

What Happens In Vegas - Free Novel by C. Qualls

Chapter 33

I wake up to my alarm clock. My head is pounding and my body is stiff. I'm alone in my bed. I roll over and pull Fredrick's pillow to me. I inhale his wonderful scent and sob. My second alarm sounds. I'm still in my t-shirt and jeans. I slowly get up. I wash my face and run a brush through my hair. I check my phone as I brush my teeth. Nothing. I head downstairs, not even bothering to change my clothes. Gerry greets me at the kitchen island. James and Kyle are awake and fresh looking. Stupid morning people.

Gerry pushes a hot cocoa with whipped cream my way. "Can I have some buttered toast, please?" Gerry gets right on it. I finish eating then decide to change my clothes. I dress quickly into a pair of slacks and blouse. I'm not just an assistant today. I throw on some simple shoes and we head out. I don't want anyone thinking about Fredrick's condition. "Guys. Fredrick's condition is not to go beyond our guard." They both nod. Kyle sends out a text.

Daniel, Li, and Mitchell are waiting in the Escalades. I don't feel like driving, so I pick one at random and get in. I check my phone again. What the hell? Where is Shannon? "Kyle, did Corey ever come back last night?"

He shakes his head. "No, no one has heard from him since he left."

I look at my phone. I'm worried. Something is going on, I can feel it. "Li can you stop at the hospital, please. I need to see Fredrick before we head to the office."

Fredrick is laying completely still on the bed. He has a nasal cannula in his nose on top of everything else from yesterday. I kiss his lips and run my fingers through his dark hair. "I love you. Wake up soon. I need you, Fredrick." I wipe away the tear that escaped. I kiss him again then head out. I can't believe I'm going to the office. I should be with Fredrick, but he told me I'm in charge and to take care of things. That's what I'm going to do. I call Corey, then Shannon. Nothing. I almost think they took this time to run away together, but I'm not crazy enough to believe that. For now, that's the story that's in my head.

I enter Draven Corp and go straight to Fredrick's office. As I open the door, my eyes immediately fall to the bloodstained rug. I call maintenance and have them remove it and clean up anything that went through the padding. "I want

the rug incinerated.” You never know what anyone could do with Fredrick’s DNA. I sit at his desk and watch as the rug is removed.

Mrs. Harvey walks in with a stack of files. “Good morning, Mrs. Draven. How is Sir doing?”

I thumb through the files. “Fredrick will be away for a while. He asked that I take care of things in his absence.”

Mrs. Harvey takes my hand. “I assumed as much when I saw you come in here, dear. I’m asking how he’s doing.”

I exhale a breath. “He’s alive. That’s the only thing keeping me here right now.”

She smiles her sweet matronly smile. “I’m here. If you need help with anything, don’t hesitate.”

I nod. “Thank you, Mrs. Harvey... Wait, what is your name?”

She picks up a different stack of files. “It’s Roberta, miss Jules.” I smile as she closes the door behind her.

I turn on his computer and I’m already stuck with the password. Since being with Fredrick I have changed mine, I assume he has too. I type in my name. Password incorrect. I type in my birthday. Password incorrect. Deep breath, Julia. I laugh at the thought of him telling me that when I witnessed his will and when he told me we were married. That day feels like so long ago. That was the first time he touched my hair, caressed my lip with his thumb, the first time he kissed me. No time to reminisce. I enter our wedding date. Bingo, the computer opens up and I get busy.

I contact Darius and have him meet me. He’s quick to respond and is soon knocking on the door. “Enter.”

He walks in and takes his seat. “Miss Jules. What can I do for you?” He looks confident as he asks. I’m surprised. I thought he would be hesitant about me assuming Fredrick’s role.

“First thing. Thank you for your loyalty to Fredrick. I know he relies on you.” He just nods. I continue. “I would like two guards with Fredrick at all times.” He doesn’t say anything, so I continue. “I want to know how Shelby Cavanagh got

in here yesterday. Fredrick said he had new cameras installed.” He continues to sit as still as a statue. Awkward. “Kyle says you know stuff. So, Corey and Shannon are both missing. I can’t contact them on their phones. I know that’s not your job, but I care about them. Would you mind looking in to it for me, please?”

Darius finally speaks. “Yes, ma’am. I need Ms. McLachlan’s phone number.” I pull out my phone and text it to him. He checks his phone. Then nods.

He stands up to leave. “Darius. I know I’m not Fredrick. I don’t know how things are done when it comes to you and the guards. I do know that Fredrick needs you guys now, more than ever. I am not trying to take his place, but the future is not guaranteed. I hope you will all work with me, just as you did with Fredrick.”

Darius gives me a smirk that sends chills down my spine. “I like you, miss.” He turns and leaves. I swallow the lump in my throat. I then get busy.

Hours have gone by when a knock sounds on the door. “Enter.” I roll my eyes at myself. That’s Fredrick’s line.

Darius enters with a tablet in hand. “Miss Jules. I have the footage you asked for.” He sits in the chair and hands over the tablet. I press play and watch as Shelby slinks her way into the building. She takes a corridor that leads to the security door, but makes a quick turn and is inside the elevator. No one even saw her.

“Darius, what was Jesse’s specialty?” I hand him back the tablet.

“Surveillance. He didn’t like our security before, so when he got here, he made adjustments.”

I run my fingers through the front of my hair. “Based on the way she moved, she knew exactly where to go to avoid being seen. I wonder how many times she’s done this. Or if Jesse just told her where to go.”

Darius shakes his head. “No idea, but this footage should go to the police as well.”

I nod. “Yes, absolutely.” A thought enters my mind. “Darius, is there a way to access the security cameras remotely?”

He nods. "Yes. Mr. Draven has already requested the password changed weekly. He did it right after the Hummer crash."

I need to double check my worry. "So there's no way Jesse can see what's been going on?" Darius nods. "That is correct." Well, that is a small relief, I must say. I sit back in my chair and notice Darius has yet to move. "Is there more?"

Darius nods. "I was able to track Miss. McLachlan's phone. It's on the move heading west through Ohio."

I scrunch my eyebrows "Ohio?"

He shrugs his shoulder. "She could just be passing through. I'll keep watching."

I scratch my head. "What about Corey's phone?" Darius pulls a black phone with a cracked screen out of his pocket. "I found it on the ground outside his apartment. I called to make sure it was his. The Inside of his place looked normal. I contacted a... friend to look in to it."

I set the phone on the desk. "Why does the way you said the word friend make you sound like a serial killer."

Darius chuckles. "You never know, miss." I cock my brow. Darius adds. "I said I like you, miss. You have no need to worry about me."

I shake my head bewildered. If I ever met him in a dark alley, I would pee myself. I'm glad he's on our side. "Darius, did you know Jesse well? What was his family life like? Do you know why he's after Fredrick... and me?"

He slightly shrugs. "I don't know much. He has daddy issues. He was raised by his mom and her various husbands. He mentioned having two half brothers. I know he was together with Ms. Cavanagh, otherwise I have no idea why he's after the two of you."

I exhale. "Thank you, Darius." He nods then walks out of the office. I send Shannon a text.

Me- Where are you?

Me- I'm so worried.

I put my phone down and get back to work. After a few minutes, I receive a text.

Shannon- I'm alive, bitch.

I let out a deep breath. I text her back.

Me- Where are you?

-I was so worried.

-Are you with Corey?

She replies immediately.

Shannon- Going on a little trip.

-Corey is here too.

-Don't worry, bitch.

-I'll see you soon.

I no longer have to worry about Shannon and Corey, so I can focus more on my tasks and my Fredrick. I quickly get back to work.

I go straight to the hospital after work. Fredrick is starting to get a little scruffy. The cannula has been removed, but otherwise there are no changes. I lay beside him on the bed and rest my head on his chest. His heartbeat is soothing. In no time, James is shaking me awake. "Miss Jules. The hospital visiting hours are almost over."

I look at my watch. 8:45. "Thanks, James." I kiss Fredrick then head out.

I have James and Kyle stay with me again. I hate the idea of not having Fredrick with me. Gerry makes us dinner then we head to the entertainment room. The guys pick out another action movie and we lay out on the reclining sofa. I eventually get bored. I'm not tired. I go to my room and find an old t-shirt and jeans. I head down to the garage and turn on the radio. There is a computer next to the radio. I switch it on. There's no password so I get right in. The files are clearly marked, one for each vehicle. The files have all the details including preventive maintenance. The Barracuda is due for an oil change. I find the right grade and get to work. After I've finished, I start the

car. It roars to life, like a beast awakening. I wonder if Fredrick has ever driven this car. I look over to the Chevelle and wonder the same thing. When he wakes up, we're taking them all out for a spin. Oh Fredrick, please wake up. I send James a text.

Me- *Going for a drive.*

-Be back in a few.

I know I should have my guards with me, but I need to be alone. I put the car in gear and head out. I take an old road that I've been on once before. I stop at the rest station and sit on the table. I think of Fredrick and how he brought me here. I play with my angel baby's ring. Take care of your daddy, little one, I pray. Help him get better and to wake up soon, mommy needs him. I wipe away a single tear.

The air is crisp and clean. I didn't bring a jacket and soon my teeth are chattering. I jump when a blanket is placed over my shoulders. "You shouldn't be alone. Mr. Draven would probably have every one of us skinned alive if anything happened to you." Darius sits beside me.

"How did you find me?"

He gives me his serial killer smirk. "I have my ways. That barracuda is one of a kind."

I look at the deep purple classic rod. Yeah, she is one of a kind, and therefore completely noticeable. "Do you think he'll wake up?"

He shrugs his shoulder. "Probably. He's not one to give up."

My heart lightens just a touch. "Have you been here long?"

He nods. "I didn't want to bother you, you seemed like you needed space."

I tighten the blanket around me. "Thank you." He nods. "I like you, miss."

Darius sits with me a little longer. Eventually, I get tired of sitting in the dark. I hand him back his blanket and head back home. I pull into the garage and note the oils change in the computer. I shut everything down and head to my room. I take a long hot bath, then curl up in my bed.

Thursday goes by quickly. I work in Fredrick's office then go to the hospital where I lay beside my husband. He smells like hospital, so I call Mrs. Bailey. "Can you bring Fredrick's soap and shampoo to the hospital, please. Oh, and his razor." I run my hand over his scruff. It's actually kind of sexy. He just needs a little trim. Mrs. Bailey is quick. She helps me get a sponge bath ready. I ask the guards to wait outside while I wash him down. He smells much better by the time I finish. I invite the guards back in. Peter and Mitchell are on duty tonight. "Would one of you show me how to shave him?" They look to each other with their eyes bugged, then shake their heads. "Oh, come on. I just want to trim him up a little."

A knock sounds on the door. Brianna is standing in the doorway. "Hey. I was just visiting Anthony and thought I would stop by."

I give her a hug. "How is Anthony?"

She nods "He's healing. They want to get him off the ventilator tomorrow. How is Mr. Draven."

We sit at the table. "No change. How did you know he's here?"

She pulls a water bottle out of her purse and hands it to me. "I was there when they took him away in the ambulance. I wanted to get your attention, but you were obviously busy. I didn't know he was in a coma though, not until I came to visit yesterday. You two looked so cute asleep together, I just didn't have the heart to wake you."

I take a drink of the cold water. "Yeah. Hey, do you know how to shave a man? The guys are too scared to show me."

She giggles as she looks at the guards. "I do actually. I went to cosmetology school for a while."

I pull her out of her chair and lead her to Fredrick. "Show me, please. I don't want to shave it all, just trim it up so he doesn't look so rough. Plus I don't want to go anywhere near his neck."

Brianna takes the time to show me how to trim up one side and let's me do the other. She makes a slight clean-up, but over all, I did a pretty good job. I'm confident enough to shave him again. "Would you like to come over for dinner? Mama keeps asking about the two of you."

I feel bad, but I turn her down. "Right now isn't a good time. Once I get to the point I can handle everything, I will definitely take you up on your offer." Brianna gives me a hug and takes off. I follow her lead and head home. James and Kyle accompany me again.

It's Friday. The saying TGIF really hits home for me. I'm seriously busy getting ready for the weekend. I attend a meeting which goes very well considering. It's the end of the day when a knock sounds at the door. "Darius, what's up?"

He sits down in the chair. "Ms. McLachlan's phone has her in Las Vegas."

My eyebrows go up. "I guess she and Corey ran off to get married..." Which is completely unlike her... and him. I haven't spoken to her in a while. "Darius can you stick around a minute. I need to go over some things. I'm just going to give Shannon a call real quick."

Darius sinks into his seat. "Only because I like you, miss."

I bite my lip while I dial her number. I kind of feel bad for not calling sooner, but she knows how it is. The phone rings until I'm about to hang up, when it is finally answered. Silence awaits me on the other end. "Um, Shan?" I hear heavy breathing.

"Try again." A man's voice responds, and I know it's not Corey's.

"Who is this?"

Darius takes the phone and puts it on speaker phone. "You're not much of a friend, are you? Your bestie has been missing for three days before you finally get around to calling her. Tsk, tsk, tsk. I'm so disappointed in you." Darius mouths "Jesse."

My eyes bug and my heart is beating wildly in my throat. "Where is she?"

He laughs. "Oh, I think you already know that, doesn't she Darius?"

I look at Darius questioningly. He mouths "speaker." Oh. "So what do you want, Jesse?"

He chuckles. "I want you to come out and visit me. Shannon and Corey would greatly appreciate your presence. Just yours. If I see any of the guards, Shannon and Corey will not be happy. I'll be watching the airport. I'll know if

you bring anyone. And Jules. Get here soon.” The sound of two slaps sound through the phone, followed by a grunt and a whimper. I hear a click, then the dial tone sounds. Darius clicks the phone off.