

## CHAPTER 6



### *INTERVENTION*

Carrillo El Duque Sanchez didn't like anything about the state of Virginia, particularly the fluctuations in the weather.

It was the beginning of summer.

His body was drenched with sweat not to mention the perspiration that seemed to never stop covering his face like a hot blanket. He did not like Virginia's summer months. It's hot and muggy and raining almost all the time.

A neat sort, always looking at himself in the mirror, Carrillo disliked the fact that his expensive clothes were always sweaty and clinging to his body like paste. He hated that feeling so much so, it didn't take much to put him in a nasty mood. Something that no one ever wanted to see happen under any circumstances.

He reached for and pulled a white handkerchief from his coat pocket and wiped the sweat from his brow when a voice from across the room barked.

"You lose today, yo ass better have the money to pay up!"

"Shad up and deal the cards." Another voice said.

Randomly looking around the bar, Carrillo noticed that four men were sitting at a table in the back of the bar.

In the darkest corner of the bar, the only light was from a light bulb hanging from a make-shift extension cord. The owner was probably stealing service from the local electric company at their expense.

There were other customers in the Bait and Switch Bar and Grill. Carrillo was standing at the far end of the bar. At first glance he didn't think that the customers were aware that he was even in the joint. He cleared his throat and to the bartender, he said, "Someday I gon' do my own thang."

"Do your own thing..."

"This is right, Senior Bartender. Carrillo will have his own place, someday."

"So...you can stop calling me *bartender*...the name is, Stonebreaker...Steve Stonebreaker."

*Stonebreaker...* Carrillo smirked. *Bartender...who gives a damn.*

"Get your own place..." Stonebreaker replied.

"Damn right!

"This ain't for everybody."

"It's gon' be a lot better than this dive."

Suddenly the place grew quiet.

People throughout the bar turned and stared at Carrillo. They looked at him for a long time before he turned to Stonebreaker and to him, he said, "wat's wrong with 'em? Why they look at Carrillo like he speak out of turn or some shit?"

"What are you...Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban?"

"I am Puerto Rican, my friend. My family lives in New York."

"If you don't like this place..." A voice bellowed from the card game. "Take your punk ass someplace else.! You ain't been doing nothing but standing 'round heah trying to look all cool and shit most of the night. Well, I got news for you, pretty bwoy. Ain't nobody here impressed."

Carrillo looked at Stonebreaker then around the room before directing his attention to the card game and the four men sitting at the table.

The dimly lit corner was a problem for Carrillo. He could see one of the men. His head was down. The other three...their backs were to him which made it difficult to get a good look at them...make out their faces.

"Eh, bartender..." Carrillo said in a low tone.

"I see you and I can hear you."



“Somebody back there, they ain’ talking to me no...?”

Stonebreaker didn’t reply. Instead, he slowly backed away and retreated to the opposite end of the bar.

Meanwhile, Carrillo cut his eyes from Stonebreaker to the card game. Again, he glanced around the bar at the customers who were minding their own business then back to the Stonebreaker.

*Carrillo, he can see where this is going. The bartender don’t want to let poor judgment get in the way of him taking an ass whipping.*

*I will let things play out for now. Carrillo, he, don’t want no trouble.*

“Quit jawing with that bartender!” Someone from the card table shouted. “You got something to say...come back here and say it!”

Carrillo went into flip mode!

He turned and stared right at the four men!

“Are you staring me down, bwoy!”

This time the voice had a face.

He was sitting at the table looking right at Carrillo as the other three sat with their backs to him, never looking up, never turning around.

Carrillo held his position, remained calm.

“You want some of this?” The loudmouth sprung to his feet looking at Carrillo then at the rest of the customers. “C’mon...let’s get to it!”

“Sit down and shut up!” Hector Lassiter said. “I’ve seen you in action, Reggie Duce Payne.”

“Yeah...” A female voice shouted.

“Calm yourself, Reggie.” Hector Lassiter grinned slyly. “That dude at the bar looks like somebody you don’t want to mess with.”

Meanwhile, a waitress walked by the card table. She collected empty glasses, wiped off the table and refilled their drinks. As she was turning to leave, she looked at Hector Lassiter and whispered. “The guy at the bar is Puerto Rican...says his family lives in New York. Tell Reggie to cool his heels. That Puerto Rican is much larger than he looks from where y’all sitting.”

Reggie grinned, slyly.

His cold dark eyes narrowed as he looked at Carrillo with much contempt.

*Sucker got the nerve to try and stare Reggie Payne down. Lucky for him I’m in a good mood. Otherwise, I’d be stomping a hole in his hide.*

Reggie took a deep breath and decided it would be best to take Hector Lassiter's advice. And, without further incident, he sat back down.

Stonebreaker was still at the opposite end of the bar tending to customers and taking it all in like a moth to a flame. His bar wasn't the best place in town. But it was where all of the action took place. The majority of his customers were retired and active-duty military that lived in and around the Newport News, Hampton area. He made most of his money on weekends the sailors and marines from Norfolk took over the joint. He had got lucky when choosing a location for his place. He just happened to find an abandoned strip mall in Hampton that had easy access from all of the main streets leading in and out of town.

The men at the poker table, all of them, had some affiliation with the military. Some were retired, others had done their time and moved on with the exception of the loudmouth, Reggie Duce Payne.

Unlike the other three at the table, Reggie was financially sound, and he wasn't bashful about flaunting his wealth. His only problem is that he did not know how to invest and spend his fortune wisely.

There was one advantage that Reggie enjoyed...he was good at convincing people to give him money, even when they didn't want to, they'd cough it up like it was candy. And true to form, as quick as Reggie Duce Payne got the money, he would blow it just as fast.

Fred T. Johnson was at the table, sitting next to Reggie. Known around town as Freddy "T", he was no better than Reggie. The only difference...he had direct ties to Street. Even when his infamous CREW were around, Fred was working behind the scenes in the shadows watching Tyrone's back.

And...there was something, else.

He was known, Freddy "T", for keeping a .38 snub nose tucked snugly in a brown leather shoulder holster under his left armpit. His reputation preceded him as he was known to shoot first and ask questions later.

Seated at the card table, his back to the wall, was The Ladies Man, Tony Rucker, aka (also known as) the *"Young Girls Pride and Joy."* He was well known around town as a flamboyant, outgoing, fancy dresser who was always looking forward to the next woman for financial support.

*Every day was a good day* as far as Tony Rucker was concerned. He lived for fame and fortune and for women to desire him. But...he only wanted to be around the "Pretty One's" with as Tony

likes to put it...*Big Bank*. His sole purpose for being at the Bait and Switch was to recruit new prospects. The card game was just a minor distraction.

The seating arrangement at the card game never changed. Hector Lassiter made it a point at each visit to sit next to Tony. They always got along despite Tony's boasting about how pretty he was and his prowess with women, which didn't seem to faze Hector.

Freddy "T" always sat across from Reggie...the drunken loudmouth who, just recently, was new to the game and to everyone.

It had been a year since General Benson had tried and failed to discredit Major Tyrone Street and his CREW. Fred, being one of the members of the CREW, hadn't forgot the despicable behavior displayed by General Benson and his goon squad, the rogue FBI Agents, Smalls and Stone. Fred knew that they were still out there, somewhere, biding their time vowing to get even.

A night didn't go by when they were at the Bait and Switch enjoying their card game that Fred didn't make it a point to keep an eye on people walking into the joint.

It was an old wound that didn't need to be reopened between General Benson and Tyrone Street. Every military law enforcement agency along with local and federal agencies were involved in the failed take down attempt of Major Street. They had all failed in large part due to the involvement of Stephanie Taylor and Major Street's mutual admiration society throughout the country who banded together, pulled the right strings and short-stopped General Benson's efforts at every turn. He and his henchmen continue to comb the country bringing with them suppressed hate, anger and the propensity to use violence, if necessary, as they are in no mood to let things go.

They continue to look at every means available to destroy Street and his CREW. The fact that Stephanie Taylor thwarted them at every turn in their investigation does nothing more than to fuel their desire for revenge.

Hector Lassiter's sick sense was telling him that he along with everyone at the card table were being watched. And Reggie was, at it again, taunting the Puerto Rican standing at the bar.

Fred was doing nothing to calm Reggie down.

"Stop this nonsense, Reggie." Hector said concerned. "That Puerto Rican...he ain't nobody to be screwing around with. Trust me."



Tony Rucker narrowed his eyes. "Watch ya ass, Reggie. That guy at the bar looks like someone that's willing to kill or be killed."

"Like I said..." Hector whispered then glance at the bar. "Calm down, Reggie and shut the hell up. We don't need no trouble right now."

Meanwhile, sitting quietly in the opposite corner at a table alone, were two female customers. They were keeping an eye on the Puerto Rican and paying attention to the distraction that was Reggie Duce Payne in the opposite corner. Steady on the case, Tony Rucker was scanning the room.

He had been cutting his eyes from the women to the Puerto Rican and back to the women for most of the night. He stood up, eased his chair back from the table. As he inched over to their table, he caught sight of a tall man wearing a black trench coat and fedora entering the bar. He watched him make his way over to the end of the bar where Stonebreaker was standing. The tall man must have caught the women's attention because they looked in his direction ignoring Tony Rucker prompting one of the women to say to Tony. "We was wondering when you'd wander over and chat with us?"

"Really...you were expecting me?"

"We noticed you watching us watching you watching that Puerto Rican standing at the bar."

The waitress came over to the table. Tony Rucker sat down. The women ordered beers. Tony...rum and coke on the rocks. They took time sipping their drinks for a few moments without talking as R&B music streamed in the background.

Finally, Tony Rucker said, "So, what brings you lovely ladies to a place like this?"

"We want to know..." One of them said smiling then continued. "How far you think you're gonna get with either of us?"

Tony raised his eyebrows but said nothing. Instead, he looked over his shoulder at his table. The boys were looking at him with keen interest. He knew why they were watching him, and he wasn't going to disappoint them. His reputation was at stake...him being the *Young Girls Pride and Joy* and all.

He leaned in, resting his left elbow on the table. With his right hand, he raised his glass took a small sip then wiped his mouth with a napkin from the table.

"I've got a good feeling that I'm gonna have a connection with one or maybe even both of you before I leave here tonight."

“Is that why you’ve been staring in our direction?” The brunette said then cut her eyes at her blond partner whose attention was switching back and forth from Tony and the Puerto Rican and back to Tony.

Tony looked at the blond wonderingly and to her he said, “The Puerto Rican at the bar is killing our moment. Don’t cha think?”

She averted her stare.

“That Puerto Rican is gonna be trouble for the loudmouth at your table. You better get back there before it’s too late.”

“You must be talking about Reggie.”

“Whatever his name is, it would be in his best interest to keep his cool.”

“Reggie ain’t gonna start nothing.”

“Pay attention, pretty boy!” The brunette lowered her voice. “That Puerto Rican is ready to go into flip mode. He’s on a mission and if your boy, Reggie, ain’t careful...he won’t walk out of here alive if that Puerto Rican has anything to say about his fate.”

Tony half turned, looked at the bar for a moment. As he turned his attention back to the women, he said. “The Puerto Rican...y’all know him?”

“Helllll yeah.” The blond said then grinned. That’s Carrillo El Duque Sanchez standing at the bar. He’s a cold-blooded killer. Referred to as...El Duque, the assassin that kills for sport.

“Yeah, and with passion...” The brunette cut in. “Word on the street is that his woman was brutally murdered a year ago. He vowed to seek retribution by any means necessary. He’s looking to join forces with someone to have his revenge.”

Meanwhile, Reggie was glaring at Carrillo.

Carrillo looked back at him except this time he was smiling which prompted Reggie to begin swearing to himself. *Shit, Goddammit!* “Look at him Freddy “T”, he’s taunting me, now!”

“Be cool, Reggie.” Hector caution. “It’s all good, Bruh.”

The brunette looked around the joint then leaned closer to Tony. Finally, she said, “your boy is a dumb ass.” She glanced at the blond and to Tony she whispered, “you may want to creep back over to your table and check your boy while he’s still breathing.”

Meanwhile, there were people in plain view. For instance, there was a man standing next to the entrance looking at the Puerto Rican and Reggie. And over to the left, there was a lady in a black

leather pants suit scrolling away on her cell phone looking up ever-so-often keeping a watchful eye not on Reggie's exploits but watching Hector Lassiter.

The two women entertaining Tony Rucker picked up on it. The brunette opened her mouth to say something when Reggie blurted out.

"Sombitch...That's it! I'm sick and tired of you looking over here!"

Reggie sprang to his feet again, throwing his chair aside, sending cards and drinks and food spilling to the floor!

"You tired of what?" Hector Lassiter replied calmly.

"That sombitch at the bar been calling me out for most of the damn night!"

"Trust me, Reggie. You don't want this fight."

"Get real, Reggie." Fred said smiling. "Calm down and stop pushing things."

Hector Lassiter turned and looked at the Puerto Rican then back at Reggie. "C'mon, Reggie...Fred's right. You don't even know this guy. You're all worked up and for what?"

Before anyone at the table could spit, Reggie stepped away from the table!

"I've had all I can stand!" Reggie said turning toward the bar.

Hector reached out to grab his arm to sit him back down, but it was too late. Reggie was already on his way to face the Puerto Rican.

The worse move he would make.

Carrillo El Duque Sanchez was already on top of him!

Reggie lunged at him and for his effort, he felt the cold steel point of Carrillo's pearl handled ice pick under his chin!

Surprised, Reggie instinctively grabbed for the ice pick, only to have the sharp point pierce his skin just enough to get his attention!

"Stay back, you mutherfucka's! Allofya...!" Carrillo said looking around his eyes bulging.

"Somebody help him...! A female voice cried out. "He's El Duque, now and that loudmouth is a dead man breathing."

"Y'all his boyzz! I know this." El Duque hissed. "Y'all down with 'em! El Duque...he, know this! You mind your own, you might live long enough to git through this!"

"Take it easy." Hector Lassiter said inching towards Reggie. "Please let him go. He doesn't mean none of what he's saying. He's just a stupid ass, drunk ass fool that should know better."



Wide-eyed, El Duque pushed the ice pick deeper into Reggie's chin, this time...breaking the skin. Blood was starting to trickle down the front of his neck.

The next move would be deadly if Reggie was even going to make a move.

"Somebody...help that poor fool before El Duque kills him." Another female voice yelled from somewhere in the bar.

"Put the ice pick away...please." Hector Lassiter said easing his way closer to El Duque. "I'll be more than happy to apologize for Reggie, get him out of here...take him home."

"I didn't come heah for no trouble." El Duque said scanning the room. "I wasn't gonna wait for him to make a move on me. You dig?"

With sweat running down both sides of his face, El Duque released his grip on Reggie. He pulled the ice pick from his neck, wiped the blood-stained tip on Reggie's shirt then put it away.

"I gon' leave this shit hole, now." El Duque whispered. "Any of you try to stop El Duque, he gon' pull the pearls and everybody gon' be dead up in heah."

Himself now, Carrillo turned and slowly backed his way out of the bar and into the dark Hampton, Virginia night.

Moments later, Hector Lassiter took a towel from the bar. He used it to apply pressure to the puncture wound on Reggie's neck.

"Looks like..." Hector said then grinned. "You'll make it, Reggie."

Embarrassed, Reggie looked around the bar. Shock was rapidly turning into anger.

"I'mon get that Puerto Rican if it's the last thing I do!"

"Dumb fool!" Fred barked. "You're lucky to be alive. He could have poked you ten times and killed your ass graveyard dead while we watched in stunned shock."

"That's right." Tony Rucker smirked. "He could have shorted stabbed yo ass and bolted out of here before any of us could do anything to stop the bleeding."

