
AWAKEN

BY SKYE MALONE

BOOK ONE OF THE AWAKENED FATE SERIES

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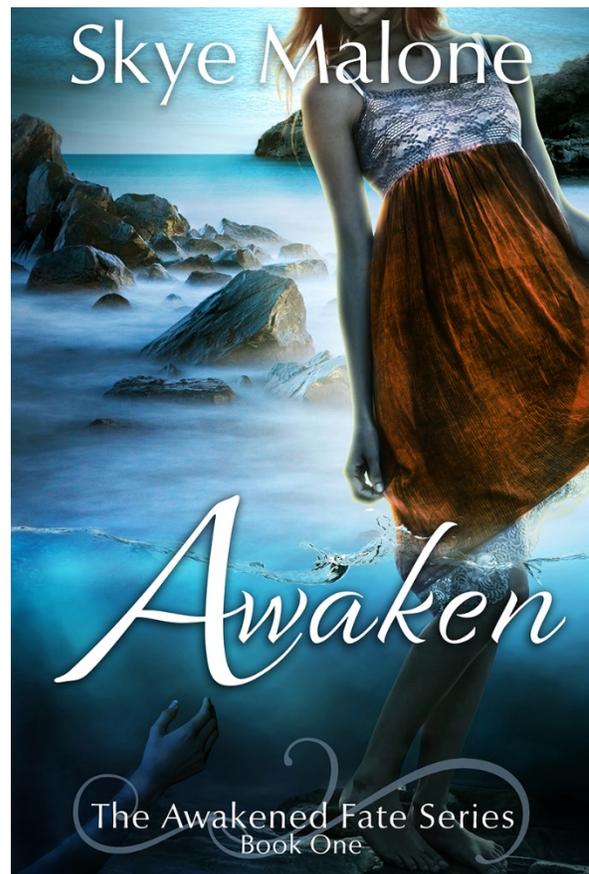
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Blurb / Synopsis:

Running away from home was never Chloe Kowalski's plan. Neither was ending up the target of killers, or having her body change in unusual ways. She only wanted a vacation, someplace far from her crazy parents and their irrational fear of water. She only wanted to do something *normal* for once, and maybe get to know her best friend's hot stepbrother a bit better at the same time.

But the first day she goes out on the ocean, strange things start to happen. Dangerous things that should be impossible. Things to which 'normal' doesn't even *begin* to apply.

Now madmen are hunting her. A mysterious guy with glowing blue eyes is following her. And her best friend's stepbrother seems to be hiding secrets all his own.

It was supposed to be a vacation. It's turning out to be a whole lot more.

Author Information:

Skye Malone is a fantasy and paranormal romance author, which means she spends most of her time not-quite-convinced that the things she imagines couldn't actually exist. Born and raised in central Illinois, she hopes someday to travel the world – though in the meantime she'll take any story that whisks her off to a place where the fantastic lives inside the everyday. She loves strong and passionate characters, complex villains, and satisfying endings that stay with you long after the book is done. An inveterate writer, she can't go a day without getting her hands on a keyboard, and can usually be found typing away while she listens to all the adventures unfolding in her head.



Skye also writes YA urban fantasy as Megan Joel Peterson and is the author of *The Children and the Blood* series.

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Excerpt

Maddox slowed the boat, killed the engine, and then lowered the anchor. At least a mile off, the shore was a mosaic of green mountains and white buildings below. Puffs of clouds drifted over Santa Lucina, but out here, only the barest wisps hovered in the brilliant blue sky. Baylie leaned back on her seat, a smile on her face, while her dog just eyed the water as though trying to figure out how the demented humans could possibly think this was a good idea.

“So...” Noah started. “Anyone want to go for a swim?”

I smiled. My parents being so psychotic and all, we didn’t even have a bathtub in the house, just a stand-up shower the size of a broom closet. I’d never been able to teach myself how to hold my breath underwater, let alone swim.

But that was going to change, starting now.

“Well, um,” I began, feeling a bit reckless with excitement. “If you wouldn’t mind teaching me?”

His eyebrows climbed. “Uh, no. I mean, sure. I—”

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The boat jumped.

“What the hell?” Maddox cried as the rest of us grabbed at the guardrails.

“Did we hit something?” Noah asked, scanning the water.

Maddox shook his head. “I don’t—”

The ocean around the boat began to bubble and roil.

Noah swore. “Get us out of here!” he called to Maddox.

His brother didn’t need the encouragement. Quickly, he scrambled back toward the driver’s seat and turned the key in the ignition.

The engine wouldn’t respond.

Shudders shook the boat, while all around, the ocean’s surface began to foam like the calm sea had suddenly become a boiling pot on a stove. Waves surged from every direction at once, growing more violent by the second, and on all sides the water darkened, as though a shadow was spreading below us.

“What’s happening?” Baylie cried.

No one could answer. As if shoved from beneath, the deck tipped up at a sharp angle and then just as quickly rocked back, wrenching us hard as we fought to hang onto the guardrails. The lurching came again, throwing us forward and back.

My grip broke. The metal rail hit me, knocking the air from my lungs.

And then came the water.

I didn’t even have time to scream. Waves closed over me, choking my instinctive gasp and tossing me so hard that, in only a heartbeat, I lost all sense of up and down. Flailing, I tried to reach out and find something, anything, to grab onto as the water pummeled me like it was a prize fighter and I was its punching bag.

Strong hands caught me. Steadied me. Pulled me from the maelstrom into a space of calm. I clutched at them, thinking Noah had managed to find me in the chaos.

Eyes like brilliant sapphires met mine.

“You’re okay,” a boy said, gripping my shoulders. “You’re fine.”

I stared at him. In the impossibly black water, I could see nothing but his face and his arms, both pale as though he’d spent his life out of the sun. He seemed only a year or two older

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than me, and his features were angular, carved like they came from stone, and strangely mesmerizing. In the darkness, his eyes shone like deep blue jewels, simultaneously seeming to reflect light and yet glow from within.

But we were underwater. We should be drowning. And instead, I could hear him as clearly as if we stood in the open air, and the oddest sense of peace was settling over me.

I wondered if I was dying.