

What Happens In Vegas - Free Novel by C. Qualls

Chapter 30

My dream has haunted me all day. I'm not letting up on her security, Julia's safety is of the utmost importance. I asked Darius and Ben up to my office. "Darius, I'm taking you off Julia's team. I need you to make sure it was Jesse in that Hummer. Ben I'm putting you on Julia's team in Darius' place. Report to Corey for your assignments."

They both nod and leave my office. Julia's knock sounds at my door. "Enter." She smiles at me as she sets down some files. I watch her the entire time. Her sexy pencil skirt and shoes make me want to grab her and toss her on the bed. She would never do that knowing people are in the office. I let out a sigh and shake my head as she walks out.

The day has already come to an end. I take my wife's hand as we walk to the elevator. I begin to sweat at the thought of her in the elevator. It was just a dream, a wildly vivid dream. I let out a breath and enter the elevator with Julia. She turns toward me. "What's wrong?" She strokes my face as I look at her.

"It's nothing, just my dream last night. It was vivid and it's getting to me."

She half smiles. "It was just a dream. It's not real." She kisses me gently. "Thank you for telling me."

I shake my head. "No more secrets." I kiss her hand and the elevator door opens. She smiles and leads me out.

Julia gets a call as we get into the car. "Oh, awesome! We'll head over now. Thank you." She hangs up the phone. "Anthony is awake."

I turn around and head to the hospital. Brianna is outside Anthony's room as we arrive. Julia gives Brianna a hug. "How is he?"

She leads us to the door. "He's still on the ventilator, so he can't speak, but he bats his eyes to yes and no questions. His medicine is really strong, so he's only awake for like five minutes at a time." She opens the door.

Julia rushes in. "Anthony? Can you hear me?" He looks at Julia and blinks once. "You're my hero, you know." His face relaxes like he's trying to smile, but blinks twice. Julia gives him a kiss on the cheek. "You get through this, get

yourself better, okay? We all miss you.” He blinks once. “Can I sign your cast?” He blinks once. Julia finds a marker in her bag and writes as the guys all take turns to say hello and sign also. Anthony’s eyes begin to droop so we take our leave.

On the way to the car I get a call. Miguel. “What is it?”

I open Julia’s door for her. “Sir, Ms. Cavanagh sneaked out of town to meet up with someone. He looked just like Jesse, but I couldn’t get close enough to see.”

I sit in the driver’s seat. “Is he still with her?”

Julia looks at me like she wants to know what’s happening. I wink at her. “No sir. They met for about five minutes. She’s on her way back to her place.”

I nod as I start the car. “Keep on her. Give Darius the information.” I hang up the phone and let out a long breath. “I have Miguel following Ms. Cavanagh around. He just told me she had a meeting out of town with someone that looked like Jesse.”

Julia’s mouth opens, stunned. “I sent Darius to check if the driver was really Jesse. I didn’t actually see the driver before they covered him.”

She nods. “That’s why you still want the guards surrounding me. Because he could show up at any time, anywhere. That is, if it wasn’t him in the car. ” I nod. She takes my hand as I drive off.

The week goes by quickly. Before I know it, it’s Monday again. Li is back to work today. My elevator and cars are back up and running. Darius couldn’t get anything from Shelby’s short encounter. The body of the driver was already cremated before he could get a way in. He was able to recover Anthony’s phone from the wreckage. The video didn’t reveal anything new. He was only able to get the few seconds when the Hummer hit the Escalade. The driver wasn’t visible. I’m not letting my guard down.

I’ve had two more dreams of Julia’s impending doom. I’m trying not to let them get to me, but they are. Business is suffering because I’m so distracted. I’ve had to attend more board meeting than I care to. At least Julia accompanies me to them. She’s been a tremendous asset. She stepped up when I wasn’t paying attention and got the board members off my back. Being my assistant is a waste of her skills. She has a business degree for a reason. I think I

should just make her my partner. Dividing the work between the two of us would mean less time stressing and more time together, away from work.

Julia's knock sounds at my door. I stand up to greet her. "Enter."

She smiles as she walks in with a cup of coffee. She sets it down then I pull her in to me. Her hair is down and curlier than usual. The weather is starting to get cold, so she's wearing a cardigan over her blouse. "Fredrick. I want to ask you something." She wraps her arms around my waist. She lays her head against my chest.

"What is it, love?"

She sighs. "I'm tired of wondering what Ms. Cavanagh is planning to do. I wonder if we should separate for a while and make her think..."

"No!" I cut her off. "I'm not doing that. I need you every day of my life. I don't want, no, I can't be away from you."

She kisses me soft at first, but after a minute we kind of lose control. I lay her on the sofa kissing her deeply. She grunts. "Wait." She's breathless as she pulls back. "We can't, not here, not now." I stand up and pull her with me. After she checks her appearance in the mirror she comes back out. "You're right. I can't go a day without you. But I still think we need to do something. I don't want to be surprised."

I nod. "Yeah. I'll give her a call. See if she'll meet with me. Can you get her number for me. I don't have it." She nods with a smile before walking out the door. I soon get a text with Shelby's number.

I call her right away. "Fredrick Draven. Why are you calling me?"

Okay, didn't expect that response. "I'm curious. Is the baby still mine, or did you move on from that scheme?"

She scoffs. "There's no scheme, it is yours."

I humph. "I wonder if the real father would be upset to know you're handing over his kid to someone else." I hope to get a reaction out of her.

"I don't know what you're talking about. You are the only one I was with. But keep denying it. Once the paternity test proves it, I'll have more leverage to use against you. You're not going to take my baby."

I guess Calloway hasn't contacted her. "How is your lawyer? Is he still under investigation? It will be hard to fake a paternity test when your lawyer can't practice anymore."

I can hear her lack of confidence when she replies. "I don't know what you're talking about. It doesn't matter anyway. Calloway is an idiot. I don't have to fake a paternity test."

I smirk. "We'll see, won't we? Give my regards to your father." I hang up the phone.

Baker comes to mind. Does he know what's going on? I call J. "Hey, boss. I've been meaning to call you."

That doesn't sound very reassuring. "Oh?"

He gives an awkward chuckle. "Yeah, uh, your ex-partner has made some friends. Look, man. He found a way to pay some people off. His buddy Jeremiah is a heavy hitter. He has connections in here. Baker's Daughter hasn't come by, but other people have."

I walk to my window and look out over the city. "Thanks for the tip. Next time, a sooner response would be best."

He clears his throat. "Yeah, yes, yes sir."

Baker made friends. I call Darius and Corey up to my office. They come up immediately.

"Sir?" They practically say in unison.

"Corey. New recruits. Anyone coming soon?"

Corey scrolls through his phone. "Yes, sir. We have one that just touched down on Saturday."

"Get him here."

He nods. "Two more in the next two weeks. I'll have them see you right away."

I nod. "The situation has escalated. Baker and Jeremiah are making friends both inside and outside. Darius, see what you can do to fix that. I don't want to see any of you guys in a bed next to Anthony, or worse."

Darius gives me his serial killer grin. I swear he puts off a Candy Man vibe when he looks like that. "I'll take care of Baker and Jeremiah."

I cock my eyebrow. "Whatever he's got going on is probably already in play. I think you both already know that. I'm not entirely convinced Jesse was the driver."

They both nod. "Agreed."

I lean against the front of my desk and fold my arms in front of me. "Jesse seems to be prone to vehicle accidents and elevators. He doesn't seem to care if it's me or Julia he takes out." I think for a second. Why doesn't it matter? If I die I can't claim his baby. All it would take is paternity test to prove it's not my kid. Holly Shit! "Shelby doesn't need me alive. If she can falsify a DNA test, she would get everything. Get more cameras in the shafts and the parking garage. Also add extra cameras to every floor. I want every inch and point of view covered. Get the new guy here ASAP. Also get one more Escalade. I want one on all sides. Guys, all of our lives are in danger." They both shrug. Their loyalty is impressive. I'm grateful to them, all of them. "Darius see if you can put some pressure on Calloway. I think if he cracks we can get some information from him."

He nods. "Yes, sir."

I look to Corey, then back at Darius. I take a deep breath. "Excused."

The guys leave my office. Within fifteen minutes, Scott gives me a call. "Sir, your new Escalade is in the garage. The driver left the key with me. I hope you don't mind me signing for it."

Scott is another loyal employee. "Excellent. Hold on to the key, Corey will pick it up later. Scott. Inform Corey if there is any trouble. We've been having security issues lately."

I hear keys jingling in the background. "Yeah, I've had a few loiterers that I had to clear away."

My hand goes to the back of my neck. “Good work, Scott. If you have any friends looking for work, I could use another guy down there I can trust.”

Scott clears his throat. “I know someone.”

I let out a breath. “Get him here to meet with Corey.”

He laughs. “I’ll get her here as soon as I can. She actually wants to be one of your guards.”

Interesting. “Alright, get her here.”

I send payroll an email. *Give parking attendant Scott \$1000 bonus and a 10% raise.* I like the kid. I want to keep him on my side. A knock sounds at my door. “Enter.”

A vaguely familiar man walks through my door. I stand to greet him. “Mr. Draven. I’m Daniel. I just got back from Taiwan. Corey told me to get here as soon as I could.”

I point out his chair as I take my seat. “You went to school with us, if I remember correctly.”

Daniel nods. “Yeah. I was runner up to Corey in the ring. I’m still waiting for a rematch.” He chuckles.

I remember they were on good terms. Corey hired him a year ago, but he’s one of the few I hadn’t met. “What did you do after college?”

He clears his throat. “I served two tours. I was a sniper. I took a shot to the kidney. I’m medically unfit to return to active duty. Corey said it was fine. I hope that still stands.”

I feel comfortable having him on board. I nod. “Visit HR for some paperwork then meet with Corey. He’s in charge of the team.” We both stand. I shake his hand then he heads out.

Julia greets me at the door of my office. “Hey handsome. You’ve been busy today. Everything okay?”

I tilt my head toward my office. She walks in and turns to me expectantly. “I’ve had some interesting intel today and I’ve come to a realization. You’re not the only target. Mr. Baker has made friends in prison. He’s also acquainted with

the guy that slipped you the pills. Shelby would benefit more if I were no longer alive. Fortunately they don't know that you get everything in case something happens to me, however, I'm thinking they want the both of us gone."

Julia sits on the coffee table. "How could she benefit if you're no longer... in the picture? Aren't you like her meal ticket or something?"

I squat in front of Julia so I'm face to face with her. "It would be easier to fake a DNA test. I might have told her that if it's mine I would take the baby away from her. I think she thought I would want nothing to do with it, which is true, but she doesn't need to know that."

She pushes slightly on my shoulder, knocking me off balance. I have to take a step back to keep from falling. "Fredrick Timothy Draven! Why would you say that to her, you crazy nut! No wonder she's so upset with you. I would've slapped you if you said something like that to me." She shakes her head bewildered.

I clear my throat. "I'm pretty sure she tried."

Julia runs her fingers through her hair, flipping it from one side to the other. "So now what? More guards? More watching around every corner, suspicious of everyone I come in contact with? I can't live like that, Fredrick. Not for long anyway."

I pull her up and wrap her arms around me. "I'm sorry, love. Just. Just stay with me. I'm working on it."

She kisses my lips. "I'm not going anywhere. Except for dinner with the Lorenzi's. Remember we made plans after work?"

I grunt. "Yeah. I forgot about that." She looks at me bewildered. "Fredrick. I'm worried about you. You're not yourself lately. You're not focusing on work at all, you're forgetting things, and you're having nightmares. Let me help you. Give me something to do that will help relieve some of your stress." My lips twitch up as I look at the bombshell in front of me. She immediately catches on to what I'm thinking. "Fredrick Draven! You dirty minded man. When we get home, you can have all the fun with me you want." She giggles, then continues. "I'm serious, let me help you."

I nod. "I know, love. I have all my guys looking after you and keeping an eye on things. I just hired a new guard. I'm having more security cameras installed on the floors, in the parking garage, and elevator shafts. At this point, I just don't know what more I can do. Even if Jesse is dead, Shelby is still a threat."

Julia nods. "Okay. You've done everything you can, so take a minute to collect yourself then focus on the other things that need your attention. Don't worry about me so much. I'll be by your side, okay?" Julia's hand strokes my cheek.

I nod. "Okay." I run my fingers through her hair and kiss her before she gets back to work. I follow my wife's advice and focus on my work. I have thousands of employees that count on me. I need to step it up and work for them.