

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

Chapter 16

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CHARLOTTE

I see it's a message from Wolf. I've been MIA with him, but I'd rather not deal with him while the whole drama with me and Raven is going on. He still hangs out with her, and I don't want to see her.

I am on a mission to fix things with Chase and me first. I rummage through my dresser trying to find something that says I am sorry but I also want you.

Ten minutes later, I think I have the right attire, and I make my way to the bathroom.

Inhale. Exhale.

Knock. Knock.

"Go away, Charlotte," he grunts.

"How did you know it was me?"

"Who else is knocking on the bathroom door beside us? Now go away."

I look down at the black nightie. God, I do look like a woman trying to seduce a man.

It's all or nothing.

Turning the knob, I walk into his room. He is sitting up, his back against the headboard, and he is typing away on the laptop. I take a quick sweep of the room. Plain and simple, and the business plan isn't anywhere in sight.

"Charlotte, what are you wearing?" Slowly Chase closes the laptop, his eyes sweeping across my body. I involuntarily shiver. A smile tugs at his lips, which must mean he approves.

That's a good thing or I would write a letter to *Cosmopolitan* letting them know they're full of shit. There was an article in the magazine a few years ago called "How to Seduce Your Man."

Raven dragged me to Victoria's Secret for some lingerie. We didn't leave until I finally bought stuff. Now I am thankful for the one time she peer-pressured me.

“Charlotte?” He drags out my name.

“Do you like it?” I mentally facepalm myself. I sound like an eager junior high student. “I mean—”

“Yes. I like it very much. Just one question. Why are you wearing it?”

Don't think. Just Do.

I sway my hips seductively. “For you.”

“Well, Smurfette, I must say you look fucking delicious.” He gets off the bed, walking towards me, wrapping his arms around me, and kissing me softly.

Chase is making me feel things I only read about in books. “But you don’t have to come in here dressed like that because of what I said earlier. I don’t want you to feel like you have to do this—if you aren’t ready.”

“I am ready.”

He looks me in the eyes and shakes his head no. “You aren’t ready, Charlotte, and it’s okay if you aren’t. I can wait.”

“I am ready, Chase,” I say breathlessly.

He slowly lays me down on the bed. He kisses me deeply and all the doubts I had until this moment are gone.

“Charlotte, I can’t.” He sits up, running his hand through his hair.

“Huh?”

“I like you a lot, and I don’t want to screw this up—you are different than the other girls and—”

“I get it.”

“See, why are you acting like that? If anything, you should be happy I don’t take your v-card right now. I want it to be special and blowing your back out while the guys are here isn’t it. Trust me, now isn’t the time.”

He leans over, kissing my lips once more. “Don’t be mad at me now.” He lays some of his weight on me. “Want to watch a movie instead?”

“Now?” I try not to sound disappointed—I know what he is doing is the right thing, but I feel so ashamed. Embarrassed, let down—hell, I don’t even know the word I want to use, but a tiny piece of me feels rejected. Yup, rejected.

“Umm yeah, I still would like your company—even if we aren’t fucking.” He sits up and I do the same. “One movie and you can head back to your room.”

“Are you mad?” I bite my bottom lip and he tugs it free, rubbing his thumb across it.

“No, but you keep asking if I am mad will make me mad. So, stop it. I am fine. So come on, one movie.”

Falling.

In.

Love.

How could that be? He was the total opposite of me and what I wanted. I throw cold water on my face once more. Last night I couldn’t finish watching *Harry Potter*. I had to get away from Chase.

I have never been in love before, but I’m guessing what I am feeling for Chase is that or a very strong liking for him.

“Hey, is everything alright? You just spaced out.” Chase walks into the bathroom, a towel draped across his shoulder. “Is everything okay?”

“Everything is fine. I was just thinking. Can I ask you a question?”

“I’ve never met someone with more questions than you. Go for it.” He takes a seat on the toilet.

“How do you know when you love someone?” He looks at me, raised eyebrows. “No not me—I don’t love you—I was just wondering...”

“Umm—well, my mother used to tell me that falling in love is one of the most exciting, rewarding, and scariest things you could ever do.

“You go from being someone who made me smile to being the catalyst of the happiness and joy in my life. You go from a gorgeous woman I met to the most beautiful woman I know.

“You went from my crush to the love of my life.” He smiles at me. Did he just confess his love for me?

“I’m using the word *you* loosely. I can see it in your eyes that you are overthinking it. Don’t overthink it. You asked me a question, remember?” He winks.

“R-right.” I shake my thoughts away. “Of course. Thank you for that. I’ll just get going.” I back out of the bathroom, closing the door.

“Hello, Charles.” Darren is standing in my room. “What would you need this for?” He picks the nightie off my computer chair.

“None of your business.” I snatch it from his dirty hands. “Why are you in my room?” I stuff the nightie into the dresser. Darren doesn’t know what boundaries are anymore, after I walked in on him choking his chicken.

“Giving you a heads up that we are throwing a party tonight.”

“On a Tuesday?” Are they crazy?

“Haven’t you heard that Croakington goes up on Tuesday,” he raps.

“No, but I heard of Taco Tuesday—much better than what you are talking about.” I smile, ushering him out of my room.

“You know partying on a weekday was one of the house don’ts. Now you guys are doing it? What’s the catch?”

When we go into the living room, Vincent and Tristan are playing the PS4, Miguel is busy texting away, Austin and Everett seem to be in a heated argument about who is invited to this party.

“Nothing, just want to throw a party, right boys?” says Darren.

They all shout at once their “yeahs” and “hell, yeahs.”

I might despise parties for the rest of my life since the Halloween party, but this is a good opportunity. I can search Chase’s room tonight, while he is down here entertaining their guests.

“Do you guys need help with anything?”

“Uhm, no. Don’t you have classes this afternoon?” Darren takes a seat on the couch. “Don’t want you missing classes over no party planning.”

“Actually, I don’t have any classes, but I would like to help with the party...” I trail off waiting for one of them to offer ideas or suggestions for me. Everyone remains silent and continues to do whatever they were doing.

“Guys, come on. I know you have something for me today.”

"We really don't, Charlotte," Tristan says over his shoulder. "Do what you females love to do. Sh—hey?!" I slap him in the back of his head.

"What did I tell you guys about that? Just because I am a lady doesn't mean—"

"For crying out loud, woman, we get it." Miguel stops texting to look at me. "Who is your role model? Amber Rose?"

"Amber who?" Who is that?

"Snow White had the fairies to look up to or was it the fairy godmother? Hell if I know or want to know. Just please take your feminist ass anywhere but here. Party starts at nine."

"Dude, no." Everett looks at him crazy. "Just don't."

"Yeah, Miguel, lighten up. She didn't do anything wrong and wants to help. What the hell is going on, anyway? You've been in a shit mood since last night."

"Fuck off, T." He storms out of the house, and I'm right on his heels. I couldn't even stop myself if I wanted to. I hate to see when the guys are going through shit.

I feel like it's my purpose to be here in this house—you know, to add the gentle touch to things. Help with their problems from a woman's viewpoint.

"Miguel, are you okay?"

"Not now, Charlotte. Just go back in the house."

Miguel is one guy in the house that is always laid back and always making jokes. He never gets fazed by anything or anyone, so this is new to me. Everything happening in my life is new to me.

It's like life is saying all right you've been sheltered and out of trouble for far too long. Here, take this bullshit and figure it out.

I don't like to push my way into people's lives, but with these guys, I want to help them with everything in my power. *And then betray them.*

"I can help you with whatever problem you have. I am really good at solving problems and stuff of that nature."

"Charlotte, you can't help. Just leave it alone."

"Miguel, I just want to help you. Come on."

He spins around and his face is pain-stricken. "You want to help that bad?"

I nod.

"Then help me figure out why my ex-girlfriend dumped me."

"You had a girlfriend?" I make a sour face. "But yet you were sleeping with Tasha last week and I think that was Jasmine who came stumbling into the dining room the other night. So, are you sure you had a girlfriend?"

"Bye, Charlotte."

"Wait! I want to help, but I don't understand this."

"It's not for you to understand. Look, I got to go."

He had a girlfriend? Where the hell have I been? I have never seen the same girl over twice besides Natasha. I could follow Miguel, but I think he is reaching his boiling point with me.

You know, living with seven guys has opened my eyes to a lot of things. One being they are just like girls, if not worse. The mood swings in this house were absolutely too much for me.

It was like every week, it was that time of the month.

"Hey Tristan," I say as he walks out of the house, slinging his backpack on his shoulder. "Can I ask you a question?"

"If it has something to do with the dishes left in the sink, it wasn't me."

"Uh no, I wante—"

"I didn't take your clothes out of the dryer and leave them to get all smelly."

"No not that—wait, what?"

"Umm, nothing. So, what did you have to ask me? I am about to run some errands. Make it quick, Charley."

His dark green eyes examine my face. I hate when they all do that. I get uncomfortable. It's like they can get into my soul.

"Do you know who Miguel's girlfriend is? He was just talking about her to me and got a phone call, never telling me her name."

“I want to help him make her a special dessert, thinking about writing her name on it. Do you think I should bake a cake or some kind of pie?”

“Maybe an apple pie or—I know, how about brownies? I think every—”

“Sheesh, woman. Her name is Valerie. I got to go.” He is annoyed now. “Lay off the baking flour, okay. I think the fumes or dust has gotten you a bit fucked up.”

“Right. Right. Well, thank you again. Valerie what?”

“I don’t know, I think Torres or Flores.” He slides into his car, reversing and driving down the road like a mad man. There is only one Valerie Flores, and she is on the track team.

Tugging the scarf tighter around my neck, I pick up my pace. The wind is slapping across my face, and I know for a fact my nose and ears are bright red.

Walsh University has few buildings, but with everything so spaced out, you would think it’s such a massive university. The football field is quite a walk from Croakington, and now I see why the guys take their cars.

Victory.

The football field is coming up. I break out into a jog, slowing down as I near the gate. At least twenty females are on the track jogging. Taking a seat on the bleachers, I wait until practice is over to make my move.

Seeing how they just started, I think I will be out here for a while. Damn, I wish I brought gloves.

Next Chapter

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