

What Happens In Vegas - Free Novel by C. Qualls

Chapter 23

I'm numb. I have no words, no feeling. Fredrick doesn't say anything until we get back to his office. He makes a call. "Who is on her? Get up here now." He's pacing behind his desk. I still can't move, can't breathe. A knock sounds at the office door. "Enter," he yells.

Kyle walks through the door. "Sir, what happened?"

Fredrick stops pacing. His hand goes to the back of his neck. "I need her doctor's information. She's claiming it's mine."

Kyle's eyes grow large. "Sir, I gave it to you. It's in the file."

Fredrick pulls a file out of a drawer. He rips through the papers until he finds what he's looking for. "Excused." Kyle nods to me then leaves.

Fredrick is going over everything in the file with a fine toothed comb. Finally, he sits back in his chair with his eyes closed. "It's not mine. There is no way. Julia, I swear it's not mine." I didn't realize he was talking to me until he said my name. I'm not comforted by his words. This is something that majorly affects us. Fredrick comes to sit in front of me on the coffee table. "Julia, if she's telling the truth about the 13 weeks, then there is no way it's mine. Remember the doctors added two weeks on you. That means she would've taken advantage of me 11 weeks ago. She drugged me the weekend before Vegas. 13 weeks ago. She's two weeks off. She must think I don't know how the doctors count the weeks."

I say nothing. I leave the office in search of Corey. He's chatting with Jesse and a new guy when I walk into the security room. Corey greets me. "Miss Jules."

I ignore the other two guys and only talk to Corey. "Can you take me somewhere, please? I don't want to be here anymore."

Corey stands up and pulls his keys out of his pocket. "Where to, miss?"

I don't want to go home, so I decide I want to see my dad. I need my daddy right now. "I want to see my dad, please."

He nods. "Sure thing, miss."

My dad is sitting in the group room working on a jigsaw puzzle. He's smiling until he sees that I can't return his smile. "Jules. What happened?" He's sitting in his chair, so he rides up to me.

"Hi daddy." I throw my arms around him.

His good arm comforts my back and I sob. "Okay, okay. Come on sweet girl. Tell me what happened."

I pull back and wipe my face. "Daddy, I lost the baby."

Dad's body physically sinks lower in his chair. "Oh, my sweet girl. I'm so sorry." He tilts my chin up. "Just because the baby isn't on this earth, doesn't mean you're not a mommy any more. That little one will always be a part of your life. You understand me?"

I nod. "Yes, daddy. I just feel so empty and confused. Like I'm not allowed to be happy. But when I do feel happy, I feel bad because I shouldn't be happy. Daddy, I don't know what to do."

He leads me down the hall to the cafeteria. He orders a soda and a southern style banana pudding. He gets two plastic spoons and leads me to a table. "You're allowed to be happy. You're allowed to be sad. You're allowed to be angry. You're allowed to grieve. Being happy doesn't mean you don't love your baby. And being sad doesn't mean you love your baby more. You have a life to live. You have to live it."

I swallow down bite after bite, but say nothing. "How is that husband of yours? Is he being good to you?" Ouch. I can't tell him about today. I play with my new ring and tell my dad how Fredrick got it for me to honor our baby.

I spend a few hours with my dad. He is exactly who I needed. Eventually I'm ready to go. I think about calling a cab when I see Ivan waiting for me in the Porsche. "Miss Jules." He greets me as he opens my door.

"How long have you been here?"

He helps me sit. "About an hour. But it's no problem. I mean look at this thing." He says as he strokes the car.

I giggle. "She is pretty. I haven't been in her yet." He nods as if to say uh-huh. He closes my door and drives off.

During the drive home, Ivan keeps looking in the mirror. "Miss, is your seat belt on?" I always wear my seat belt, but I don't know why he would ask such a question. "Hang on, Miss!" Ivan slams on the gas and swerves all over the road. He makes a quick turn followed by another. I'm gripping the Oh shit handle as tight as I can to keep from flying across the back seat. He's still checking behind him in the mirror. "Shit! Miss, if you can, call the boss." He swerves again.

I can't reach my phone, it's in my butt pocket." Headlights are shining through the back window. Ivan swerves to the left. A black Hummer nudges us on my side of the car, making us turn in front of the mammoth vehicle. Ivan hits the gas to keep us from getting run over. The Hummer crushes the very tail end of the Porsche. Ivan gains control and speeds off in the opposite direction we were just facing. The hummer doesn't turn in time and Ivan loses him.

I'm trying to catch my breath. "Are you alright, Miss?"

I nod, "Yeah, Ivan. You're an amazing driver. I don't think I could've gotten out of that."

He chuckles. "I was going to drive for NASCAR, but Sir pays better."

I chuckle too, then lay my head back against the seat still trying to calm down. "Ivan, do you know who it was?"

He shakes his head, "Sorry miss, I was more worried about getting out of there than looking at the driver. Besides, the windows were tinted." I did catch that part.

Fredrick rushes out to meet me and pulls me into his body. He squeezes me as tight as possible until he's almost crushing me. I squeeze him back just as hard. I've never been so happy to see him. I kiss his neck and breath him in. His scent calms my nerves. I didn't realize I was shaking. Fredrick kisses my forehead then pulls back to look me up and down. He pulls me back in. "I'm so relieved you're okay, my love." I nod. I can't speak yet. His hand grips my pony tail as he crushes his lips to mine. Eventually he drags me into the house. "Ivan wait here please." Fredrick drags me upstairs and runs a bath for me.

Fredrick's POV

I get Julia situated and meet up with my guard. "Did you see who it was?"

Ivan shakes his head. "No, sir. It was a black Hummer with tinted windows. I just wanted to get Miss Jules out of there."

I nod my head. "Good job protecting her. Follow me." I lead him to my study and pull up the footage of my fathers' accident. I turn my monitor toward him. "Is this the Hummer?"

Ivan watches the screen then nods. "Yeah, boss. It's the same one. I'm positive."

I call Peter. He sounds frustrated when he says "Boss, I lost him about an hour ago."

My head falls back against my chair as I close my eyes in frustration. "Does he own a Hummer?"

I can hear Peter slam his car door. "Not sure, sir. He drives a red Mustang normally. I'll find out, Sir."

I rub my temple. "Find him. Next time you lose him, tell me immediately." Why is it so hard for my guards to keep track of the slippery little bastard? My guards are the best there is. "Ivan, take care of the Porsche for me. You may go."

I receive a call from a number I don't recognize. I'm cautious, so I turn on the voice recorder before I answer. "Draven."

It's quiet for a minute. I'm about to hang up when I hear a whisper. "Mr. Draven. I have the information about Ms. Cavanagh that you were looking for." It's a timid woman with a shaky voice.

"And you are?"

She clears her throat. "No one important. Just a nurse." I lean back in my chair.

"Well, Ms. Nurse. Please continue."

She whisper into the phone. “Ms. Cavanagh has been in the office. She had a man with her. They were fighting about who the father of her baby is. I overheard her admit the baby belongs to the man, not you. She mentioned your father’s will and plans on getting money because of it. She’s a terrible person.”

This information proves my theory correct. “I appreciate you contacting me, but why are you helping me?”

The nurse clears her throat. “I was in the operating room when your wife lost her baby. I saw how the two of you were so heartbroken. Ms. Cavanagh and the man were talking about your wife losing the baby.” The nurse chokes up. “They did it. They are the ones that killed the baby. I lost a baby years ago. I couldn’t in good conscience let those people get away with it.”

A dial tone sounds in my ear. Shelby and her guy killed my baby, now they’re trying to get me to think her baby is mine. He killed my father, my baby, and tried for me and Julia both. The two of them. She wants Julia out of the picture, but I would bet my entire fortune he wants me out of the picture. Who is he though? I look at the footage again. This Hummer is the answer. If I find it, I find him. I call Darius. “Did you find the pills?”

He let’s out a sigh. “No, sir.”

I figured as much, he would’ve told me if he had. “Darius. I need the driver that killed my father. It’s the same guy...”

Darius cuts me off. “Sir. I think I know who it is, but I can’t prove it yet. I’m close... Sir, I think he’s one of us.” I let out a breath. Jesse. I quickly fill Darius in on what just transpired.

“Fredrick.” Julia whispers as she enters my study.

“Find him.” I hang up and look at my lovely wife. “Hey, beautiful.” She half smiles and walks over to me. I pull her on my lap. She’s in camo pajama pants and a matching tank top. I’ve never seen these clothes before. She looks hot. “What is this?” I ask as I play with the drawstring.

“I just wanted to be comfortable. I must look terrible.”

I run my hand up her back. There is no bra under her top. I’m immediately switched on. I shift under her. “You could never look terrible.”

Her eyes bug. “Fredrick, I can’t...”

I smile. “I know, my love. But I can’t help it. You’re so beautiful.” She climbs off of me and curls up on the sofa with a pillow in her lap. I adjust myself then ask, “What happened to you today?”

She looks up at me. “What do you mean?”

I walk over to the sofa and sit next to her. “When you left. Where did you go?”

She lays her head sideways on the pillow so she can look at me. “I went to see my dad. Didn’t you know?”

I run my hand over her ponytail. It’s still damp from her soak. “No. I had no idea. I figured you needed space after this afternoon.”

She gives me a soft smile. “I found Corey in the security room. I asked him to take me. Ivan picked me up. I figured Corey told you.”

I shake my head. “I didn’t ask. Corey must’ve sent Ivan after you. I didn’t know anything until Ivan called when he was bringing you back.”

She nods. “He’s such a good guy, Corey. He didn’t mind that I interrupted him and Jesse and the new guy. What’s his name? I haven’t met him yet.”

I keep calm as I process what she just told me. “His name is Ben. I’ll introduce you to him tomorrow.” I check my watch. It’s getting late. “Come on my sexy wife. Let’s go eat some dinner.”

I pull her along with me to the dining room. Jesse knew where she would be. Did Corey send Ivan on purpose? If he did I’m either going to beat his ass or give him a raise. I’m not sure which yet. If he did it to draw Jesse out, that would mean he used Julia as bait. But, if he did it just to be cautious, it was good thinking... It’s Corey. There’s no one I trust more, except Julia. I’ll have to ask him about it later. “Hey, my handsome husband. Are you not eating?”

I look down at my plate. I raise my eyebrow at Julia. “What is it?” It looks like vomit and rice.

She giggles. “It’s coconut chicken curry. Don’t worry, I told Gerry not to make it hot. She knows I can’t handle spicy food anyway. It can get really hot.”

I watch her as she rips a piece of fluffy flat bread and scoop it up before popping it into her mouth. "You really expect me to eat this?"

She shrugs her shoulder. "You don't have to, food snob. But it's your loss, trust me." She takes another bite and hums.

What is this woman doing to me? I follow her example and dip the bread into the sauce. My tongue bursts with flavors that I am not familiar with, but find intriguing. "Do I have to use my hands?"

She giggles again. "No. There's a fork right there." I take a scoop of the vomit dish with some rice. It's full of flavors, but I think I like it better with the bread. I drop the fork and use the bread to pick up more. Mrs. Graham soon brings out small square dishes with a fried ball sitting in a sticky looking sauce. "Wow, Gerry! You're amazing, these look beautiful. I didn't know you prepared dessert too."

Mrs. Graham smiles at Julia. "Come on now, I know how you are." She winks at her, then goes back into the kitchen.

"What is it?" I ask Julia as she's already scooping a bite into her mouth.

She stares daggers at me. I chuckle as she chokes down her bite. "It's Gulab Jamun. Just try it. You'll like it. But heads up, it's really sweet." I take a small taste. It is really sweet, but not in a bad way. It has a subtle rose flavor that balances out the sweetness. I do like it.

We finish eating then sit down to a classic film. I can tell Julia isn't really watching, but I still hold on to her. Every now and then she let's out a soft sigh. When she starts yawning, I tuck her in to bed and lay down behind her. Her breathing quickly evens out and I soon join her. Julia's arm is across my face when I wake up. Her legs are caging mine. I wait for her to move again before climbing out of bed and heading to my gym. Li walks in with his duffel bag and water. He shows me a few more techniques, then works with me on how to use them properly. Li is so fast, sometimes it's almost a joke that I spar with him, but he doesn't seem to mind. Li lands a perfect kick to my face, one I would've normally dodged. "Boss, why you getting slower? Married man doesn't practice now."

Damn, he's right. I am slower. It's because I've been spending more time worrying about Julia and catching the guy helping Shelby. "Yeah, married man." I wipe my nose and continue.

Li is a funny little Chinese man. Little by American standards. He's about 5'8". It's hilarious watching him step down from the gigantic GMC Denali Sierra he drives. He used to have an old military green Hummer. We finish up and bow our respect. His hummer makes me think of something. "Li what happened to that ugly Hummer of yours?"

He swallows his water. "Jesse helped me sell it to one of his buddies. He said he fixed it up, made it nice."

My heart goes into my throat. "How did he make it nice?"

He's packing up his bag as he replies. "Said he smoothed out the dents and painted it black. It was already nice on the inside. I took good care of it."

Li walks to the door, "Later boss."

I stop him just before he leaves. "Do you happen to know the friends name?"

Li throws on his sunglasses. "I can ask."

I shake my head. The last thing I need is Jesse knowing we're on to him. "It's alright. Not important." Li shrugs his shoulder and nods as he leaves my gym.