

# An Elk Hunt with Dad

by Evelina Aslund

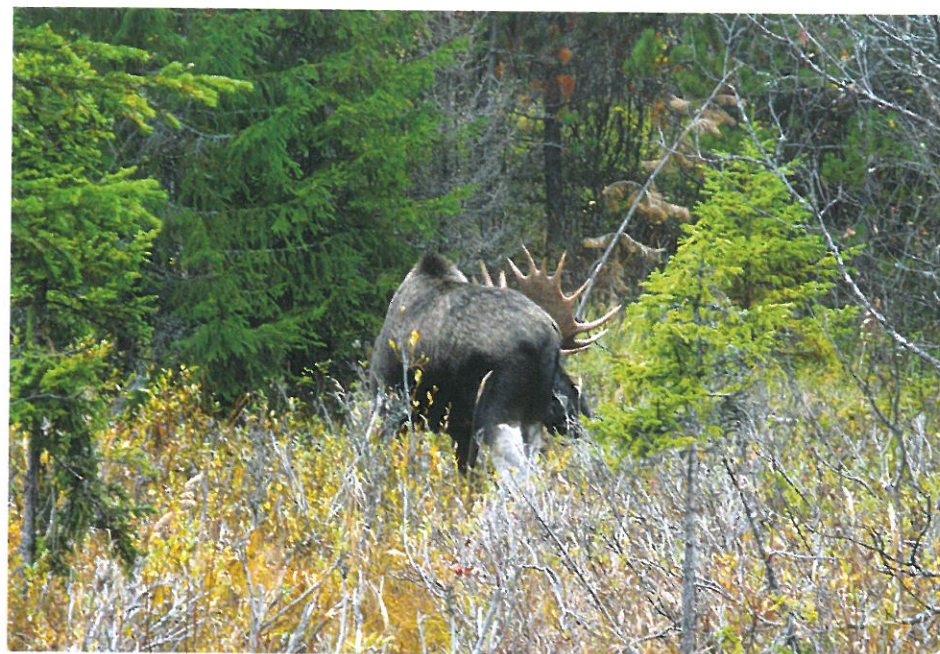


The air is clear and cold. Deciduous trees that mix with pine trees are resplendent in their autumn colours and gleam bright orange, yellow and red, and light up the whole forest at this time of year. It smells good in the woods. We sit down for a little while in the berry rice, that bush that the blueberries and lingonberries grow on, on top of the small hill to catch our breath after walking up the east side of Mount Skalberget. We released the dog about forty minutes ago, the young dog, Diana, accompanies us this early morning during the second week of the moose hunting season.

Diana is a very promising dog, a female Jämthund or Swedish Elkhound, barely two years old and it was at this time almost exactly a year ago that Diana and me got her first elk, a double celebration as it was also my birthday. Now we are out again, my Dad and I, to try our hunting luck once again. Diana has been out for two search rounds and will now catch up with us as we sit in the berryrice and take a breather. - "Good girl!", says my father, Lars-Göran who looks happy and pats Diana on her head and she is also breathless after her long run up the hillside.

Diana has hardly no time for us as her hunting instinct beckons her to take a third look around round. Now she heads right west, over the hill, and she has the wind right on her nose. We wait a short while to give her a little head start. I take some blueberries from the rice we sit on and they tastes heavenly good. We rise up and start walking in her direction when it suddenly becomes uptake...! Diana barks her call and stops her run and then we hear some animals rising and go crashing through the branches. Diana starts barking again, sharp and clear, and we hear her going away off to the right as she continues westward.

The heart beats a few extra beats and the adrenaline rises within me, a great feeling! This is the pleasures of hunting. We stand completely still and listen to which direction the quarry goes. Diana barks a few times,



and we look at our GPS that links up with Diana's transmitter attached to her collar and it tells us that she is now 400 meters away. There will be a few stops along the way as we establish her locations. Diana barks again and we wait for a moment to listen to the canine notes and using the GPS in combination we come to a standstill. Me and dad look at each other and he whispers that we can now move forward slowly. We sneak as best we can in the dense spruce forest, and soon come stealthily to where we see the tracks of three Elk. Two big tracks and the tracks of a calf.

There is a slight breeze and so far we have been able to keep it downwind. Diana is now silent and has come back to us but taking us in an arc to the northwest for a few hundred meters.

We continue to stalk very cautiously and we must now continue to arc around the moose ensuring that we do not give them our weathering. After about an hour of very gently creeping we're getting close to the moose. The whole time, we must pay attention to which way the wind is blowing so as not to give ourselves away.

We make our way out of the old spruce forest and come to a small clearing where we have to cower down so as not be seen. We can now glimpse the moose about 100 meters out where they stand in a tree seal. We can see that there are three animals. Dad looks at me, waving down his arm to show that we should cower down. We settle down on one



knee in lingonberry and start to crawl and creep slowly, slowly. We have focused on a small hill about 20 meters ahead which we can put behind us to enable us to scout without being seen. I stalk as silent as I can be in the berry rice and am so glad that I have good clothes on me that do not rustle.

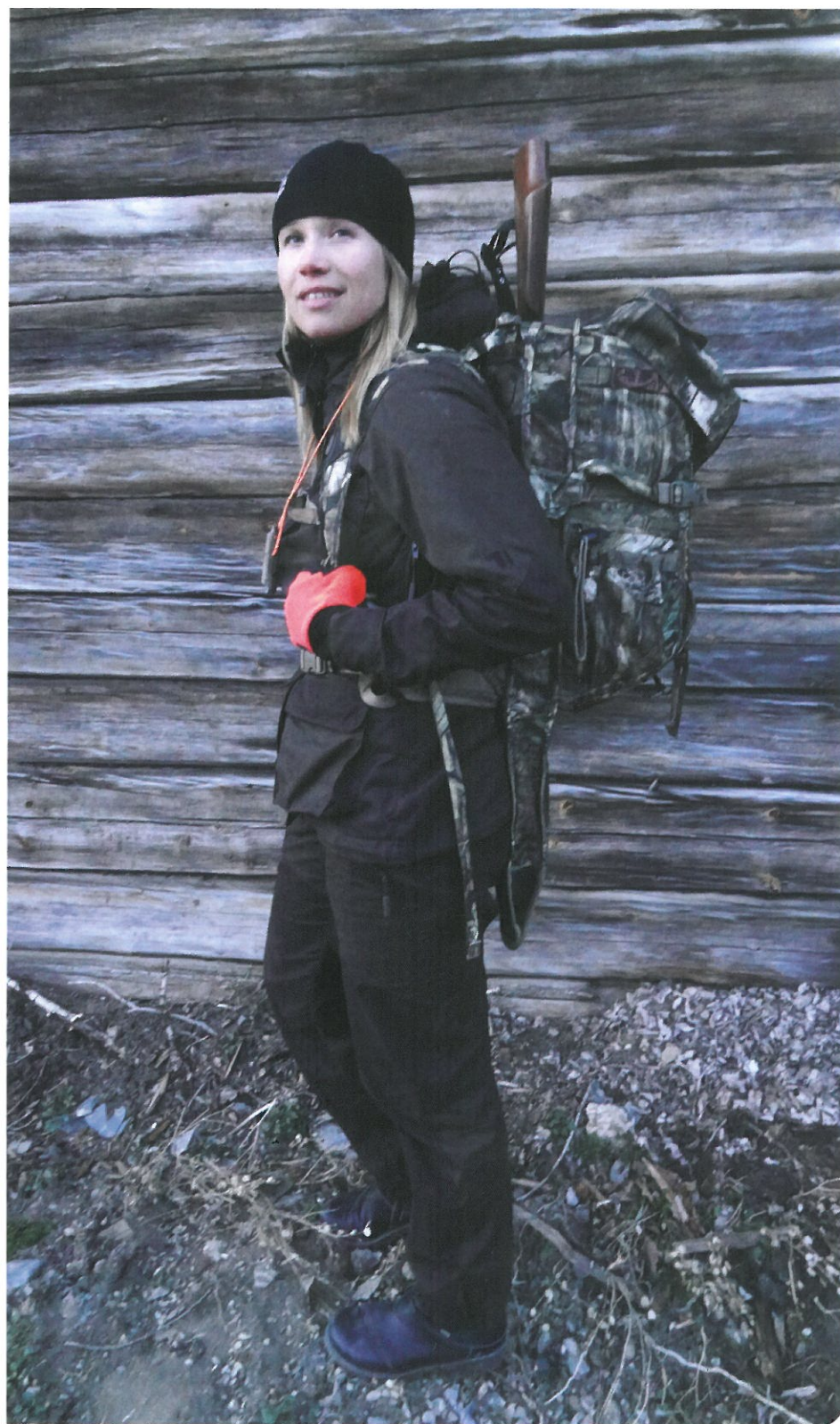
Diana continues to deliver with frequent barking and I see the eagerness in my Dad and I feel the excitement swirling in me. I get short of breath as I crawl and it feels good to get hidden behind the small hill where we can exhale and lay out a blueprint ... The elks move round and round and slightly forward and out of the protection of the trees to stand in the small opening available. The elk are irritated by the dog that persistently stand by and barks but far away enough away from any kicks.

The cow elk folds her ears back and is very annoyed with Diana ... she suddenly makes contact and leaps towards Diana and kicks out the front legs towards her but the dog is fast and nimbly jumps away and barks even more intensely. We now see clearly the animals. The calf follows the cow with every step she takes, but the ox moves in circles a bit in





## big game hunting




front and we see its horn crown for the first time. "What a great bull this is", whispers Dad to me ... we're trying to count the tags and we both note about 13. When we are hunting together, Dad always allows me to shoot first if I have the opportunity ... Dad has shot many moose in his day but every hunting opportunity is a personal experience ... You never know what opportunities will present themselves.

But yes, this time Dad backs away a little bit behind me so I can curl up on the little edge to get a really good support for the gun. Dad gives me the chance today. I adjust the windage and elevation on my scope for the range waiting to see if the bull will turn broadside on to me. ... He is standing now with the back towards my direction and looking directly at Diana who stubbornly stands and barks, doing her job to keep the elk's attention away from us. Now the cow and the calf move to the right and it looks like she catches our scent as she opens her ears, watching and listening to our side. Now we may be in a hurry! Maybe the wind turned and they feel the weathering of us?

The bull has not yet made us, but he is still with his backside towards me and now with that hefty horn crown pointed annoyingly at the dog. Should I have luck on my side and get a shot chance this time or not? I feel the excitement rising within me and the adrenalin is pumping a little extra now as it can only be a few seconds before they might pull away on catching our weathering ... The bull turns up his neck, twist around to the right and I get a second of a good position toward the moose, but cannot shoot as Diana is standing right behind the moose in the firing line ... I breathe out, calm. I'm totally focused on the task and with the finger on the trigger; I wait for the first best situation. It just seems like Diana could read my mind as she moves out of the line of fire, slightly to the left and I get my chance. I shoot. The bull bucks wildly a leap but stumbles and steps up again and then, twenty meters further on, he fall down to the ground with a big thud.



The cow and calf disappeared as soon as I took the shot. I am very satisfied with a perfect shot and secure my weapon and turn as Dad scrambles up behind me to congratulate me. My heart is beating a little extra and I feel that I had adrenaline spike when I get up and feel that my legs are a little weak ... - " Good job" Dad says, smiling and hugging me and saying congratulations. He is very happy. Like me.

We go to where the moose is soaking the moss between two old trees. Dad breaks a spruce twig and come forward to put the twig in my cap. Diana stands in the middle of the elk and tearing and pulling making the tufts of hair fly off. Oh, so happy and proud she is! "Good dog, good Diana!" I say and try to capture her to pat her well, but she does not have time. She looks at me and happily receives my praise by waving her tail even more and even more intensely tears the hair of the moose. 

Evelina Aslund.

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Calibre	338 win. Mag.
Capacity	4+1
Action	Claw extractor, controlled round feeding, three position safety.
Stock	Lay up composite stock.
Barrel	26 inch free floating fluted stainless steel.
Sights	Scope and mounts extra.
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Weight	7.25lb/3.28kg
Price	US\$ 1,250.00