



# HUNTED

Harper R. Horrod

A tale directly  
from the  
imagination of a  
10-year-old girl  
who loves  
wolves.

Edited by AVS

# **HUNTED**

*By Harper R. Horrod*

*Forward*

*What does the term hunted come from really? It comes from the long and winding path to this place. Something is always out there looking to end your life or capture and exhibit you. It could be simply a trophy for the wall or cabinet.*

*We are hunted, almost to extinction, but some of us .... AVS.*



## **One: The Existence**

Let's start at the very beginning, we grew up without our mother who had been killed almost six months after we came into the world. She had given birth to us in our dry and safe den, within a hillside. It's dense trees providing a wonderful shield from the outside world. Some said that the den had maybe been dug out by humans, although there was no trace anywhere of their scent or it was simply a wonderful quirk of nature.

Okay, I know. The first sentence in and it's already getting sad, so let's restart

There were eight of us in total, I had five brothers and two sisters, with me making up the third female of our litter.

In too short a time after my siblings and I had been born my mother was shot and killed by a hunter. The only saving grace for my siblings and I is that we didn't witness the traumatic event.

She had been hunting for food with the pack, my dad and three of our older siblings who along with unusually an unrelated pack member who had managed at a fairly young age to be accepted into the family, had seen the tragedy, and so I got told about it many, many, times so that I would remember to avoid humans and stay well within our forest and prairie domain, but even then, we could never be sure of being safe, humans did not have the same regard for our territory as we had for theirs!

I should probably have told you my name, how incredibly rude of me. My name is Bloom

Warrior I'm named after my mum because she was the last born, and so was I.

My brothers are all larger than my sisters and I, and are named Nature fighter, Flame Killer, Water Burn, Slice Bird and Killer Jaw. My sisters are Rain Fall and Leaf Flower.

So, as you can probably see we are all named after an element of nature or a creature of nature!



## **2 The Pack**

In the absence of our mum, it was our dad who had started to train us for the big wide world, as part of a pack we were lucky enough to get food from the other four adults too, their presence meant we felt safe, even if on some days we could hear the faint echoes of the gunshots. Hunters were always there.

We were about six months old when our dad decided it was the right time to train us to fight, and he taught us to hunt a little with the pack, which was pretty easy if you ask me. Anyway the next thing was to learn how to survive in a one-on-one wolf fight. Our play became a little more aggressive and assertive as we went one-on-one with each other fighting the best we

could. But don't worry no one was actually hurt. Some of us got pinned to the ground easily, some fought more cleverly and so were harder to pin down. Once we had learned the basics, we were put into groups that reflected our levels of best fighter, good fighter and bad fighter. I do not like to brag, but I was in best fighter, of course.

After learning how to fight we went on to learning how to protect the pack from other creatures, even other packs of wolves. This one was mostly for my brothers, but me and my sisters joined in as well.

It was important to learn these things to keep us all safe. At first, we would growl to threaten or to warn. We would put up our tails high over our backs pointing towards the moon, illustrating our fury and readiness to attack. It had all began of course with our playful rough and tumble. Not just to yelp as sharp teeth caught and pinched during our overzealous play, and make those sounds, cub like growls some might see as cute, this was real now, no more playing it was a weapon we had, like the older wolves of our pack. That was the foundation of our survival,

and as it became almost a daily activity to challenge one another, it meant we knew how to fight.

After the first long and thorough hunt with the pack, I realised perhaps hunting wasn't quite so easy after all. Hours of trekking to find the meagre pickings of hares, voles and other small animals had left us all tired.

Fatigued I had sprawled out in our den with a few of my siblings, our bellies were as full as they could be when sharing with the pack, and a stop at the river's edge had helped us quench the thirst made from chasing the rodents and hares we had captured and devoured.

### 3 Explore



The sights and sounds of our territory were becoming well known to us all now, as we grew bigger and stronger, hunting close to our den, and staying out of the reach of those deadly hunters, we honed and honed our skills until we felt ourselves truly becoming pack members, not simply the children who needed to be fed. And yet our father knew we needed more experience of our large hunting range and thus he led us to explore further than we ever had dared before.

I think we were about nine months old, and like all young wolves we knew our place within the

pack, our father was the alpha, after which age and audacity had set the order of our hierarchy.

Instinctively we moved in groups to flank prey we might come across, we set off deeper into the forest and we began to become a little less watchful, as the sights and sounds of the wildlife, birds singing loudly as if nothing in the world was wrong, the rabbits darting for safety. It was a wonderful and exciting experience, I felt truly alive, buzzing with becoming a part of the land, the pack, and the seasons, I was now fitting into the balance of nature's challenges and gains, there was suddenly so much more to smell, see, and hear. Watching the pack hunt was exhilarating, we copied, learning from the older wolves. As we went deeper into prairie, which was broken up as a long flat valley by some clusters of trees, and the occasional brush. We could smell and sense deer ahead and instinctively we separated gradually. Some went left some right and some went straight across the prairie floor. I opted for the right side because that's my lucky side, the way that came most naturally to me. As we travelled more, we

encountered a young bear that seemed to be alone, we were immediately intrigued by this creature, it was so much smaller. Our curiosity took us too close, the bear was wary of us, standing on its hind legs, making itself as big as possible, snarling and growling, an aggression we mirrored, that was until backup arrived in the shape of the mother bear. An altogether different proposition, as she stood to voice her displeasure at our presence, we felt it might be time to beat a hasty retreat. Leaving the angry bear and its cub to grumble about the intrusion.

I noticed that some of the pack had broken off from the hunt to investigate our absence and the sounds the bears had made, our father was less than pleased at our antics. He reminded us that food was not easy to come by, and injured pack members would likely starve. Since survival was most dependent on our fitness. We were reprimanded fiercely, our fathers unwanted attention reminding us of our place. The pack must hunt in unison, to be successful, we would not forget that lesson. And the human hunters were always close by, limiting our hunts to very small windows. We learned to respect the things

that lurked within our terrain, bears of course, but predominantly humans. Our sole mission must be a focused, hunt, kill and return to the relative safety of our den.



## 4: Growing



We were now one and a half years old and ready to set off on our own, to start our own packs.

We had begun to wander more and more, something was almost calling us, drawing us away from our pack, we ended up splitting down the middle, two groups of four. Slowly the numbers dwindled as each found a mate. It felt very odd to just let go, to leave the siblings I had grown with, with barely a look back. It wasn't a strange thing, even if it felt like it, for us to just pull away, and to seek out a mate. It was an instinct that had been bred into us all. In order to survive we had to dilute the gene-pool. I had been with Nature-Fighter; Water Burn and Rain Fall. It was she, Rain Fall who was the first to leave, and as we progressed further into different

territories Nature-Fighter was gone. Water Burn and I had spent a lot of time together, but eventually he too was led away by the scent of a female wolf.

## **5: Blood Reaper**



I travelled alone for a couple of months. Laying low when the light revealed my presence and hunting in the darkness. The further away from my siblings I got the more driven I became, and then suddenly the familiar scent of another wolf filled my nostrils, apprehensive at first that I was not intruding onto the land of a rival pack but nevertheless driven by the desire to find a mate, I found him, Blood Reaper.

We had circled, taken time and then finally our tails wagged as we engaged with each other.

He was a magnificent wolf, fast, and strong, he was also very intelligent and very cool.

We were both filled with the natural need and so we became a bonded pair.

Hunting together for the first time, was an interesting and exciting experience, 'Reaper' was stealthy and confident, I watched him closely, he was so self-assured it gave me the confidence to engage with him and together that first hunt was a success.

We could still hear the wretched sounds of gunshots all of the time, but whilst those sounds were distant, we paid more attention to our surroundings and what might trouble us there. Blood Reaper and I became closer each day, and our abilities to anticipate and work as one meant we were now a very efficient hunting unit.

Our hunt that evening was a long one, until we found a herd mixed of deer and elk. Knowing instinctively our chances would be heightened we observed and went straight for the weakest Elk, there was no stealth, it was a straight battle

our stamina against the weaker animal, and after a brief chase we brought it down.

As we began to enjoy the bounty of our hunt, we became aware of the proximity of the humans, their hideous guns intruding, and now becoming louder.

To our chagrin we were forced to abandon the rest of the meat, gorging quickly before fleeing into the darkness to avoid the monsters that sought to destroy us.

Gunshots now aimed at the elk and deer, ringing in our ears as we travelled a great distance away. Silence.

Whether luck was smiling on us, or just our natural ability to sniff out meals, we discovered a carcass of a deer, perhaps wounded by those incessant hunters before dying unseen close to a lake bathed in moonlight.

As we gratefully consumed the meat, the water of the lake quenching our thirst. It had been a long trek away from the menace, and perhaps finally we had found a range for ourselves. It

was becoming clear that our natural instincts to mate were growing stronger, and after a few less than successful attempts our bond was consummated.

As the days passed and the growing cubs within me moved about announcing their presence, it was clear that we would need to den, a haven to bring our cubs into the world.

The snow was coming soon, and it promised to be cold, so my anxiety grew.

## **6 Mates:**



The den had to be perfect, a safe and clean hiding place for my precious cubs to thrive.

We found so many promising sites, but they all turned out to be inappropriate, mostly because a dry and covered area of concealment needed to be our priority for keeping us all safe. None of them felt right so we kept looking I could see Blood was getting anxious and just as I thought we would never discover the den I wanted, there it was.

It was secluded in a wooded area, a cave almost like the one I had grown in. We investigated deep inside to ensure there were no other inhabitants. The space was cool, but small enough to keep them warm now, and once summer came it would be away from the heat of the outside world, and we felt comfortable enough to spend our first night in this new den.



When I awoke, I could hear only the sound of the pouring rain outside, it was falling quite heavily and that was almost an invitation. With the sun just rising, I left the cave and sat feeling calm and free, I could feel my babies inside me, stirring and moving. Perhaps they were enjoying the sound of nature, as I was.

It felt so refreshing and I sat there in the rain until Blood had awoken and had ventured out to investigate my absence. It was oddly warm outside.

He sat beside me, nuzzling my neck and licking my face occasionally, a reminder of his devotion and joy at my presence, I reciprocated, a sweet show of affection. The cooling raindrops ran from our fur coats a little penetrating to the skin,

but welcome in this strangely warm and heavy weather.

The next day we started the territory marking and it was going pretty well we had lots of territory and room for us to hunt and our Cubs to play.

We spent a good deal of our time ensuring everything was as we wanted it, no surprises carefully leaving our scent on our territory we had disturbed the interaction of two Hares, one in pursuit of the other, and I wanted it moving as quietly as I could along the edge of the meadow, hoping to intercept the follower due to it being so distracted. And I did, a single snap of my strong jaws had provided me more food for my cubs.

## 9 Birth of Cubs



As my body began to experience the labour pains of the cubs wanting their freedom, I could neither lie down, nor stand up, it was a curious and gripping pain, yet excitement coursed through that pain. They were coming, I would be starting our pack finally, and with Blood Reaper watching on, often stepping into my space to offer reassurance my beautiful cubs were given freedom and life from within me.

Three gorgeous females and two males. I named them Lily, Bailey, Eva, Casey, and Fonen. Their coats although slightly wet from my cleaning away the afterbirth, were magnificent. The boys were a rich brown colouring with wisps of grey and black, whilst 2 of the girls were darker, a

black and mottled lighter colouring. Our last girl was white. She had taken her colouring from me, as I had grown my coat had become a much paler colour, I was white and Blood's fur was thick and full, a beautifully intense black and brown colour match that made him look even more impressive.

We were so relieved, mostly I was since it was me that did all the hard work, but I could tell Blood was excited to see our brood and had helped to clean them up.

I was so excited, look at what I had produced, with my bonded mate, and now I was eager to feed them, to make sure their start in life would be a much better experience than my own. Blood nuzzled me gently licking across my muzzle, up toward my eyes, and then giving the same attention to the cubs who were making pitiful sounds and wriggling around looking for their first meal.

It seemed to be an age before I saw much of the sun again, the cubs were a full-time job, fortunately Blood kept me going with meals he could hunt and bring back to me.

As they began to grow, their eyes opening after just ten days, and beginning to walk at just three weeks old, they were more than a handful, even my meals were fodder for their greedy little mouths. And once the first month had passed, it was full blown cub rebellion, some of them refusing to stay where I wanted them. Lily the oldest started to get white specks all over her Eva stayed black and Casey stayed white with some grey and brown flashes beginning to creep in, Bailey had an extraordinary dark brown patch on his back and Fonen stayed an impressive mixture of the light and shade.



## 10: Goodbye

As I speak in now, in the present. My cubs are now one year old and becoming impressive hunters, we are not sure if the urge to roam will call any of them, we hope to form a pack with them as the nucleus, Blood is teaching them so many different things, from avoiding the old brown bears, to being aware what those echoing sounds of minor explosions are in the distance. We may be hunted, but we will never stop trying to thrive and be a part of the natural world around us.

Thank you for reading my story.

Harper:

from inside my mind, to yours. To show my imagination and the inspiration I derive from Wolves.

Bloom is of course my favourite, since she and I are always one in my mind.



Harper R Horrod.