## The Alpha King's Human Mate by HC Dolores **Chapter 117**

"Everything I've ever let go of had claw marks on it."

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**David Foster Wallace** 

He'd nodded firmly. "Yes, but it's more than that."

he'd drill these words into her brain if he could

At twelve-years-old, Alessia wished she'd been born a boy for the

you. You don't need a boy to protect you when I can do that."

find appealing about Arthur — or any of the boys in their class

arms, was laughing with his friends

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complaining about who you're fighting."

"— Arthur and Alessia." She could hardly believe her luck

"You can take her, Arthur!" One of the boys he'd been laughing with

shouted from the sidelines. "She may act like an Alpha, but she's not one."

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"Which means I will be one day too."

Good, she thought

start of the fight

Arthur struck first

you'd

class

She grinned back at him

ese

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before he taught her anything else about the world

There had never been a thing in Alessia's life that she hadn't had to fight for. That was one of the first lessons her father instilled in her, long

"You're my only child, Lessie," he'd told her when she was barely six- years-old, perched on his lap, and licking chocolate sauce off her fingers. One of the ladies in their pack had dropped off a chocolate cake an hour ago. Alessia wasn't sure why, but she wasn't the first — a lot of women in their pack liked to bring baked goods to her father. They'd usually bat their eyelashes and ask to come in, although her

father never let them "That means you're my heir," he'd continued

"What's an heir?" Six-year-old Alessia had asked. It sounded a lot like air, but she didn't think her father was calling her that

"Tt means you're the next in line to take my place as Alpha," he'd explained, "One day, I'm going to be gone like your mother, and these people are going to depend on you."

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"T don't want you to leave," she'd pouted, twisting her body around to look at him, "Not like mom. You have to stay. Forever."

She didn't miss her mother - not the way her father did - but it was only because she'd died the same day Alessia came into this world. It was hard to miss someone she only saw in framed photos around the house

"T can't do that, Lessie," he'd replied, his eyes softening, "Nobody can That's why we need to prepare you for what happens when I do."

"So, I'll be your heir?" She'd asked. She still didn't quite understand what that meant, but it sounded cool. She saw the way people looked up to her father, and her chest swelled when she thought of them doing the same to her

"Things would be so much easier if you'd just been born a boy," he'd said, "Or if you'd just had a brother I could teach these things too." Even so young, Alessia had felt the disappointment for something she had no idea how to change

She'd blinked at him curiously as he wiped the remaining chocolate sauce from her face with a napkin

second time. This time, it had nothing to do with her father or her birthright — it had to do with girls

minutes. When she got her hands on Instructor Roman, she was going to kick his ass

And since her combat skills were leagues above the other kids her age, she might be able to

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stops. You'll have to spend every day fighting to make up for the biology you weren't born with." His voice had been hard and cold, like

birthright, and protect it from people who try to take it from you. You'll have to prove yourself to the pack, even once you're Alpha. It never

"But you weren't," he'd continued, "You're a girl, which means that none of this will ever be easy for you. You'll have to fight for your

And for the first time in six years — but not the last - Alessia had wished she'd been born a boy too

ina bad mood "Why?" Alessia snorted. Their instructor was late, which meant everyone in class had been freezing on the grass field for about twenty

"T can't wait to meet my mate," Elise said one morning in warrior training class. Alessia wasn't sure she'd call Elise a friend — she didn't

have friends - but she was probably the closest thing to one. She didn't mind spending time around Alessia, even when she was grouchy or

AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Alessia & Lily (1) "Because he's going to love me," Elise continued, her blonde braids flapping in the breeze. "And protect me. Don't you want someone to love and protect you, Lessie?" Her big blue eyes peered up at Alessia, and she could've sworn something in her chest flip-flopped

"No," Alessia scowled, crossing her arms over her chest. "Why would I want some gross boy to love or protect me? I can protect myself. And

Elise rolled her eyes. "But that's a mate's job!" She suddenly turned to where some of the other pre-teens had gathered on the field and

sighed dreamily. "I hope Arthur is my mate. He's so cute. And he looks strong." The boy in question, a freckled, red-headed boy with gangly

Alessia scrunched up her nose in distaste. "You want Arthur? He couldn't protect a fly, let alone you." She couldn't imagine what Elise might

mat. She was still stronger Before Elise could jump to Arthur's defense, Instructor Roman finally showed. He was a large, bulky man with a shaved head and biceps the size of her head. "I know I'm late," his deep voice boomed across the field, "The previous class ran over, but I appreciate you waiting."

"What about Instructor Roman?" Elise whispered into her ear, and she was so close that Alessia could smell her vanilla perfume. "Surely,

Almost all of them were scrawny like toothpicks. Some of them were taller than her, but she'd gone head-to-head with all of them on the

want him to protect you." "T want his muscles," she retorted. She wondered if people would take her more seriously if she had biceps like that

"Today we're going to do more one-on-one combat," Roman explained, "Yl be pairing you up randomly, so I don't want to hear any

"Alright, here are the pairings," Instructor Roman continued, and began listing off the pairings before anyone could complain

Arthur glanced at her, his throat bobbing nervously. They'd never fought each other, but he had to know she was undefeated amongst the

There was a murmur of excited and less-than-excited murmurs from the group of students

When it was their turn, they both stepped onto the makeshift mats set up on the grass. Despite having at least three inches on her, Arthur's walk onto the mat was filled with plenty of hesitation

Alessia blood boiled, and she turned to the heckler, hissing, "I am an Alpha." "No, your father is," the boy shot back

The boy's smile widened. "I doubt it. When our current Alpha dies, the Elders will just elect a new one, and it's not going to be a girl."

been heckling from the sidelines. "And I don't want to hear any commentary." With anger still burning up her veins, she turned her attention back to Arthur

He looked terrified, even more than when he'd first stepped onto the mat. He could probably sense the rage brewing inside her

"Okay, you kids remember the rules now," he said, "Clean hits, and the fight is over when one of you taps out."

And then Instructor Roman clapped his hands together, signaling the

Arthur stumbled, and she took that opportunity to sweep his legs

Before he could get up, she tackled him to the ground, driving all her weight into him

"Get up, Alessia," Instructor Roman called firmly, "He tapped out. The fight is over."

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He went sprawling on the mat with a grunt

wanted to protect her? Over Alessia?

He did nothing but tap out again

She knew she should, she was supposed to, but...

how incompetent of a boy - of a mate - he was now

herself? Why did he get Elise's admiration over her?

And she punched him

extend of the wound

But none of those things happened

He began finding his footing just as the fury boiled over

"Alessia! Up now!" Roman growled more sternly this time

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She exhaled. "I'm going. I'm going."

"That's enough," Roman's voice cut through their argument, "Keep your eyes on your opponent, Alessia." His gaze fell to the boy who'd

His blow was sloppy and uncoordinated, and it took hardly no effort at all for Alessia to dodge the blow

Alessia sneered. He was giving up that easy? She hadn't even hit him yet, and he was already trying to surrender. Was this really who Elise

Arthur wasn't even trying to fight back or throw her weight off. He was just lying underneath her, limp, defeated, and weak. Surely, Elise saw

She jumped up, removing the weight of her knees, and watched him cradle the section of his stomach where she'd driven her kneecaps in

Pathetic, she thought again, and fresh anger filled her. Why did someone like Arthur get to be so weak when she constantly had to prove

"Alessia! Off the mat! Now!" Roman's voice was a roar as he rushed to Arthur's side. His nose had blood spurting out of it, and he was

She'd probably broken his nose, but she couldn't bring herself to feel sorry about it as she stepped off the mat, her fist throbbing

Instead of letting up like she was supposed to, she dug her knees into his stomach until he coughed. "You're pathetic," she sniggered at him

His eyes widened in horror, and he tapped the mat three times — the signal that he was tapping out of the fight

He didn't look angry or even disappointed in himself, which is how she usually felt when she didn't perform well He just looked scared, like a wounded puppy who'd been kicked too many times

crying AKHM - Bonus Chapter - Alessia & Lily (1) now. Some of the other kids crowded as close as they could to see the

The other students parted for her, and pride swelled in her chest. Oh, they were taking her serious now

On the outskirts of the crowd was Elise, trying to peer over the other students' heads to look at Arthur

There was a loud crack that set him stumbling back to the ground, and a series of gasps from the other students

Maybe for Elise to jump into her arms and proclaim that Alessia had been right — that Arthur was a terrible mate, and someone like her was a much better protector

He can't protect you. He couldn't even protect himself." She wasn't sure what she expected

Maybe for Elise to fuss over her throbbing red fist, or talk about how amazing of a fighter she was

She strode over to her friend. "See? Arthur would make a terrible mate

A lump settled in her throat, and she took a step closer — only for Elise

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Instead, Elise turned to her with big, teary blue eyes. "What is wrong with you? You didn't need to do that. He tapped out."

"Elise — " She started, but Elise had already turned away, making her way through the crowd

"Arthur? Are you okay?" Even several feet away, Alessia could hear her soft voice as Elise settled next to Arthur's side on the mat, cradling one of his hands. "Would you like me to take you to the infirmary?"

to immediately back up with new fear in her eyes. Like she might do the same thing to her that she'd done to Arthur

Alessia had never heard Elise sound like that, and certainly not with her She felt angry again, like she might just burst if she didn't sink her teeth into something and destroy it

I need to get out of here The other students and Instructor Roman were too busy fussing over Arthur to notice as she stomped away. If they wanted to fawn over

some weak boy and blame her, that was fine

Her father's old words rung in her head Yes, things certainly would be easier if she'd been born a boy

All she'd done was expose his weakness, and prove that she was not