

Chapter 1

Charge it!

Dubai

Three Years Ago...

It's 10:00 a.m.

At least that's what I think the clock says.

One of my arms is still tied to the bed, and I'm trying to focus around a nipple. The nipple belongs to a hooker. To which hooker, I have no earthly idea. I seem to recall several of them hanging around last night.

Fuck, my head hurts.

It takes me a couple of tries, but I get myself untied. I sit up, throw my feet over the side, and step on another hooker passed out on the floor. She doesn't even move. I wish I could tell you the whole story, but I was halfway in on a bender when they showed up. I will tell you

this—although I’m super fucking annoyed I’m even stuck here in Dubai, I’m happy to have at least made it back to my hotel. There have been other occasions where I’ve “come to” on the other side of the world.

It’s the main reason I rarely do cocaine.

We don’t get along, cocaine and me.

The problem is we keep trying to work it out. You know how it is, some days you have to just step over a hooker to start your day, and others, you wake up and just have to figure out where the fuck you are.

Whaddaya gonna do?

I throw on a hotel robe and go off to find my phone. The hotel suite runs right around seventeen grand a night, so the robe is posh. Same with the view. I’m forty-five floors up in one of the world’s only six-star hotels, staring out at the Persian Gulf.

I know what some of you are thinking: *What’s this jerk-off bitching about?*

Well, for starters, fuck off.

You come over here and deal with these Hezbollahhs.

Plus, I’m hungover as hell, my phone is MIA, there are hookers lying around like wet beach towels, and this place is a fucking mess. I’ve been holed up here in the Sandbox for the last five days...waiting on a fucking phone call. Not to mention, I’ve got sand wedged into places my mother’s never seen.

To top it all off, I’m *supposed* to be in Greece on a three-week vacation.

Do you have any idea what the hookers are like in Mykonos this time of year? It’s the

height of the season there. Hookers from every nook and cranny on the planet. The place is crawling with 'em. Exotic hookers. Crazy hookers. High-class hookers. Low-class hookers. Hookers with a friend. Hookers I might never see again. It's hookers and hookers and hookers.

Again, whaddaya gonna do?

Before you and I can go any further, we need to get something straight. I don't need to pay for sex...by any stretch of the imagination. I'm six-three, two hundred and thirty pounds, and work out like my life depends on it. My mother's Puerto Rican, like J-Lo. My dad's six-five, Belgian with dark hair and blue eyes. I have his height and coloring and mom's olive skin. Plus, I read, write, and speak four languages—French, English, Spanish, and Russian.

And if all that's not enough to make you puke or want to punch me, I'm paid.

I mean like paid-paid.

Honestly, I only pay for sex because I can...and I have a hooker fetish.

I'm not talking about hookers you find on Main Street. I'm talking about *Pretty Woman*-type hookers. Hookers who run two and three thousand dollars a night. Hookers who'll earn you a smack from wifey for trying to cop a second peek. I parade 'em around town. It's dinner. It's dancing. She tells me the lies I wanna hear. Then it's back to my place for anything I like. *Poof!* She's gone in the morning.

Simple.

It's my pop's fault. He bought me my first hooker. I was fifteen. Shy. He said it was easier than trying to explain the birds and the bees. Two weeks later, it was a lot harder to explain the rash to my mother. She called her priest back in San Juan while Dad went out of town on business.

Anyway, I finally find my phone under a couch cushion and walk out onto my balcony, while it's still almost bearable outside. I've missed several calls and texts from Mikale. He's my business partner back in Zurich. We've been friends since we were kids. He's at his sister's wedding in Lake Geneva.

I've known Maggie her entire life. I was supposed to attend the wedding. I'm basically part of the family. The problem is, I very recently had a "thing" with Maggie's maid of honor, Kennedy. And Kennedy's married to a dickweed billionaire who runs in their father's inner circle.

Hence, the thing.

Two months back, a glass just missed my head at one of the umpteen social events leading up to Maggie's wedding. That's when their family decided it might be better for everyone if I sat it out. Mikale didn't have the *couilles* to tell me to my face. Instead, he left a first-class ticket to Greece on my desk, with the note: *Sorry, Buddy. Get some R&R. You deserve it. See ya in three weeks.*

As I was packing, the phone rang.

Ten minutes later, I was on a video conference with Mikale to Dubai. The landowners were ready to close on our next build site. This was a very big deal. Mikale told them he was unable to make the trip over because of the wedding. This left me. Fuck it, no problem. Figured I'd drop into Dubai for a day or two, schmooze a couple of sheiks, grab the check for two hundred million dollars, then it's hookers here I come.

Shit never works out like that, though.

Ever!

The next day, I flew here. When I arrived, the front desk handed me a note: *Enjoy Dubai.*

We'll be in contact soon. And nothing since. I told Mikale they were miffed about him not showing up. He said I was being irrational.

Go figure.

I'm calling his ass right now. He's not picking up, of course. Oh well, I reckon it's as good a time as any to break the news to him. So, at the beep, as instructed, I do leave a message. "Dickface, I put another round of hookers on the credit card. I'm not going to stop until there's a check in my hand."

When I want to get even with Mikale, charging pussy to the business account is my go-to. He catches hell from his wife, Eva, which gives me the warm and fuzzies. Eva and I don't see eye to eye...on anything. She thinks I'm a total dick. I'm not expecting the relationship to get any better any time soon.

Last year about this time, she went all Sherlock Holmes on our credit card statements and found my sins. The line item didn't exactly say *Pussy for Sale*, but it didn't take a professional dick either.

Truthfully, I couldn't care less if she discovers my indiscretions. I'm not trying to score points with her. However, Mikale thinks she'll eventually spill the beans to one of our investors. It's fucking bullshit. I've never professed to be an altar boy. I agreed to make them money. And make money, we all have.

Mikale and I manage some serious loot.

Wall Street-type loot.

We've got a handful of investors with Batman money who've kicked into our fund. All of it

goes toward condominium development projects around the world. We've been at it for a few years now. Boca Raton, Florida, was the site of our first project. Dubai's going to be our second...if the fuckers would just call and bring me the check!

I need to get back inside, get rid of the hookers, and get on with this day.