



162 Kill Or Be Killed

Eve 1

I let instinct take over and twisted right out of her way. She crashed into the settee, toppling it over with a heavy thud. I scrambled backward, gripping the shard of glass tightly in my hand, my chest rising and falling in ragged gasps.

Jules—no, whatever she was now—rose slowly from the wreckage, her movements fluid and eerily composed. The eerie smile remained, blood dripping down her arm from the gash I'd inflicted, but she barely seemed to notice. Her eyes tracked me like prey, a macabre glint in them.

"Good," she murmured, licking the blood off her wrist in a way that made my stomach churn.

"You're finally learning."

I forced myself to focus, scanning the room for anything I could use. The vanity, the wardrobe, the scattered paintings—none of it was a match for her raw strength. But if I could stay on my feet, stay ahead, I had a chance.

I ran.

She lunged again, faster this time. I sidestepped, barely missing her grasp, and used the momentum to kick the wardrobe door open. It swung violently, colliding with her side and sending her stumbling. I seized the moment, diving behind the bed and using it as a barrier.

Before I could react, Jules' hand shot out, gripping my leg with an iron grip. My scream barely escaped my lips before she flung me across the room as if I weighed nothing. I hit the floor hard, my back slamming against the unforgiving wood with a sickening thud. Pain lanced through my body like lightning—white-hot and paralyzing—knocking the breath clean out of my lungs.

I gasped, trying to roll over, but Jules was already on me.

Blows rained down mercilessly—fist after fist pounding into my ribs, shoulders, and arms as I curled in on myself in a desperate attempt to protect my head. Each hit sent shockwaves of agony coursing through me, my bones screaming in protest. I clenched my teeth, grunting with every impact, my vision swimming. 1

****Think, Eve. Think.****

Summoning every ounce of strength left in me, I raised my legs and kicked out with everything I had, my foot connecting squarely with Jules' face. The impact sent her staggering back, her head snapping to the side with a sharp crack.

I didn't wait. I launched myself to my feet, adrenaline surging through my veins like wildfire, fueling me past the pain. My own speed surprised me, the raw energy pushing me beyond what I thought I was capable of.

Jules recovered quickly, not bothering to wipe the blood now gushing from her nose, her left eye already bruising from my assault. She did not relent for a second, snarling as she came at me again. This time, I was ready. 1

She swung first, aiming a wild punch at my face, but I ducked, twisting to the side and countering with a hard jab to her ribs. She grunted, but it barely slowed her down. Her knee shot up, catching me in the stomach, and I doubled over in pain. She followed with a sharp elbow to my shoulder, sending me stumbling, but I pushed through it, reacting on instinct.

Every attack she threw, I countered—my fists blocking, my feet moving with newfound agility. My ribs ached from her earlier blows, and my

arms trembled from absorbing so many hits, but I fought through it, refusing to go down. Jules' face was a mask of rage and wild exhilaration that made my blood run cold. I could taste blood in my mouth, thick and metallic, from the relentless assault she'd delivered earlier.

I left my back open, and she suddenly twisted out of my reach and wrapped her arm around my neck, locking me in a chokehold.

Panic rose like mercury in a thermometer as I squirmed and struggled desperately in her grip. But her hold only tightened until air began to evade me, my lungs burning, black spots dancing across my vision. A cold sensation washed over me, my body going limp fast.

I flopped like a fish against her, my strength waning with each second of struggle.

Then, without warning, I drove my elbow into her sternum, hard. I heard another crack.

Jules staggered, a sharp gasp escaping her lips as she stumbled backward, her chest heaving. Her eyes widened in momentary surprise, and I seized the opportunity, sprinting toward the door with everything I had left. My hands clawed at the knob—only for my heart to drop when I



realized it was no longer there. It lay on the ground, twisted and useless. She had broken it. 6

No. No, no, no.

I spun, scrambling for my phone in my pocket, my fingers fumbling in desperation. I yanked it out, hope rising—only for it to shatter completely when I saw the screen. Cracks spiderwebbed across it, the glass fragmented beyond repair. A shaky breath left my lips as a cold wave of terror settled deep in my bones.

The alarms were still blaring, drowning out my ragged breaths and rising panic. I screamed, hoping someone—anyone—would hear me over the noise.

A slow, deliberate clap echoed through the chaos.

I froze, turning back to see Jules standing in the middle of the room, her lips curled into a smirk that sent chills down my spine.

"I underestimated you," she purred, eyes gleaming with something dangerous. "But then again, you wouldn't be here if you didn't have potential. Too bad I'll have to kill you. But I can make it fast; all of this isn't needed."



She relaxed her stance and wiped the blood from her nose with the back of her hand. Her nose was crooked badly—it was broken. She gestured for me to come forward.

"Just come, and I'll break your neck. It'll be over in a second."

My hands clenched into fists, my pulse pounding in my ears. Sweat dripped into my eyes, but I barely registered the sting. I spread my legs apart and raised my fists to my face, ready.

Darkness seemed to seep back into her expression, the beast returning.

"You've made your choice," she said, her voice a low, menacing growl. "I've always wanted to get my hands dirty with mutt blood." 1

