



164 Pull it

Eve 1

I felt my hope wane, fear saturating every cell in my body as I raised one hand in surrender, the other dangling uselessly from my shoulder, twisted so horribly that even the slightest movement sent white-hot pain lancing through every muscle. The gun's exterior gleamed a deadly silver. It resembled Kael's gun. My mind was in overdrive, each desperate thought scrambling to formulate a solution to escape this situation.

Jules hissed, and my heart lurched. "To think I almost didn't take this fucking gun. But I couldn't put it past you to hand my ass to me. So now, here we are." She smiled—a bloody, macabre gesture—her mouth coated in blood, further intensifying the sinister gleam in her eyes. 1

"Jules." It hurt to speak, my body teetering on the brink of shutting down from shock and agony. I wanted so badly to let my drooping eyes close, but my blood was pumping so hard and fast that my pulse sounded like war drums in my ears.

"Please, don't do this."



Jules' lips curled into a twisted smile, a manic glint in her eyes as she kept the gun trained on me, blood dripping freely from her side. The wound I had inflicted should have slowed her down, should have made her hesitate—but it hadn't. If anything, it had only deepened the madness etched into every fiber of her being.

"You know I love him," she said, her voice thick with something bordering on obsession. Her fingers twitched on the gun's grip, caressing it like an old lover. "Any sane person would see that I worship him. And why wouldn't I? He was the sun in my darkness, the light at the end of my tunnel, the torch in my grave."

Her laughter was hollow, a chilling sound that echoed off the battered walls. I swallowed hard, my pulse hammering in my ears as I forced myself to stay still, to not let the fear paralyze me.

Jules' gaze turned distant, glassy, as if she was seeing something far beyond this room. "Back then, he was just Alpha Leon's enforcer, his Beta. But to me?" Her expression softened for the briefest second before it darkened again. "He was my savior. He gave me a gift, Ellen—a sacred thing I'll never forget."

I watched, frozen, as she lifted the gun slightly, her grip possessive. Her voice dropped to a reverent whisper, filled with a sick kind of devotion. "It was the first time I touched a weapon. He gave us a chance to kill that tyrant Alpha who subjugated us until we were nothing but animals. I took the gun." 1

Her fingers flexed around the trigger, and I tensed, ready to bolt despite the agony tearing through my body.

"It was power," she murmured, eyes alight with a feverish gleam. "It was mine. And he gave it to me." Her expression twisted, her smile sharp and venomous. "The most beautiful thing I ever saw was that bastard's head blown clean off. And he did that for me. I've loved him ever since. He was mine then, and he's mine now." 3

She took a slow, deliberate step closer, and I struggled to breathe past the suffocating weight of her words. Her voice wavered, but the madness in it never faltered. "But you—" she spat, eyes narrowing, rage boiling beneath her surface. "You just had to crawl into his world, didn't you? Had to weasel your way in, thinking you could mean something to him. Pathetic."

The gun in her hand trembled slightly, but I



knew it wasn't uncertainty—it was excitement. She was relishing this, feeding off the fear that hung between us like a thick fog.

I licked my lips, tasting sweat and blood, forcing my voice past the knot in my throat. "Jules," I whispered, my tone pleading but careful, "I'm sorry they hurt you. You didn't deserve that. You were a child."

Her lip trembled, but her gaze remained hardened. "He saved me when my father refused to. I was his prinzã without him even having to say the word," she rambled. "Only for you..." she growled, spitting blood, "to come."

"A mutt, an abomination, a pathetic excuse for a challenge," Jules snarled, her voice cracking with the weight of fury and something else—something dangerously close to heartbreak. Her grip on the gun tightened, the barrel steady despite the tremor in her bloodied hands. "He doesn't love you. He can't love you. You don't belong in his world, Ellen. You never did." 1

Her words cut deep, but I refused to let them sink in. Not now. Not when my survival depended on keeping my head above the flood of emotions threatening to drown me. I swallowed against the bile rising in my throat,

my body trembling from the agony of my twisted arm.

"I know you think that," I said carefully, every syllable a struggle. My vision blurred with sweat and exhaustion, but I forced myself to stay focused, to stay alive. "But love isn't control, Jules. It's not about who owes who, or who saved who."

"Shut up!" she screamed, the gun shaking in her grip now. "You don't know anything about what we went through! I was nothing before him. Less than nothing. But he made me strong, made me somebody. I would have died for him a thousand times over, and you? You waltzed into his life like it was your right!" 1

Her voice cracked, and for the briefest moment, I saw it—her desperation, the brittle edges of the girl she used to be, hiding beneath layers of rage and devotion. She wasn't just fighting me; she was fighting the ghost of who she used to be, the girl she swore she'd never become again.

"I don't want to take anything from you," I said, my voice softer now, trying to slip through the cracks in her armor. "I know what it's like to be nothing. To feel like the only person who sees you is the one holding you captive in their



hands." I took a shaky step forward, ignoring the way my legs screamed in protest. "But you don't have to do this. You can be so much more. You have so much light, without him."

Her eyes darkened, the vulnerability snuffed out as quickly as it appeared. "No," she whispered, her lips curling into a snarl. "You're lying. You just want me to put the gun down. You want me to trust you—like an idiot." Her finger twitched on the trigger. "But I'm not an idiot, Ellen. I see through you."

I took another step, heart hammering, every breath a struggle. "I'm not lying," I said, my voice raw, desperate. "I know it feels like when you are ripped up from the inside until you are nothing but jagged edges and broken pieces of a person you once were. And having someone come along, begging that they continue to hold together your fractured parts until you feel whole again. But it never works," I screamed. "I would know. You have to do it yourself. You have to put yourself back together, Jules. Piece by piece. No one else can do it for you—not him, not me. Just you." My voice cracked, my throat raw from the strain, but I pushed on. "Please, if you do this. You will lose yet another piece of



yourself."

For a moment, Jules faltered, the manic glint in her eyes flickering like a dying flame. Her grip on the gun loosened, and her lips parted as if she were about to say something—something real, something raw. But then, as if a switch flipped inside her, she hardened again, her expression turning ice-cold.

"Nice speech," she sneered, though I could hear the strain beneath her mockery. "But you don't get to tell me who I am." She raised the gun again, leveling it at my chest with deadly precision. "I am strong. I chose this. And I'm choosing to end you, Ellen."

The world was closing in, darkness bleeding into the edges of my vision. My limbs trembled, cold seeping deep into my bones despite the sweat drenching my skin. I couldn't breathe, couldn't think—only feel the unbearable weight of Jules' menacing stare, the gun pressed firm against my forehead. My pulse stuttered, my heart thrashing wildly in my chest like a caged animal fighting for escape.

"Please," I whispered again, the word barely escaping my cracked lips.



Jules' eyes softened for a split second, a flash of uncertainty in her expression but it was gone before I could grasp it. Her grip tightened, her knuckles paling against the cold steel. "Once you're gone," she murmured, voice trembling, "I'll finally have him. I'll—"

Then, something stirred inside me.

It was slow at first, like a whisper against my skin, a familiar yet foreign hum that grew louder, fiercer, until it was all-consuming. A slow, creeping crawl of something strange and stark wrapping around my senses and setting them ablaze. My skin prickled, my ears throbbed with every sound amplified to an unbearable degree—Jules' ragged breathing, the distant drip of water, the pounding of my own blood. Light seared into my eyes, too bright, too much, and yet... I could see everything. Every twitch, every minute shift in the air. 5

A voice, a whisper from the deepest recesses of my mind, purred through my veins. 2

"Now." 2

My body reacted before my thoughts could catch up. With a speed that defied reason, my hand shot up, fingers curling around the gun's barrel



with an iron grip. The metal burned against my palm, but I didn't let go. Jules gasped, her breath hitching, her eyes widening in sheer disbelief and horror, p blood draining from her face.

And in them, I saw it. Through the glassy depths of her eyes.

My reflection.

My eyes, crimson irises pulsed in the dim light, glowing with an unnatural intensity, piercing through the shadows like twin embers. 🔴

"Now,"

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