

# **Durante**

## **The Devil's Playground**

**Take away their bliss.  
Replace it with suffering.  
And even saints will turn to sinners.  
Welcome to the city of Durante.  
There's no God here.**

**Miles Overland**

## Chapter One

The city of Durante doesn't need a hero. It needs a fucking arsonist, and it'll be a pleasure to burn it down. This city has seen better days, before organized crime wormed their tendrils out of the ground. A few pay offs, a few murders, and no one bats an eye. Every city has problems with crime, and people get used to it. It doesn't shock anyone anymore, because it hasn't affected them directly. The police will handle it; they will increase police presence and crack down on crime. Durante has heard that one before, and before you know it, you don't know who the police are really protecting. Growing up in Durante, you learned quickly to turn your head and mind your own business because the brave die young, and the desperate are recruited into one of the gangs who call this city home. The Lords, a black gang to the north. The Russian Tsars to the south. The Salire, an Italian mafia to the west and the Shi, a Japanese crime syndicate to the east. I'm not brave or some comic book superhero. I'm fury incarnate, and anger is a hell of a drug. I can't help this city by being a vigilante. I can't bring the people responsible for the downfall of Durante to justice. So don't call me a hero or a savior. Don't glorify me. I'm not a symbol of hope. I'm a murderer.

The rain beats against the broken windshield of this old seventies Pontiac rust bucket riddled with bullet holes as it rolls down the streets of an empty industrial part of town in the north borough. The Lords gang controls this part of Durante, but all they really control is just a carcass of what the north borough used to be. They're maggots eating the last bit of meat before they start starving. It's hard to see the road in front of me as the rain pour down, but at least it washes the blood off. Puddles of dirty rain water fill the pot holes on the beaten street. I can't help myself from driving through them spraying filth onto the abandoned warehouses. It reminds me of when I was a kid, before the city went to shit, and I snuck out of the apartment to play on the wet streets waiting to get splashed with water as cars drove by.

I stop the Pontiac under an overpass, adjust my tie and grab the revolver from the passenger seat. I look at the six inch barrel of the Raging Judge Magnum, it's engraved "For those he abandoned" on one side, "I will judge" on the other. I glance at myself in the rear view mirror before sliding a mask over my face. A white faced devil with its golden teeth and horns jutting out and the eyes of a man I don't recognize stare back at me. Attached to the mask is a hood with long black hair sewn into it that hides the rest of my head and neck. I step out of the car, and my black tie soars in the wind, and the rain beats off my mask and leather coat. The weight of the Raging Judge in my hand steadies my nerves as I walk the length of the car squeezing the cushioned rubber grip of the gun. I've had enough of this city. The anger I feel is shared among many. When God turns his back on a city, it becomes the Devil's playground, and I love to cause some chaos.

I put the key into the keyhole and pop the trunk. Two sacks of shit lay unconscious and bound. The infamous cop killers, Tyrone Williams and Andre Jackson, acquitted of all charges due to a lack of evidence and some rumored payoffs. These two used to be some low level gangbangers for the Lords. Now they can afford Lawrence Sandford, a hotshot attorney from Morrison & Gates, one of the top law firms in Durante. I can guarantee Lawrence didn't do this pro bono either. These bastards gunned down two rookie cops, Derrek Letts and Tommy Forgione, as they were walking to their squad car

after checking out a false disturbance call at an abandoned house. I grab Tyrone by his wife-beater and drag his skinny body out of the trunk. He bounces off the pavement. A swift kick to his stomach wakes him up from his stupor. He groans and rolls over into a puddle.

“Get up,” I demand as lightning illuminates the night.

He rolls over again, shaking his head in confusion. “What the hell, man, I thought the Lords and the Shi were cool.”

He struggles against the ropes binding his ankles, his hands tied behind his back and sits up. Blood drips down his face from a cut on his eyebrow. His fat nose twisted sideways on his face. I avert my attention to Andre in the back of the trunk. It was hard enough getting that fat bastard in there. I shove my gun into my belt and grab him by the arms. I heave his flabby body over the ridge of the trunk, and gravity does the rest as he falls on his face.

“Fuck, man!” Tyrone shouts as Andre groans.

I stomp on Andre’s belly and he gasps for breath. I grab my gun from my belt and point the barrel of the gun towards him; his eyes snap open, his lower lip trembles.

“Who ordered the hit?” I snarl through my teeth.

“What are you talking about?” Tyrone asks before my knee collides with his jaw sending him flying backwards. He shakes his head again, his eyes dazed over. “Jesus, you Shi fucks are mean.”

I grab Tyrone’s face and snap his crooked nose to the other side. He reels back in pain. “Derrek Letts and Tommy Forgione, who ordered you to kill them?”

“We don’t know, I swear,” Andre cries out after watching his buddy’s painful ordeal.

“Don’t you fucking snitch, you fat bitch,” Tyrone growls as he stares at Andre.

I step towards Andre, one step after another, watching him regret his decision. “Oh God, please, we don’t know. I swear on my momma’s life,” Andre prays.

“This is Durante. God doesn’t answer prayers. He doesn’t care, but the Devil does. I listen to every little prayer. So you can quit praying. I’m already here,” I chuckle as the barrel of the gun rises to meet Andre.

“Don’t tell him shit; he’s just a wannabe Shi. Pussy, won’t even pull the trigger!” Tyrone shouts. I turn to face him swinging my arm around. I squeeze the trigger and the hammer falls. The recoil rattles my arm, but the blood shocks me the most. The .454 Casull bullet busts through Tyrone’s fucked up face as blood and brains spray all over the wet pavement. He collapses and his ghetto voice is silenced by a gunshot.

Andre glances at Tyrone’s lifeless body before throwing up on the pavement. I grab him by the back of his collar and twist him around. I stare at him and his puke covered face. “Better start talking.”

“Alright man, whatever the Shi needs from me, I’ll do it. I got a kid and my momma to look after,” he begs. “I don’t know who ordered the hit; that’s the truth. Tyrone got a phone call from some unknown number asking if we wanted to make some money. We’re some broke ass niggas you know. So we agreed. They told us to roll up to this hotel every Monday night, and if the light was on in the corner room, to go in and enter the room. One night the light was on, and we walked into an empty room with a folder on the table and a stack of cash in an envelope. We never met anyone, I swear.” Tears start to form in Andre’s eyes.

“What hotel and what was in the folder?” I shove the barrel of the gun into his double chin.

“Some run-down hotel in the north borough. Called Courtyard Suites. The folder had the names and photos of those two cops. It had their usual patrols routes, where they took breaks, even where they lived. Everything on those cops. Then it said to contact some lawyer after the hit. They paid us eighty grand to split. Cops die every day; two more won’t make a difference.

“Was it the lawyer who defended you in court, Lawrence Sandford?” I pull the hammer back on the revolver.

“Ya, man, didn’t even have to pay him. He said everything will be taken care of. Let me go. I have a family, man,” Andre pleas.

“So did those cops.” I pull the trigger. Andre’s cry dies out. The gun’s smoke dissipates and I open the revolver’s cylinder. I pull out the two empty shell casings and place them on the trunk of the car before turning towards the run-down warehouses. I stop for a brief second, taking in the moment, wave at the security camera across the street and step off into the rainy city.

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