

The Viking'S Mate Hunt

Chapter 49 What did you do to me?

I moved up and down in the darkness, floating in a soft sky. Like a little boat on the ocean, the steady slow movements made me feel doozy.

Like in a lousy movie, a short glimpse broke the darkness. Wooden walls. A tiny lamp and bed sheets. Then back to the darkness, warm, soft, and safe. Like I was lulled into a thick fluffy blanket, letting me sigh in contentment and lean into it with a smile.

Dreamless, no worries, nothing but the soft night. I had no sense of time or place, but it didn't worry me. Didn't bother me, I just existed, and it felt so lovely. One voice was there often, whispering behind the night curtains. On and off, words and soft murmur accompanied brief images of light and wooden walls.

I stretched my arms over my head and squinted toward the light. My body felt heavy, but a smile graced my lips. Like I just woke up from the best sleep I've ever had in my life. But with each breath and every time I blinked, I felt more and more confused.

Where am I? How did I even get here? My head felt foggy, and I struggled to grasp my own thoughts. What was the last thing I remembered? Fixing up that little building with the other ladies! Yes, and it was gorgeous. Everyone was so happy and satisfied with their work. I leaned back on a soft pillow, excitement filling my chest as I pictured everyone working so hard together.

No, fire! I sprung up in a sitting position again. We were attacked; the wall was burning! Panic raged through my veins as my eyes quickly scanned the little dark room I had been sleeping in. Was I hurt? I patted down my own body. But no. Besides being a little stiff and sore, I felt fine. No wounds, nothing. Maybe I hit my head? Could I be in the infirmary? I looked around again, but no. Not at all. This was more like a little old wooden hut or a bed chamber. No machines, no lights, no emergency button. Nothing. Looking down, I noticed the duvet I wrapped around me didn't even have a cover.

I grabbed the door frame not to fall as I managed to stagger my way over from the bed. My legs didn't listen, like they were still asleep. The moment I had stood up, dizziness completely blind-sighted me, and I fell back into the bed.

This is not right; something is not right.

I leaned heavily on the wooden frame as I clung on for bare life, feeling like my feet would not hold me up on their own. Then images of the black wolves flashed through my mind: the woods and the camp. I met the barbarians!

Burning campfire, huge men with tattoos and leather clothing. I frowned; I felt like that was a good memory. I felt like there was supposed to be laughter and warm drinks. But I could not for the life of me find those memories.

Could my mind and memory be affected by a dream I can't remember? I took deep breaths while struggling to open the door. The handle was strange, and when I first got a grasp on it, it was hard to move. For a second, I wondered if it was locked or just rusty, but it finally moved. My feet were numb, and the wooden floors felt cold against my bare feet.

Bare feet, I stooped in the narrow hall outside and looked down. An uneasy feeling spread in my stomach as I noticed my attire. It was that white simple dress—the same dress we were all forced to wear on the hunt. I hated it. Hated it then, and I hate it now. Not really for how it looks, but what it means and what it stands for. It made me feel tiny, helpless, and meaningless. Strange, really, how one little piece of fabric can hold such power over one person.

My head jolted up. Voices! I heard voices. They were distanced and mumbling as they came from outside. My hands fumbled along the dark walls as I made my way down the hall, it wasn't that dark, but my body still felt foreign. My bones, muscles, and head wanted to move with the waves. Sway softly from one side to the other, but with my feet placed firmly on the ground, I knew it didn't move. This was not a boat, not on the sea, but still, my body refused to believe it, and the movement of the waves washed over me again and again.

The hall was short, only a couple of meters, and I passed two closed doors. But it feels endless, growing two steps with each step I took. Finally, I threw myself at the door frame at the end of it. No door, just an open frame leading into something looking like a primitive kitchen. I frowned. This was nothing like the cooking area the wolves had, but far from the kitchens, I'm used to at home.

A long wooden bench, rough and unpolished, resembled a kitchen bench. The only difference was that there was nothing beneath it. Now drawers or cabinets. Just a couple of long wooden legs and some crossing between. Bowls and knives were scattered on top of it, and at the end, something that could look like a kitchen sink. I mean, if I really put my imagination into it.

There was an open fire further down the room, and a long, massive wooden table occupied most of the open space in the middle, almost like the long table in the alpha's hall. Laughter and voices brought me back and out of my own speculations, and my eyes landed on a little window: no curtains or flowers. I squinted my eyes; where is there even glass there? Or was it just an opening in the wall? The voices were more apparent now, closer, and my heart skipped a beat.

I knew that voice, Toke! Stumbling across the room, past the window. I grabbed the handle of the door there and used all my strength to push it open. The only problem was that this handle was working just fine. It flung open, and I stumbled after. Tripping over my own feet and the threshold. With a pathetically high-pitched squeal, I fell face-first. My palms scraped along the hard and rugged ground, and lightning pain flashed through my legs as my knees crashed to the ground.

My body was too weak even to brace myself, my hands gave in, and my knees buckled as I fell even further. Not stopping before my chin collided with the cold ground. The cold night air brushed against my skin as to remind me how little clothes I was wearing while crawling around on the ground. The thin straps fell down over my shoulders, and the dress crumbled up, leaving my bare ass for all to see.

With shaking breaths, I struggled to regain myself. Struggled to bite through that childish but yet incredible pain burning on my skin. Why did I feel like this? Like Bambi wobbling on the ice, like my muscles have forgotten how to work. Weak and utterly useless! Around me, there was utter silence. All talking was gone, and all the laughter vanished with the wind.

The crackling of fire eating raw wood and my raging pulse pumping through my ears were the only sound the soft wind danced around. I didn't hear a thing, but I knew they were there. Felt them staring, their eyes burning on my exposed skin.

Seconds flew by, and seconds felt like days. I tried to push myself up, not daring to look in their direction. But my arms began to shake, and when I put

pressure on them, they gave in again. Anger flared. My skin boiled. Toke was there! I knew it; I heard his voice! Why didn't he help me?

"Toke!? What the hell did you do to me!?"

I shouted from the top of my lungs, so angry I just wanted to throw a fit—a top-notch toddler tantrum. Kick and hit the ground while screaming until I fell back to sleep. The silence grew even thicker and heavier, pressing over me like a suffocating blanket. Someone stepped over me and, with a foot on each side of me, lifted me up under the arms. Like the humiliation couldn't be even worse, but I had no choice. My hands and feet would not hold me, so when I was up in a standing position, I grabbed onto him. Looking up, I was met by an unshaved man with dark skin and sparkling brown eyes.

Confused, I looked over to the fireplace, where Toke sat. Staring into the flames like I didn't exist. What the hell is happening here?