



The Devil Himself: A Novel

Eric Dezenhall

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"I'll talk to anybody, a priest, a bank manager, a gangster, the devil himself, if I can get the information I need. This is a war." -- Lt. Commander Charles Radcliffe Haffenden, Naval Intelligence Unit, B-3

In late 1982, a spike in terrorism has the Reagan Administration considering covert action to neutralize the menace before it reaches the United States. There are big risks to waging a secret war against America's enemies---but there is one little-known precedent.

Forty years earlier, German U-boats had been prowling the Atlantic, sinking hundreds of U.S. ships along the east coast, including the largest cruise ship in the world, *Normandie*, destroyed at a Manhattan pier after Pearl Harbor. Nazi agents even landed on Long Island with explosives and maps of railways, bridges, and defense plants. Desperate to secure the coast, the Navy turned to Meyer Lansky, the Jewish Mob boss. A newly naturalized American whose fellow Eastern European Jews were being annihilated by Hitler, Lansky headed an unlikely fellowship of mobsters Lucky Luciano, Bugsy Siegel, Frank Costello, and naval intelligence officers.

Young Reagan White House aide Jonah Eastman, grandson of Atlantic City gangster Mickey Price, is approached by the president's top advisor with an assignment: Discreetly interview his grandfather's old friend Lansky about his wartime activities. There just might be something to learn from that secret operation. The notoriously tight-lipped gangster, dying of cancer, is finally ready to talk. Jonah gets a riveting---and darkly comic---history lesson. The Mob caught Nazi agents, planted propaganda with the help of columnist Walter Winchell, and found Mafia spies to plot the invasion of Sicily, where General Patton was poised to strike at the soft underbelly of the Axis. Lansky's men stopped at nothing to sabotage Hitler's push toward American shores.

Based on real events, *The Devil Himself* is a high-energy novel of military espionage and Mafia justice.



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