

## Chapter One

Dimitri

I watched the news with dispassionate care. The politicians on the television strutting about like puppets on a string, doing one thing while pulling off another. They were con men. They were worse than the loan sharks who would loan to the poor schmucks that couldn't pay them back. At least with those bastards you knew you would get your kneecaps broken or get killed when you didn't pay. They didn't hide behind shiny smiles and false promises like politicians did.

"The fuckers do have their uses," I mused aloud. I had more than one of the assholes in my pocket. I wasn't the only boss who had those unlucky so-called civil servants in their hands, but I was the one with the most because I owned the club that most of the sick fuckers liked to come to. No, today I simply wanted to see what the good mayor had to say. I had told him exactly what he needed to say about the continued car jackings. It wasn't something I was involved in personally. Nonetheless, being how it was one of the assholes who thought they could come into my territory and set up shop, I was putting out a very clear message.

I looked over at the video monitoring system where my enforcers currently held the men. I had this town wrapped up in a little bow. For them to come onto my turf and try to take over without even giving me the courtesy of knocking on my door and asking was like a giant fuck you, which was unacceptable to me.

Standing, I turned off the television once the good deviant that we called mayor put the message out that I wanted to be put out and smiled. "Time for me to go to work and figure out just who the hell these little bastards work for and where they came from." I had an idea. I just needed the confirmation from them. I knew that Patrick O'Casey was trying to muscle in on my side of the river again. That had been a bloody battle last time we fought and one I was looking forward to again. The little punk had taken the reins of the Irish house in the city and thought he could fill his daddy's shoes right away, and I was just the right demented fucker to put him into place.

Cracking my knuckles, I walked down the steps of my home and into the basement, where his men were being kept by mine. "Ivan, Dafid, I do believe that I would like to have a turn with our friend here." I watched two of my closest friends and most trusted enforcers give me a respectful nod as they backed away from the men that hung from their wrists with rope from the ceiling.

I looked at the two men who swung back and forth. My men hadn't been gentle and that was appreciated. All the same, they had left the men conscious, which was exactly what I wanted. I removed my crisp white shirt and knew what the men saw. I wasn't a vain man, but I was very aware of how I looked. I worked hard to keep up the body that served me so well, and I was damn proud of it. They would see not only the six-pack abs I worked daily on, but the numerous tattoos that littered my body. I knew they would also see the ones that would have them shitting themselves if they knew anything about Russian prisons and how they worked. I had spent time in the Gulag and had lived to build a stronger and better life, but not before I was scarred and marked by the inmates inside of those walls of hell. American prisons were like staying at a Holiday Inn, more than one of my men had said when they had to actually spend time in jail for a crime. No, Russian prisons were their own nasty and terrible beasts, and I came out their fucking king.

“Now, you will tell me who gave the order for you to step onto my turf to steal a specific list of cars from a specific list of people?” I asked in a calm voice. At least, I thought it was a calm voice, considering how volcanically pissed off I felt inside.

They had been ordered to steal from me and those I protected. I refused to let this slide.

“Fuck you,” one of the cocky little bastards said while I was musing about how they had been ordered to steal from me and mine. Oh, he was going to pay for his words and pay dearly.

“Do you know who I am?” I asked, because it was possible these idiots simply didn’t know they were in the den of The Devil himself.

“Yeah,” the one who had the motormouth continued. “Doesn’t make a fucking difference to me. Would do it a-fucking-god-damn-gain, you fucking self-righteous prick. Not like you and yours don’t come onto our side of the river.” The idiot spat at me and onto my shoes. Shoes that I liked. I swung at his partner, not him.

Smiling, I looked at the cocky one again. “I am Dimitri Dudikov, and I am the head of the Russian mafia here in Arlington and the East Coast. Anything that happens comes through me first, so I would say that you are a liar, and every lie you speak, your friend will pay.” The shocked look was priceless and one that I had become accustomed to. These little fucks didn’t know who they had come into the home of. They had thought it was a lower boss, not me. “Why him? I’m the one who insulted you.”

“Because I’ve found the one who talks the loudest is the cockiest and seems to think he knows it all, where the one who is silent typically does know it all.” I looked at the silent one and nodded. “Ah yes, understanding is there. He knew very well just whose turf and home he was coming into, didn’t you?”

At the silence, the man swinging beside him twisted. “Jesus, Toby, tell me you didn’t bring me into The Devil’s backyard.” Continued silence. I wasn’t really surprised. He would be the hardest one to break. I looked at three of the lower level enforcers and nodded.

“Take our talkative friend here back home.” I could practically feel the relief flowing from him, stupid idiot. Didn’t he realize I was not a nice man? “I will let you all decide how many pieces to deliver him in. I would save the head for his boss, but that’s just me. Have fun, boys.” I knew my men would see to it. I trusted them just as they trusted me. I would die and kill for my men, and it was no different for them.

I turned my attention to the silent one. “Ivan, will you bring me my tools, please?” I was going to get to have some fun after all. Maybe later I would even hire a few whores for everyone, because it would only be a matter of hours before I broke this man. They all broke under my hand. I was The Devil, and it was my time to play.