

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

### Chapter 24

I shower and get ready for the day. Julia is laying sideways across the bed. Her first alarm has already gone off. Alarm number two should be going off any second. I adjust my tie as the blaring noise pierces the silence. Julia grumbles as she turns off the alarm and sits up. She's still in her camo pants and tank top. I whistle as she stands to stretch. Her face reddens as she rolls her eyes. "Fredrick, you're ridiculous. I look terrible."

I walk up to her and pull her flat against me. "You have never looked terrible. You are the most beautiful woman." I run my hands up and down her back.

Her long brown hair has natural waves and the ends tickle my hands. She straightens my tie then kisses my chin. "I have the best, kindest husband."

I grip her ass and kiss her mouth. "I'm not a nice guy. You're just hot." She giggles then sashays to the washroom.

I'm surprised when Julia comes down the stairs in her pencil skirt and sexy office shoes. Her hair is pulled back from her face by a thick cloth headband. "Are you ready to return to work?"

She nods as she sits down. "I'm bored. I feel better when I have something to do. It will keep my mind occupied."

I sip my coffee as she tears into her breakfast. "If you need a break at all, take it. The room in my office always available for you." She slightly nods. I'm overjoyed that she'll be with me at work again. I've missed her.

Julia goes over my schedule. Mrs. Harvey goes over important files and paperwork. I then call Ben up. I introduce him to Julia. I excuse Julia with a kiss, then have him go over what Jesse did yesterday. His information is nothing enlightening. However, he does mention overhearing a conversation with a woman making plans for tonight around 2 am. Maybe that's when he meets up with Shelby? That could possibly be why Peter, Kyle, and Miguel have never caught them together. "Inform Corey of the midnight rendezvous. Continue to stick with him."

Ben nods, "Yes, sir." He leaves my office.

A light knock sounds. I already know it's Julia. I know her knock. "Enter." I smile as she places a coffee on my desk. "Hi beautiful."

She smiles, but I can see something is bothering her. I rush around my desk to hold her. "What is it? What's bothering you?"

She looks at me with pleading eyes. "It's Ms. Cavanagh. I had no idea that you were together with her so recently. I assumed that it was a long time ago. It took me by surprise. It made me feel like I'm not as special."

I run my hand over her cheek. "I'm so sorry you were blindsided by her. You know she drugged me, I was never willingly with her. I let it slide because we already had a deal in place. You can not compare yourself to her. You are my everything. She is absolutely nothing to me. I'm not even attracted to her, I never have been." I trace her bottom lip as she nods, but I can see there's more. "Julia. Please talk to me. Tell me everything that's bothering you."

Her head bows as she takes her time to work up the courage. She has fresh tears in her eyes. I'm pretty sure I know what's coming. "You can't be sure it's not yours, the baby. What if it is?" I take Julia's hand and lead her around my desk. I grab my phone to play the recording. Julia gasps and covers her mouth as more information is revealed. I pull her on my lap as she sobs into my shoulder. "She did it. Fredrick, she killed our baby."

I run my fingers through her hair. "Yes she did. I plan on returning the favor."

Julia jumps up off of my lap. "NO!" Her hand goes to her empty abdomen. "Don't you dare. Promise me, Fredrick. They may be absolutely terrible people, but you are not."

I step closer to her. "Julia."

She steps back. "No Fredrick. You cannot take away an innocent life. I don't care who the parents are, the baby has done nothing and is off limits."

My hand goes to my neck. Why is she always so kind. "How can you protect her after what she's done?" I raise my voice, then quickly realize who I'm speaking to. "I'm sorry Julia, I don't mean to yell at you. I apologize. But answer me. What should I do? How should she be punished? She didn't care about your life and certainly not our baby's life."

She shakes her head. "I'm not protecting her, I'm protecting you. If you want to punish her, let her think she has you trapped. Then throw the bitch in jail for the rest of her pathetic life. I'm sure she's not one that will handle prison very well. When the baby is ripped away from her, because it will be when she goes to jail, she might understand how we felt when our baby was ripped from us. She'll never get to see her child grow up. She'll have to think about you and her child every single day, but neither of you will think about her. That is how you can punish her."

I swallow hard. She's right, that would be a much better punishment. "I promise." Julia nods then heads into the room. After a short while she returns to work looking more refreshed and calm.

I call Corey to get a better understanding of yesterday's events. "Corey, what happened yesterday?" I look out over the bustling city 30 floors below me.

"Sir, Miss Jules asked to go visit her father. Jesse was in the room. I thought it best to have Ivan pick her up in a fast car. I was worried that if he's our guy, he would take the opportunity."

It's just as I thought; Corey was looking out for her. "Good work. Peter lost him at that time. All signs are pointing to Jesse. That Hummer was Li's. He sold it to Jesse's friend. Darius is looking in to it."

Corey almost growls into the phone. "That little bastard. I'll find the proof." Corey hangs up the phone. I take a deep breath.

Now that I know what to do about Shelby, I need to know about her mystery man... Jesse. I need to be patient. What will his reaction be if I claim Shelby's baby? Julia said I should make Shelby think I believe her. I exit my office and slowly lean against the wall behind Julia's desk. My Angel. She's so strong. She's making notes on her paper pad and checking my calendar. "Mrs. Draven."

She jumps in her chair. "Damn it Fredrick! You scared the crap out of me."

My lips twitch up. "Sorry, baby. I need arrangements made to meet with Ms. Cavanagh tonight for dinner. If you're not comfortable, you can hand it off to someone else, but I want her to think you're upset. It's up to you."

She twists her new ring around her finger, "I can do it."

I run my fingers through her beautiful wavy hair. "You're sure?"

She nods. "It's the least I can do."

I kiss her velvety lips. "I love you, my wife."

She smiles. "And I love you, my husband."

I return to my office. Darius tosses a file on my desk. "I got him, Sir. I found the Hummer."

I open the file to pictures and documents. "Jesse?"

Darius stands up straight. "You knew?"

I cock my brow. "I had my suspicions. Go over it with me."

Darius picks up the file. "Right. The Hummer belongs to a friend of his named Jeramiah. Jeramiah made repairs following the death of your father. Right now it's in a storage locker in Jesse's name. I have paint scrapings from your father's car with black paint. Also from the Porsche that came off the Hummer. I still have prints from your break line and your father's. They match."

I look at the pictures of the scratches in the black paint of the Hummer. I stash the file away. "Great. Now see if you can match the prints to Jesse, then get with Ben and Peter. They've been tailing him. I want to know his relationship with Shelby Cavanagh. Kyle and Miguel have been tailing her."

Darius nods. "Yes, Sir."

It's finally the end of the day. I kiss my wife and watch her as she leaves the office with her guards even though it kills me. I take the Lexus to the restaurant that I have not been to in months. The staff seems surprised to see me, but remember their duties. Shelby is already waiting at my table. She's checking her makeup in a mirror. I unbutton my jacket and sit down as a scotch is placed in front of me. "Darling. I was surprised that your assistant contacted me. I thought you said the baby isn't yours."

I sip my scotch, noticing the way she mentioned my assistant with a sneer. The smooth drink takes the edge off the hostility I have toward the bitch sitting in front of me. I loathe her. "You said you're 13 weeks. It adds up to the last time you drugged me and took advantage of me"

Shelby smirks. "You weren't exactly forthcoming. I had to do something."

I humph into my glass. "How many other lovers are you playing? I'm not an idiot. I know you've been sleeping around. As you say, I was not forthcoming."

She rolls her eyes with a scoff. "I was faithful. You're the one that went behind my back."

I raise my eyebrow. "Shelby. Let's get one thing clear. There is no way in hell I'm trusting your word for it." The waiter reaches our table. "The usual."

I nod to Shelby. "Vegetable Penne."

I internally roll my eyes at the absurdity. The dish is big enough to feed her for a week, the way she eats. "So what do you want from me?" I ask as I take another drink of my scotch.

"Darling. I don't want anything from you, but the baby will need it's daddy. I have an appointment in a month. We'll be able to find out what we're having."

I down the rest of my scotch and tip the glass toward the waiter. "If it's mine. What about my wife? How do you think she will react to this?"

She scoffs. "I am the one you were supposed to marry. Besides, she already knows. There's nothing she can do about it. She'll just have to get over it or move along. I prefer the second option, but that's obviously not up to me."

I glare at her. "Yes, thank you for your subtle way of breaking the news. You've made things quite awkward between us." A little lie to add to her ego, which seems to boost it quite a bit. She puffs up her inflated chest.

I almost forgot how much I enjoy the Wellington. I remember the last time I had it was after Julia graduated. She rolled her eyes at me and said; "do you ever try anything new?" I've tried so many new things since she entered my life. I almost smile, but I remember who I'm eating with and my smile quickly turns back into a scowl. I hate the woman in front of me. She picks at her plate after taking a picture and posting it online. She eats a whopping six bites, as opposed to her usual three. She is pregnant after all. She hasn't changed. How did I ever agree to marry her? What a nightmare I would've been stuck in. For a year, because that is more than I would be able to tolerate. I wonder how Jesse can stand her. If it is Jesse. It's still not one hundred percent

confirmed. "Send me the information about your appointment. I may attend if I have the time."

I lay down my napkin and stand. Shelby grabs my arm. "Darling. Are you planning to ignore me? I am carrying your baby. You could at least try to care."

I toss a tip on the table. "You said you don't want anything from me."

I turn on my heel and leave. Shelby grabs her designer handbag and rushes after me. "Wait. I didn't mean it like that. I do want something from you. I want you to take care of the baby."

I stop and turn so fast that she runs into me. I don't raise a finger to help steady her, but step back so she's no longer touching me. "I'm sure a check every month will suffice. That is what you're after, isn't it? Money? A lifestyle of luxury? You want your baby to inherit everything I have so you never have to be impoverished. That will not happen. If a paternity test proves it is mine, I will take the baby. Then you will never have to worry about it. Unless it is the money you want. In that case, you might as well take care of it now before you are no longer legally able to. You will not get a penny from me."

Shelby raises her hand to slap me, but I see it coming and catch her wrist tossing her arm aside. "You bastard. I am keeping my baby. I have an excellent lawyer that will stop you from taking it from me. You may be familiar with him, after all he was your father's."

My eyes open in shock. That's how she knows about fathers will. That's how she plans to trap me. Mr. Calloway. That shady son of a bitch must be in on it too. I remember seeing his name in the file Kyle gave me. He would fake any paternity test I take. "I bet his wrinkled ass is amazing in the sack, because his courtroom skills are shit. You can't afford him. I wonder, could he possibly be the father?"

She sneers at me. "I don't need to pay him. He is loyal to your father, unlike you. He knows who your wife should be. And it's not some skanky bitch you married in Vegas. It's me. He knows what it means to make a deal."

I chuckle once. "I bet he does. What could you possibly have to offer him? Huh? And what could he possibly do to me? I'm Fredrick Fucking Draven. If you think I'm afraid of him, you don't know anything." I storm out without looking back.

I guess I messed up the whole play nice thing, but I can still make it work. She would be suspicious if I acted overjoyed. As far as she knows, I never wanted kids anyway. Definitely not hers. She makes me physically ill. I would love to get my hands around her fake tanned throat and squeeze the life out of her. My Julia is a thousand times better than Shelby. It's Julia that keeps me calm. Now that I know Shelby's plan, I no longer have to keep on my toes. What an enlightening dinner. She's so mad, I bet she goes crawling to her little lover. I call Kyle. "Ms. Cavanagh is expecting company tonight. I want pictures and recordings. Get Miguel there too. I want everything covered. Do not screw this up." A single "Sir" is the only reply.

I go home to my wife. She's in the kitchen talking to Mrs. Graham, Gerry. I shake my head. I think of her as Gerry now too. I put my finger to my lips signaling Gerry not to inform Julia of my arrival. There is a plate of what looks like fries in front of her. I reach around her to grab one. I pop it into my mouth and I'm bewildered by the flavor. It's not a fry, but battered and fried apples with caramel sauce. Julia jumps with her hand to her chest. "Damn it, Fredrick! You scared the crap out of me."

I wrap my arms around her from behind and kiss her temple. "It's not my fault you didn't hear me come in." I wink at Gerry. She smiles and turns her head to laugh.

Julia gives her friend the stink eye. "Traitor. Gerry, you could've warned me."

I steal another apple and dip it in extra caramel. "Hey, get your own." She says as she smacks at my hand.

I still manage to get it into my mouth. "I don't eat sweets," I say after swallowing. I lick the powdered sugar off my finger. "These are really good."

She pops one into her mouth. "I know. I made them."

I see a drip of caramel on her bare shoulder. It probably fell from my last apple, so I lick it off. Hmm. I run my nose up her neck, then whisper in her ear. "Delicious." Her face heats scarlet. I kiss her cheek.

I take the stool beside Julia and steal another apple. She bites down on another fried apple. "How was your dinner?"

I steal a drink of her soda. I look to Gerry. She takes the hint and leaves the kitchen. "Enlightening. I have new plans." She cocks an eyebrow at me. "I will

not back out of my promise to you, but I'm not able to be near her. I can't stand her, especially knowing what she did." I rub my hand up Julia's bare thigh. I love it when she's only in a tank top and shorts. Her skin is soft and smooth.

She nods. "I understand. I wanted to throw up after talking to her just to make the arrangements. She's a terrible person."

I nod and steal another apple fry. "I know her plan now. I just have to get all the proof so I can put her away for good. The bitch is going to jail for life."