

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

### Chapter 27

#### Fredrick's POV

My head is still pounding. I take a long shower. I throw on a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, then take some more medicine. I go straight to my study to make a few phone calls, beginning with Calloway. "Mr. Draven. What do I owe the pleasure?"

I sit at my desk and let my head fall back on my chair. "Calloway. I hear you have a new client. One that knows things she shouldn't know."

Silence. After a moment he finally begins to speak. "I have no idea what you're talking about. My clients are confidential."

My head is still pounding. I really shouldn't have had so much to drink. "What's confidential is my father's will, at least it should have been considering probate hasn't been granted yet. Your client was bragging to me that you're her attorney. That's not very confidential, now is it? Besides, you and I both know she's not one to be trusted. Your client will soon be needing you for more than my father's will and a fake paternity test."

He growls into the phone. "I'm not afraid of you, Draven. You're nothing like your father."

I smile to myself. "I'll take that as a compliment. Calloway, you should be afraid. Your client isn't the brightest crayon in the box." I hang up the call. I wonder if he'll contact her or not.

I get Mike on the phone. "Hey, bud. So we have a situation. Mr. Calloway has given information of my father's will to Ms. Cavanagh. It's still in probate right now."

Mike grunts. "That decrepit old bastard. I'll get on that immediately, before it gets granted."

I nod, agreeing quick action is necessary. "That's not the biggest issue. She's pregnant and she's claiming it's mine so she can get father's shares. I have evidence that she is collaborating with Calloway. The baby is not mine, however I'm sure they have plans to prove otherwise."

Mike exhales. "This is fabulous. You're sure it's not yours?"

I clench my jaw. "I'm positive."

I hear keyboard noise from Mike's line. "Alright get me everything you have. I'll get busy working on it." I email the files. "I'll get back to you after I go over everything. Stay away from Ms. Cavanagh in the meantime."

My lips twitch up on one side. "I can't stay away from her right now, she's carrying my baby after all..."

Mike guffaws. "Whatever, dude. Does Julia know?"

I look toward my door. "Yeah, she knows. She also knows it's not mine. She's dealing with a lot right now. Try not to bother her."

The keyboard is clicking in the background. "Alright, man. I'll swing by your office Monday." He hangs up.

I sit back in my chair. One more call and I'll go find Julia. "Kyle. I hear you have issues with Jesse."

Kyle grunts on the other end of the line. "Did you see the footage, sir?"

I smile to myself. "Yes, I saw. I'm putting you on Julia's detail. Have Peter take your place and let Miguel know. Contact Corey to get your assignments. James can fill you in on everything that's been happening."

Kyle relaxes. "Yes, sir."

Julia is in the kitchen chatting with Gerry. Julia grabs a water bottle out of the refrigerator. She takes a sip and places the bottle in front of me. "How is your head?"

I take a few swallows. "It still hurts."

She smiles at me patronizing. "You do get hangovers. Are you ready to eat?"

I take another drink and nod. "I could have a little something, I guess."

She gets some produce and lays it out on the counter. Gerry grabs a cutting board. "Will you sit down and let me do my job." She sets Julia on a stool. I turn my head to laugh.

Julia glares at Gerry. "He's my husband, you know."

Gerry begins chopping an onion. "Yeah, but I get paid for this. You just sit your sassy butt there on that stool."

Julia sticks her tongue out at Gerry. Julia steals the rest of my water. I whisper to her. "Mike Frasier will be stopping by on Monday. Let him in, no matter what I'm doing."

She cocks her eyebrow. "Your lawyer?" I nod. "Okay." After dinner I'm feeling better. Julia and I watch a movie and turn in for the night.

It's Sunday. Julia and I visit her father. He is in his room working on a jigsaw puzzle. Julia sits beside him and starts looking for missing pieces. Tom smiles under his mustache. "Fredrick, you want to join us?" It's a 2500 piece black and white puzzle of 100 zebras.

"How long have you been working on this thing?"

Tom finds a piece and places it correctly. "Three days so far."

I sit next to Julia. The puzzle looks to be about halfway finished. Julia finds a piece and places it. The pieces all look the same to me. I have no idea how they figure out what's what. "I've never done a jigsaw puzzle before."

Tom looks up at me with his mustache grin. "There's a first time for everything. Normally you can go by the colors or similar patterns along with the shape of the piece, but this one is a bit more challenging. You have to go by the shape more." I begin looking for missing pieces.

Julia leaves us to get lunch from the cafeteria. "How are things going between you two?" Tom asks as soon as Julia leaves.

"We're doing well together. I'm very luck to have her. She's the kindest person I've ever known."

Tom places another piece. "You say the same thing every time I talk to you. Tell me something new."

I think back to the few times I've accompanied Julia. He's right, I do say the same things. "I apologize. I wasn't aware that I do that. I love Julia more than anything. I was crushed when we lost the baby. I wasn't trying to get her

pregnant, but I was happy about it. Now I feel like the worst husband in the world because it's gone."

Tom looks up to me and nods. "It wasn't your fault. Jules told me about the ring you gave her and how you're giving her exactly what she needs. You're a good husband to her. You keep it up, keep taking care of her."

Oh, I found a piece. "I plan too, sir. Our marriage was not a traditional one, but I'm thankful every day that it happened."

Julia comes back in with a loaded tray. She hands out the food and sits back down between us. "Daddy, I saw Dr. Torres. He said he's taking you off your antidepressants."

Tom swallows his sandwich with a nod. "Yeah, he says I'm doing better. He thinks it's the new facility, but I think it's you. You're happy now and taken care of. I don't stress as much any more."

Julia sips her lemonade. "Daddy. You don't have to worry about me."

His eyes twinkle as he looks at his daughter. "I know. You got yourself a good husband here." I eat my sandwich with just a little more confidence. I'm starting to feel more and more comfortable with my father-in-law. I never really thought of him in that way before, but Tom is a really good guy. He's nothing like my father. Julia and I spend more time with Tom than head back home.

Julia and I are in the Lexus with the two Escalades in tow. I think back to a conversation we had before. "When would you like to have your father come to stay with us?"

Julia's mouth drops open. "Really?"

I'm a little confused by her reaction. "We did agree to have him live with us, did we not?"

She bites her lip. "Well, I guess we did, but it was a really short conversation. I didn't know you were serious."

I cock my eyebrow. "When am I not serious?"

She smiles brightly "You're the best husband ever." She kisses my cheek.

“I’ll inform Mrs. Bailey to start preparing for his chair. There are plenty of rooms downstairs. I can turn one into an entertainment room just for him. Unless you think he would prefer the guesthouse?”

She shakes her head, “No. Downstairs would be perfect.”

Her smile is brighter than the sun. It gives me warmth and a lightheartedness. I reach over to hold her hand. One of the Escalades comes speeding up on my right. I slam on my breaks. There’s a loud metal scraping and crunching noise as the Escalade is struck on the side. It’s pushed into the front of the Lexus, thrusting us sideways as well. We’re stopped sideways on the road scrunched up against the drivers side of the Escalade. I look over to Julia. She looks back at me with a shaken expression, but otherwise seems fine. Corey reaches Julia’s door. “Are you alright, Miss. Jules?”

She nods. “Yeah, I’m fine. Just a bit startled.” He pulls her out and takes her to the remaining Escalade.

I rush behind him as he straps her in. “Corey, get her home and stay with her.” He jumps back into the SUV with James and Kyle and speeds away.

Ivan, Anthony, and Li are in the other Escalade. No one has moved out of the vehicles. Ivan is laying on the steering wheel with the airbags deployed. I can’t get to his door as the Escalade is pinned to the Lexus. I call an ambulance as I climb up on the hood of the Lexus and check the windows. “Ivan, Anthony, Li?” No one answers. I walk around to the other side. A black hummer is crunched to the passengers side of the Escalade. The driver is not visible from my vantage point. My heart sinks as the only sound is the emergency vehicles making their way toward us.

The rescue workers get busy as soon as they arrive. The Lexus is quickly pulled away from the Escalade. They pry open the doors. Li is in the back seat. He regains consciousness as they pull him out and on to a stretcher. Ivan soon follows, but does not wake up. The driver of the Hummer is laid out on the pavement with a sheet thrown over him. They finally manage to pull the Hummer away from the Escalade. Anthony is laid on a stretcher and rushed to an ambulance. He’s covered in blood and barely recognizable.

An officer pulls me aside to take my statement. He recognizes me immediately. He’s a little intimidated as he clears his throat and asks “Mr. Draven, can you tell me what happened?”

I describe the incident as I saw it. I explain that the Escalade contained my men and that Ivan sped up to protect us from the Hummer. "The man driving the Hummer, is he dead?"

The officer nods, "Yes, sir. It appears he was not in a seat belt and the airbag did not deploy. You said your men were protecting you?"

I nod, "Yes. My wife has been that man's target. He's an employee of mine. That is, if it is the same person. I was not able to see who the driver was."

The officer flips through his note book. "I have his name as Jesse Dalton."

I nod. "Yes. That's his name. Can you tell me where my men were taken, please."

The officer tilts his head toward my car. "Looks like you're not able to get anywhere. I'll take you to the hospital."

I nod, "Thanks." I hand my card to the tow truck driver then sit in the passenger seat of the police cruiser. The officer drops me off at the main entrance.

I go to the front desk to ask about my men. "Three men were just brought in by ambulance. Shu Li. Sidorov Ivan, and Lorenzi Anthony."

The elderly woman checks her computer. "Mr. Shu and Mr. Sidorov are in the ER beds 4 and 7. Mr. Lorenzi is in the operating room."

I swallow hard. "Thank you." I text Corey as I make my way to the Emergency room, letting him know where I am.

I am buzzed into the Emergency room. I find bed 4 easily. Li is laying on the cot with his hand over his eyes. The lights are off. I am quiet as I enter the tiny area. "Li?"

He raises his head slowly. "Boss man. Where's Anthony? He got hit the hardest."

I sit in the single chair provided. "He's in the operating room. I don't know anything more. I'll let you know anything I find out as soon as I can. How are you?"

He runs his hand over his short hair. “Doctor says I have a concussion. They want to keep me here for a few hours to keep an eye on me.”

I pat his shoulder. “I’m glad you’re alright.”

I stand to go check on Ivan. “Boss man.” I stop and face him. I tilt my chin up. “Anthony saw the Hummer speeding at you. He told Ivan to speed up. He tried to record it on his phone. I don’t know if he got anything, though.”

I nod. “Thanks, Li. I’ll let you know what I find out.”

I look for Ivan’s bed next. He’s across from Li and one bed down. Ivan is laid out on the bed. The nurse is checking his vitals as I walk in. “How is he.”

The nurse is a young man. He gives me a reassuring look. “He’s stable. He has a concussion, a fractured clavicle, and a few broken ribs. We’re going to keep him overnight he’ll possibly go home tomorrow or the day after. We’re just waiting for his bed.”

I nod. “Thank you. Do you know anything about the third man in the SUV?”

The nurse shakes his head and points out a set of double doors. “The operating waiting area is through those doors and to the right. There’s a reception desk. They will have information.”

No one is behind the desk. I’m sitting alone in the room when the doctor opens the door. “Lorenzi?” I stand up to speak to the doctor. “Are you related to Mr. Lorenzi?”

I shake my head. “No, but I pay the bills. He’s one of my body guards. He got hurt on duty.”

The doctor makes an ‘Oh’ face. “I see. Well. Mr. Lornezi is in critical condition. His right side took the brunt of the impact. His liver, stomach, and right lung were damaged along with his ribs and arm. His radius and ulna are both broken and his knee is pretty much blown. We have him on a ventilator, but there’s no guarantee. I gotta get back in there.”

I nod. “Thank you doctor.” I go back to inform Li how Anthony is doing. Ivan is still out when I walk by his bed. Li lifts his head slowly when he sees me. “Li, lay down. You’re just going to make your head hurt more.”

Li lays back down. "My head hurts anyway. The nurse is supposed to bring me some pain killers."

I walk up to him so he doesn't have to move his head. "Anthony is critical. He's on a ventilator and his right side is pretty damaged. They're still working on him."

Li covers his eyes. "He's my best friend. He better pull through."

I pat his shoulder. "I know, man. I'm going to go back down there and wait for more news."

Li doesn't move, but chokes out. "Thanks boss."

I sit in the Operating waiting room. How did this happen? Peter should've been watching Jesse. I close my eyes and realize my mistake. I put Peter on Shelby's tail this morning. No one was on Jesse. I let my head fall back against the vinyl hospital chair. There's a reason Corey is in charge, he would've remembered to put someone on Jesse. I screwed up.

Corey, Kyle, James and Julia walk in to the waiting room. "What are you all doing here?" I'm pissed that they brought Julia out of the house, but I'm so glad to see her.

She wraps her arms around my neck and kisses my cheek. "How is everyone?"

I glare at the guards, but smile as I look at my Angel. "Li has a concussion. Ivan has a concussion some broken ribs and a broken clavicle. Anthony is still in surgery. He's on a ventilator with damage to most of his right side. I'm waiting for the doctor to tell me more." Julia's hand covers her opened mouth with each detail. I rub her back to comfort her.

Corey asks "What about the driver?"

I hold Julia tighter as I tell him. "He's dead. He wasn't wearing his seat belt and the airbag didn't deploy." Corey nods. Everyone takes a seat as we wait for news of Anthony.