

# The Viking'S Mate Hunt

## Chapter 17 A black wolf

I felt the creature move behind me, and for some reason, I knew it was the wolf. Not a human form, not the bear, but the wolf that was stalking down the steep hill behind me. I clenched the little stone in my hand, frantically searching the area around me with my eyes for a way out, anything that could help. I'm not ready for this; this is not how it was supposed to be!

One more day, I need one more day! Before I knew it, the hot breath of the massive predator fanned my hair and sent shivers down my spine. I threw myself to the side on instinct just as he launched forward. Big black paws slid on the loose rocks as the animal struggled to regain balance, and I stared at it with wide eyes—a big black wolf. No big would be the world's biggest understatement; it was the size of a goddamned horse!

For a brief second, time stood still. I sat a couple of meters away from a massive wolf; its fur was black, almost shining like the ocean waves at midnight when the cold moonlight hit the water just right. His eyes were deep green and locked to mine. Its lips were twitching, lifting and showing those deadly canines, and he lowered his head as his ears laid flat. Images of the wolfs that stalked towards me the day I arrived in the village, the day bulky McBraid or Bo gave me the formal introduction flashed in my mind. My heart felt like a caged hummingbird smashing against my ribs to get free, my muscles tensed, and tears welled up in my eyes. Fuck! Angerly, I whipped the tears away and glared at the wolf. I know what he is, I know he can kill me if he wants to, but I'm not fucking crying! I won't give him that satisfaction! I'm no rabbit!

The wolf's head lifted a little, looking down on me cocking its head a little to the side, and when he began taking steps towards me, I acted quickly. I grabbed the first stone I could get my hands on and threw it right at him, clearly not expecting it; the little palm-sized rock hit him right between its eyes.

He grunted and shook his head, I took the opportunity to grab new stones, and I hurled them all at him, one after the other, faster and faster. Most of them reached their attended target, but unfortunately, it didn't seem they did much more than irritate and confuse him. A heavier stone hit him right over the eye and then one on the snout; a little yelp left the beast before he bared

his teeth and snarled at me. He hunched down before he leaped, but this time I rolled forward beneath him, and he missed me once more. But he jumped straight back before I could even stop my first movement. It just bounced off the ground and knocked me over from the side.

He knocked the air out of my lungs, and I groaned at impact, rolling over and nearly sliding down the hillside before grasping after the ground and getting to my feet.

Standing tall, the wolf's head still towered over me, and reality dawned on me. I'm fighting a wolf! I'm fighting a horse-size wolf with rocks! A burst of dry airy laughter left my lips, and it caused the wolf to cock his head again. Looking me up and down, I nearly fooled myself by thinking it looked like he scanned me for injuries. This place is undoubtedly messing with my head! No matter what, I'd rather die than end up as a forced bride, mate, or what they are calling it! I lifted my chin, a stone in one hand and my knife in the other.

A dancing game started, he launched, and I jumped aside. After a while, I began to feel like he was only playing with me. Tiring me out, but I figured that out a little late. I was tired, my side was sore after the impact, and my muscles ached; my head screamed at me. I needed water, food, and rest. I need to find a way to end this, get away, if only for a while. If we continue like this, I will break. Give up, lose, and that is not an option! The black wolf jumped after me like a puppy playing fetch, not a dead animal ready to kill. So, the next time that overgrown puppy jumped, I stood my ground with the rock ready. His eyes squinted at me, and just before we collided, I swung my hand as hard as I could, and the rock crashed into the underside of his jaws. A high-pitch bark left the animal before it spun around and pushed me over with his behind.

I stood too close to the edge and lost balance as I fell backward over the steep fall. I threw my knife out without even being able to aim, but right before my back hit the ground and I started to spin and roll down the rocky side, a loud whine reached my ears. Stones and rocks rolled with me, cutting into my knees and arms, and my head tossed around like a kid's toy before I landed on my back on the ground. The impact knocked the wind out of me, causing me to scream just before my head hit the ground; a surging pain rushed through me before everything turned dark around me.

My head was pounding, everything ached, and I hissed as I tried to move.

My eyes were still closed, afraid that if I opened them now, my head would explode! A fire crackled nearby; the smell of grilled meat filled my nostrils, making me feel sick. Meat? Fire? With all the strength I could muster, I pushed myself up with my elbows and slowly opened my eyes. The light from the fire burned in my eyes, and I repeatedly blinked to see clearly. A couple of meters from me, he sat by the fire, turning a big chunk of something around in the open flames