

## What Happens In Vegas - Free Novel by C. Qualls

### Chapter 17

Home. We're finally home. I decide not to go back to work after our plane lands, I'm not dressed for it anyway. This trip was far too long. If it were not for Julia, I have no idea how I would've gotten through it. She wants to stop at Taco Bell, then visit her father. So of course we do.

"Daddy, I brought you food." She places the bag on a table. Thomas is in his chair so he rides up to the table. "Oh crap. I forgot drinks. Fredrick, would you mind getting some sodas please?" I raise my eyebrow at her. She smiles. "Please, my handsome husband."

I kiss her forehead. I lift my chin to Thomas. "What are you drinking?"

He's pulling wrapped up items from the paper bag. "I'll take a coke. Thanks."

I walk out of his room and up the corridor. I find a vending machine and get a few sodas. This girl. Another item to add to my list of things I do just for her.

As I walk in, Julia is telling Thomas about the shows we went to while we were in Vegas. I set the sodas on the table and sit down. Julia opens her can so I steal her taco. "Hey, get your own." I kiss her and slip the taco away from her, stealing another bite. She rolls her eyes. Thomas is enjoying his burrito, which looks sloppy and messy. "Daddy, guess what."

Thomas sips his soda. "Did you meet Elvis?"

Julia laughs. "Yeah. Like ten of them, but no. Fredrick and I are going to have a baby."

Thomas smiles from ear to ear. "Kiddo, you're making me a grandpa? I'm a little young for that, don't you think?" Julia laughs as he one arm hugs her and kisses her cheek. "Congratulations. The both of you." He reaches over and shakes my hand.

We end up visiting with Thomas for a few hours. My hunger wins over and I eat a messy burrito. It's actually really good. Julia laughs. "Food snob. I told you it's good."

I squeeze her thigh under the table. "I'm going to be eating a bunch of this slop, since it's all you want to eat. I might as well get used to it." She laughs and steals a bite of my burrito.

Thomas's doctor comes into the room. "Mr. Lewis. How are you doing today?"

Thomas nods. "I'm pretty good, doc."

He greets me and Julia. Dr. Torres does his checks then writes something on his clipboard. "I think I'm going to decrease your antidepressant. You've been doing really well lately, I want to see how you do with less. You've been getting around with that chair of yours. I like it. I also think this facility has been better for you." Thomas agrees with the doctor's assessment.

We're driving home when Julia asks; "would it be a possibility to have dad live with us? Once he's more stable of course."

I squeeze her hand. "If that's what you would like."

She kisses my hand. "Thank you. For everything you've done for him. He's already so much better."

I rub her thigh. "He's a good guy, I like him. I'm glad he's doing better."

Julia showers when we get home, while I get some work done in my study. With the time difference, she's able to stay awake later. Her long, wet hair is draped over her shoulder and she's wearing her short, silky, peach colored robe. Her legs are glistening from the lotion she rubs on her skin. "Hello, my beautiful wife."

She sits on the sofa and curls her legs under her. Her robe is short enough that I can see her white lacy panties. That's all she's wearing. "Hi. Are you going to be long?"

I drop the file I was looking through. "Miss me already?" She nods. I come out from behind the desk and sit next to her. My head falls back on the sofa and my hands rub my face. I look at her. "There's always something that needs my attention."

She raises her chin toward the desk. "What are you working on now?"

I place my hand on her silky leg. "It's the budget for this year's gala. Our company has one every year. I have a committee for it, I just have to give my approval."

Her eyes brighten. "That sounds fun. I've never been to a gala. Will I get to go?"

Her leg is soft and smooth as I run my hand up it. "Of course you're coming."

She laces her fingers through mine. "As your wife, or as your assistant?"

I hadn't thought of that. I'm not hiding her, not really. I just haven't made it a priority to reveal who I married. "As my wife. You're going to be the belle of the ball."

She giggles. "When is it?"

I kiss her hand. "The end of next month. It's a grand spectacle. I never really cared about it before, but it's a tradition my grandfather started when he created the company."

I pull her onto my lap. I kiss her chest where her robe is open. "Mmm. Fredrick, not tonight. I'm exhausted and I'm feeling a little nauseated."

I rub her back and stop kissing her. "Okay. How have you been feeling lately? Do you need anything?"

She shakes her head. "I'm fine. The nausea comes and goes throughout the day. And I'm more tired than normal."

I nod. "That's normal, according to everything I've read." I stand her up. "Come on, let's go to bed. We have to work in the morning and your boss is a pain in the ass." I lead her out of the study and into the bedroom.

She laughs. "No he's not. He's wonderful. He just likes to keep my ass busy."

I rub my hand down her ass and give her a squeeze. "It's a very nice ass." She rolls her eyes but crawls topless into bed. She's facing me as I lay next to her. I lace our fingers and kiss her forehead. "Sweet dreams, my beautiful wife." S

he kisses my hand. "Good night, my handsome husband." Her eyes close and her breathing evens out.

## Julia's POV

I wake up to my second alarm. I almost want to just throw the damned thing across the room. Oh, I hate mornings. Nausea hits me before I have a chance to eat the Graham crackers Fredrick left for me. I rush to the washroom and retch. Oh, this sucks! How much longer do I have to be sick all the time? I brush my mouth out and dress in my usual pencil skirt. I pick a royal blue one today with a light gray pinstriped blouse. I throw on my gray strappy shoes, then kick them off. I hate shoes. Too bad I can't be barefooted in the office. I grab my travel toothbrush and toothpaste and throw them in my bag. I just know it's going to be one of those days. I can feel it stirring in my stomach. I grab my shoes by their straps and head out.

Fredrick is at the table when I make my way downstairs. He's always so perfect in the mornings, ugh. Morning people suck, but he's so handsome I'll forgive him his one flaw. Gerry places plates of eggs, bacon, and fruit on the table with a glass of orange juice for me and coffee for Fredrick. He's smiling as I sit down. He takes a drink of his coffee. I don't understand the world's obsession with coffee. It's disgusting no matter what you put in it to try to mask the flavor of burnt. The smell hits me in the face as if I walked into a brick wall. I rush to the washroom and retch, again. How is that possible? There is literally nothing in my stomach.

Stupid Fredrick and his stupid coffee. "Julia? Are you alright? Can I get you anything?" Fredrick rubs the knots out of my shoulders. Okay maybe he's not stupid, but his coffee still is.

"No. I'm fine. The smell of your coffee just turned my stomach."

I wash out my mouth and return to the table. His coffee is gone and has been replaced with juice. Oh, he's so sweet. I think I'm going to cry. "Julia, honey. What's wrong?"

My lip quivers and tears begin to fall. "You're so sweet to me. Why do you have to be so perfect? It's all your fault." I wah wah like a baby. Fredrick chuckles and pulls me on to his lap. I curl up and cry into his chest. He takes a handkerchief out of his pocket and dabs at my face. Seriously? A freaking handkerchief? Who does that now days? I laugh that my husband is an old man. I laugh so hard. Fredrick has a confused look on his face. "You have a handkerchief, what are you 50?"

He raises his eyebrow. "I'll have you know, young lady, they are quite convenient and useful. I always have one." I had no idea.

I finally realize that I am on Fredrick's lap. If it weren't for my pencil skirt I would straddle him right now. Note to self, get rid of the damned pencil skirts. My stomach growls so I take my seat and eat my breakfast. Fredrick finishes quickly and kisses me before he leaves. I finish my breakfast, then go into the kitchen with my grapes in hand. Gerry is loading breakfast on to more plates for the staff. "Hey, Gerry. So, I'm pregnant."

She looks up at me without a hint of surprise. "I thought so, you said you've been feeling sick lately. How did Sir take the news?" She places the frying pan in the sink and dishes up the bacon.

"Like a saint. I swear that man is perfect. He's even installed apps on his phone and took the time to read them. Oh my gosh, Gerry. Vegas was awesome! Even with all of his meetings, we still went to three shows and went sightseeing. He's so good to me."

She sets the plates in front of the island stools. "You're good to him too you know. He's happy now. He was never happy before you came along. He certainly never smiled. Honestly I think he was miserable before you." She looks at the clock. "You better get going, Jules. You'll be late for work."

I look at the clock. "Crap! Bye Gerry."

I rush out the door and run strait into Corey. "Miss Jules." He greets me as he stands me up.

"Hi Corey. Sorry. I lost track of the time."

He opens my door for me. "No worries, Miss Jules. Shannon asked me to tell you hi. She had other choice words, but I'm sure you can work that out."

I give her a call. It goes to her voicemail so I leave a message. "Corey, do you have a good relationship with Shannon?"

Corey nods. "Yes miss. I like Shannon very much."

I strap my shoes on and tell him. "Shannon is very important to me. I love her like a sister. You're a good man, and I know you'll treat her right. But if you hurt her, I swear I'll have to kick your ass."

He laughs, but concedes. “Yes, Miss Jules. Understood.”

My coworkers are standing around facing Fredrick’s office as I walk in. I look around in search of Mrs. Harvey. She’s at the front of the crowd. I squeeze my way through the throng and land next to her. “Oh, Miss Lewis. I’m glad you’re here. Mr. Draven is not in the best of sorts. He was yelling at the top of his lungs. I’m pretty sure some glass got broken.”

I set my bag on my desk. “I’ll handle Mr. Draven, you handle crowd control. Get everyone back to work.”

I go into the break room and get the coffee pot going. The smell wafts me, making me nauseous. I brew some mint tea and pour our cups. I take a sip of my tea. It helps settle my stomach. I place my mug on my desk and knock on his door. “Enter.” Fredrick has his head in his hands turned away from the door. I notice shards of glass on the floor in front of his desk. I step over them and place the mug down in front of him. I pick up his phone and call for a janitor.

“Is it the lack of caffeine, or did something happen?” I walk behind him and begin to massage his shoulders.

He takes my hand and pulls me onto his lap. He takes a deep breath and holds on to me with his head buried in my chest. “A little of both, I think.”

I kiss his head. “You want to tell me what happened?”

He looks up at me with his ocean blue eyes. He takes a deep breath. “It’s really not that big of a deal. It just took me by surprise. Darius is having trouble finding the other guy, the one that actually killed my father. Then Mitchell informed me that the papers are reporting an affair between me and my secretary. I have a press conference soon to clear it up. Normally I would not care about rumors, but it’s affecting our stocks.” He picks up a newspaper from his desk and hands it to me.

A knock raps at the door. I take a seat on the sofa as Fredrick replies, “enter.” The janitor makes quick work cleaning up the mess. Fredrick pays him no mind and continues our conversation. “I’ll need you and Mrs. Harvey to accompany me.”

I skim the paper. “Shannon writes for this paper. She’s a freelance journalist right now, though.”

Fredrick drinks his coffee, then replies. "I'll have to give her a pass. Will you please invite her over. I want at least one paper to get it right. She may be beneficial to me and she'll have the inside information."

I read the article. It's a vague story that is twisted to make Fredrick look bad. "When is the press conference?"

He takes another drink of his coffee. "It's at 10 am. She can add Corey for a reference."

I set the paper down on the coffee table. "You know about them?"

He chuckles. "I'm pretty sure I knew about them before you did."

The janitor leaves and Fredrick comes out from behind his desk. He sits on the coffee table, sandwiching my legs between his. He speaks gently. "I plan to introduce you to the world as my wife. But only if you're okay with it." His hands rub my thighs.

"You're my husband. Why wouldn't I be okay with it?"

His hand goes to the back of his neck. Uh-oh. "Because the media will likely paint a despicable image of you."

Despicable image, I can only imagine. Words such as mistress, social climber, bedding the boss enter my mind. I take a deep breath, then nod. "I can handle it. You and I know the truth. They can label me all they want. It won't change anything."

Fredrick runs his thumb over my bottom lip. "Are you sure?"

I pause for only a second. I kiss his thumb then nod. "Yes."

Fredrick rests his forehead on mine with his eyes closed. His hand moves up to caress my cheek. "You truly are an amazing woman, Mrs. Julia Draven." I lean into his hand and smile.