

"The biggest problem is getting out past the fog." I point out and Meadow frowns, taking a moment to think hard and then focuses on me with a very serious expression.

"Your powers, you can clear a path until we get out. Hopefully the fog isn't widespread. That means you and I, chica, we have to go together." I quiet and think of what she says, seeing the possibility in it and nod as I agree without hesitation.

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"It's too dangerous. You can't go out there. The pack is circling its own people ready to take on any of you who venture out. What about vampires? Or the witch that did this?" Sierra grasps my hand and clings on tight, painfully so, gripping my fingers with white fierceness, eyes washing with instant tears and fear, and her light of hope seems to vanish in the reality that I might go out and not return either. She sees me as her second child and her intense maternal need to protect me almost chokes me half to death as I feed from her panic.

"If we don't then how else are we supposed to save them? We can't wait on the spell ending, because it might never. Are we supposed to leave them out there, like they're dead? What about when we run out of supplies, or the witch finds a way to breach our border?" I respond anxiously, trying to keep my voice steady and patient as though dealing with a fearful and fragile child. Knowing that she's right and it's not safe but at the same time, it's our only solution so far. I can't live without Colton, even if he's close and cursed for an eternity. I can't live with my pack in a zombified state of feral, pacing our borders with a bloodlust against our own kind.

"There has to be another way. Maybe that's not what the book meant. Maybe I'm wrong." Sierra releases me and goes back to yanking books to her, a look of pain on her face, determination to find a different path as tears fill her eyes while flicking through them somewhat erratically.

"You said the books will give an answer. And they did. If she's as powerful as you say, then we have to do this. It can't be a coincidence that a Scottish witch is seven hours away from us when we need her. That the book jumped to her name, and the bottle so freely dragged us to where she is. Maybe the fates are pushing us to her?" I point out. Afraid that what we're about to do is not safe but determined to save Colton and bring him home. To save Cesar, the subs and my extended pack. I once doubted the fates and yet they never abandoned me. They brought me to her, to my new home, to my love, and so many answers I never knew I needed before. They brought me to position of Luna and I have learned to never judge, doubt, or ask questions when the fates are showing me a path I may not understand.

"The fog, Alora." Sierra despairs, but this time it's Meadow who chimes in. Her own face set with a stubborn air, knowing this is what we need to do.

"And the only way we can think so far to get rid of it and take its power away, is right here in front of us." She taps on the little symbol of Leyanne Cruden's mark in the book beside the locator spell and narrows her eyes. "Can you take it away? Break the spell? Can we? No, nosotras no podemos so we go get someone who can." Meadow is in harsh mode, that version that often talks sense into me when I am dwindling. The commander who stands by Colton's side and I see a return of some of her fierce now she has her sights set of doing something to undo what's happened.

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I lean over to grasp Sierra's hand and as I pa** the vial close by my wrist, where she left it, it starts to glow crazily bright so that it instantly stings my eyes and I gasp and recoil.

"What the hell?" Meadow and I sing out in unison and Sierra slumps down and cradles her face. A whimper of agony as fresh tears roll down her face and she seems instantly defeated.

"The potion is calling out to its maker.... you need to take it with you. It's a token of proof. That you come from this home and this bloodline. It's a sign Alora, that the book was right, and we shouldn't argue. It's our answer.... even if I don't want it to be so." She cries softly into her palms and my heart pines for her, feeling the despair and knowing the why. I know there is only fear and genuine concern at its root, because she doesn't do well with danger or loss since she woke. She's afraid that I won't come back, in the same way Colton hasn't and she can't bear it. Sierra isn't as strong as she once was and the thought of the people she loves leaving her is something she is working on.

"Colton can't come home to us unless we do. And all three of us will be together again. Don't cry for what needs to be done. Look after our people, be their Luna in my absence. We will only be a couple of days." I move to her and wrap my arm

around her shoulder, rubbing her delicate frame and wishing I knew how better to take away her heartache and terror for what must be done.

“No, I should come.” She tries in a last attempt to cling to me but I only shake my head looking for a way to explain why she needs to stay. I need her to stay here and be safe, for my own sanity.

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“We should keep our entourage to a minimum. Maybe just the two of us. We are what’s left of the strongest and with our powers combined we should be okay. Someone needs to lead the people and keep them sane.” Meadow tries to reinforce my decisions, voices what I don’t know how to explain, and Sierra stifles a sob loudly. Lifting up to turn and cling to me with a possessive hug around my body,

“Travel only by day, find a place to stay safe at night, never out there. Go to human places where the vampires won’t stray. Maybe there’s a way to use the protection spell on a vehicle, create a safe transport. Go fast, be swift, and then come home the same way as quickly as you can. Take no chances.” She urges us with a desperate begging in her eye, her face awash with warm tears that I try to wipe away, and I nod. Exhaling slowly so as not to let her feel the depths of my own worry and nervousness about how dangerous this trip may be.

“We have some preparing to do and we need to find a better map to narrow down our route, to at least a town. I want us to be ready to go by the next dawn. There’s no point in delaying this. I need my mate back, we need our alpha, and god knows we need our pack.” I state with determination and Meds agrees. Standing as though to make it clear we have things to go plan, start readying and it energizes the air around us with a new sense of purpose.

“Yes Luna, let’s get to it.”

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I stare from my bedroom window into the darkness of the dense forest and the distant mountains, rising like sinister slashes in the night, and try like crazy to feel him out there. Focusing everything I have in sensing him, connecting in some small way, just so I can fill that empty void of sadness that I have carried with me all day. His absence is like ripping out my soul and tossing it aside carelessly and nothing I have done can distract me from how much this hurts, how much I want him to come home to hug me and tell me everything is going to be okay. I’m emotionally weary, exhausted and have cried stupidly, on and off since I came to our room alone. Hating that it just amplifies how empty this place is without him.

Since the fog appeared all parts of our bond seem to be severed and nothing works, not even being able to feel his emotions or pain anymore. It’s like he’s dead, nonexistent and I can’t do anything except helplessly gaze for signs of our

pack out there in the shadows and grasp onto the love I have for him and the hope that we can undo this.

We spotted them all day, through the trees, circling, watching us hungrily. Trying to get in, always aggressively attacking the walls if we ventured too close and now the whole village knows exactly what's happened. How could they not. They could see them, hear them snarling and growling and they spotted their Alpha running wild and looking feral as he personally checked every inch of the perimeter for a way in.

The fog dispersed enough to see through it as though a murky morning haze lies over everything out there, but it's not completely gone, it's just spread further and wider and no longer condensed as it was, and we have no idea how many miles it stretches. For all we know it could be spreading far and wide and taking in packs galore as it creeps through the states.

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One of our villagers came and told us her mind link to her pack family on the mountain ceased to work and I know that means the fog has possibly reached them too. The mountain has no protection against this, not in the way we do with the rune border, and I can only assume all are lost to this spell and engulfing their own mountain like ravenous zombies seeking something to devour.

This is the vampire's new weapon, and we never saw it coming at all; we weren't ready. Much like we never saw the frequency box coming and suffered such awful consequences of its first use against us. The fog is a much more efficient tool than the frequency ever was though. It's turning our own people into their soldiers and doing their bidding for them. Turning on their kind, probably out there savagely mauling one another and I don't doubt the mountain and beyond without magical protection has suffered more losses of our people if any had escaped the initial enchantment. I doubt many could get away from it though, so in a way, I guess being turned is safer than being out there unprotected. I can only hope that if they did escape the smog, that somehow, they have managed to find a shelter that our own kind can't penetrate to get at them.

I don't know if it can get inside the homes and the buildings as we have a distinct advantage living behind a barrier and no wish to test it. I wonder how many wolves beyond our lands have been affected, beyond Santos, or if the reach of the fog can only go so far seeing as it's so much thinner now. I guess it has to elongate and spread until it's not got anymore to distribute. I wonder if in its diluted state it may be less effective and less likely to affect us as quickly if we went out there.

I also wonder if maybe Meadow was right and the fog has to stay for the enchantment to work; that should it disperse for long enough would it somehow break the spell? It's something that has plagued me all afternoon as I saw it clear up enough for us to see through the trees and it lit a tiny candle of hope deep down in my heart.

How long would that take? Days? Weeks? Months? I can't live like this without him for even hours, so I don't think I want to wait it out to see if this will just fade

off and release them by itself. It's only been one full day and my heart is bleeding with the absence of his touch, his laugh, his eternal warmth and attentive nature. I'm craving him like a drug that will kill me the longer I am without. The people are low, their hearts are heavy and the loss of our alpha hangs over all of us like a dark cloud.

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My bed is cold and empty, uninviting, so I've not even tried to get in it since coming here to rest. The house and the surrounding grounds are almost silent, and you can feel the loss of our pack in every atom around us. The males and femmes out there are missed by every single house in the village, while we mourn for our loved ones and can't escape the weight of grief it's brought down upon us. There's no joy, there's no childish laughter or happy squeals in the air. All day it was as though Tawna was not the only wolf we need to lay to rest.

I checked on Carmen through the day, but she was asleep and looked painfully peaceful in her vulnerable state. The doctor kept her medicated out of kindness, but I have asked to speak to her before we leave tomorrow. She needs to know what's going on and not get secondhand information from others after I leave. It's the least I can do, because if it were me, my own guilt and self-blame would eat me up knowing it was my mother that caused this. If it was me, I would emotionally take responsibility for all of it and I can only assume Carmen will too. She brought her here to keep her safe and yet gave her a means to end her life. I know how I would take this blow and I don't think Carmen is as different to me as I first thought.

Her mother was bait. The vampires saw an opportunity to lure as many of us as they could, further than we have ever ventured. It's why the kill was new. They waited and dragged her as far as they could until we started to get too close. Then they killed her in a frenzy and spread her body because they knew we wouldn't leave her there. Wolves are respectful of the dead and our need to bury our own with ceremony meant we wouldn't turn back. They made it so we couldn't just pick her up and leave, because they needed time. To keep us out there and distracted while they put their spell in motion.

They had to know a wolf was about to run into the forests in an attempt of suicide, and they made full use of it. They must have been brewing their spell and waiting, getting ready, for a time when enough of us were out beyond our borders and away from our magical wall. Vampires possess some who can see things like seers do, and they have witches whom I know get visions, so I wonder if one of them had a dream that Tawna would run out and look for them to do what she couldn't for herself. Kill her to end her misery and her mate's life.

I think they know we have protection, I mean, with a witch among them she has to know she can't get near the homestead in any kind of way. I don't think we were the main target; I think we were one of many and just happened to give them a reason to do it now and an opportunity to add our numbers to the casualties. It's rare for so many of us to be out there unprotected and if it wasn't for Tawna, then we wouldn't have gone out at all. I don't want to lay blame at her feet, I don't want to be callous but that pit of anger and despair in my heart cannot help but think of her, and what her actions have done. She left us with chaos that goes beyond the trauma she inflicted upon her child.

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Meadow and I will leave at first light, taking the main road out and hope to god the pack out there don't follow. My powers can buy us time and keep them far enough from the jeep but if they follow us all the way to New Mexico I have no idea how we will keep them off. Sierra figures she can protect our vehicle from the fog somehow and spent hours in the spell rooms looking for anything that might help us stay safe on our trip.

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Meadow's a warrior, one of the best, and I am capable of so much, but neither of us want to fight our own family. Our own mates. So anything that shields us and stops us from having to physically interact is a must. We love them, all of them, and our sub pack are am*** those who have been enchanted. We wouldn't want to battle any of them even if it came down to it, even if our lives depended on it. I couldn't force myself to hurt a hair on a single wolf's head who is lost out there.

The plan is to drive fast and have me keep them back, keep them as far as I can, in the hopes they turn back and focus on circling the homestead once again while we drive off into the dust and head for the witch known as Leyanne. We need to get some distance and avoid all known wolf territory in case they too have been turned. We don't have any idea of how far this goes or how many are infected. This area is predominantly Santo but there are smaller packs out there especially in the wilds, and once we leave Arizona, we will have to figure it out as we go. Packs generally don't intermingle and there's no love between different packs in our species. We are born territorial and get aggressive in defense of our spaces. I don't expect warm greetings and offers of hospitality if we do find they are untouched by the spell.

We had sentinels pack the jeep with food and supplies to last a few days, even sleeping bags, and we aim to head for human territory by nightfall every day we are out there. The vampires aren't really attacking anywhere the humans are in dense population; staying hidden for their own safety, and keeping this battle in the shadows between non mortals. Vampires and wolves still fear the wrath of humans. They may be the vulnerable ones, but humans are capable of horrible things when they shine a light on the dark secrets of our kinds. They outnumber us tenfold and have their ways of taking down our kinds. Surprisingly, for a species who are physically weaker and lack gifts like ours.

We lost many of all kinds in past centuries at their capable hands. Humans killing all who were different and forcing us into hiding. They still outnumber us in population, taking over most of the globe and have an uncanny ability to unite when faced with the supernatural. Their advances with weapons most definitely slow us down. Their ability to weaponize and acc**ulate large numbers and crash through our species with their steel vehicles and drop bombs galore, putting aside racial differences when the will to have their species prevail runs strong.

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Our kinds have hidden for millennia, more so since numbers dwindled after the great vamp wars. It just always has been known that nonhumans should conceal and stay away, for the survival of all. We will never out populate them, because we don't reproduce in numbers the way they can, and with all our inner species wars going on, we can never focus any kind of energy at subduing the humans. We have too many enemies within ourselves to ever unite for that one cause. History has always failed to keep them down and make it acceptable for our kind to walk free.

I'm distracted by a gentle knock on my bedroom door and I tune in, coming back to reality and that familiar pang of heartache; my body slumped because my life feels like it's ebbing away tonight. I sense Meadow outside my door and taste her own deep and uncontrollable sadness even from this distance.

I'm up, come in. I link her and she doesn't hesitate to push the heavy oak door in quickly. She looks exhausted, dark circle under her dull eyes and I can tell that much like me, she has no thoughts of sleep tonight. Anxiety reigning supreme, thrashing around in her heart and brain, and pining for the mate out there in the dark who is currently wandering around angrily trying to find a way in.

"You look tired, Chica, you should sleep. First light we got to get out of here and head for New Mexico. It's going to be chaos getting through that fog." Her soft tone wreaks of fatigue, her loose posture shows no hint of the strong femme I am used to seeing every day of my life.

"What about you? You're the one driving... you should be resting more than me." I point out as she wanders beside me to my open balcony door, the gentle breeze cooling my skin, and stares down at the view that has held my attention for the last half hour. A faraway look taking over her expression and she sighs heavily.

"I can't even feel him... it's like he's just gone. Like they all are. One blink and p***.... We just lost them." She utters sadly with so much pain in her voice that it makes my throat constrict and I choke on a subtle sob. I know exactly what she means and have been fighting myself not to let the tears come at me. I know once they do, I may not be able to stop them again

"We have to just focus on a solution, and deal with the loss we feel. It will only hinder us, and we can't just give in." I point out and slide my arm through hers, pulling her close to my body and lay my head on her shoulder. Needing touch, even hers so that I can pull strength from somewhere, and she nestles against me mirroring my feelings.

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"How did they know.... How were they so ready? It's like they waited for an opportunity and we handed it right to them."

"Seers probably" I sigh and am hit with a deep painful strike in my chest as the thought of Colton's most recent dream comes at me from the recess of his mind,

and I shudder. A prickle of intense unease and nerves rippling through my body and leaving me cold.

He had stood out there clawed up and devoid of any emotion staring right at me. Blank, just like he said that morning. Much like his dream he was disconnected and didn't seem to know me and yes, I was so very afraid of him out there faced with him like that. I wonder if it really was something to come or more of a symbolization of that moment because most of it still makes no sense. I wouldn't let him strike me down like that, I have abilities that even Colton can't match, and I surely would change to heal myself. I push it out of my head and try not to ponder.

"Maybe they saw it coming long before Tawna even came here and got ready for the moment it did. Or maybe it was luck, and they intended to use the spell and it was just a fluke that we gave them the chance to make it count when we did." I don't really know, but speculating isn't really changing anything.

"None of this is working you know. Fighting them, protecting ourselves, holding them off. They just find new ways and even when we win wars, they always come back. There's never a resolution to any of it." Meadows words deflate me, and I know she's right. The vampires and the wolves and this bloody never-ending hatred of one another, it never ends and the wars, even after a decade, always rise again. It never solves anything; it just takes many of our numbers and then what. It only breeds more hatred, and the cycle keeps going. I can't see that it will ever stop because no side will ever be satisfied until the other is destroyed. Vengeance is a toxic need.

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"As long as either side holds a grudge, it won't end" I exhale heavily and rub my temple with my free hand as a headache begins to ache inside. None of this feels real, much like a daymare and yet I can't waken myself up from it at all.

"Then why haven't the fates done anything? I mean you, you're right here, and wasn't that the whole point of the prophecy? To unite us, to end the wars, but it's been months and yet we still fight and there's no signs about what you are meant to do to be any kind of war-ender. It just feels like none of it was true." Her words silence me and I'm ashamed to admit that this is a thought that hasn't crossed my mind in months. So wrapped up in my new life, by Colton's side, that I never stopped to think about what that prophecy implied I was meant to be. She's right though. They said I would redress the balance and bring peace, but I have no idea how. Looking at this situation, I am not qualified to even begin to know how to put this to rights.

I need a manual on what to do to make that come about, but the fates are great at giving you nothing, and twisty turning endless roads to walk first. What with this recent turn of events, the vampires are not high on my list of possible friends and certainly not about to sit down and figure out a peace treaty with them. They

just took my mate, my family, and my pack away from me, and turned them into mindless angry killers looking to end their own.

“The fates, if you haven’t noticed, are inherently vague and slow to do any kind of anything. I mean I was eighteen years old before they did a single thing about me and my gifts. Maybe it will be another eighteen before I get some sort of sign as to how to end our wars.” I bite it out harshly, a glimmer of resentment surfacing even though I know I should not doubt the higher powers.

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We both sigh and she grips my arm tighter, her breathing shallowing and I look up to see what has her gasping. I spot them too. The dark figures of a combined pack of some fifty or more wolves moving through the fog as one fluid unit. Heading away, towards the mountain and it’s obvious even from here that the most familiar figures our mates and our sub pack are leading the way. Still leaders even under a spell. It’s a sight that crushes me.

We both stand stock still, held breaths, as we watch them disappear into the fog and my heart sinks as I lose sight of him. A fire emerging in my stomach and burning in my chest as rage builds from heartbreak.

“Screw the fates. Screw vampires.... We won’t take this lying down. We WILL get our pack back, our men. What’s the point of being some kind of hybrid with gifts if I stay in here crying over this. You’re right. I AM something special and maybe us pursuing this witch and doing what we need to do will change something... if not, at the very least, we get our mates back. We make her help us and we prioritize our pack above all.” There’s a tinge of anger in my voice and I stand up rigidly, letting that despair turn to icy determination, that pain turn into stubborn decision, much like so many months ago when I left to go run free alone in the mountains and forests to find my own path. Wasn’t that when the fates started to give me nudges of help. When I let my decision and instinct take over and went looking for myself for some kind of solution to my predicament.

“Chica, if anyone can get us through this, then it’s you. My Luna.... You have yet to shine and your time is coming.” Meadow’s soothing words calm my fire a little and I smile warmly, gently, her way. I cuddle into her one more time and lay my head back down on her shoulder which is level with mine, adoring my best friend and not knowing how I would have coped had she been out there too. It doesn’t bear thinking about.

“You know, I used to think I was better alone. Stronger. I see that I was wrong and it’s not about doing things alone. It’s about relying on others, being strong together. Heroes in stories they never do it alone, they always have friends... family.... Sisters, a sidekick. I think WE can get through this, together! If I’m going to shine, it won’t be because I’m doing it all by myself.” There’s some comfort in knowing this time, no matter what, I’m not alone.

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“Damn right. Isn’t that what packs, family, best friends are supposed to be there for. You know I got your back, Hemara, always. We will do this together.”

“First we both have to rest and as I’m not good at sleeping alone since Colton marked me, maybe you could stay here tonight. I’m sure you haven’t slept alone since Cesar and you mated up, right?” I point out, knowing that all day I have been dreading tonight and the loneliness of the lack of his presence, it’s why I have been standing here staring at the night instead of braving that big bed, and the tears fill Meadow’s eyes.

“Not a second apart since I fell head over heels for that a**hole. He drives me crazy; you know. When we fight, damn do we fight. It’s not pretty, but I would die without him. Literally, given, you know... marking and all.” Meadow laughs lightly through her weary teras and I smile at her humor and her attempt to make light of this. This is one of the reasons I love her so much. “He’s the best thing that ever happened to me. I love him so damn much; it wasn’t just imprinting... I always had such a crush on him, even before I turned. He’s my stability, my rock, my safe place. Cesar is my Papi, and my heart doesn’t beat when he’s not here.” Cesar is all of those things to the pack too. Always mature, parental, solid, and unwavering, and I could see how the fiery Latinos could be insane when they clashed. Meadow’s temper and Cesar’s aggression, which he has shown on the battlefield many times. I bet they clash like thunder and lightning, sparking the air around them and self-combusting with the boom. Probably in the same way they meet in pa**ion and why they still act like hazed lovers after years of being mates. What they have is rare.

“Colton is my everything too. There’s no life without him. We can’t fail.” We both fall silent once more, both sharing the bittersweet pain and lost in the same agony of reality, pining yet unable to do anything about it.

The fog is still out there, hanging like an unwanted smell around our land, cloying and clinging to everything we can see, and I let out a breath in exasperation.

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“How did the spell work on the truck go with Sierra?” I left them to it this evening while consoling many people in the town hall when I brought them up to speed on what was happening. Never in my life had I been more crushed with the weight of responsibility than in that moment when I realized without Colton here, all hopes, and eyes, were pinned on me to lead.

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As Luna I become alpha in his absence and it hit me fully when standing up on that podium and trying to rea**ure them, that we have a plan and we are going to get through this. I had to be stronger than I felt. I had to be Colton – emotionally calm, stable, sure in my wording, and remain confident in whatever I was saying, even though it was a million miles away from what I was actually feeling. The pressure bearing down on me of expectant eyes and expectations that I would be able to stand up and do it without him.

It terrified me. The what ifs. The glimpse of a future I might have to bear if we can't break this spell and the packs entire needs and direction were laid on my head. I don't know if I have it in me to be what he is, I don't know if I can lead these people long term, yet I have no choice. I am what they have and now I understand fully why Colton always doubted and second guessed himself so brutally all his life. Why he always felt he wasn't enough, and I realize I've stood behind his shadow and been under just as much protection as they have all this time. I was a Luna sure, but I never had to really command while he always protected me.

I know why he feels like he isn't doing enough, when all I felt standing there was the same damn thing. I felt inferior and like a failure.

"The sun is almost down; we should go to bed. Try and sleep. We have an early rise and a long drive if we get out of this place in one piece." Med's cuts into my thoughts and brings me back from the dark recesses of my mind that was starting to bring back that weight of despair. I need to not let myself ponder.

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"You're right. We should try." Even if I already know it won't happen, maybe I can give Meadow the sense of companionship that she may sleep. She needs it more than me if she intends to drive us seven hours across country without stopping.

I follow her when she moves and she stops at the bed and stares at it for a long moment, somehow lost in thought or memory and a tear rolls down her cheek.

"Meds?" I walk to her, but she shakes her head and inhales heavily.

"He asked me if I still loved him as crazily as when we first imprinted last night. Lying in bed, in his arms. It's like he knew something was wrong and stupidly thought it was that. He said he felt like things were off, not with us, but in general and he had a sense of foreboding that was suffocating him. Of course, the first thing that comes to mind for Cesar, is us.... if we fell apart, so would he. So he asked me, and I..... I told him he was stupid, and to stop talking loco. I could have just told him yes, and that I love him, more than ever, but I didn't. I was sa**y, I gave him att**ude, because he woke me up and I was snappy, because I'm hormonal as hell, a moody b****, what with the blood moon coming and now.....what I wouldn't give to have him laid in bed and asking me that stupid question all over again." Meadow breaks, her voice cracking, her body heaving and the tears start to fall at speed while I instinctively go to her, pulling her into my embrace protectively. Pain eating me up inside for my own feelings as well as taking on some of hers.

"He knows you love him. Cesar is one of the most loyal, happiest wolves in the pack. He can never keep his hands off you, Meds. Don't think this way, it's only hurting you," I try to console her, but she shakes her head, acting like a lost child and suddenly so young and fragile in my arms.

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"I give him such a hard time. I'm always giving him attitude. I should be sweet talking my man, and sucking him up anytime he cuddles up, right. I don't. I'm moody and harsh and I push him around because he lets me. I'm jealous, and possessive, and bossy as hell. He's the best thing in my life and I take him for granted and make life harder for him."

"Meds, this is guilt talking, and despair. Cesar knows you love him. Your relationship is normal and healthy. You do give him love and affection. I've seen it on multiple occasions, and damn girl, that jealous streak when a chola, as you call them, makes eyes his way. I think he more than knows that you need him, to survive. Cesar doesn't stop how you are because he likes it." She's crazy not to know this. Cesar worships the ground she walks on; he literally lights up when she strolls in the room and he never rejects her touch or her affections. He's quiet, less vocal about his love, but it's so obvious to everyone that she is his Queen. He patrols by her side, sticks to her like glue, and beams proudly when she handles things herself and shows how tough she can be.

"We weren't talking... this morning, when we went out. We weren't together because I was sulking that he woke me with such a stupid question. Such a stupid fight. And we searched separately, two different packs, because we are both stubborn assholes when we bicker, and we gave each other a wide berth. The last I seen of him was him glaring my way as we split to go off into the woods. That's it.... a glare, a standoff, and then he was just gone." Her whimper turns into full blown snotty sobbing, heaving as she tries to breathe through her emotional hysteria and my resolve crumbles.

"Oh god, Meadow." I squeeze her half to death, willing my hug to give her some sort of comfort. No wonder this is messing her up. I can't imagine if Colton and I had fought before the fog moved in, how much worse this would feel. Being apart, having him mad at me before we lost them. It explains why she was so quiet and introverted when it first happened and why now she's so emotional.

"Well, when we break this stupid curse, you can make it up to him. Stop thinking that this is it, because it's not. We have a plan. We are going to keep doing until we fix this. You think I'm going to let my mate stroll out there in the woods and leave us to run things, pick up what he abandoned, and allow him to live a life of leisure out there. Hell no. He needs to get back here and take the wheel once more, and Cesar needs to come pick up his woman and shake some sense into her about how much he adores her." It's half stern statement and half jest in a bid to lighten her mood and to stop myself tumbling with her.

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"Yeah, right.... Shower him with love and then smack him in the face for putting me through all this and stupidly getting himself caught in this fog. Does he have any idea what an idiot that makes him?" Her sass pushes through the tears, the outrage that he abandoned her, and I giggle at her turn in mood. She's still quietly sniffing but the lightness of her words has me squeezing her tight as

Med's composes herself at an impressive speed and shows me that tough lady, I met so many months ago.

"Tell me about it. I owe Colton a strangling for this one." I smile but it doesn't reach my heart. Talking this way is helping though, like its temporary and just a blip we are going to fix. That it's not serious and they are out there intentionally giving us a hard time like naughty boys looking for attention.

Meadow seems to find strength from somewhere and straightens up, pushing her shoulders back, lifting her chin and wipes her face clear of the mess of tears.

"Right, this time I mean it. Bed, Chica. You have looked exhausted for days and this can't be helping. Come on, we can cuddle as long as you know it's not going to second base. I don't do girls." Meadow smirks wiping her face for a second time to fully dry it and I throw out my hands in mock exasperation.

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"Ughh, I only agreed to bed share because I thought I was getting something out of it." I wink cheekily, throw my hair over my shoulder as though I'm sulking and then beam at her with a smile I hope reaches my eyes. We both smile at each other, warmly, and I pull off my clothes and head to my closet to find my nightshirt. Normally I'm all about the s**y negligees for Colton's benefit, but tonight I want to sleep in one of his t-shirts. I need him around me in some kind of way. I need his smell, his presence, his aura. To give me strength to get through this trip and something to hold onto to keep me sane.

Meadow is already in casual wear; she pulls off her hoodie that I only now realize is Cesar's because his scent is subtly lingering around it. I hadn't even noticed her complete change of style until she pulled it off to reveal a shirt I've seen him wear, over baggy grey sweats that are too big for her. She's more of a flaunt what you've got girl, so I guess much like me she is using his clothes in place of her mate.

We climb into bed and I clap my hands to kill the lights. Something Colton insisted on in our room given how reluctant he is to ever get back out of bed when we get into it.

"This witch better have some answers, I swear." Meadow snuggles down into the duvet on Colton's side of the bed and curls closer to me, catching my hands as I lay beside her to turn on my side, so we are face to face mirroring positions. It feels weird to be like this with her, somehow intimate, and in a bed that most definitely has seen some embarra**ing scenes between my mate and I. I try not to think of it.

"The fates are sending us to her, given my previous experience with their hints.... I think it's our best chance at breaking this spell. They never steered me wrong before." Despite cursing the fates out earlier I still believe they will put me on the right path. I pray so anyway.

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"I hope Sierra is right, and she's wolf friendly, else we might end up in a worse state than our boys." Her hushed tone injects a hint of seriousness in the air between us and I shiver a little.

"Yeah, as long as it's quick and painless, I don't think we will care." I giggle to lighten the mood, ignoring the real chance that this may not go well and refusing to ponder on it, and Meadow sighs heavily.

"I've been thinking this afternoon. We should take Carmen; she might be useful, and she can drive. She's going to be useless here and just a weight to Sierra's load while we're gone. With us it might take her mind off of this and give her something to do. I know I never liked her, but the girl is a fighter, and her skills made her a good fit for our pack in the past. She can hold her own in a battle and we don't know what we are driving out into tomorrow." Meadow's gaze locks on mine, that shrewd mind seeing a plan that she thinks will give us our best chance. I stay silent for a long while, thinking it over and weighing it up before nodding slowly. Seeing the why in her suggestion and respecting that Colton always values Meadow's input in all things like this.

"Yeah, I think you're right. There's going to be a part of her that tries to take on the responsibility of this, because it was her mom. Maybe helping will lighten that weight and focus her on something else while it's still so raw." I know Carmen has skills and before there was a ME in her pack, she was seen as capable and tough.

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"You're amazing you know that? I don't think I could show the same kind of compassion and care to Cesar's ex, almost mate. You really are a born Luna. You and Colton, you're a perfect fit." My face warms at her words and I intertwine my fingers in hers. My heart throbbing with so many conflicting emotions but right now, my focus is on taking one step at a time.

"I don't really have a choice. We are all in this together, bound by blood and bonds. She's one of us. The pack needs all of us to survive. Even her."

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Surprisingly, despite my mind working overtime and inability to keep picturing Colton inside my head, I fell asleep. Curled up with Meadow, talking quietly until the darkness grew that we could no longer see each other, and we faded into tiredness. I don't remember who fell asleep first, but I woke to her rousing me with a shake and telling me we had to get up. Exhausted, groggy, and somewhat disorientated, as I came to and impulsively reached for the warm and familiar body of my mate and blinked at the shock of his absence.

It was then that it all came rushing back and I almost cried with the realization that none of it was a dream, he's really not here to welcome my day, to kiss me good morning or hug me awake. And that today we have to leave to go drive an

almost full day to find a witch who may or may not help us. It feels like being s***er punched by a cannonball and my heart faltered before pounding through my chest in the most agonizing way.

It's way too early in the day, sun not quite fully up but I know we have to get out of here at first light to make sure we hit our destination before the sun comes down again. The goal is to get there without stopping if we can and try to make it in one day. The sooner we deal with this, the quicker we can break the spell, and the faster I can get Colton back. That our pack can come home again.

I wander down with her, half asleep, fatigue kicking my a** still and we grab a cold quick breakfast in the kitchens as quietly as we can so as not to attract attention and spread the word we are sneaking out.

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We didn't tell the pack we planned on leaving, so as not to cause panic and have the remainder of the pack try and talk us out of going. We are relying on Sierra telling them after we go so no one can hinder our progress. Wolves are naturally protective and when it comes to a Luna, they will hold me against my will for my own safety if they feel it's needed.

Everyone is on edge and I know the loss of their Luna on top of their alpha's absence will send them into a frenzy and barricade us from leaving. Wolves need the hierarchy more than is logical sometimes, especially the peaceable land-dwelling type and by going out there, I am abandoning them to their own fate should anything happen to me. They're going to be unhappy when they know the Rema is now in charge and they have neither Alpha nor Luna in the grounds.

It has to be done. I'm the one with the strongest gifts, and that gives us more chance of doing this without death. And the spell books and the bottle seemed pretty certain I was meant to go with Meadow to see this through, for whatever reason.

I walk slowly into the medi bay when Meadow cuts right to head outside and check the sentinels she left in charge of loading the truck have done what they were asked. They know she's leaving but they don't know about me. I am waiting until the last second to go out and jump in the truck with her, besides I still have one task to carry out before we go.

Carmen is standing by the window when I walk in and staring outside at the obvious green mist which is still lingering over the horizon. I can tell by the waves of mood coming her way she already knows what's happened while she was asleep. She's quiet, still, somber, and standing upright like that frosty b**** I knew so long ago, only now, I can feel her so much better than I used to, and the sadness is almost suffocating. If I didn't know her before, and only saw her like this now, I would be moved to pity this vulnerable creature and wonder who had hurt her so deeply.

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I clear my throat to get her attention, feeling like I'm invading her space and a little awkward; she snaps around, startled at seeing it's me and not the doctor, lowering her eyes immediately in submission, knowing her place in our grounds.

"Luna.... I ... I'm sorry for...." She begins with a waiver in her voice, her guilt seeping through so that I know what she's about to say; almost like an overwhelming heavy dampener in the air and I cut her off. She is nothing like the fierce and stubborn girl of yesterday.

"You didn't do this. She didn't do this. It would have happened anyway. They were waiting for a time and it was just coincidence." I try to soothe her, but the lack of change in her tight expression tells me my words are falling on deaf ears and her responsibility in this runs deep. I sigh and try a different approach in a bid to remove that dark shroud of worthlessness which is cloaking her and making me feel all kinds of emotional. "You can look at me, I give you permission. After all, you are one of my sub pack and they're family. No need for the formalities." It's the least I can do, given how awkward it is for her to stare at the ground while I am attempting to comfort her and making a hash job of it.

Her eyes flash up at me, a hint of shock on that normally noble face as she second guesses my words, looks away again and then flickers back at me unsurely. I think she's trying to figure out if I actually mean it, or if I'm trying to catch her out, but I haven't got time to waste today.

"Look, I didn't come here to have a chit chat... I came to ask you something." My nerves are building, knowing it's almost time and I sigh and look around the room trying to ground myself and sound stronger than I am at this moment in time. I feel like time is ticking away faster than I can deal with and yet also not. Like wading through sand in terms of how long it's been since Colton held me.

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"Yes, Luna." She has the sense not to question anyway. I guess she really is trying to step in line with my new role, or that she's so bogged down in her own grief that all her fight has left her. I'm thinking it's more that than anything else.

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"Meadow and I... we have a plan, a possible solution to the fog, the spell. I'm sure the doctor has filled you in on yesterday's events and where we're at. I want you to come with us, Meadow and I. I think you may be useful, and we need the help while numbers here are not what they were. It'll be the three of us and only a couple of days away from here in the hopes of finding a solution." My voice is steady and low, afraid any pa**ing wolf hears me but inside I'm a crumbling mess of doubt and insecurity. I have no idea if this is even a good plan or going to help, but we have to do something.

She gasps, in first surprise, and then eyes me up, mistrust all over her face as she thinks something through, and I can almost taste the apprehension coming from her in waves. That sharp look in her eye as her thoughts align.

“You think it will ease my sense of guilt!” She homes in on that right away, stating it bluntly with a chill in her tone and I have to pull myself rigid to not react in how well she saw through that ploy. It’s not all about easing her guilt though, it’s also about her being useful. Meadow wouldn’t have suggested her if she thought she would be a dead weight we drag along and right now; we need all the help we can get. I’m terrified about what we may face out there and won’t turn down someone with a gift like hers.

“You have gifts. Meadow vouched for your worthiness as a fighter and as we are going without guards, I think three is better than two.” I completely dodge her statement, not willing to confirm that yes, I’m worried her sense of responsibility will have a long-term effect on her and I don’t want to burden Sierra with her in our absence. She is going to have enough to deal with while we are gone and not have to babysit Carmen for fear of another wolf legging it out into the forest to end things.

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“I can fight. I’m fast. I can break eardrums, gla**, sometimes brains....and I want to make up for what my mother did that put us here. I brought her here. I did this. If I kept her at the mountain then ... so what I’m saying is, yes. Don’t cotton pad me, I’m capable and I’m willing.” Steel determination, even tone and no hint of weakness as she locks an eye on me. Her emotion stabilizing as she regains control and I’m impressed with how coldly she states it.

“Then you would all be enchanted too. And useless. The fog hit them not long after it hit here. We think every pack in this entire area was probably caught the same way. We were not the aim; we were only part of it.” I point out, needing her to know that what her mother did was not the only cause of this.

“So, everyone...” she starts, and I cut in.

“Yes. Which is why we have to leave now, because we have a possible fix.” I turn, motioning her to follow me, but she hesitates, and I am forced to pause while she verbalizes whatever the issue is.

“Is it true.... that Sierra is a witch? That Colton’s also a” She trails off, her voice weakening to a whisper and she gazes almost through me, caught somewhere in her head, and I realize, despite living with all the exposed secrets all these months and making peace with them, this is all new to her. That months of getting used to this fact has normalized it into a mute topic, but for her, it’s like suddenly finding out everything you knew was wrong and she is still reeling. I don’t doubt she found out a whole lot of things recently before coming here and is still digesting it all.

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"It's true." I look over my shoulder at her, confirming with my serious expression, and her eyes widen on me as she swallows noticeably. A sudden wave of unnatural wariness overcomes her aura.

"So, you?... You're a ... part of them?" It's part accusation, emphasis on the word them, a bitterness to her tone that's cut off with a croakiness of raw emotion breaking, and a tear rolls down her cheek before she can check it. I falter because I know this reaction well and should have expected it, given what's happened. The realization that I'm part of the enemy and the people who just ripped her mother to shreds, that I share their blood and stand before her, telling her I'm an ally and not foe. It was hard for me to digest it so many months ago and it took a while for the pack to fully accept it and stop staring at me like I was some kind of abomination at first, so I can't even imagine what's running through her mind as she stares at me so intensely and see's part monster who just destroyed her world.

"I am. Mother was part, so that makes me even less, I guess. Turns out there's a few hybrids int the Santos." I sigh, dodging her obvious issue with this fact, really not wanting to stand and do this now and yet she surprises me with blurting out a statement I suspected but didn't really think I would ever confirm.

"My mum was half human. It's why she was.... weak." The shame that overcomes her tone, flushes her cheeks red and pushes her gaze back to the ground, overwhelms me. I gasp in shock, turning back to her in time to see her dropping her chin to her chest and exhaling painfully as though letting out a long-burdened weight on her body and I wonder if this is the first time she has told anyone those words. I know being Luna means I can somehow charm her pack into confiding deepest secrets, but I truly never thought Carmen would be so willing to share something like this. I know for a fact Colton doesn't have this in his memory banks, so she never told him at all.

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"My dad was livid when he found out. He was so mad, he never touched her again, but she was already pregnant with me and he pressured her into aborting. He abhorred her for that part of her, and me, because it lives in me too and he hated the fact she defied him and kept me. Inferior...weak. Worthless. An impure hybrid with a species who is completely giftless and he was ashamed to know us at all..... I don't even know why I'm telling you this."

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It explains so much, especially Tawna's inability to heal her mental state with turning. It explains Carmen's sometimes loner personality; while wolves, even me, really long to be part of the pack and crave close connections but she always avoided it. Flaws from hybrids can be devastating on the abilities most wolves are born with. Any discrepancy or mutation can affect us, like how I can override Colton's alpha tone even before I was his Luna. Sierra and the Doc found out a lot

about this in the years they studied and researched hybrids and it's amazing a human was even able to carry a half wolf to term.

"You're none of those things. We don't choose what we are Carmen, we just live with it, and learn how to use it to our advantage. If you were weak, inferior, Meds wouldn't have vouched for you as our back up. So pull yourself together, grab whatever you need a for a few days and meet me out front. We need to go and as much as I know I should be giving you time, empathy and compa**ion; I don't have the time right now. Come or stay, we leave in about fifteen minutes and I expect to see you there."

I know I'm being harsh, but really, I don't have the energy for this, if I let her wallow in pity she will spiral, and it won't help. We need to leave; we need to go before people wake and we want to be out of here at the break of dawn as the sun peeks to make sure we have maximum time to get where we are going. Safe from vamps, and early enough that maybe the wolves out there will be asleep, wherever they are. I know that even enchanted that they do rest, we saw them trial off as the sun went down to go wherever they were beckoned, and we can only a**ume it was to sleep. I don't doubt that even enchanted they need to do the basics of self-care, like eat, rest, use the bathroom. Here's hoping they all don't wake at the same hour as Colton with an energy akin to the sun at that hour.

I don't wait for an answer, feeling antsy and knowing I need to stay pulled together and strong, or else I'll break and I'm already emotionally exhausted. I walk off, leaving her there to decide what she's doing and make light work of getting outside in hyper speed. I'm in no mood for more interactions with other wolves right now.

Meadow is outside with a very familiar truck pulled into the center of the drive and it's covered all over with symbols, spray painted on everything I can see. They are only a shade or two darker than the green military paint so not overly showy, but I know they're what I saw in the spell book yesterday. I guess Sierra figured this was the best way to cast a protection spell on our vehicle. Keep the fog out and maybe our pack too, much like the rune border does.

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It's the medical truck from the lab that the Doc and I came here in so many months ago and that sense of Deja Vue and full circle claw at the back of my mind again, making my skin bristle and wonder at why this feels like it has more importance than it should. Maybe the fates are coercing something once again, but I truly can't imagine how this circles back to all that's come before. I push the feeling away and set my eyes on the truck before me, in all its glory.

It's large, roomy, with space in the back for supplies and us to lay down and sleep should we need it. And when I wander round to the open back doors, I'm not shocked to see two beds clipped into place, one on each side, and another one folded flat and pushed into a corner. I guess Meds figured should we need to stop and spend a night somewhere, then a truck with a protection spell is the best place to sleep. If the runes keep Vamps out here, then it should be the same on this vehicle, so inside we wouldn't be sitting targets at all. There's a whole bunch

of creates piled and strapped into one corner, holding dried and fresh foods, a small camping stove and crates of water beside it. She really has thought ahead, and it brings a veil of peace over my fraught nerves for a moment. Reminding me of Colton's capable command and attention to detail and just serves to remind me why Meadow is his beta.

"Is she coming?" Meadow comes around, slightly pushing me over while she closes up the back doors and locks them tight, showing more runic symbols painted on them and I run my fingertips over the surface of them with interest.

"Were these successful?" I ask, not really answering her question when I don't even know myself. Carmen never gave me any real hint if she would actually follow me or not, even if she said she was coming.

"She thinks so but we won't know until we test it. She put them everywhere, even underneath and on the roof. Thinking it will create a bubble, so the fog can't get in and neither will anyone who's enchanted." Meadow stands beside me and admires Sierra's handywork with a silent stuff posture. I can feel her tension ebbing my way, her mind caught in plans and the road ahead.

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"How do we test it? I ask curiously and Meadow glares at the sentinel who has been helping her, one I recognize as being called Tom. Someone Colton trusts and speaks highly of, who's been on sentinel patrol many times. I guess he is sworn to secrecy. He wouldn't have been part of the search due to labor of his mate yesterday and the arrival of twin puppies last night, so we're lucky we have at least one capable wolf staying here to assist Sierra.

"I volunteered." he points out but Meadow shakes her head, giving off that aura of attitude and I know I probably missed an argument.

"No, Tom. I told you. She needs you here, not some mindless whatever, out there with them if it doesn't work. Those puppies need their Papi; the first days are so important for the bond." Meadow pats him on his shoulder and while I completely agree with her, I see no possible way to test it if no one is going to drive it into the fog. Maybe we should rely on me keeping the fog out until we get beyond its perimeter after all, because I don't want to take any chances at all.

"I'll do it!" the voice startles me from behind us and we both turn in unison, surprised by the invasive statement, to see Carmen standing there on the gravel in front of the main stairways in. She's watching us with interest and no hint of hesitation on her face at all now she's fully dressed and out in the sunlight to start a new day. "I can drive out there, to the main entrance, and if the fog gets me and I end up like them, you don't lose anything except a burden. If it works, then you'll know." Deadpan, emotionless tone as she shrugs nonchalantly, and I can sense she really does not care if it puts her in danger.

I open my mouth to argue with her but Meadow cuts in instead and silences me.

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"Sacrifice isn't admirable, nor smart. And we don't take burdens along for the ride. If I didn't think you were worth coming along, you wouldn't be. Don't flatter yourself." Its harsh even for her but given how they always used to snap at each other, I think it's the closest to niceness I think she'll get verbally. Meadow and Carmen had issues long before I came along and looking at the way Carmen stiffens up and that fire of anger shows instantly, I wonder if maybe Meadow knows how to deal with her better than I do.

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"Look, it needs tested, you said so! I'll drive only enough to get the hood into the fog, if it starts leaching in, I'll reverse. It can't cross the runes, so it won't be something that gets to me if I pay attention and keep the wheel behind the runes." Again, with that shrug of indifference and I squint at her, trying to get a read on her emotional state and still find nothing but emptiness. She isn't afraid of what's out there, she doesn't care about dying it seems. That's never good.

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"Actually, that's a pretty smart idea, thanks." Meadow doesn't wait, she turns and much to my despair, hops into the truck and revs up the engine with every intention of doing it herself before either of us can protest. Carmen blanches and I call out in utter panic, fear gripping my soul as my voice rasps in my throat painfully.

"Meadow, NO! What if it doesn't work, or you can't reverse in time?" I raise my hands to use my gifts to haul the truck back or lift its wheels so it can't progress, but Carmen catches my wrists and tugs them to her instead. Stopping me from interfering and shakes her head at me vigorously, daring to tell ME how to react. I'm too shocked by this bold maneuver to initially react. She just detained her Luna and stopped her from doing what she felt she had to do. Who gave her the right?

Meadow isn't listening, instead she crunches gears of the stick shift and moves off before I can do or say anything about it. Stuck in Carmen's strong grip, wriggling against her, cursing and hating on her with a fury as I bare down on her face with fire in my eyes. Carmen completely blanks me and looks at the road ahead instead, waiting to see if the truck survives. That crunch of tires on gravel has me spin back to her and the blood turns cold in my veins as all sense of fight dissolves.

"Meadow!" I start to freak out, panic rising in my throat, along with bile, as terror grips me, and I'm near hysteria as she moves away from me, dragging my focus back to her departing image. I know fine well that if I lose Meadow too, I'll crumble and break. I can't do this without her. I need her. She's keeping me sane, my head above water, and a sense of confidence that I can do this in the absence of the Alpha. Without her, we're doomed.

I lift my hands, yanking them free from Carmen's now looser grip while she was distracted, ready to push the fog back and drag the truck backwards but my wrists are grabbed from the side and yanked away for a second time with an almighty sigh, sending a surge of energy out towards the tree line as they quiver with the force. I round on Carmen, tears biting my eyes as she holds me steady once more and tugs me hard as if shaking sense into me.

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"Pull yourself together. Meadow's not stupid. We need to know the spell works, because if it doesn't, we need another plan." Carmen's biting tone, angry scowl, and raspy scold silence me momentarily for a second. I really want to punch her in throat for talking to me like that, yet all I can do is blink at her in stupefied quiet, that she would even dare address me this way and turn when I hear the crunch of brakes and the skid of the truck stopping at the perimeter. Just before Meadow inches it forward slowly, carefully, edging out to test, and I'm glued to the spot as I watch it at a distance.

It seems to crawl onward, more and more, my nails biting into my own flesh cutting skin as I watch in frozen fear, Carmen still holding my hands taut and we realize Meadow is not stopping.

"What's she doing?" I utter shakily as the truck moves out further into the fog with no hint of stalling, being swallowed into the green mist at an alarming rate, and my breath catches in my throat.

"Either... it works and she's making sure, or ..." she swallows loudly, and I stare at the red lights of the rear hazards as they dull out mistily and the worst-case scenario floods my mind.

"She's been taken and isn't stopping!" I verbalize the fear but then sigh with relief as the truck halts noisily, brakes making the wheels whine and she thrusts it into reverse at speed and comes all the way back, no hesitation, and moves right to the spot she left us at with precise speed.

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"Pretty sure she wouldn't have got back in if she had been" Carmen points out factually, raising a brow with a somehow know it all expression, and I still hold my breath until I hear the driver door open and Meds yells out.

"Are you two coming or what? We ain't got all day, Chicas. Move, move!"