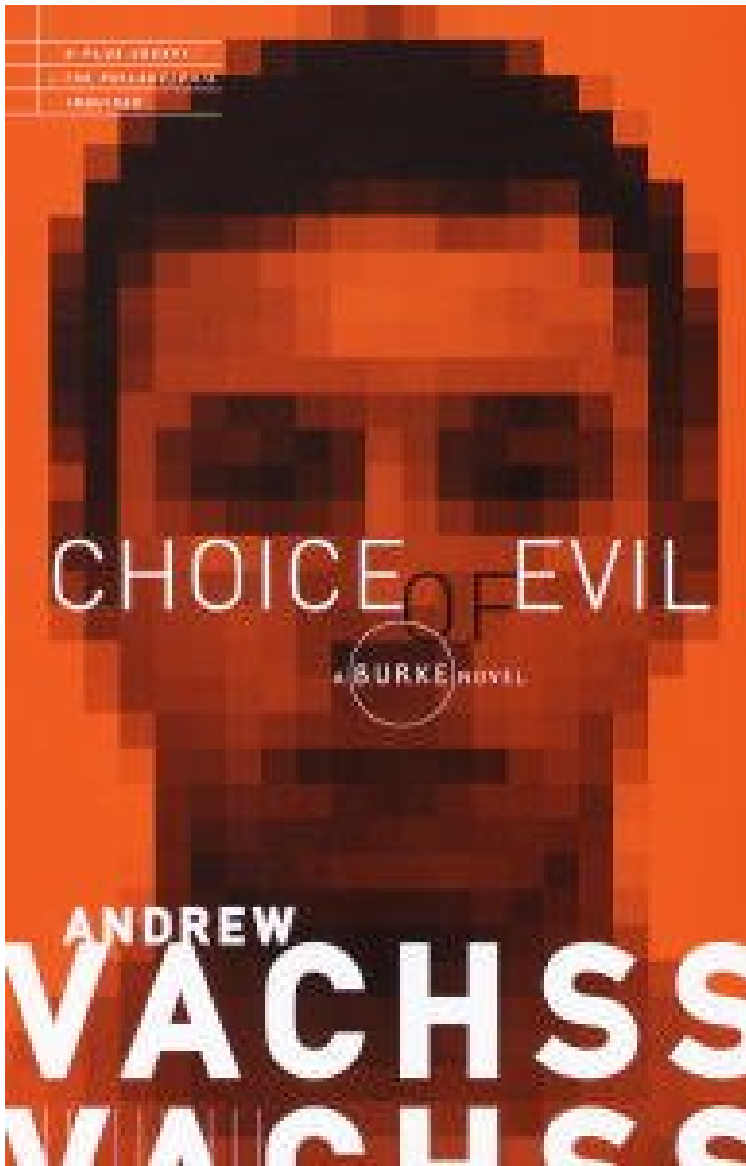


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Choice of Evil



Par Andrew Vachss
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWhen his girlfriend, Crystal Beth, is gunned down at a gay rights rally in Central Park, Burke, the underground man-for-hire and expert hunter of predators, vows vengeance.But someone beats him to the task: a shadowy killer who calls himself Homo Erectus and who seems determined to wipe gay bashers from the face of the earth.As the killer's body count rises, most citizens are horrified, but a few see him as a hero, and they hire Burke to track him down...and help him escape.In Choice of Evil, Burke is forced to confront his most harrowing mystery: the mind of an obsessive serial killer.And soon the emotionally void method behind the killer's madness becomes terrifyingly familiar, reminding Burke of his childhood partner, Wesley, the ice-man assassin who never missed, even when the target was himself.Has

Wesley come back from the dead? The whisper-stream says so. And the truth may just challenge Burke's very sense of reality. Expertly plotted, addictive, enthralling, Choice of Evil is Andrew Vachss' most haunting tale to date. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Extrait From Chapter One

It was almost three in the morning when she'd called, so I was outside her apartment house in fifteen minutes. I didn't like the doorman eyeballing me more than once, but I didn't see a way around it either. If he thought it was unusual for someone to be calling at that hour, he didn't show it . . . just rang up and got the okay for me to enter the elevator. She must have been right at the peephole--the door opened even as I raised my knuckles to rap. The rose lighting was back on. Otherwise, the place was shrouded. "Go sit down," she told me, standing aside. I gave up trying to solve the mystery of her three chairs and just took the middle one, letting her play any way she wanted. She looked ghostly, floating across the room toward me. Barefoot, in a gauzy white robe that wrapped her body--a frame, not a cover. She took the nearest open chair, reached over, and pulled mine around so we were facing each other. "I believe you," she said. "Which means . . . ?" "I believe you wouldn't . . . do what you said. I believe you . . . Oh, never mind. Look, here it is, okay? She . . . asked around. Like you said. I don't know about this 'theory' of yours, but you're right about one thing--they have the men who did that drive-by." "Have them?" "Found them, I should have said. They're dead. And one of the people killed in the crowd--you were right about that too. The police think it was murder. I mean, deliberate murder. The rest was only for . . . what do you call it? Camouflage? I don't know. But the cops say it was business. Professional business. They think they know who gave the order. That's what you want, right?" "That's what I want." "Well, I have it," she said. "But you want to play with it first? Or you want me to place a fucking bid? What?" "Why are you so . . . hostile?" she asked softly. "I've been nice to you. It was fun . . . flirting, right? I know you liked it." "We've already been there," I told her. "You really hate them, don't you?" she said, leaning so close I could feel her breath. "Who?" "Child molesters." "Who doesn't?" I said, sloughing it off, staying clear of whatever was lightning-bolting around the rose-lit room. "You should spend more time where I do," she said, an ugly undertone to her soft voice. "And you said to ask. You said it was okay. You told me to do it." "What are you talking about?" "My . . . friend. The cops. All that. It was easy, she said. They all . . . a lot of them anyway . . . they know you. Or about you, at least. I even know about those murders--the ones in the South Bronx." "Jesus Christ, that's the kind of sorry two-bit rumor your pal came up with? That story's a fucking fossil." "I know what you think," she said, sliding the gauzy robe off her shoulders. "You think I'm trying to get you to . . . admit something, right?" "That's why you keep taking your clothes off? So I'll see you're not wearing a wire?" I laughed at her. I could see her face flush. Or maybe it was just the reflected light. "I'm just more . . . comfortable this way," she told me. "I don't like clothes. I don't like people to wear clothes. It's another thing to hide behind." "Yeah, sure. You spend half your life in a gym, you've got a beef with clothes? You're more confident without your clothes, that's all. Because you're an overmatch against most everyone else that way." "I'll bet I'd be with you." "No contest," I acknowledged. "You don't want to play at all, do you?" "No." "Why not?" "I'm not a player." "What does that mean? You don't have sex unless you're in love?" "No. It means I smoke cigarettes but I don't light them with sticks of dynamite." "You don't trust me?" "I'd have to upgrade a cubic ton to distrust you," I told her, keeping my voice level. "You got me over here because you said you had what I wanted. Instead of giving it to me, you start asking me about some murders I'm supposed to have committed. I tell you I don't want to fuck you," I said, dropping my voice, letting a harder tone bleed through, "you tell me I'm a liar. I told you before: Behavior is the truth. What's the game? I say: 'Sure, you've got a body that would get a rise in a morgue,' and you say, 'Well, you're not getting any of it'? Would that make you happy? Is that your game? Okay, I'll pay that much, if that's what it takes. You're a gorgeous woman." "But . . . ?" "But you can't get juice from marble," I told her. "What does that mean?" "How many different ways you want me to say it? You've got a stake in this. Not the same one Lincoln and those other guys have. Yeah, I know, you told me: You 'love' this guy. And you just want to protect him, right? Sure, fine. I'll buy it, that's what you want. And I played right along, didn't I? You think I'd turn him over to the cops for a pass on one of my own cases, then don't help. But you already did that, right? Checked me out. Found out some stuff. Enough to convince you that, whatever else I am, I'm not a rat. So here I am. And what do I get? Another strip show. More of your stupid teasing. And some questions about . . . bullshit crap that couldn't be your business." "Revue de presse" A gripping tale of evil, cruelty, retribution and love. -The Plain Dealer

Choice of Evil is Vachss' darkest Burke yet, exploring man's propensity for savagery, ice-cold cunning and wearing thin the limits of sanity. -The

Clarion-Ledger (Mississippi)