

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

### Chapter 35

Jesse opens a screen door then he opens the unlocked door to the trailer. I'm hesitant. "Get inside." I look at him for a split second then take a step inside.

My eyes take a minute to adjust to the darkness. I'm standing between a kitchen and living area. There's a sofa and a flat screen television to my right, and a small table to the left. "Where are Shannon and Corey?"

Jesse steps up right behind me, making me quiver. "You'll see them later." He walks to the refrigerator and pulls out two bottles of water. He hands one to me. I gingerly accept it. He pops the top off of one and starts drinking. I follow suit. Stupid desert. Jesse walks past me into the living area. There is a narrow hall on the side. He walks down the hall and disappears. There's a window on both sides of the door, so I open the blinds. The light fills the room illuminating everything. The trailer is decent. The carpet is clean as are the counters. The colors match. It's not some rundown shack. It looks like a cozy home. The only thing missing is a phone.

Jesse walks back into the room. He crosses his arms over his chest. I step back against the counter. He smiles knowing I'm terrified. He steps up to me. I swallow. "So what now?"

He puts his hands on the counter, trapping me. "Now you hang out here. Monday, we'll take care of the paperwork." I look at him like he's crazy which, let's face it, is not far off. He grabs my face, squeezing my jaw. "Won't this be fun." He kisses my mouth. I shove him away and try not to vomit. He steps back and laughs.

I wipe my mouth. "I'm here for my friends. Where are they?"

He crosses his arms. "Not here. I told you, you'll see them soon."

Darius said to make sure I see them. "How do I know they're not already dead?"

His face gets hard. "I said you'll see them soon. Get control of your mouth or I lose control of my temper. Understood?" My lips quiver and I nod. He gets back in my face. "Good."

He reaches into the fridge and pulls out a beer. He drinks it down right in front of me. "I just wanted to know that they're alive."

Jesse gets back in my face. "I don't care what you want. Keep talking though. I plan on killing them anyway. They're only here for your benefit."

I gasp. "How so?"

He shrugs his shoulder. "To get you to do your part."

I shake my head. These mind games are ridiculous. And I'm losing. "What does it matter? If you're just going to kill us, go ahead. We're all going to die anyway, right?"

Jesse's hand comes flying out of nowhere striking me across the face. I gasp in surprise and pain. A tear leaks out of my eye. "It matters if I take my time before I kill you or not. If you want a slow, very painful, and scary death for you and your friends, by all means, continue. Otherwise, do your part."

I know, without a doubt, he means what he says. I shake my head and close my eyes. "Why are you doing this?" I open my eyes and swallow.

He hasn't moved, but he's not as menacing. "I told you already, retribution."

I softly ask. "For what? Fredrick treated you very well, just like everyone else on his guard."

Jesse grimaces. "Yeah, Fredrick was only part of it. Carl was the problem. But they're both taken care of now. I don't have to worry about them anymore, do I."

I almost choke. Tears leak out of my eyes as I think of Fredrick. I wipe my face and shake my head. "No." Jesse steps back. He crosses his arms in front of him. He stands there as if he's dying to tell me something. I get up the courage to ask him questions. "You had Shelby stab him, didn't you?"

Jesse smiles. "Of course. She had the stupid idea of pinning my baby on him. I wasn't about to have that. Although, she was supposed to meet me after she killed him. I guess the guards got her?" I slowly nod. I can feel my entire body shaking. He thinks Fredrick is dead. Darius said not to give him any information. I'm not about to correct Jesse. He shrugs. "Just as well. She's an idiot anyway. My kid will come to me while she's in jail."

I nod. "It is yours then?"

Jesse glares at me. "Of course it's mine. I made sure to knock her up the first chance I got. I even tracked her cycle and took her birth control away to make sure. Fredrick barely even got it up for her." He chuckles at me and continues to speak. "Like I said, you have bad taste in men." I almost want to slap him for Fredrick's sake, but I know better. Fredrick is amazing. This loser has no idea. He raises his eyebrow. "Anything else?"

I nod. "Why did you kill my baby?"

He shakes his head. "That was Shelby. I just gave her the tools. My child gets shares from Carl's will, being the only grandchild now. It worked out for my benefit, so why not?"

His heartless answer stings. My tears fall from my face non-stop. "Y-Y-You're a mon-monster. How c-can you think so-so little of-of human life? My b-baby was innocent. I'm in-innocent, Shannon, Corey, Fr-Fredrick. All of us. We did noth-nothing to you."

Jesse steps back into my face. He's venomous as he yells. "So was I! I did nothing wrong. Carl didn't give a damn about me. Only his precious little Fredrick. Ironic isn't it. Fredrick did the same thing Carl did, deny his kid. Well, in this case Fredrick was right." I swallow as he continues. "My mother loved that bastard. He wanted nothing to do with her when she told him she was pregnant. She had nothing. She found this place and took care of me by becoming a stripper. She tried to get child support, but that fucker, Baker had Calloway fake the paternity test."

I clear my throat. "That's, that's why you had him killed in prison?"

Jesse chuckles. "You are a smart one. As soon as Calloway handles the will, he'll get his too."

My mouth is gaped open. I take a few deep breaths. "Why didn't you tell Fredrick? He would've accepted you."

He chuckles like a madman. "My dear brother. The narcissistic, spoiled, workaholic. You think he would give a damn about me? Come on, Jules. Think about it. He didn't give a damn about anyone either. He was just like our dear old dad. I did you a favor getting rid of him." I turn my head away from him. He grabs my chin to turn my face back toward him. "Awe, come on sis.

Don't be like that. Now that he's dead, everything goes to you, for now. You'll get to be with him soon enough. After you sign everything over to me." I jerk my head away. I can't even look at this lunatic.

He chuckles as he grabs another beer from the refrigerator. He walks to the sofa and plops down. I take a moment to collect myself. My heart aches at the thought of Fredrick having a brother he never knew of. I wipe my face with my sleeves. "So what do you want me to do until Monday?"

Jesse shrugs. He looks me over from head to toe. My skin crawls and my stomach flops "I don't really care. I have some ideas though." I'm horrified at the implication. I drop to the floor and hold on to my knees. I can't stop my tears, I'm so scared. He looks at me from the corner of his eye, then chuckles.

I'm curled up on the floor for a long while. My legs and my butt are numb. Finally Jesse stands up. "Come with me."

I slowly raise up. "Where are we going?"

He cocks his eyebrow. "Don't you want to see your friends?" I nod. He grips my arm tightly. I just know I'm going to be bruised. He takes me down the squeaky hall to the last door. Inside is a desk with a bunch of monitors and a chair. He practically throws me into the chair then pulls out two sets of handcuffs. He pulls my arms flush with the cracked armrests and cuffs me down. I can't move my arms. He clicks on the monitors, then walks out the door.

I listen as he stops at another door in the hall, then leaves the trailer. The screen door slams shut on it's own, then all is quiet. I unwillingly look to the monitors. There are ten all together. I can see the airport, the hotel, and a single dark screen. After a few minutes, the dark screen lights up. Shannon and Corey are tied up to chairs in separate corners of the room, wearing only their underwear. They both have their mouths covered with duct tape. Corey has blood all over him. One of his eyes is swollen shut. He has bruises all over his bare body. Shannon has a few bruises, but otherwise looks to be in good health. Jesse rips the tape from Corey's mouth. He pulls out a pocket knife and cuts away the tape on Corey's left hand. Jesse hands Corey a water bottle. Corey glares at him as he drinks most of it down.

I look at their surroundings. The walls are metal and rusted with wooden beams. There's a window near Shannon that's covered with wood. Corey says something to Jesse. Still there is no sound. Jesse shrugs his shoulder

speaks again. Corey looks pissed as he tightens his jaw. Corey looks straight at the camera then back to Jesse. Corey says something, which I assume is you mother fucker. Jesse laughs.

He walks over to Shannon, rips the tape from her mouth and cuts her left hand free. He gives her a water bottle. She drinks it slowly then puts it between her knees. Jesse runs his hand up Shannon's thigh. Shannon tries to slink back from his touch, but she has nowhere to go. Corey becomes irate and starts yelling at Jesse. He laughs, then tapes them back to the chairs and covers their mouths. Jesse goes to the door, then turns back to Corey. He says something, then pulls out the pistol he took from me. He aims at Shannon's face. I jerk on the handcuffs, but they stop my movements. "Oh no no no please!" Jesse lowers the gun. He quickly brings it up again and shoots. I hear the gunshot as a bullet sinks into Corey's thigh. I'm shaking and crying my eyes out as Corey screams into his tape gag. It's my fault, I shouldn't have brought that gun. Oh Corey, I'm so sorry.

A few minutes later, the floor creaks then Jesse walks through the bedroom door. "Did you enjoy the show?"

I'm wiping my eyes with my shoulder as much as possible. "You're just going to let him bleed out?"

He shrugs his shoulder. "What do I care? Now you know not to do anything stupid, don't you."

I turn my head away and close my eyes. He unlocks the handcuffs. I wipe my face with the sleeves of my jacket. I look back at the monitor and watch as Corey passes out. I should have known Jesse wasn't going to take me to see Shannon and Corey. What do I do now? I don't know where they are. Darius said sit up and think. I take a few calming breaths. I heard the shot and Jesse walked to where they are. That means they're very close by. I'm willing to bet they're in one of the old rundown cabins, which wouldn't be very difficult to find. Jesse is armed with one shot left, but I don't know if he has more. Jesse smirks as he leaves me alone in the room. I can't bring myself to leave it. Shannon and Corey are still on the monitor. I have to save them. Corey is a mess of blood and dirt. Shannon has been struggling at her binds, trying to get to Corey. I can't just sit here. Sit up and think. What can I do? I'm free to walk around, but I can't just leave. Why can't I? I have a better chance at saving Corey now, before he bleeds to death.

I look around the room. There's really nothing here. I still have the gun on my ankle and whatever Brianna slipped to me. I watch the door as I reach into my pocket. I feel a tiny object. I hear the floor creak in the hall. I shove the device back into my pocket. Jesse stands in the doorway. "You know why I shot him?"

I nod. "Because you're a crazy asshole and you're a coward."

Jesse smiles then swings his fist as hard as he can. I'm knocked onto the floor. My mouth is bloody and my jaw hurts. "No, bitch. It's because it was funny knowing you were watching. You gave me a nice little toy to play with, didn't you?" He pulls the gun from his pocket and aims it at me. I'm stock still unable to move. Jesse laughs. "Who's the coward now?" I spit the bloody contents of my mouth at him. He kicks me in my knee. I scream in pain. He pulls me off of the floor and settles me back into the chair. He puts his hands on the armrests and gets in my face. "Next time, it's Shannon that gets the punishment. She's really sexy tied up and in those panties of hers." I almost want to vomit. There's no way I'll let him hurt her. I reach my good leg up and nail him in between the legs. He drops to the floor. "Humph-uhh. You bitch!" I rush out of the room as fast as I can with a messed up knee, but I'm not fast enough. Jesse gets to his feet. I get just to the door when he grabs my hair and pulls me down. He kicks my stomach. I feel like I'm going to vomit, it hurts so much. I grab my stomach and turn on my side. He smiles and stands up. "It's Shannon's turn now." He turns for the door.

I breathe heavily as I know this is my only chance. While he's not looking, I pull the pistol from it's ankle holder. I raise my shaking arms. "Stop now."

Jesse slightly turns my way, but stops when he sees the gun. He laughs. "Do you even know how to use that thing? Or do you value human life too much?" He raises his own arm, holding my other pistol. He steps closer so his chest is right in front of the barrel. "You're not going to shoot me." I do value human life. The lives of my friends. I take a breath and squeeze the trigger. The glass of the window breaks and Jesse falls to the floor. I'm breathing heavily and there are tears in my eyes. I keep the pistol trained on Jesse as I check him over. I didn't fire the gun. Jesse has a wound to the head. I drop the pistol and lay back down. I curl on my side and hold my head as I cry. Jesse is dead. He was going to kill all of us. How is he dead?

Sirens and lights begin flashing through the window. "Jules!" I recognize Brianna's voice. I'm so relieved I sob uncontrollably. The trailer door opens. Brianna rushes to my side.

I throw my arms around her. “Bree. He’s dead. I didn’t shoot him, but he’s dead. I didn’t...” I shake my head. I can’t speak.

She wipes my face. “Shh. I know. Daniel got him. He was set up on the roof of the store. It’s okay, Jules. You’re safe now.”

I cry into her shoulder. “He shot Corey. He was going to hurt Shannon.”

Brianna helps me to my feet. “I know. The device in your pocket. We heard everything. We’re looking for them now. We tried to get there, but we didn’t find them in time. I’m so sorry about Corey.”

Brianna starts to lead me out, but I stop her. I don’t know why, but I lead her to the hallway. I fling open the door of the second bedroom. I’m shocked when I see the décor. Distorted pictures of Carl and Fredrick are everywhere. Jesse took my phone and car key, I want them back. I check all of the drawers of the desk and dresser. I spot a wooden box on a shelf above the bed and limp to it. I find my key, my phone, a pocket knife, and a black box. I slip everything into my pockets. “It’s Corey’s. He’ll be glad to have it back.” Brianna has a puzzled look on her face. I immediately understand. “Corey was shot in the leg. He’s alive, but he’s bleeding out.”

She leads me back through the trailer, which is now swarming with police officers, and out the door. Daniel is there to greet us. “Miss Jules. Are you okay?”

I nod. “Shannon and Corey? Corey was shot. He’s bleeding out.” He points out the many people searching around. The police are at three different buildings they could be in, but come out empty handed.

I look around me. “Shannon! Corey!” Oh please let me find them. I see another cabin they could be in down the road made of metal and beams that looks a little more promising. The window is covered by a board just like in the monitor. I hobble toward it. “Shannon! Corey!” Oh please be in there, please be the right one. I find the door on the side and pull on it. It’s rusted and difficult to move. Daniel gives me a hand. We pull on the door until it’s big enough for me to squeeze through. I see them as soon as I get inside. “Shannon!” I limp to her.

Her eyes bug, surprised to see me. I cut her tape and ropes using the pocketknife. “Oh doll, I’m so glad to see you.”

I take off my sweatshirt and cover her while I help her stand. I move to Corey and cut his bindings. He doesn't move. Shannon rushes over to help. I put my ear to Corey's mouth. I can't hear anything. I check for a pulse. It's faint, but there. "He's alive, but I can't hear if he's breathing." I look up to Shannon. Daniel and Brianna make their way inside.

We lay Corey out on the ground. Shannon puts her ear to his mouth and shakes her head. "I don't hear anything. Come on sugar, you gotta wake up." She puts her mouth to his and blows in a few breaths, then stops to listen. Daniel gets the duct tape off the floor. He rips a few pieces off and wraps them around his leg in the hope that it will help stop the bleeding. Daniel checks Corey's pulse. Shannon gives him another set of breaths. "Sweets please. Breathe." Her tears are flowing and she's getting choked up. I take over breathing. I tilt his chin up just a bit and pinch his nose as I blow in. I watch as his chest rises and falls, then I breathe again. I listen as my breath exits his lungs and watch his chest as his lungs fill back up again. He coughs and begins breathing on his own. Shannon almost falls on me in relief. Corey slowly opens his good eye and looks at us. I can see it's a struggle for him. Shannon takes his hand. "Don't say anything, just breathe, okay. Don't you dare die." Corey closes his eye and nods. Shannon puts her hand on his chest. She lays on my shoulder. I wrap my arms around her, relieved we're all safe.