

# Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

## Chapter 12

Raven.Reynolds

Nope. She just said feel better. I hope you've been resting so we can cook together again. Class was a bore without u

Charlotte.Withers

Thanks again Rave! See you tomorrow.

Raven.Reynolds

TTYL love bug

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Around noon, I spot Chase swimming laps in the pool. His body moves with ease and grace as he swims back and forth. I watch him for another five minutes before heading out to the backyard.

I stay quiet, tiptoeing to the lounge chairs. This is so wrong of me, watching him swim. This is the creepiest thing I have done since...since ever.

Chase must have sensed my presence. He stops swimming and glances in my direction.

"How are you feeling?" He's breathless. "Do we still need to make that trip to the medical center?"

"N-no. I'm fine, thank you."

"So come join me."

"Now? In the pool? I don't have any swimsuits here."

"You can strip down to your bra and panties, it's just like a bathing suit, or you can go grab one that's in the laundry room. Females leave theirs behind all the time."

He swims closer to my side. "I need someone to swim against. I won't be looking at your body, scout's honor." There it is, ladies and gentlemen. Chase's panty-dropping smile.

"I am sure, that right there was a lie."

"Fine, don't come in." He backstrokes to the middle of the pool. I watch his body move gracefully through the water.

He is making small talk. He wants to bond. Just go for it. When is the next time I'll see this Chase? He seems in a happier mood than this morning.

*Take advantage of it, Charley*, I tell myself. I take my shirt off and get in the pool with my bra and shorts.

*Splash.*

He looks at me surprised.

"Charlotte Withers, I didn't take you for a girl who throws caution to the wind." He swims over to me. "You know you could have taken the shorts off too."

"Are you flirting with me, Chase?" I turn my head, not wanting to see his face when he tells me I am crazy or whatever mean thing he could possibly think of.

"It depends."

I look at him surprised.

"Are we going to race or not?" He splashes water at me.

"I think—I'll just watch you. I almost died this morning, so I shouldn't be doing any extracurricular activities." I wipe my face.

"So why did you come into the pool?" He circles around me.

"You offered, and it's rare when you do."

"Am I that bad?"

I shrug my shoulders as he continues to swim around me.

"You can tell me, I won't bite—unless..." He's right behind me and nips on my right earlobe. I jump, turning around—touching the spot he just bit.

"Chase?"

"So, no biting?" He laughs.

I don't know whether to play with the playful Chase or get out of this pool. I wonder what goes on in his head sometimes for him to be such a hardass that he can rarely show this side of him.

Yet, I find this side of him more dangerous than any. He looks so carefree and happy. His laugh and smile are captivating, alluring, and I was very tempted.

“Are you just going to stare at me like I am an alien?” He splashes me again.

“Chase,” I pout. “Stop it or—”

“Or what?”

I quickly splash him back and try to make a swim for it as he wipes his face. Almost to the edge of the pool, he pulls me back and then picks me up.

I should be more worried about what he is about to do next, but no, I am too consumed by his large hands on my waist. He tosses me in the pool, and I can still feel his hands on me.

I am so smitten by him it’s almost comical.

“Charlotte, are you okay?”

I wipe my face and look at him. “Uh, yeah?”

“You’re not mad?” He looks at me as if I am about to explode.

“No, we are playing right?” Now it’s me who is confused.

“Just have to ask because you are quiet. And nine out of ten times when girls are quiet, they are pissed off and ready to attack.”

“First of all,” I splash him again. “Wherever you got that from is a lie. Second of all, we don’t attack—you make us sound like wild animals. Third of all...” I swim a little closer to him. “This is an attack.”

I quickly pounce on him, dunking his head under the water. He pops up shaking his head from side to side. I laugh.

“You shouldn’t have done that.”

He reaches out for me, and I move out of the way in time. I am a decent swimmer, but no match for Chase. He catches up with me quickly, picking me up and tossing me back into the water.

“Chase.” I pop up from underneath the water, wiping my face. “Stop tossing me.”

“I can but...” He swims. “But it depends.”

“On?” My breath catches in my throat as he leaves no space between us.

“On this...”

Tilting my chin up, he looks at my lips and back to my eyes. *Please just kiss me already.* Like the Gods finally answered my prayers, his lips captured mine. I whimper as his tongue skims mine.

Wrapping his arms around my waist, he pulls me into his chest. As the kiss continues, I can feel his hunger growing, and like a moth to a flame, mine grows.

I can't fight it. I don't want to fight it. However, all good things must end. Chase breaks the kiss and stares at me.

"I shouldn't be doing this," he breathes heavily. I don't think, I just pounce on him, arms wrapped around his neck, pulling him in for another kiss.

He breaks the kiss again, and the whimper I give out doesn't go unnoticed. "Don't worry, I'm not going anywhere." He kisses my jawline and down my neck sensually and slowly.

"Oh, God," I say, tossing my head back.

"Not God, just me." He slides my right bra strap off my shoulder, kissing me there, and repeats it on the other side. My whole body is now covered in goosebumps.

"Oh, hell no!"

My eyes widen, and my body freezes. "This can't be happening."

"Don't worry, I got this," Chase says nonchalantly, like Everett and most likely the other guys aren't behind me. He swims around me, and I hear him get out of the pool.

"Dude, you're smashing Charlotte?" Everett asks. "Dr. Tucker fucked her and made her feel all better, huh?"

"Shut up," Chase growls.

Worst mistake of my life is turning around.

"Nice tits, Charles." Darren gives me props.

I look down; my arms instantly cover my breasts. When did my bra get taken off? I look around the pool, spotting it floating near the other side.

"Inside, guys, now." Chase's voice is loud, and the frustration is evident.

"You got it," Everett says. "Come on, you two, I think Chase is about to blow."

*Splash.*

I need not look to know Chase is back in the pool. He brings me my bra, and I quickly put it on.

“Charlotte—wait, where are you going?”

“I have to go.” I pick up my shirt and flee into the house.

“Charles!” I don’t stop to look at Darren. “I guess we are even now.” He laughs, and my face is cherry red as I make my way upstairs. I need to get dressed and go home immediately.

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I avoid leaving the room until later on in the evening. Chase hasn’t come to check on me, not once, and I’m glad he didn’t, in a way. After what happened earlier, us being alone is not a good idea.

The only one who stopped by to get me out of the room was Austin. I genuinely told him I wasn’t up for it and would take a nap before heading home. Halfway true, I am too embarrassed to face any of them, and I’m tired.

Just as I gathered the courage to face the guys before going home, I hear her voice.

“Chase!” Her voice is like a bucket of cold water. A painful reminder that Chase isn’t on the market and is off-limits.

I can’t let myself be so stupid and fall for his boyish charms again, no matter how badly I wish it was me with him and not her. There has always been a reason I stayed away from him once I reached college.

I like to think one day we would end up together, but I am sure my husband will be a normal guy working in marketing.

I hear his room door close and this is the perfect time to make my escape. I rush out of the room and down the stairs.

“Whoa, where is the fire?” I run into Vincent. He holds out his hands, steadying me. “Are you okay?”

“No fire, I thought I should hit the road before I run into traffic.”

“Before you leave, do you mind taking a stroll with me? I just need some fresh air and company would be nice too.” He stuffs his hands into his pockets.

Being two flights down from Chase's room, I can hear Natalia. She is yelling at him for supposedly ditching her today. They had plans to go into town, Halloween costume shopping.

Of course, they would dress up in couple's costumes. Natalia isn't his *official* girlfriend, but she is the closest thing to it.

"Uh, yeah, I think I can use some fresh air before my drive. First, let me grab my jacket and hat from the car." We exit the house.

"Sounds like a good idea. Can't have you sick."

The weather is so bipolar today.

"Thanks for the invite." I tug my hat down, to cover my ears. Fall is upon us and this wind is no joke. The sharp night air makes me shiver.

"No problem, walking helps out a lot with physical and mental health." He smiles and his dimples deepen. "I heard about today in the pool." He chuckles.

"Yeah, about that..."

"No need to explain. Whatever you have with Chase is none of my business."

"There is nothing though." I gently bump into him.

He drapes his arm around my shoulder, pulling me into his side.

"I know there is. I can see the way you look at him. You don't have to lie to me. I am not going to judge you."

I know he wouldn't judge me, but I always question myself when talking to Vincent. Out of all the guys there, he is the conventional or conformist type.

I am drawn to him in a different way. He plays everything safe and follows the guys, but when it's just me and him hanging out, I feel like he is more himself.

He brings out the inner goofball in me. The girl I wish I could be, but I have plans, plans set for me to survive this thing called life.

He plays it safe, and I should want safety and security, but I had that my entire life growing up, and I want someone who will challenge me and keep me on my toes. I need adventure, so to speak.

"Earth to Charlotte." He squeezes my shoulder lightly.

“Huh? Oh, I’m sorry, I spaced out.” We stop walking, and he turns to face me.

“A penny for your thoughts?”

“I sell them for a dollar.” I smile, as does he. Patting his pocket, he pulls out his wallet, handing me over a dollar. “You mean it?”

“I do.”

“Well...” I take the dollar. “I was thinking how you’re such a nice guy, but you’re single. Why is that? I know you have your fair share of girls in the bedroom, but none as a girlfriend. Are you still thinking about Dove?”

He gestures his hand for me to give back the dollar. “Maybe I shouldn’t have asked about your thoughts. Hand over the dollar.”

“I’ll pay you a dollar if you tell me why.”

“Not a chance in hell.” He starts walking again.

I jog after him. “Come on, Vincent, tell me.” I grab his arm, stopping him.

“It will change the way you look at me.”

“No, I won’t, you’re Vincent, my Vincent the invincible.” I look in his eyes, and he doesn’t have to answer me, I know that look. I see the look in all the cliché romance movies.

The same look my father gives my mother when he is just in awe of the woman he loves. Holy cracker barrel. How could I not see this before? All the times we’ve hung out together, and he never mentioned it.

“Do you really want to know?”

I say yes, but I shake my head no. I can’t.

“I thought so. Look, I am going to keep walking...alone if you don’t mind.” He clears his throat and doesn’t wait for an answer, just walks away.

“Vincent.” I jog after him again. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“And ruin our friendship? No way in hell.” He stops walking.

“I am a big girl. I can handle myself.”

“Charlotte, I love our friendship.”

“More reason for me to help you.” I want to throw a tantrum because he is being a big stupid jerk.

“This is our last year in college, and we might not ever see each other again, but you and Dove will. I heard she already has a job lined up out here. Let me help you get the girl you are madly in love with.”

He exhales heavily. “She is going to make me choose between you two. She doesn’t like to feel threatened, and I know she feels that way about you.

“I got the text messages daily when you lived at the frat house, and she and I weren’t together. Just imagine what it would be like if I got back with her. And that’s something I can’t do.

“I can’t be with someone, no matter how much I love them, if they can’t accept all my family—you are family to me.”

I can feel the tears forming, and I try with all my willpower to stop them from falling.

“Vincent, don’t be ridiculous—you’ve found love. And I refuse to be that person to stand in the way of it. Let me talk to her, okay? That way you don’t have to choose. I can get her to see that I am no threat, and you love her.”

“Why are you so nice and always willing to go out of your way to help people?”

“Because I know deep down inside people need someone to know and care. Even if they say they don’t, they do. Besides, I know you would help me in a heartbeat. We just got that connection.” I wipe my eyes.

“Don’t cry, Charley.” He steps towards me.

“It’s not fair.”

“What’s not fair? I’m lost. Charlotte, please stop crying, what’s the matter—did Dove say something to you before?”

“No.” I swat his hands away. “I got to go.”

“Charlotte what just happened? What’s not fair? Is it Chase?” he bombards me with questions, and I lose it.

The connection he and I have is amazing. The connections I have with all the guys are worth treasuring, but Chase and I haven’t got that yet and it’s not fair. The love universe is against me. Where is Raven when I need her?

“I don’t want to talk about it. I really got to go.”



Vincent pulls me into his arms, hugging me tightly.

“You know you are an amazing woman, and I think Chase knows that too. He hasn’t been in love before, so give it time. I know this is the last thing you want to hear, but don’t force love—if it’s meant to be, it will happen.

“You want him to feel the same way you feel about him, and I think it will happen, but not now. You are not living in a sappy love romance novel. Give it time.”

“You read romance novels?” I sniffle looking up at him.

“Out of everything I just said, was that all you heard?” He raises his eyebrow at me. “Hmm?”

“No, I heard it all. I just don’t know why I’ve fallen for someone years ago and it’s still there. I thou—”

“What?” he steps back, ending the hug. “You loved Chase before now?”

“Vincent, I’ve said too much. I got to go.”

He shrugs a little. “Alright, I’ll let that last confession go, but please don’t rush it, and also, don’t worry about me and Dove. I’ll figure something out.”

“I can help.”

“Honestly, Charlotte, you are an emotional train wreck and you might say the wrong thing to Dove, and I don’t want you getting into a fight—physically or verbally. You just focus on you and RCA.

“Speaking of that—I heard that—never mind just go home and get some rest. Now that I think about it, I need to go somewhere. See you tomorrow, and I think you should reconsider moving back in. Later Charley.”

He doesn’t wait for me to respond to him not wanting me to help and flat out calling me a train wreck.

I doubt I am a train wreck. Maybe a tad bit emotionally after everything that happened today, but that’s about it. Am I an emotional train wreck?

Next Chapter

Continue to the next chapter of Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers