

What Happens In Vegas - Free Novel by C. Qualls

Chapter 9

The four of us are seated at the same table Fredrick and I sat at the first time we had dinner together. Fredrick sits next to me leaving Shannon to sit with Corey. I'm glad he invited Corey to join us. I always feel bad knowing we're eating while they're standing watch. Shannon begins grilling Fredrick about our relationship. There's not much info to give, since we've only been married just over a week.

Shannon squints her eyes and asks, "have you met Old Tom yet?"

I roll my eyes. "That's what she calls my dad." I fill Fredrick in.

He nods. "Yes. Actually he was at your graduation. We plan to have him over for dinner when he's well enough, perhaps you should join us as well."

Shannon looks at me then replies. "Do you have a pool? Or maybe we could do a barbecue."

Fredrick smiles. "I do have a pool. You're welcome any time."

Shannon smirks. "How 'bout tomorrow?"

I pull out my phone. "I'll call daddy."

My dad agrees and we solidify our plans. Fredrick whispers to me. "Do you happen to know how to grill?"

I kiss his cheek. "Of course. You know, we should make a party out of it. Why don't we invite all of your guards so I can get to know them better. They can bring their girlfriends too. The two that have them anyway."

Fredrick is getting more and more stiff beside me. "Don't get carried away. They are my employees. Also I don't think your father does well in crowds."

I deflate a little, but he's right about my dad. "Well, how about just Corey then? I'm sure Shannon doesn't want to be a third wheel. At least that way she'll have someone to talk to." Fredrick concedes.

The plans are made and we enjoy our evening together. Shannon and Corey seem to get along pretty well. I ask Corey to drive Shannon home so she doesn't have to get a cab. Fredrick opens my car door for me. I'm excited about tomorrow I get to see my dad outside of the facility. It's the first time in a really long time. Seeing him earlier was great, but we didn't have much time together. Then I think of Fredrick's dad. I wonder what he's like. I've seen him in passing at the office, but I have never interacted with him. "Fredrick, when will I meet your dad?"

Fredrick takes my hand. "You want to meet my father?"

I lean into his arm. "Of course I do. Though, I don't know anything about him. Do you have a good relationship with him?"

Fredrick thinks about how to answer. "Our relationship is complicated. He was an excellent businessman, but he is also a playboy. He goes through women constantly, he doesn't respect them. I learned a lot about the business world from him, but I also learned how not to act. We were never really affectionate. If you want to meet him, I'll take you now."

I nod. "Please."

Fredrick calls his dad and finds out where he is. He makes a few turns and stops in front of a lavish tavern. There are women in very scandalous clothing serving cocktails in the dimly lit room. Fredrick leads the way as if he knows exactly where to go. We reach a secluded area that is roped off. The guards move the rope without questioning us. We head up the stairs until we reach a room full of chatter. There are several older men smoking cigars and playing poker. Some of the men have young girls in their laps.

A gray haired man with overly tanned skin stands as we enter "There he is! Everyone look, my son brought his newly acquired wife." The men go nuts with cheers and congratulations. Glasses clink together and more drinks are poured. It appears like a cheerful scene, though I feel like it's all in ridicule.

Fredrick nods to the white haired, tanned man. "Father. A word." Fredrick leads me outside the door, stopping in the hall.

Fredrick's father emerges from the room. "What is it son. We're playing for shares in there. Baker is supposed to join us later. He thinks he can gamble his way back in. You really showed him, that bastard. Good work. I think we

should change the name of the business. Get his sorry name off our life's work."

Fredrick nods. "Yes, Father. It's already in the works. I did not come here for business. I came here to introduce you to my wife, Julia."

I'm about to say hello when Mr. Draven speaks first. "Why? Does she want to bed me too? Sorry, honey I'm not interested. I'm sure you're amazing in the sack or else you wouldn't have been so lucky as to land my son."

I don't think, I just react. My hand comes flying of it's own accord. The sound of the slap resonates through the hall. I turn around and walk out.

Fredrick's POV

I glare at my father as he stands there in shock. I clench my jaw and shake my head, then turn around to leave. I follow Julia out. "Julia. I'm very sorry. I didn't know he thinks that of you. I'm not going to defend his behavior. You were absolutely right, he deserved what he got."

Julia turns to face me. "I don't want you to have to take sides. If he apologizes, I'll forgive him. This was my fault, I shouldn't have insisted on meeting him."

I take her waist and tilt her chin up so she's looking at me. Her eyes are glistening. "This was not your fault. What he did was callous. He didn't only insult you, he insulted both of us. I know you are not like that at all. You are innocent. This was in no way your fault. Understand?" Her head hangs down, but still she nods.

Julia doesn't say a thing the whole drive. We get home and head straight to our room. "Would you like a bath tonight?" She nods her head then goes into her closet.

I prepare the bath with soothing fragrances I had purchased specifically for her use. I turn on the jets just as she enters the washroom. "That smells really nice. Thank you."

I stand up to give her the room. "I'll be in my study. Take your time." She takes my hand as I go to leave. I turn back around. Her hands slowly wrap around my waist and she places her head to my chest. I hold her tight until, after a short while, she pulls away. I kiss her lips then let her have the room.

I go to my study and handle some business. There is always something that needs to be done. I'm too frustrated to focus on work. My hand goes to my neck as I dial my father's number. No surprise, he doesn't answer so I leave a message. "Father, what you said tonight was malicious and reprehensible. Julia did not deserve to be treated that way. She is the kindest person I have ever known. You deserved what you got." I hang up the phone and decide to go down to the garage. I have a car that needs work.

I'm listening to a mellow classic rock station while I'm under the hood of the 57 Chevy Bel Air. The paint is a crisp metallic blue and the interior is all original in pristine condition. The engine itself is pretty clean. I found the car through an estate sale. It had been sitting in a garage for over 20 years. I've already changed the belts and plugs. Now I'm just changing out the air filter.

"Fredrick?" Julia's voice sounds from behind me. I turn to look at her, just to let her know I hear her. "You didn't come to bed and then you weren't in your study, so I got worried. It's past midnight."

By this time she's reached my side. She smells so fresh and enticing. She's looking down into the engine. She picks up a crescent wrench and hands it to me. It's exactly the tool I need. "Thank you. I'm sorry for making you worry. I was just trying to get out of my head."

I tighten the last bolt. "When did you get this?" She asks.

I organize my tools and get them put away. "I bought it a few days ago. I wanted to surprise you."

She drops her head, "I'm sorry for ruining the surprise. It's beautiful."

I close the hood and wipe my hands. "I'm glad you like it. It's yours."

She gasps. "Really?" Her eyes light up as she hugs me around my waist for a quick squeeze. She lets go of me to take a closer inspection of the car. "You're the best husband ever!"

I laugh. I go wash my hands and arms then dry them off. I pull her into my arms. "You're the best wife ever." I kiss her, hard. I need her. She gives me strength, comfort, and peace of mind. I don't know what I would do without her. I don't know how I lived before she came along. I was miserable. Nothing made me happy. I never used to smile, I definitely didn't laugh. She's changed me so much.

Julia pulls away breathlessly. She smiles at me. I can't help but smile back. "Let's go to bed."

I turn around to switch off the music when the song changes. "Hold on, I love this song." She grabs my hand to stop me. I take her hand in mine and hold it to my chest. I glide her other hand up to my shoulder. We slow dance to Sting's Fields of Gold in my garage. Julia's Head is on my chest by the time the song ends. I reach over to turn off the radio, but we keep slow dancing. I'm in a pair of old jeans and a dirty t-shirt and she's in her silky peach colored robe. It doesn't matter. This moment is perfect. It's one that I will still think of when I'm old and gray. Hopefully I'll still be dancing with her by then.

I can feel her starting to sag a little and I know she's dead on her feet. I pick her up bridal style. She lets out a soft scream, but grabs onto my neck. I take her up the stairs and to our room. I lay her down and tuck her in. Her hand reaches up to cup my cheek. I kiss her hand then her forehead. "Go to sleep. I'll be back, I just have to shower." She nods and closes her eyes. I'm sure she's out before I even reach the washroom.

It's 3 am. I'm awoken by a call from Darius, one of my guards. He specializes in getting down and dirty. He's the one that has a way of finding things out. "Sir. Mr. Draven was in a car accident. I'm sorry, but he didn't make it."

My hand tightens around my phone. "You know what to do. Get Peter and Ivan on it too." I hang up and I'm numb. I sit up in bed and I'm blank.

Julia wakes up, which is weird because she sleeps like the dead. "Fredrick? What's wrong?"

I reply as if on autopilot. "My father is dead."

Julia jumps up to sit next to me. "What happened?"

I automatically answer. "He was killed in a car accident."

She covers her mouth as she gasps. She slowly brings her hand back down. "Oh, honey I'm so sorry."

She takes my hand in both of hers and places them to the middle of her chest. The numbness slowly starts to fade. I turn my head to look at her. "I need you right now."

She nods her head. "Of course. I'm here. What do you need me to do?"

I shake my head. "I don't know. I just need you."

Julia's POV

I hold Fredrick in my arms. His head is resting on my breast as if I were comforting a child. His arms are wrapped around my waist. My fingers gently run through his hair. We sink down slowly until eventually we're laying down. I hope I'm giving him all the comfort he needs. His breathing evens out eventually, I relax a little knowing he fell asleep. I have no idea how he feels right now. I do know their last moments together were in conflict. I pray that this doesn't haunt him. I stay awake and watch over him like a sentinel. The sun is starting to peek through the blinds, signifying a new day. I take comfort in that thought.

Fredrick's alarm chimes and he rolls over to get it. He turns his head my direction as if out of habit. He's surprised when he looks at me. "Did my alarm wake you?"

I give him a light smile and shake my head. "No, I was awake."

He stretches on the bed. "Get some sleep. I have work to do before the barbecue."

He goes to stand up, but I stop him. "We should cancel it. I don't think this is the best time for a barbecue."

His eyebrows crease. "Why not?"

I look at him pointedly, "Fredrick."

He looks back at me in all seriousness. "I'm fine."

I'm shocked at his response. He's not grieving at all. This isn't right. I know he's hurting badly. "I'm glad you're fine, but I'm still going to cancel it. That way I can help you with arrangements. I am your wife after all."

He finally agrees. Fredrick goes to work out while I sink down in the comfort of the blanket. I wake up to my second alarm and roll out of bed. I'm wide awake for once in my life. The only reason is because I'm worried about Fredrick. He wants to act like everything is normal, I have no choice but to let him.

Eventually it will catch up to him and I want to be there for him when it does. I get dressed in a soft summer dress and go downstairs for breakfast.

Fredrick is sitting there with his cup of coffee like always. Geraldine brings breakfast out. I sit down excited to eat biscuits with gravy and a fried egg. Fredrick has a healthy looking dish in front of him. No wonder he always steals my food, his food looks bland and tasteless. Out of curiosity, I steal a bite. Yep, tasteless. I'm barely able to choke it down. "Hey, eat your own slop." He says before stealing a bite of my food.

I point at him with my fork "Hey, them's fightin' words. Besides yours is the slop. I wonder if a pig would even eat it, it's gross." I poke open the egg so the yolk saturates everything, then shovel a bite of my food into my mouth. It's delicious. I hum as I chew.

"Right, a pig would definitely eat that," he says as he steals another bite.

"Are you calling me a pig?"

Fredrick smiles. "Absolutely. You're the prettiest and most sexy little pig I've ever seen." He then steals another bite.

"That would make you a slimy green frog."

Fredrick ends up eating half of my plate of slop. He heads to his study while I call Shannon, Corey, and Dad to cancel the barbecue. They're all understanding. Of course Corey already knew about everything. I go to the study where Fredrick is facing the window with his hand on his neck. "You're sure?" He asks whoever is on the other line. "Excellent. Keep me informed." He hangs up and turns around to face me.

"What's going on?" I ask him.

Fredrick sits beside me. "Last night those men in the room were all the share holders. They were playing poker for shares. Baker came up with this bright idea. He was trying to weasel his way back into the company. Anyway, he lost. Father took them, all. Baker went off into a tirade. He claimed Father cheated, which he didn't. Father is excellent at poker, everyone knows that. Baker was just desperate. I had already taken half of his shares."

My eyebrows knot. "Why did you take his shares?"

Fredrick pulls me onto his lap. "Baker is a shady guy. I've never trusted him. I've wanted to get rid of him since before I took over." He runs his nose along my neck and kisses under my ear. I squirm because it tickles.

"Why did you agree to marry his daughter then? And why does she have a different last name?"

Fredrick runs his hand up and down my neck. "She took her mother's name. He set it all up because he wanted a sense of security. He thought that through her he could control me. I agreed so that I could take his shares."

Fredrick begins kissing my neck. I'm trying really hard not to lose my mind, but he is so addictive. Every touch entices me. "That's a pretty calculating and shallow plan. That doesn't sound like you at all."

Fredrick pulls back to look me in the face. "That's the way I've always been. Everything is business. At least that's the way it's been until you came along. You've changed me. I'm still a shrewd businessman. I have to be if I want to stay on top. If I get soft they will take advantage of me. You..." He kisses my neck again. "You've made me soft."

I shift my body so I am now straddling him. I gently rub my hips up, and I can feel it. He's growing under me. I whisper in his ear. "Not any more." I bite down on his ear. He grunts and stiffens more under me. His hands travel up my thighs and under my dress. His hands continue traveling until they grip my rear. He caresses my lace panties then slowly inches his way up my body. His hands glide up my back lifting my skirt in the process. It's a sensation I have never felt before, but is oh so delicious. I exhale into his ear. His lips are on my neck nibbling everywhere he touches. His hands move to the front of my body. My breasts are cupped by his gentle but firm hands. His thumbs find my nipples over my bra. My panties are on full display. I'm nervous, but I trust Fredrick. He would never do anything to hurt me.

A knock sounds at the door. Fredrick grunts and pulls his hands away. He makes an adjustment to his pants, then he puts me back across his lap sideways. "What is it?"

Mrs. Bailey's voice comes through the door. "Mr. Calloway is here for you, Sir."

He tightens his arms around my waist. "Enter." Mrs. Bailey opens the door and leads an elderly gentleman with beady eyes and a crooked back to a

chair in front of Fredrick's desk. "Mr. Frasier should be arriving soon, please show him in and prepare a pot of coffee and some infused ice water."

Mrs. Baily turns to leave. "Yes, sir."

The man starts pulling files out of an old leather suitcase. I'm uncomfortable sitting like this in front of this strange man. "I should go, you're obviously busy."

I'm about to stand when Fredrick pulls me back down. He whispers in my ear. "Not yet." He moves his lower body slightly so I get poked in the leg. My face heats up instantly. I let my hair fall to cover my face from the old man.

Mrs. Bailey leads another man in while carrying a tray. She places the tray down and leaves. This man is closer to Fredrick's age. He's a blond pretty boy with blue eyes and a charming smile. He reaches out to shake Fredrick's hand. "This must be the mysterious Mrs. Draven."

I shake his extended hand, "Julia." I recognize this man. I've seen him in the office on a few occasions. He's Fredrick lawyer.

Fredrick allows me to stand up, but takes my hand pulling me along to sit with him at his desk. "Gentlemen, may I pour you a coffee or water?" I ask to put everyone at ease, but mostly me. I serve the drinks and lean back into Fredrick's chest while I sip my water.

Mr. Calloway begins speaking. "Mr. Draven this meeting is of a personal nature. Should she be present for this?"

Fredrick glares at him. "Regardless of whatever my Father has claimed, she is my lawfully wedded wife. You will show her the respect she deserves in her own home. Now that you understand your place, you may begin."

Mr. Calloway clears his throat then begins speaking. "The last will and testament of Carl Draven." There is a lot of legal jargon that I don't understand. I catch a few things here and there such as he wishes to be cremated. All of his worldly possessions pass to his son, blah blah blah. Mr. Calloway finally gets to the end of his will and reads; "all 25 shares of Draven and Baker are to be passed to the first grandchild. Should there be no grandchild within 10 years of the time of death, the shares will be passed to the son Fredrick Draven."

Fredrick nods and signs the bottom of the will. Mr. Callaway stands up, shakes Fredrick's hand followed by Mr. Frasier's hand then leaves. Mr. Frasier speaks as soon as the door is closed. "That man should've retired centuries ago. It's ridiculous that he's still allowed to practice law. He's really a scumbag."

Fredrick laughs. Fredrick is much more relaxed. His hand caresses my thighs. "Julia, this is my buddy Mike. He's also my lawyer. He and his wife graduated with me."

Fredrick, Mike, and I chat on for a while. Mike asks me, "Have you had a chance to take care of your legal name change?"

I guiltily bite my lip. "I haven't really thought about it." Fredrick's hand grips my thigh. His other hand goes to the back of his neck. I look him in the eye, I know I upset him. "I'm sorry. It wasn't out of spite, I promise. I just didn't think about it."

His hand falls from his neck and goes back on my back. "I gave you the papers for a reason. I even told you to do it." I hang my head. I disappointed him.

Mike waves his hand. "That's not a big deal, just a few more pieces of paper. I'll need you to sign your legal name as it is now. When you get it legally changed, I will make the changes on my end."

I scrunch my eyebrows in confusion. "What am I signing?"

Fredrick clears his throat. "My will and transition of shares. If anything happens to me everything goes to you. Also I'm giving the shares I got from Baker to you."

I think my heart stopped for about five seconds. "What?... wh... wha."

"Deep breaths, Julia." Fredrick hands me my glass of water. I take a few big gulps. He laughs. "Julia, who else would I leave everything to? Silly girl."

Mike speaks up. "I just need two signatures, Julia. Quick and painless." I nod and automatically sign where he points. "What do you intend to do with your Father's possessions?" Mike asks.

Fredrick is quick to respond. "Keep the ranch and everything there. Sell everything else. And retire Sam. In fact, double his pension, he's certainly earned it."

Mike nods and makes a few quick notes. "Alright. Julia, fax me a copy of your ID once you make the changes. We're all set here." Mike shakes my hand, then Fredrick's, before making his way out.

Fredrick picks me up and places me on his desk in front of him so my legs are on either side of his chair. He lays his head on my breast. He takes a deep breath. "My Father is dead, Julia. He's gone."

I gently stroke his back. "I know. I'm so sorry." I kiss his head. "I'm still here." He holds me for I don't know how long. Neither of us speak. Eventually he stands up and pulls me along with him. We spend the rest of the day making memorial arrangements.