



## 233 The Final Trigger

Eve

1

A warning growl escaped me, my blood buzzing with bloodlust that tinged my vision crimson. They circled me, snarling, fangs clenched, looking for the perfect opening to rip into me. I twisted my head, making sure they both remained in my line of vision.

The air was saturated with a taut tension that had my fur bristling at attention. I could hear everything — the crickets, the blowing of the leaves, the blood pumping through their hearts.

They circled me, snarling, fangs bared, looking for the perfect opening to tear into me. I twisted my head again, making sure they both stayed in my line of vision.

"Leon!" A feminine voice from behind the men made me momentarily pause.

The air trembled, thick with tension. I could hear everything — the chirping of crickets, the whispering leaves, the pounding of their hearts.



But there — beneath all that noise — five heartbeats. Two before me. Three trapped in the vehicle.

And the fifth... faint. Muffled. Like it pulsed inside liquid. Small. Weak. 4

A pup. 1

I didn't have time to think.

The gray wolf lunged first. I met him halfway, our bodies colliding with bone-snapping force. His claws raked down my side, but I barely felt the pain. My jaws clamped down on his neck, shaking him violently until his weight threw me off balance.

Before I could recover, the fawn wolf slammed into me, sending me skidding through the underbrush. My spine jarred against tree trunks, branches snapping beneath me until I crashed into an ancient oak.

For a moment, darkness wavered at the edge of my vision.

And then — I smelled it.

Blood.



Sharp. Fresh. New.

Minute, but potent. Like a fresh cut. Coming from the vehicle. 3

I didn't think. I couldn't. The scent ignited something inside me, snapping my limbs back into focus, erasing exhaustion. 2

The wolves charged again — but this time, I was faster. Weightless. My body moved on instinct.

I ducked low, claws slashing up, catching the gray wolf across the face. He howled, staggering back. The fawn wolf went for my flank, but I twisted, my hind leg kicking into his jaw with a crunch that sent him sprawling.

They were down. Not for long — but long enough.

I bolted.

The vehicle loomed ahead. I leapt onto its roof once more, metal groaning beneath me. From inside, screams pierced the night — two women. Terrified.

I didn't care.





I tore at the reinforced shell, ripping steel apart like wet paper. My paw shoved through the opening I'd made — and then, pain.

A sharp prick.

Something pierced my paw. 3

I yanked back with a snarl, jumping down from the roof — but my body betrayed me. My muscles spasmed violently, twisting and locking.

I tried to steady myself — but a howl tore from my throat, raw and wild, the force of it slamming outward in waves. The wolves flinched, forced back by the sheer power of the sound.

And then it began.

My body convulsed.

Bones cracked, stretching beyond what should be possible. My claws lengthened, stabbing into the earth, the pain blinding. My fangs grew, tearing past my muzzle, too long, too heavy. My muscles ripped apart from the sudden strain — then knit themselves back together, stronger, thicker, pulsing with impossible power. 1

I couldn't breathe.



I couldn't stop it.

The wolves stared, frozen.

Their snarls had died in their throats, replaced by something colder. I could smell it on them — fear.

They had barely recovered from the force of my howl, their paws digging into the earth, their eyes wide as they watched me change.

My body stretched and warped, my fur bristling in jagged, untamed patches. My spine arched higher, my front legs thickening into something monstrous. My breath came in ragged heaves, every muscle screaming as it reshaped. My claws gouged trenches into the earth, long enough to bury bone.

And then I lifted my head.

I met their eyes.

The gray wolf moved first, a desperate attempt at dominance — but he was too slow.

I slammed into him with all the weight of my new form, sending him careening into a tree with a crack loud enough to shake the forest.



Before he could rise, I was on him, claws tearing into his underbelly, deeper than before. Flesh, muscle, bone — all shredded beneath my touch like paper. His howl turned to a choked scream as I ripped upward, leaving nothing intact.

The fawn wolf hesitated for half a heartbeat — a mistake.

I turned on him with a feral snarl, my body faster, heavier, unstoppable. He leapt back, but I was already there, my jaws closing over his shoulder. My teeth pierced straight through muscle and bone, and I jerked my head, tearing his leg from its socket with a sickening crunch.

He howled, collapsing.

I didn't give him the mercy of pain alone. I pounced, claws ripping through his throat, silencing him in a spray of hot blood that painted the night. 1

The forest was silent again.

The crickets. The wind. The heartbeats in the distance.

Only me.





I stood there, drenched in blood, my breath ragged, my body still burning with that unnatural power.

And somewhere beneath it all — beneath the hunger, the frenzy, the storm — a thought pierced through.

What have they made me? 1

Rhea.

Yet, I lapped at the blood without thinking — warm, metallic, thick on my tongue. The taste flooded my senses, a rush of delirium, heady and sharp. My body trembled, still caught between agony and power.

And then I saw them.

The bodies.

Not wolves anymore. Men.

Their forms had shifted back, naked and broken, eyes glassy, staring at nothing. Their mouths hung open in slack horror, blood bubbling from torn throats, limbs twisted at grotesque angles.

I stopped.



My tongue froze mid-lick, the copper tang turning sour in my mouth.

Nausea crashed over me.

I stumbled back, paws trembling, my chest heaving in short, ragged breaths. A whimper tore from my throat — soft, broken.

No.

I hadn't meant to.

I hadn't...

I shuffled forward, pawing at the first body. My snout nudged his cheek, rough and cold. He didn't move. His head lolled to the side, lifeless.

A sharp whine escaped me.

I turned to the second — prodding him, harder this time. His head jerked limply from the motion, blood seeping from the corner of his mouth. 3

"No, no, no..."

The words tried to form in my head, but all that came out was another pitiful whimper. My legs buckled beneath me, and I pressed my snout to





his chest, desperate for the faintest flicker of a heartbeat.

Nothing.

My vision blurred.

What have I done?

I scrambled back, tail tucked, ears flattened, my body shivering violently. I looked around, wild and frantic, like a lost pup in a world suddenly too big and too cruel.

And then — crackling.

My head snapped up, ears pricked, breath caught.

The vehicle door creaked open, groaning under its own weight.

A figure stepped out slowly, one hand bracing against the car, the other cradling a rounded belly.

Her breath hitched as her wide, terrified eyes met mine.

A pregnant woman.



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Her scent hit me next — life, fragile and pure,  
blood and fear tangled together.

Something inside me twisted.


The storm roared back to life in my veins.

My body coiled.

My eyes locked onto her.

The beast wanted more.

And I — I couldn't stop it.

I pounced. 

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