



## SYNOPSIS SAMPLE

### BEAST

When Assistant Commissioner of Police Aditi Kashyap is called upon to solve a gruesome triple-murder in a Mumbai suburb, she has no idea that she will soon be dragged into the mysterious and secret world of the Saimhas – **werelions** - who have lived alongside humans, hiding amongst them since ancient times, forbidden by Saimha law from ever transforming into lion form. *Ever.*

As it becomes increasingly clear that the murders are the work of something that is more animal than human, DCP Kashyap has no choice but join hands with Prithvi – an Enforcer who claims that he is tasked with hunting down this monstrous creature before any more lives are lost.

But can Prithvi overcome the burdens of his past - particularly the violent deaths of his best friend and of the woman he loved – for both of which, he holds himself responsible? And when the time comes, can Prithvi be trusted to save human lives, or will he choose to serve a different, more powerful master - one who promises to fulfil the ancient destiny of the Saimhas and raise their kind to great glory?

When the fate of the world may be at stake, who can be depended upon – human or beast?

## OUTLINE

### I

A gruesome murder in a field in Powai leads to a message that wakes up Prithvi – an Enforcer - from the horrifying nightmare that torments him every night, summoning him to Mumbai. He meets Dev Narayan – CEO of Rex Data Analytics, who briefs him on the case.

Mayhem reigns at the crime scene. ACP Aditi Kashyap is briefed by a forensics expert on how it looks like the dead men – gangsters all – were attacked by an animal. But other evidence points to this being a pre-planned attack.

Prithvi surveys the crime scene, then makes his way to meet Bhima, an old friend, as well as Dr Acharya, his former teacher. We learn about Saimhas or werelions, a species that hide amidst humans, never revealing their other form. Prithvi, as an Enforcer, must hunt down and kill those who Saimhas who have broken this first and greatest law.

Prithvi make his way to Chembur's Regal Dance Bar – where one of the gangsters, Ranjan, had his base. Ranjan's men are roughing up Rosie – Ranjan's moll, blaming her for their

boss's death. When the police arrive on the scene, the men decide to kill Rosie, and Prithvi has no choice but to intervene and take on the bunch of them in a thrilling fight.

A brief standoff between Prithvi and Aditi ensues, but they are forced to briefly work together to save Rosie, who tells them that Ranjan's associates meet at an old warehouse in Parel. Come evening, Prithvi gives Aditi the slip and heads for the warehouse on his own, where he finds a bunch of men discussing Ranjan's murder and plotting their revenge. Aditi Kashyap comes in on the scene, just as the unimaginable occurs – a lioness, terrifying and breathtakingly stunning at once – is in the warehouse. All hell breaks loose. The thugs began shooting at the lioness, who makes short work of them, ripping them to pieces before escaping the warehouse.

His eyes gleaming eerily in the darkness, Prithvi tracks the lioness. As the animal turns into a girl, barely a woman, Prithvi grabs her by the hair, preparing to snap her neck and kill her. But only when he sees her face does he realise: the girl has an uncanny resemblance to Noor, the woman he once loved, and it takes barely moments for him to figure out she must be Noor's daughter. Which means, she also is... *Oh fuck!*

## II

Flashback: Prithvi's life as an abused child who finds himself in a juvenile prison comes to end when he finds himself in Modern School, facing a strange man – Dr Acharya. For the first time in his life, Prithvi finds kindness and answers to his strangeness, as he learns about his own kind: The Saimhas, who are the result of a double-recessive gene, which means that even two human parents can give birth to a Saimha child, if that gene was passed on from either side. This is the reason why there are Orphans – children like Prithvi, who are considered freaks in the human world.

Prithvi also learns how they must live in secrecy, their considerable powers completely kept in check, for the sake of all their kind. But all that pales against Prithvi's greatest new treasure – friendship. For he meets Rahul and Irfan, cubs just like he is.

As they grow to adulthood, best friends Rahul and Prithvi break all the rules, transforming into their lion selves. Prithvi and Rahul both join Mumbai University. And that, is where Prithvi sees Noor for the very first time.

## III

Aditi Kashyap staggers back to her flat, to find Prithvi and a young woman waiting there. Prithvi explains that the woman – Chandana – is none other than the lioness Aditi had seen last night. Chandana briefly shares her story: Her adopted parents were recently killed in a freak accident, and she woke up in Bombay in the custody of a guy who since then told her who she was, and began to train her, using blood and meat to stir her inner lioness, teaching her to transform and to kill.

Before anyone can decide what to do next, the three are attacked in the apartment by a group of mercenaries. But they make a thrilling escape, with the help of Bhima, who arrives on the scene. The four of them decide to make for Police HQ, where Aditi thinks they will be safe.

Bhima explains that he overheard Dr Acharya on the phone, and thus realized that Prithvi was in trouble, so he came to help. Prithvi guesses that it is Dr Acharya, who has been training Chandana to his purposes, and also sent the mercenaries to kill them. Just as they near the police HQ, there is a blockade in front of the building. Aditi breaks through the police blockade, resulting in a high-adrenaline chase by both the police and the assassins.

Finally throwing off their pursuers, the four of them decide to head for the little-known network of tunnels that crisscross south Mumbai, which have been used in the past as a Saimha hideout. Prithvi suggests to Aditi that she might be safer if she left them. Aditi refuses, telling him that not all humans would think of Saimhas as monsters. Prithvi does not reply. Saimha or not, he knows he is a monster, given the things he has done.

#### IV

Flashback: A house, the site of a gruesome, bloody murder. Prithvi, naked and covered in blood from head to toe, stands in the middle of the carnage, a broken man. Dr Acharya comes in and takes control of everything, doing what it is he has to do to meet his first and only priority – keep the Saimhas safe. He calls Dev Narayan to help him. Prithvi is sent to Gir Forest, where he is to meet a ranger – Niyor Gogoi – who will train him to become an Enforcer: but it is a punishment.

Gogoi teaches Prithvi all he needs to know for his future job as an Enforcer – to track, to fight, to survive. But Prithvi's greatest challenge in the jungle is not his training, but learning to deal with his nightmares. In desperation, he changes form, seeking out the lions of the forest, hoping that amongst them he will finally find peace. But they too reject him. That is when he realizes. He is neither man nor beast.

The realization fully hits when a young Saimha arrives at base camp, and Gogoi hands him a gun and tells him to shoot the cub – it is to be Prithvi's first execution as Enforcer, a sign of his willingness to now do whatever it takes to keep the Saimhas and their secret safe. Prithvi kills the cub, knowing as he pulls the trigger that this is his life to be. He will never be fully man nor fully beast. He is, and will always be, a monster.

#### V

Prithvi, Aditi, Chandana and Bhima make their way to the museum and into the tunnels beneath it. Aditi inadvertently scrapes her hand against the rock – a small cut - but as it bleeds, Chandana, trained by her “mentor” to stir at the smell and sight of blood, begins to transform.

Prithvi reacts with the instinct of training, moving forward to strangle Chandana while she is still in human form – even as she begs him to kill her. She says she cannot control herself, it is too late, she has tasted flesh and she is a monster. But Prithvi cannot bring himself to do it, even though he knows that once Chandana turns, she may well kill the three of them at once.

He lets Chandana go, and as she transforms, reaches out to the beast in her. Chandana listens to him, letting him guide her. To her surprise, she finds that it is the human part of her brain that longs for blood and killing, for the power that death gives. The lioness in her sees no sense in killing. She calms down and transforms back into human form, cuddling up

like a child against Prithvi, who swears to himself that he will do whatever it takes to save her. Even if it means...

With that, Prithvi makes his plans. He tells Chandana to use the tunnels to head Dev's office at Nariman Point, promising her that he will meet her there soon. Only after she is gone does Prithvi reveal his plan – to distract their pursuers – police and assassins, so that Chandana has the best chance of getting to safety. Aditi suggests that the simplest way to do that would be to let themselves get arrested by the police.

They make their way to Dr Acharya's apartment, partly to execute their plan and partly because Prithvi wants answers. As expected, the police surround the building. Meanwhile, as Prithvi confronts his past, he realizes that he has actually sent Chandana right into danger.

## VI

Flashback: From the moment Prithvi had met Noor, at University, he had been smitten by her, as was Rahul. As the relationship amongst the three grows more complex, both Prithvi and Rahul meet Bhima – who challenges their thinking on Saimhas, their society and their lives. A little before their graduation, Noor and Prithvi have a falling-out.

Not long after the three graduate, Rahul proposes marriage to Noor, and she accepts. Prithvi confronts Rahul, asking him what if his future children with Noor were Saimha? Could he take that risk? Rahul explains: He along with his recently-met business partner, Dev Narayan, have been working on an analytical database that was meant to track and predict the the Saimha gene across generations. The idea – no more Orphans. Based on this analysis, Rahul is sure his none of his children with Noor will ever be Saimhas. Satisfied that Rahul truly cares for Noor more than he ever could, Prithvi backs off. Soon after, Rahul and Noor are married.

Rahul and Noor have a daughter, Tara, and as she grows up, she becomes the chance for a renewed bond between Rahul and Prithvi. Things slowly take on the appearance of normal domesticity. One day, when Tara has an accident, Noor calls Prithvi for help. A severely-injured Tara is rushed to hospital. She recovers, but then the attending doctor mistakes Prithvi for Tara's father in front of Rahul, who is visibly affected by the mix-up.

Soon after that, things begin to go wrong. Noor asks to meet Prithvi. She brings a plastic bag containing a small deer, drained of all blood, half chewed at. She tells him of more such animals dead around their house. Prithvi blames it on a leopard and sends her home. The next evening, Prithvi goes to see Rahul and Noor. Rahul confronts Prithvi and accuses having an affair with Noor and claims that Tara is Prithvi's daughter. But Rahul also admits that the dead animals are his doing – once again, Rahul has begun to assume his lion form and hunts in the jungle at night. He tells Prithvi to go away and leave them alone, so that they can get on happily with their lives.

Prithvi is distraught, and is about to leave Bombay for good, when Noor comes to his house. Noor makes Prithvi admit that he does love her and asks him to stay for Tara's sake but Prithvi refuses, and Noor leaves. Prithvi makes his way to the station, when Rahul reaches out to him in the voiceless way of communication between them. His words chill Prithvi to the core: *Come, feast with me.* A terrified Prithvi rushes to Dr Acharya, to ask him for help.

Prithvi warns Dr Acharya that Rahul is dangerous, that he might hurt his own family, but Dr Acharya refuses to believe Prithvi, blaming him instead for all the trouble that is being caused; he calls him a monster and forces him to leave. By the time Dr Acharya realizes that something is indeed wrong, it is too late.

Prithvi rushes to Noor and Rahul's house, to find the place a mess. Noor is dead. Next to her, five-year-old Tara is face down on the floor, unnaturally still. Prithvi looks up to see Rahul sitting on the sofa, naked, covered in gore. Rahul's eyes are the long, yellow slits of light of his lion.

## VII

Chandana makes her way to Dev's office, only to get taken prisoner – Dev Narayan is her “mentor”, the man who had her adoptive parents killed and her brought to Mumbai. Dev tells her something that brings her whole world crashing down around her. It was Prithvi who killed her real father.

Meanwhile Aditi comes up with a plan – she and Prithvi escape from the police force around the building and head to Regal Bar in Chembur. There, they enlist the help of Rajan's men to break into Dev's office. However, at Dev's office, Prithvi and Aditi are forced into an exciting gunfight with Dev's hired guns that turns out to be a splendid display of Prithvi's “superpowers”.

Prithvi makes his way to the basement of the building - the site of Dev's fiendish experiments. Prithvi confronts Dev, who shares his megalomaniac's plans for an inter-species war that the Saimhas will surely win. Dev also explains his actions thus far, and his plans for Chandana – a third generation Saimha, whose genetic material is the strongest he has seen yet. Chandana asks Prithvi if he killed her father, and he says yes. An angry Chandana allows Dev to then shoot Prithvi.

At that, Dev transforms. The results of his experiments have turned him into an abomination –neither lion nor human, but a soulless, disgusting creature. Telling Chandana to hide, Prithvi takes what he now knows is his natural, sacred form: a lion. As Dev and Prithvi battle it out as beasts, Prithvi is no match for the Super-Saimha Dev. Finally, Dev strikes a killing blow. It seems that Prithvi's end is inevitable. He calls to Chandana with the voiceless speech of their kind, inviting him into his blurred memories.

As Chandana hesitantly shares in Prithvi's memories, it is as though she lives those moments in her parents' house, when Prithvi came in to find Noor dying. She sees the man who killed her mother – her very own father, Rahul. She sees the pain, the love in Noor's eyes as she dies in Prithvi's arms, then sees Prithvi's efforts to protect Tara – the five-year old her – only to watch as her lion-form father, Rahul, attacks, forcing Prithvi to transform and kill him.

The memory seems to awaken a courage that Chandana did not know she had. She takes her lioness form and together, Chandana and Prithvi battle Dev, like a pride of lions facing a dangerous threat, finally bringing him down. That done, they both turn back into human form. Prithvi's are beyond his Saimha healing abilities, but he is ready to die. His job is done, and he has finally found peace with his past.

Prithvi wakes up to find himself, still alive, thanks to Dr Acharya. In the background, a host of people are sorting out the mess that has been left behind. There are details to be tied up, but it appears to be, as Chandana joyfully declares, a happy ending. Prithvi looks at this girl he loves with an intensity he has never felt before, not for Rahul, not even for Noor. Yes, my daughter, he agrees. It is a happy ending.

\*\*\*