

The Viking'S Mate Hunt

Chapter 16 MINE

Those curious but terrifying grunts and sniffs turned to deep rumbling growls as a branch broke nearby. The beast turned around and faced something in the darkness. The hair on my neck and arms stood up as the cave rumbled; growls and snarls echoed off the walls around me, but besides scaring the living hell out of me, nothing happened. The beast's growl died down and disappeared into the darkness. But I didn't dare to move, breathe out loud, or crawl out to check. I stayed put and did my best not to fall asleep through the night. Again, I must have fallen asleep in the late-night hours because I jerked up and realized the sun was shining outside.

I listened to birds, wind, and insects. That's it, so I breathed out. My body was aching and sore, and I felt drained after a long night with little sleep. I ate the rest of my berries, drank some water, and washed my face with some of it before I pushed the bushes aside and crawled out.

I yawned and stretched my hands over my head, trying to wake up, taking in the stunning view as I suddenly caught a movement in the corner of my eye. I spun around and fumbled for the knife I managed to strap to the side of my waist. A man slowly raised from the ground and stretched his arms over his head, just like I did, and his eyes flickered as a sly grin tugged at the corner of his lips. Taking a quick step back, I pointed my knife at him.

He was tall, like the rest of the monsters. But his hair was cut shorter and twisted with leather straps of two different colors over his head. His eyes were intensely blue, and he had dark lashes and brows. A light, thin scar went from his temple and disappeared into his short thick beard. His muscles bulged on his chest as he rolled his shoulder and neck. The only thing he wore looked like a torn mini skirt made of light brown hide. He looked me up and down like a hungry dog, but I didn't move an inch. I just kept watching him, hundreds of thoughts rushed through my head, and he started walking back and forth. I squinted my eyes at him, but I took another step back as a deep rumble came from his chest. His eyes flickered again and again. He kept pulling at his beard and pacing back and forth like he had an internal struggle. I couldn't care less; I'm no wolf prey!

My eyes widened, and I started taking several steps back as his eyes suddenly turned green and he walked stalking at me with long strides. Still, that cocky grin plastered all over his face. He smelled like a salty sea breeze with a faint hint of vanilla, and my heart started pounding in my chest. My hands felt warm and sweaty as he quickly put the distance between us away. I couldn't move, and he stopped so close I could feel the heat of his body as I looked up. He towered over me, greedily drinking me in with his deep green eyes. My heart pounded so hard in my chest that I could feel the thud between my slightly parted lips, and my breaths became rapid and shallow. When he opened his mouth, it sounded like he spoke with two voices. A deep man's voice, coated by a carnal, growling one, and I began freaking out as he leaned down towards me,

“MINE!”

The words vibrated toward me, and electrical waves danced over my skin and left goosebumps up my arms to my neck. No, hell no! what kind of magic shit is this?! I jumped as a massive warm hand snaked around my waist; what was happening here? His green eyes found mine and I disappeared into the deep green forest of a sparkling set of eyes until I felt his warm breath on my skin.

I yanked my hand back, twisted the knife in my hand, and I smashed the back of it right across his nose. I heard the sickening crack, that deep growling in his chest came out like a raging animal through his lips as he stumbled backward, covering his face with both hands. I didn't wait, and I jumped down the steep mountainside. Ran, jumped, rolled. I heard him curse and growl, but I didn't look back. Right before I reached the ground, I heard stone begin to roll down beside me.

I heaved for breath and started running as I saw the massive man bare his teeth, running way too quickly down the rocky hillside. His teeth were more like sharp animal canines, and those green eyes seemed darker, but that wicked smile tugging at the corner of his lips gave me the impression that this was a game he gladly played. I didn't know the area too well, but I've made some notes behind my ears as I was down here the day before. I jumped over the first little stream, running up the water stream on the next. Through the part with dense raspberry bushes, over the rocky part, over the next little stream, and I started to run up between two other mountains.

Everything went by so fast. My heart raged like a caged animal in my chest; in my head, the word MINE vibrated, and my cheeks blushed. The only thing I heard was my fast pulse pumping through my ears, making me feel like I was

deaf. No birds, no running water, I heard nothing of it. A pulsating wall separated me from the real world.

Again, I found myself running on all fours, clawing myself up the steep hillside. Mine, mine. Why did those words stick in my head? Make me feel so warm and flustered? I reached a flat area midway up and sat down. My breathing was so deep and quick that I could taste that sweet metallic with each breath. I burned down my throat as I scanned the woods down below me. The hairs on my neck stood up as a little rock tumbled down and stopped at my palms. Holding my breath, I heard someone breathing behind me.