



Lord of the Wolves (Vikings Trilogy Book 3)

By Heather Graham

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She was the heroine of her people....

With her extraordinary violet eyes, French Countess Melisande was a prize for any man. But the teenage hellion who rode into battle to defend her people belonged to the warrior who saved her life, made her his bride, then disappeared for years. Now Conar MacAuliffe had returned to claim his wife, now a ravishing woman determined to fight for her freedom at all costs. But the proud beauty who feared no man suddenly feared herself and the passionate embrace of the husband who vowed to never let her go.

He was the mighty viking conqueror they called...

Lord of the Wolves, a legendary warrior whose greatest challenge would come with the woman he was destined to wed. In the fiery Countess Melisande he would find his heaven and hell. Even as he waged war for her heart, he dared not to yield his own. Even as he laid sweet, seductive siege to her body, he tried to shield his soul. It would take a common enemy, a little trust, and a united front to awaken them both to a love that could change their lives forever.

From the Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

New York Times and *USA Today* bestselling author Heather Graham has written over one hundred novels and novellas including category, romantic suspense, historical romance, and paranormal. Married since high school graduation and the mother of five, her greatest love in life remains her family, but she also believes her career has been an incredible gift. Romance Writers of America presented Heather with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003.

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Chapter One

Spring, A.D.885

The Coast of France

"Melisande! Melisande! His ships are here!"

Melisande had been a flurry of motion. The words brought her to a dead standstill in the center of the tower, a sudden cascade of both fear and anticipation sweeping through her.

She had not believed that he would come!

But with Marie de Tresse crying out the warning from the wooden parapet beyond her open tower door, Melisande could no longer doubt his promise that he would have his due.

She stared at Marie's anxious face for a moment, dropped the tunic of delicately crafted mail she'd held, then tore through the doorway from the high tower chamber and ran out along the stone wall to stare out to the sea from the parapet.

Indeed, he was coming.

Dear God, it had been a day like this when he had first come. It seemed so long ago now! Was he always to catch her in adversity such as this? Would she always be left to wonder if he had come to her aid—or to destroy her completely?

There was no question today, she told herself. He had come for what he considered his.

She felt suddenly hot and cold at once. She pressed the back of her hand to her face. Her face felt like fire, her hand like ice.

God, he was coming, he was coming. Wave after wave of tremors shot through her, sweeping her up. It seemed so long since she had seen him. As if it weren't enough that a thousand Danes under that loathed Geoffrey were at her door! Now, he was coming, too. After so long. Maybe there was a lot he had forgotten.

And maybe there was a lot he had remembered.

And God, how ridiculous! She wasn't half as afraid of meeting the Danes as she was of meeting him!

Not afraid . . .

Yes! Afraid, after all that she had done.

And surely, with what his coming must mean!

Dear Lord, he was almost here. She could see his ship, see the man!

It was an extraordinary ship with its huge dragon prow. He rode his ship just as he had those many years ago when she had first seen him.

One booted foot was high upon the helm. His great arms were crossed over his heavily muscled chest.

A crimson mantle, broached at his shoulder with an ancient Celtic emblem, flew wild behind him with the whip of the sea wind. His hair, as golden and rich as the sun, also flew back.

She couldn't see his eyes yet, but she didn't need to see them. She could remember them all too well.

God, yes, she could remember their color! Remember that astounding, piercing blue. Sky blue, sea blue, deeper than cobalt, brighter than sapphires. They were eyes that looked at her, and through her, stripping her bare to the soul.

"So, he will not come, eh?"

She heard the taunting question spoken from a rich masculine voice at her rear and spun around quickly. Ragwald was there on the walkway with her, as ancient as the moon, as nagging as a fisherwife. He wagged a finger at her. "Milady, you cannot turn your back on a bargain with such a man!"

"I made no bargain! You did."

"I bargained for our lives!" Ragwald reminded her with great dignity. "And thank the good Lord! It does appear that you might have need of the man again. Then again, perhaps the young jarl is angry and not in the mood to be very helpful, eh?"

"You—" Melisande began, ready to tell him that he was the adviser, she was the countess, and therefore, hers was the final word. But she broke off, biting her lower lip. There was a more immediate danger. When she stared down from her vantage point on the fortress wall, she could see her men already engaged in battle.

Odd, how things came around! They'd made these very enemies they fought now that long ago day when he'd first come, and now they were embroiled in battle again, even while his ships sailed through the seas, their great dragon prows slicing the water.

Strange that the day was gray, that lightning ripped, that thunder drummed. Strange that he had a penchant for coming in such a tempest, as if he were one of the gods himself, casting down his fire bolts as if he cast out his fury.

"Which shall it be?" Ragwald mused. "Has he come to slice and dice us—or has he come to the rescue once

again? A Norse Viking—to fight these Danish Vikings!"

How could it be that they lived in such a lawless land? Melisande wondered for a pained moment. She used to love to hear her father talk about the great King Charlemagne, and about his love for the arts and astrology—and peace!

But Charlemagne, like her father, was dead. He had ruled nearly a hundred years ago, and many things had changed since then. Charles the Fat was king in Paris—except that he wasn't in Paris, he was off somewhere in Italy, and the Danes had been ravaging the coast, heading for Rouen, forever, or so it seemed.

Melisande's enemies had joined with the Danes once again to attempt to take what was rightfully hers.

She'd gone against them before. Ever since that day years earlier when her father had fallen dead, she had learned to still her cries when she watched men die by the sword. She had learned not to shiver before the war cries, and hardest of all, she had learned not to run! She had been all that was left to lead her people, and she had learned how to lead.

Not that he had ever intended that she should, but then again, that first meeting had been a long time ago. So much had happened since then.

So much for which he must surely long to wind his hands around her neck. His very powerful hands. She could almost feel them.

That thought again made her hot and cold, and incredibly weak. She had vowed to him that she wanted no part of him, yet even the thought of him made her tremble.

Ah, and there was the rub! For she dared not show the man weakness, dared never let him know her mind, her heart! Never let him know that thoughts of him filled her days, her life, always.

Most definitely not now! She couldn't be weak. She didn't even dare think about herself at the moment.

Or fear him or his touch. Think about it, loathe it, anticipate it, loathe it, ache for it. Hate him, love him, despise him, long for him . . .

Her men were in trouble, she realized suddenly. Deep trouble. From the parapet she could see the changing position of the warriors below, see the promise of defeat when they could not.

"Sweet Jesu above us!" Melisande cried. "Pray God someone has come for our side! I must hurry out there, Ragwald. Our forces are being split, there, see!"

Ragwald caught her arm. "Let it be! Don't go! Let the Viking come in! One of them will have it—the Danes or the Norwegians. Let them battle it out, you remain here safely this time!"

Melisande pulled from him, angry at first, and then with sorrow.

Ragwald loved her. In these dark days love was hard to come by.

"I remind you, my dear adviser, you first sent me out in armor. I am the countess! I will hold this place. You are right about one thing—let them battle one another. But I must lead our men from the trap that is beginning

to divide them now!"

"Wait!" Ragwald called. "See—his ships are beaching!"

"I cannot wait! See, Ragwald!" She dragged him to the edge of the parapet, pointing out the shore far below. Her father had built an exceptional fortress. A motte and bailey work, a castle. Such structures had become very prominent here in the last century since the Vikings had started their constant raids. There was a truly fine example of all that such a fortress might be. They were located upon a mount with a safe harbor and beach directly in front of high stone walls. Most castles or mottes and baileys were wooden—her father had seen the great benefit of stone. It did not catch fire. Within the high walls there was the promise of safety. There was a great courtyard with room for men and animals, space for smiths to work, stables for the great war-horses, craftsmen's shops, kitchens. To the left and to the right of the walls high precipices with forests mounted great cliffs that rose above the sea. The view from the parapets seemed never ending, and it was possible to gain infinite information here. Indeed, the fortress's cunning placement had kept it standing when the troops left to defend it were minimal.

Now Melisande took full advantage of her bird's-eye view. "See, Ragwald, there's Philippe, and there's Gaston, their forces being split, and they are so fierce in their combat that they cannot see! I must go."

"Melisande, no!" Ragwald repeated. He gripped her arms when she tried to run past him. She stared into his eyes, and for once Ragwald could see a glimmering of fear there.

In Melisande? Melisande feared nothing.

Except the Viking, Ragwald thought in silence. She always had. He had both infuriated and fascinated her. Perhaps she had good sense to fear him now, as well as pray that he had come to defend them. After all, she had quite directly defied him in everything.

And now she meant to take her sword and ride out and do battle on Warrior!

"Don't do this!" he warned her, holding fiercely to her once again.

"I have to!" She cried back, her voice husky, tinged with a certain desperation now, her eyes wide and wild with the tempest of her emotions.

"No—" he began again, but she had wrenched herself from his arms. "Melisande!" She ran from him down the parapet and into the tower.

"Melisande!"

Her name rose on the air and seemed to echo at him in a long taunt.

It didn't matter. She was gone. Tensely he paced the tower parapet, the highest point of the fortress. He could see the courtyard below, the wall, the outer parapets; the field beyond the gates, and even to the sea.

Ten minutes later he saw her. His old hear...

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Gerald Reed:

The book untitled Lord of the Wolves (Vikings Trilogy Book 3) contain a lot of information on it. The writer explains the woman idea with easy approach. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was written by famous author. The author provides you in the new era of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can start their official web-site and order it. Have a nice study.

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