

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

Chapter 24

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CHARLOTTE

What is on the menu for dinner tonight? I've asked myself that question several times, standing in front of the fridge.

The chicken was in the sink defrosting, but I am not sure it will be ready to cook in time. Meatless pasta should be fine.

Buzz

My phone lights up on the countertop.

Nate

Hey Charlotte, are you ok?

Charlotte

I am fine thanks for asking.

Nate

No problem. I heard what happened and thought I should check up on you.

Charlotte

Right.

Nate

I'm actually walking by the frat house. Do you mind company? I can help you cook.

Charlotte

Umm...sure.

There's a knock on the door. Did he jog the rest of the way? Placing my phone on the countertop, I make my way to the door.

"Hey, Charlotte." He sports a lazy grin.

"That was quick. Please come in. You know which way the kitchen is." I step aside.

"Guys here?"

“Nope, ran out for a few minutes.” I check the chicken in the sink, knowing it is still frozen—I just need something to do. Wolf is just staring at me.

“So...” He walks around the counter. “I’ve been thinking—maybe you and I should give us a chance.”

“Umm...excuse me?” I walk towards the cabinet, putting enough space between us. I’m hoping he’ll catch the hint, but it doesn’t seem like it.

He walks toward me and all I can think about is if he is going to make a move. I pray he doesn’t. Wolf stands behind me and grabs the pan I was reaching for.

“I like you, and I know you like me too...”

“As a friend,” I add.

“Friend? We hung out fo—”

“Charles, I forgot my—what the fuck is he doing here? Why are you in my house?”

Miguel turns the corner sharp, stopping in his tracks, and looks at me and Wolf. Oh, this is not good. The last time these two were in each other’s presence was the bonfire, and that wasn’t a good encounter.

“Hey Miguel, he was just stopping by to check up on me. He heard about the fight with Raven.”

I walk towards him. Standing in between the two should help out some. I don’t think anyone would throw any punches, with me in the way...or would they?

“Yeah, that’s what phones are for.”

“Miguel...stop. He just stopped by and is going to help me cook dinner.” I place my hands on his chest pushing him back slightly. I don’t want these two fighting, whatsoever.

“You want someone to help you cook, then I’ll stay.”

He looks down at me and then at Wolf. “You can get the fuck out now. I don’t know what you think you were going to accomplish by coming here, but it’s not happening, bruh.”

“You can’t tell her who she can have over or not. Last time I checked, she’s single, and I don’t see why she can’t have me over then.”

Why can't he just stand still and be quiet? Miguel tenses up, and I swear I can see his veins popping out on his neck. Crap, why did the guys have to leave? Why did Miguel have to come back? Damn, this is too much.

"You know what, Wolf?" I turn around.

"I think maybe you should go. I'm sorry about this, but to not have any more problems, I think it's best we don't communicate.

"I mean you never talked to me before and—what I am trying to say is thank you for your help with my school work that time. I'm not sure I would have been able—"

"Charlotte, cut it out. I get it...no need for explanations and so on. I just wanted to fuck, honestly. Just a payback to Chase, but I see you have too many bodyguards for that. See you around, Miguel."

Wolf chuckles, picking up an apple off the countertop as he heads out the back door.

It takes a second to fully register what Wolf just confessed. I want to cry for being so stupid, but not while Miguel is standing here.

The look of "I told you so" is written across his face already. I let out a heavy sigh and walk back to the refrigerator, pulling out all the ingredients for tonight's dinner.

How could I be that stupid and naïve not to see what Wolf really wanted from me? That skimpy bathing suit at the bonfire should have been the dead giveaway. No one really noticed me until then. God, I'm so stupid.

"Hey, maybe we should order pizza instead."

Miguel takes the can of sauce from my hands. "You're shaking right now, and maybe you should go lie down for a few. I know what that dick said was hard on you. I can go bash his fucking face in if you like."

"Let's be honest here, you are going to do it regardless of what I say. I know you guys better than you guys think. I know everyone that has said something wrong to me, you guys approached them.

"I know these things, like how I know you all are going to do something to the dean and/or Candace." I raise my eyebrows.

"True." He says short and sweetly. "Come on, Charles, don't act like you don't like it."

"At first, I did, and then I didn't. A few students on campus are scared to talk to me because of you guys, and the ones that do talk to me are only trying to be in my good graces to get closer to you guys. It's annoying now."

“Whoa, there, firecracker—I guess we didn’t look at the outcome of our decisions. I do apologize on behalf of the guys and myself. You are special, Charles, and we don’t want to see you hurt.

“Now go lie down, and I’ll just order pizza when the guys let me know they are on their way back.”

“No, I need to cook to get my mind off things. So, since you are staying to help me, I need you to dice the pe—”

“Actually, I am not helping you. I just said that to get Wolf out. I will be in the living room watching *Criminal Minds*.” He kisses my forehead and makes a quick exit. “Sorry, Charles,” he shouts.

“I didn’t want your help, anyway,” I shout back, shaking my head and smiling.

I hear the front doorknob rattle. I look to see if Miguel is going to press pause on the show we are watching, and it’s a no, he is so engrossed in it.

I finished up dinner almost an hour ago and decided to watch *Criminal Minds* with him. I don’t know how anyone can watch a show like this at night time. I’m becoming paranoid about everything.

I kept glancing at our surroundings, and Miguel thought it was funny. Shows like *Criminal Minds* get you thinking a lot about people and their capabilities.

“Miguel.” I stretch my foot out, tapping his thigh. “Miguel...”

“What, Charles?” He looks down at my foot first and then my face.

“Someone is at the door. Go check it out.”

“Are you scared? It’s probably the guys.” He looks down at his cell phone. “It’s been almost three hours... it’s probably them. Stop being a chicken-shit.”

“But they would have the key. So why would they play with the doorknob? Come on, go check it out.”

He looks at me and heavily exhales. “Fine, Charles, come on.”

“Me?”

“Yup, let’s go.” He pauses the show and stands up taking me with him. “You are a chicken-shit, and I want to prove to you there is nothing to be scared about.”

"I think I will stay here."

"Nope, let's go."

We walk to the door and he opens it. No one is there, but I know what I heard. He steps outside, looks to his left and right. No one.

"Charles seriously, no one is there." He closes the door.

We turn around and the person is standing in the kitchen's archway. All we can see is the silhouette. I should have kept the lights on in there.

I don't know who screamed louder, Miguel or me. But I am guessing his instincts finally took over because he steps in front of me, grabbing the closest thing to him, Austin's hockey stick.

"Charles, go," he whispers over his shoulder before turning his attention to the intruder. "Who the fuck are you? Step out into the light—show yourself."

"Glad to see you have a strong guy protecting you, pumpkin." The person steps into the foyer. "Sweetie, put down the hockey stick. I don't think you will ever hit me—in any lifetime."

"Mom?" I look from behind Miguel.

Miguel glances at me and my mother, lowering the stick.

"What are you doing here?" I walk towards her. "How did you get in? What are you doing here? Where's Dad?"

The sound of laughter and talking comes from the other side of the door. It's the guys, and I don't want them to meet my mom. Oh, my goodness, what is happening right now?

The door opens and the guys walk in with my dad. I must be dreaming, that's it. I probably fell asleep watching TV with Miguel, that's the only reasonable explanation for this right now.

I pinch myself over and over, and I am not waking up. Holy crap, this is real—it's really happening.

"Hey, pumpkin," My dad finally notices me and engulfs me in a big hug.

"Dad, please tell me this is some kind of dream." I stand still—tense.

“No dream, pumpkin. Your mother and I came all the way here because we were informed there is something going on with you and the school.”

“Hold that thought, love. I need to use the restroom. Which way is it?” My mother clears her throat. Austin offers to show her where it’s at.

“Oh, pumpkin, next time lock the back door, strangers could just walk in and kill you.” She shakes her head following Austin upstairs. Now I know how she got in. I never locked the door after Wolf left.

“So, Dad, who called you?”

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