

# The Viking'S Mate Hunt

## Chapter 39 Seeing with new eyes

Elisabeth/Eir.

It was a rocky and a little uncomfortable start. Back home, the normal me would never seek out the one I decided to fuck for no good reason, for company. But what was I supposed to do? I knew nobody here, didn't even know if I wanted to know anyone here. I did, however, I know I didn't feel safe walking around here alone. Monsters, shifters, magical asshats. I didn't trust any of them, even for a second. But it was also this place. Everything felt so different, so foreign, and I felt so alone and lost. A feeling I really didn't like. I tried pushing it aside, but it didn't help. Walking through that little village place, eyes were on me all the time. I was the outsider, the one that didn't belong.

Sitting on that edge, feet hanging in the air and watching the ocean. It calmed me like the sea breeze cleared my head, letting me start with blank pages. He told me how they used boats to fish, hunt seals sometimes they even caught whales! As he talked, pictures began to form in my head. Families get together to spend the day at the beach, and kids play and learn by watching the adults. They found shells, crabs, seaweed, pretty stones, and onions growing nearby. How everyone helped when the big fishing boats came back, the whole village reeked with fish and blood as they gutted them. Sliced them up and stored them in salt. I could even imagine the laughter, the easy chat between neighbors and friends.

Toke showed me the small huts built to dry the fish. Others were to smoke them, and they even had a whole cabin just for herbs, vegetables, and fruit! Slowly I began to realize this wasn't the typical community I was used to. Just neighbors, people saying hi as they passed or locked the other way to avoid confrontations or situations. They were a family of sorts. Close friends and family living side by side, helping each other, relying on one another. They made each other strong. I haven't noticed how green the grass is before now. How radiant colors flowers and berries have. As we walked through the village, over the fields they owned, along the beach and their wharf.

Everyone could go everywhere, and there were no guards. No cashier taking money if you needed some vegetables or meat. With each step we took, the

place opened in a new way. What I'd seen as a scary, old village with high walls, monsters, and evil was now becoming something else entirely.

The walls around were built years ago, right before a war between this pack and the barbarian pack. It was to protect the females and children while the fighting mainly happened in the woods surrounding the area. The reason I saw mostly males when I arrived was that the females and kids had their own place on the backside of the village center. They were not confined to that area; it had just slowly become this way. Mostly because they needed to keep the youngest from the steep dive into the ocean, away from the training grounds and weapons. Some kids happened to watch it sometimes, but always with supervision.

Females of any kind were rare in this new world and therefore protected, but the children were too. Birthrates had gone considerably down, so most children were sheltered. Trained, learned what they needed, and all that. Of course, they even had an open play area, but they didn't have real freedom. They could not roam and investigate the woods. Playing alongside the beach and picking shells, one grown-up or another was always right by their side.

We walked between a couple of houses at the end of the village, and true enough, a huge green field opened up in front of me. Here children of all ages were running around, playing, squealing, crying, shouting, and laughing. Some were kicking something that looked like a ball between them, and others chased each other with sticks. A nice sight, but at the same time, a little sad. To call this, a play area was wrong on so many levels in my head. There wasn't much for the kids to do here but run after each other, throw things at each other, or nag at their parents.

In the shadows of the houses we had just passed, there were several wooden benches set up, and a small group of women was setting out different bowls. It looked like they contained small shells, colorful stones, and small silver and copper figurines. On the table next to it, there were stacks with what looked like small pieces of fur, leather, dried threads, and old fishing lines. I had no idea what they were doing here.

"The first table is for decoration. They pierce whole in the shells, stones, figurines, and whatever they have found and think would make a nice piece. Some become toys for kids; others become necklaces, decorations on the kid's boots, or items of clothing. Some of these women even have their own booth where they sell things like this every year on the market. The other table is fur. Mostly from rabbits, squirrels, and other small prey. They are usually

used to make winter boots warm; they are doubled up with fur from seals. The seal's skin is thick and water-resistant, and the animal's fat is used to make them even softer and more resistant. There is also set up a place where you can make bowls, pots, and whatever you want out of clay further down towards the water's edge. There are no limitations here, not for them, and we will provide whatever they need as long as we can."

Reality began to dawn on me; this place had no stores. No place they could get by clothes, nowhere to get what they needed. Nothing. They were all dependent on making what they could or trading with each other. A nice thing, maybe, but also hard. It was like I had traveled back in time. As my eyes wandered over the area, I spotted someone I recognized. One of the girls that came in the same carriage as me. She wasn't standing with the rest, and she sat on the edge of the open field. Her back leaned against the high wooden fence. Her feet were curled up in front of her, and her hands pressed her knees close. I wanted to go to her; she looked as lost and alone as I felt this very morning. I know how that could hurt and what it did to you.

Two of the ladies had walked over and were talking to Toke, or Alpha as they called him, and I used that tiny window to sneak away from his side. Pressing my back against the wall, I slid down into a sitting position right next to the girl, and she didn't even seem to notice before my ass bumped down on the grass.

"Im, Elisab.. "

I stopped myself no. I might have been Elisabeth, and she will still be a huge part of me, but here, here I was, Eir. And I was beginning to like Eir, she was a little different, but it also felt good in a way I could not explain. So I decided to just go with it,

"I mean, I'm Eir."

"I know; I'm Maya."

She muttered, not taking her eyes away from the blank stare she had ending out on the horizon.

"Are you okay?"

Quiet, and for a while, I thought she wasn't even going to answer me.

“No, no, I’m not! I hate this place! I can’t sow! Make clothes and all that nick-nack! I can’t even have kids! I don’t belong here. I don’t belong here either..”

Just as I was about to answer, Toke called out. That there was a meeting, and I needed to be there. I just nodded and got up before I looked back at Maya.

“What did you do back home?”

“I used to help in my dad’s shop. He was a carpenter and a jack of all trades in our neighborhood. The only reason I was allowed to was that my mother could never give him the son he wanted.. and needed. ”

“Eir! Come! We need to go. They are waiting for us!”