

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

### Chapter 32

The machines continue their steady, rhythmic beeping. Otherwise, all is quiet. I haven't moved since I sat down. Fredrick has kept a grip on my hand the whole time. Shannon walks in with two bags. "Hey, doll. I got you some food and a change of clothes."

I sit back in my chair. My back aches from being bent over. It's been over three hours and Fredrick is still out. "Thanks. I'm not hungry."

Shannon sets the bags down on a nearby table. She pulls out a chair and sits across from me. She opens a bag of chips and starts munching. Eventually I reach for one. Then another. She pulls half of a sandwich out and puts it in my empty hand. I take small bites. Eventually I get it all down. "You've got blood all over your clothes." She looks to Ben and Kyle. "Starsky, Hutch. Clear out for a minute so the lady can change." The guys blush a little but leave the room. Shannon helps me change then sits down across from me. She hands me a flavored water. I take little sips then set it on the table. "What the fuck happened, doll? Corey hasn't been very gabby about details."

I look at my friends pretty elfin face. "They kept me out of the loop too, until the accident. You remember Jesse?"

She thinks for a minute. "One of the guards, right?"

I nod. "He's been sleeping with Shelby. She's pregnant and claims it's Fredrick's. This is after they drugged me, making me miscarry."

Shannon's face contorts in rage. "What the actual fuck! What's their problem? I mean, who does this shit?"

I comb my hair out of my eyes. "I don't know what their problem is, but Shelby lost a lot when her dad... did what he did. She thinks she can get Fredrick's... well, everything because of the baby."

Shannon hunches back into her chair. Shannon takes some time to mull over everything. "Is it his?"

I shrug my shoulder. "It very well could be. Fredrick says it's not, but I'm not one hundred percent convinced. I did hear a recording from some nurse that claims it's not his, but how would she know?"

She shakes her head and grimaces. "So how did Fredrick get hurt?"

I take a deep breath then explain what I know. "Shelby came to the office. She came up Fredrick's personal elevator, so she must've been let in. I was surprised to see her. Next thing I know I hear a scream so I rushed in. Fredrick was on the floor with blood everywhere and a letter opener in his neck." Shannon shakes her head, but doesn't say anything more. We return to our game of waiting.

Four hours. The nurse enters the room to check Fredrick out. "The anesthesia should've worn off by now. He should be waking up soon."

I nod as she takes her leave. Shannon grips my free hand. "He'll be okay, Jules."

I nod. "Yeah." I look at the handsome man beside me. He's seriously the man of my dreams. His eyes begin to blink. "Fredrick. I'm here." He squeezes my hand. He begins to try to turn his head toward me. I stand up to hold his face still. "Honey, you have a neck brace on, you can't move your head." His eyes slowly open. I lean over so he can see me. His eyes shine. He squeezes my hand. I lean forward and kiss his perfect soft lips.

I ask Shannon to notify the doctor that Fredrick is awake. The doctor does her checks. "Mr. Draven, can you speak?"

Fredrick swallows then rasps out, "yes." I smile in relief.

The doctor checks his bandages. She talks to Fredrick. "Okay. So the letter opener landed straight in your carotid artery. Your wife left it in and applied pressure, she saved your life. It won't cause permanent damage. We're going to keep the brace on you to prevent you from moving. Sorry, it's not the most comfortable thing in the world, but it is necessary. We'll keep you for a few days to watch for any more clots. Are you in any pain?"

Fredrick goes to shake his head, but the brace stops him. He grunts in frustration. "No. Not now." His voice is quiet and hoarse.

The doctor nods. "You'll be in pain as soon as that medication wears off. I want to keep you semi sedated. That way you're less likely to tear your stitches."

I nod. "Thank you doctor." Fredrick pulls me toward him. I'm not expecting it so I fall on him. "Oh, crap. Fredrick are you okay?"

He smirks at me. "Am now." He caresses my lip with his thumb.

I roll my eyes at him, but smile. "What happened? Why did she stab you?"

He shrugs his shoulder. "You're in charge, love." I look over my shoulder to Corey, Ben, and Kyle. They all nod their heads. Fredrick begins to grunt. "Are you in pain now?" He hums out. I kiss his lips. "Okay, I'll get the nurse." He grips my hand, making me stop.

Shannon steps up. "I'll go get her."

Fredrick rasps. "Corey?" Corey walks into Fredrick's line of sight on the other side of the bed. "You let her in?"

Corey shakes his head. "No, sir. I didn't even know she was in your office until you came out with the paramedics and she came out in handcuffs."

That's weird. He would've had to let her up. I definitely didn't see her either. Fredrick closes his eyes. "Check tapes." The nurse enters the room. She injects medicine into Fredrick's line so he quickly falls back to sleep.

I check my watch. It's almost 8 pm. I've been here all day. Fredrick has short windows of consciousness. I was joined by most of the guards around six. "I don't know if I should stay here or go home."

Fredrick grunts. "Home. 'M okay."

I shake my head. "I don't want to leave you."

Fredrick hums. "Home, love. Take care things for me."

I feel terrible leaving him. "Are you sure?"

His thumb caresses my lip. "Mm sure." I nod conceding to his wishes. Fredrick falls back to sleep.

I look to Corey. "I want at least two guards on him at all times. If someone has to use the washroom there still better be two more."

Corey nods, "yes ma'am."

Shannon steps up beside me. "I'll stay at your place with you. I don't want you to be alone."

I nod. "Yeah. That would be good. Corey, can you stay too?"

He looks to Fredrick, then nods, "Yes, miss."

I let out a breath. "Thank you, Corey."

Shannon kisses Corey's cheek. "I'll go get our things and meet you at Jules' place."

He nods. "Be careful." She winks and walks out.

I pack up my bags. "Corey, send someone with her. I don't like the idea of her going alone."

Corey calls the new guy, Daniel. "Go with Shannon, would ya." Corey flexes his fist. "Damn it. Alright." Corey hangs up the phone. "She already left."

I grab my dirty clothes bag and jacket. I lean over so I'm in Fredrick's face. "Fredrick, my love."

His ocean blues open slightly. "Hmm."

I kiss his lips. "I'm going now, okay? There will be two guards with you at all times. I love you."

His eyes close. "Love you."

Corey takes my bag and leads me to the Escalades. He jumps in the back seat with me while Ben drives. "Miss Jules. I want to ask you something."

I look over to Corey. "What's up?"

He pulls a box out of his pocket. "I want to ask Shannon to marry me. Do you think that's a good idea? I have a dangerous job and I don't want her to get hurt if something happens to me."

I look at the ring that fits Shannon's personality to a T. "Corey. It's perfect. She'll love it. I think if your job were a problem for her, she would've said something a while ago." I hand him back the box.

"I hope your right. What do you think, though? You're her best friend, I care about your opinion."

I kiss his cheek. "She got herself a good man. I'm happy for her, and you."

Renovations are still being made on the ground floor, so I ask Mrs. Bailey to set up the guest house for Corey and Shannon. I meet up with Gerry to let her know that we're having guests for dinner. "Jules, are you okay? You're white as a sheet."

I take a seat at the island. "Fredrick almost died. I could've lost him." My tears begin to flow like a waterfall. Freak-out mode has officially started.

Gerry gets a hand towel and gives it to me. "Hey, he's alive. He's going to heal. He'll be fine."

I nod, my tears still falling. "I-I-I I N-N-know. He-He-He He was ta-talking. I ju-just just want hi-him home."

Gerry pats my back. "Shh. Jules. He'll be home in a few days. It'll go so fast. Before you know it, he'll be stealing your desserts again." I giggle at how many times he's taken bites of my food. The food snob. I wipe my tears. I continue to sob for a few minutes. Pretty soon I'm able to regain my composure.

Corey enters the kitchen. "Miss Jules, has Shannon called you? She's not here yet, and she's not answering her phone."

That's not like her. I check my phone. "No. No missed calls. Let me try to call her." I dial Shannon's number. It rings, then goes to voicemail. "No answer."

Corey tries again. "Nothing."

I get to my feet. "Let's go."

Corey sits me down. "I can't let you leave, miss Jules. You stay here. I'll have James and Kyle come over, they live the closest. I'll go check on her." I give Corey my pleading eyes while he makes a call. He almost gives in, but says;

“It’s not happening. Mr. Draven would kill me if anything happened to you. The guys are already on their way.” Corey checks his sidearm. I didn’t know they carry concealed. Makes sense though.

The doorbell rings and Corey takes off. I’m hoping it’s Shannon, but it’s James and Kyle. Corey leaves without a word. James and Kyle accompany me in the kitchen. “Do you two have guns?”

They both nod. James rolls his eyes. “No, miss Jules. We knock the bag guys out with our good looks.”

I roll my eyes. “Har har. James, you’ve got to get better jokes. Aren’t you all fighters?” He shrugs his shoulder.

Kyle answers my question. “We can all hold our own. We go through a year of heavy training, but we all have special skills that make us more valuable.”

I think of all the guys. “Like what? I guess Ivan is a driver?”

They both nod. Kyle speaks up. “Corey is a grappler. Darius knows things. Ben, the new guy, he’s awesome with weapons. You should see him with a knife. Ridiculous skills.”

James grabs some cups and ransacks the pantry. I roll my eyes. “What are you looking for?”

His head peaks out from around the door. “Hot cocoa and popcorn. Movie night.”

I shake my head. “No way. I don’t know about you two, but I have to work in the morning.”

James comes out with a box of microwave popcorn. “Ah, but mom. We’re having a sleep over.”

I laugh. “You’re a nut. I don’t care if you two want to watch a movie, but I’m going to take a shower. I smell like hospital.”

I show them to the entertainment room and give Kyle the remote. I head to my room. I call Shannon’s number, but she still doesn’t answer. I grab my things and head for the shower. I let the hot water soothe my aching muscles. I could seriously go for a massage. I wash up and dress for bed. My bed is huge and

lonely. I check my phone. Nothing. I call Corey. "Did you find her?" I hear the wind rushing by in the background.

"No. She wasn't at her place or mine."

My phone slips out of my hand. I quickly pick it up and a thought enters my head. "Can you like, track her phone or something?"

Corey must be driving fast because horns are honking at him. "I gotta go, miss." The dial tone sounds in my ear.

Okay, I'm totally freaking out right now. Shannon is missing. Fredrick is still in the hospital. I'm sitting here trying to get to sleep. Not happening. I get out of bed and throw on some jeans and a t-shirt. I throw up my hair in a messy bun and head for the entertainment room. Kyle and James are watching some action movie. I have no clue what it is. "Hey, miss Jules. Couldn't sleep?"

I shake my head and sit next to James. "Nah. I'm too worried. Have you guys heard anything?" They both shake their heads. I go to the mini fridge and grab a water. I sit back down and check my phone. Of course there's nothing.

Bruce Willis busts out a "Yippee Ki-yay, mother Fucker." On the screen. The movie, I'm assuming, is almost over. My phone begins to ring. I answer without looking who's calling first. "Hello?" I stand up and walk out of the room so I can hear the speaker.

"This is Dr. Woods. Mr. Draven threw a blood clot. We were able to catch it, but his condition has worsened. He's now in a coma."

I drop my phone, my hand goes to my mouth and the tears begin to fall. I kneel to the ground with my arms around my waist, sobbing. James comes out to check on me. "Miss Jules?"

"F-F-Fredrick is in-n-na co-co-coma."

James kneels next to me and rubs my back. "Miss Jules. Mr. Draven will pull through. He's one tough son of a bitch. You'll see." He pulls me to his shoulder and let's me cry.