

# The Alpha Games

## Chapter 7 - A friend's promise

“Come on, Mads.” Lewis chuckled, his breath even. “Did you completely stop training at Red Dawn?”

“For your. Information. I worked out. Every. Day.” She panted, keeled over with her hands planted on her knees. “It’s not. My fault. That you warriors. Are freakishly. Fit.”

Maddie tried to growl her frustrations, but her lungs wheezed instead.

They had only been sparring for thirty minutes and she was already buggered. Every muscle ached like she had been running for hours, and everywhere he had landed a hit already hurt and she knew she’d be covered in bruises. Despite her best efforts, she could see that he was barely trying. Not only was he fit enough to run circles around her, but he was taking it easy on her; slowing down his movements and reducing the force behind his hits.

It's no wonder he had struggled when he first joined the warriors. Back then he was the same level she was, but there was a vast change in him now. The difference was staggering and made her reluctant to continue. Covered in mud, and a bit of blood, she felt done.

“Isn’t it Jess’ turn to get the crap kicked out of her?” She groaned, blowing her sea crusted hair from her face.

“She’s still in bed. I doubt we’ll see her today.” He held out a hand and gestured for her to come at him again.

Despite her reluctance, she put up her guard, just as she had been trained, and slipped into an offensive stance. With their difference of abilities, it had turned into her trying to land hits on him while he easily dodged them. It was similar to how she had trained with her mother and father when she was a mere pup.

Lewis’ movements were a fluid dance that only he knew the steps to. He side-stepped her every attack so easily that it looked like he was reading her mind to know what she would do next. Maddie felt like a clunky lump of

awkwardness opposite him. Despite not being a warrior, she was a Luna-to-be. Grace and poise were a part of the role and that was one of the areas she considered herself to excel in; given her prior training to defend herself and her upkeep of her fitness. However, Lewis made her look like a fawn on its legs for the first time, stumbling around and trying to find purchase.

"You've gotten really strong. I'm impressed." She grinned as she wiped the sweat pouring off her brow.

"The warrior training is brutal, but I can't deny the results." He chuckled. "Though I'm still far from the best. Dad can still knock me on my arse whenever he actually tries."

"He *is* the Beta." Maddie snorted. "I don't think I could even land a hit on my father..."

Her grin faded as the order the Alpha had given her returned to the forefront of her mind. She had to accept that her fate was going to be left in the hands of the Alpha Games, and take it with the grace of a Luna. A thick lump swelled in her throat as all the emotions, that her burning muscles and racing heart had been holding back, flooded into her. There was a prickle at the edge of her eyes, but she turned from her friend to hide its fall as she forced herself to stand tall despite the weight now laying on her shoulders.

"Maddie..." Lewis started, and she braced herself for the oncoming sympathy. "I'm going to enter the games."

Maddie sucked in a breath and whipped around to face him. "You... You want to be... My.... My mate?"

Her eyes flickered over him. Sure, he was handsome, and she had no doubt that he would be a fantastic partner to any lucky wolf, but she had known him since they were pups. She couldn't remember a time in her life without him and Jess at her side. They had grown up as siblings, and to become more made her skin crawl.

"No." Lewis denied sharply, making her eyes narrow. With the speed of a man well versed in deescalating a situation, he back tracked and explained, his hands held up in defence. "It's not that I want to be your mate, you're like a sister to me, but I'd rather fill that role than let you end up with some arsehole." He sighed and his eyes dropped to the floor. "Red Dawn have already submitted their entrants. Daniel is on the list."

Maddie felt that name like a punch to the gut. She knew her ex would join the games. She doubted he wanted her back, but her appeal to him must've always been the strong pack she came with. Her hand wrapped around her middle as her stomach churned its protest, but there was nothing she could do. Not unless she failed him at the scent trial, but she already knew her father wouldn't allow it.

"Listen to me." Lewis drew close, hands resting on her arms as he ducked his head to meet her gaze. "I won't let him win."

Confidence rang in his tone, allowing a shaky smile to her lips. Some of her tension melted at his comfort, but she had seen Daniel train. He may be an asshole, but he had been preparing for the Alpha role since he could walk. Still, even if Lewis didn't win, at least he was trying for her.

"You know if you do win, you'll lose your choice too. You'll have to mate with me." A weak laugh pulled past her lips, though it was only laced with the humour she was forcing. "Are you sure you want to be stuck with me forever?"

"I'm in line to be the next Beta, so I'm stuck with you either way." A boyish grin toyed at his lips.

"But your compatible mate..."

"Mads. I want to do this. Let me." He stared at her intently until she nodded her agreement. Then, he breathed a sigh of relief and released her. "Anyway, we'll figure something out. So long as we have one heir, there won't be any issues, right?"

"You haven't even bought me a drink yet, and you already want to reproduce." She teased.

Lewis rolled his eyes. "If I win this, you owe *me* drinks for the rest of our lives."

"Deal." She giggled, feeling a weight lift from her chest. A sombre mood gripped her as she was filled with gratitude. "Thank you, Lewis."