

Chapter One

A gray sky loomed above as a thin, bespectacled man exited his vehicle. Standing beside the black Mercedes, feeling distinctly out of place, he buttoned the neck of his overcoat and winced as the wind blown trash drifted overhead. He had received an invitation from an old school chum and having a limited circle of friends, decided to accept. That must be him, he said to himself, as he watched a dark haired man crossing the street. Now, inches apart, he shook the offered hand of a man he barely recognized. "Good to see you again," he remarked.

"Indeed," the dark haired man agreed, unemotionally.

"So, how have the years treated you?"

With a silent shrug, the dark haired man frowned.

"Why are we meeting here?" he asked, "and why now, after all these years?"

"This is his domicile," the man replied, "I intend to reveal what you've done to him."

"Him? What are you talking about? I thought I was coming here to retrieve the watch I lent you years ago and to reminisce?"

"Yes, your assumption is correct, it is about the past," the man sneered.

"What's happened to you, you've changed?" he asked, as they entered the lobby of an old, decaying Bronx building.

"This way, the elevator's not working," the man ordered, ignoring the question while ascending the litter strewn staircase towards the third floor landing.

"You didn't answer my question," he commented, reaching the last step out of breath.

"It really doesn't matter anymore."

"What do you mean?" he asked, unbuttoning his coat to counter the hallway's stifling heat.

"You'll see," the man replied, with a sinister smirk.