

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

Chapter 26

Denver.Jones

Ummm Candace, I just came from the administration building and saw the cops walking into your dad's office. WTF happened?

Lakrisha.Hayes

Probably there to discuss the recent theft of bicycles on campus. Did you girls know more than twenty were stolen last week?

Natalia.Cumbler

Krishna stfu that is not what it's about. I was driving to the library this morning and I saw the Croakington crew walk in with this lady and a guy—kinda looked like Charlotte's parents, not too sure tho.

Denver.Jones

Oh her parents are probably upset their daughter is sharing a house with guys. Boohoo. Grow the fuck up!

Lakrisha.Hayes

That doesn't explain the police though—like I said it has to be the bicycles.

Candace.Grey

Denny did you hear anything when you walked by?

Denver.Jones

Nope.

Natalia.Cumbler

Holy shit! I am heading that way now. Candace, are you okay? Where are you?

Lakrisha.Hayes

OMG CANDACE IS YOUR DAD THE ONE STEALING BICYCLES?!

[~Candace.Grey has signed off Monday, November 6, 1

26 P.M]

Lakrisha.Hayes

That proves it girls! Her father is the bike thief. Can't trust anyone nowadays, not even your own Dean.

Natalia.Cumbler

Lakrisha, I have no words for you.

Denver.Jones

Risha, I don't know if you are stupid or stupid. I gotta go. A massive crowd has now emerged.

CHARLOTTE

I don't think the guys knew what a can of worms they opened when they told my parents what has been going on.

We sat in a conference room for hours as parents went to talk to the dean, and then all our phones were going off. Pictures and videos of the dean being escorted out of the building in handcuffs.

I look around at their faces, and like I predicted, they all were shocked. I wasn't. I know how my mother can be—the reason why I fix things before they can ever find out.

Last night, my mother came to my room before leaving and told me she wasn't mad or disappointed at me for not confiding in her sooner about everything.

She was hurt because I didn't tell her, because I didn't want to disappoint her. I told her I never want to disappoint her or Dad. It's been that way since I was young, and she cried.

Not going to lie, it was weird, but she never knew that putting me on such a high pedestal at a young age would be the cause of me never being willing to share my failures with them.

I guess in a sense, she thought she parented me wrong, and I had to reassure her she didn't. I like to think I turned out to be an amazing person because of her and Dad.

"I think we fucked up." Everett places his phone on the table.

"Yeah, maybe calling Charles's parents wasn't such a good idea." Miguel scratches the back of his neck, still looking down at his phone. "Seems like she is out for blood."

I don't say a word and just listen to the guys speak back and forth about the mistake they apparently made. I'm just worried about what will happen to Candace and Raven.

Especially Raven, she was like a second daughter to my mom. My mother's face filled with pure rage when I told her about the pictures that Raven sent the dean to stop me from going to RCA.

She said she was going to fix it all, and that I shouldn't have kept that from her at all.

The door to the conference room opens and in walk a ton of people.

There's Raven and her mother, Candace, and I believe her mother, my parents, Assistant Dean Robert, and five other people I never saw before wearing suits.

Everyone took seats at the table except for Robert. He stood at the head of the table. He didn't look happy to be here. No one did, really.

"Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for coming here on such short notice. As we all know, there have been a lot of events that have been taking place on campus to none of our knowledge."

At “our,” he gestured toward himself and the five people.

“I would like to introduce you all to Noel Carmichael, the Vice-Chancellor; Adam O’Neal, the Chancellor; and Korey Nickerson, Derrick Ross and Samantha Cleverly, the Board of Trustees...”

Chase looks over at me and raises his eyebrows.

“So now that we are all introduced, the reason we have come together today is that it was brought to our attention yesterday that some blackmailing with photos was taking place.

“At Walsh University, this type of behavior is unacceptable, and we will not tolerate it. I am going to hand the floor over to Mrs. Withers. Frankly, she is the reason we are all here.”

He gestures to my mom and it was like *game on* when she stood up.

“Mrs. Grey, I will start with you and your daughter. As we are all aware, your husband was arrested a few minutes ago due to the blackmailing of my daughter, right here...” She places her hand on my shoulder.

“All because your daughter asked him to, just so she could get back at one of the guys in the frat house. That young man over there, Mr. Tristan Beckett...”

Tristan coughed looking at me like, *What the hell is your mother doing?*

“Now wait a minute, Mrs. Withers, my daughter would never do such a thing over a guy. That’s absurd.” Mrs. Grey stood up as well.

“Viviane, what’s absurd is that your daughter would rather destroy my daughter’s future and integrity because a guy she used to sleep with is a guy who is done with her. Right?

“You honestly shouldn’t feel shocked by any of this because we were once friends, or did you forget? The apple has fallen too far from your tree. Now pipe down, Mrs. Grey, I don’t want to air your dirty laundry too.”

“Mom?!” I look up at her, and have never seen that look of hatred on her face before.

“Mom, are you okay?”

“I am fine sweetie... it’s been a very long time since I saw *my* old college roomie.” She clears her throat. “Sorry, everyone, please excuse me.

“Your husband has already taken the fall for blackmailing my daughter, but I have come with receipts that your daughter played a part in it.”

She slides a folder down the table to Mrs. Grey. "And Raven over here is a witness who can back up said receipts."

Raven? Why was she doing this? She had a part to play in this as well. She sent the pictures to the dean and my mother knows... what the hell? I look at Raven, and she looks at me briefly before putting her head down.

What is she playing at here?

"Okay, so what? They're young girls, bricking and fighting is going to happen. It's college, for crying out loud. They're kids." Mrs. Grey tries to justify Candace's actions.

"Mrs. Grey," Adam O'Neal calls out to her.

"We understand that college is a time to get to know who you are, and yes, there will be times when mistakes will happen.

"However, what your daughter and husband did is considered theft by extortion in Georgia. This kind of behavior cannot and will not be condoned at this university."

"Unfortunately, we the board of trustees and the chancellors have unanimously come to the decision that your daughter can no longer attend Walsh University.

"We have officers waiting outside to escort you both to Candace's dorm to gather what you can now and off the campus. Robert will be your contact person when it comes to gathering the rest of her things."

Ms. Cleverly explains to her, and Candace bursts into tears. I kind of feel bad for her.

"Sweetie, don't cry, this school is filled with idiots anyway. Let's go." Mrs. Grey stands up with such poise and grace, and then there is Candace who is still a crying mess.

Mrs. Grey stops at the door and looks at my mother. "You know Hailee, I didn't think after all these decades you're still hurt over that incident. I would think you would have been over it, seeing that you did marry him."

She rolls her eyes, following Candace out of the room.

"Mrs. Withers, on behalf of the university, we would like to sincerely apologize for what your daughter has been through. Is there any other issue we can resolve now?" Adam runs his fingers through his hair.

"No, that was it." She smiles sweetly. "I will be in touch with you all if something comes up. Thank you all for your time."

I want to shout, Yes, there is still a huge issue!" Raven! She took pictures of me and I think my mother is letting it slide. I should have known she was going to do something like this. Raven was her fashion buddy.

Everyone stands up and the room is feeling less crowded, and I just want to break down and cry. She is letting Raven go. I scoot my chair back, getting ready to leave as well.

"Oh, Cheryl, do you mind hanging back a bit with Raven, I just need to have a little chat, you know, woman to woman." My mother winks at me. I feel so relieved that she didn't forget. Whew.

"Uh, sure." Raven's mother takes her seat. My father ushers the guys out of the room, closing the door behind him, and leaving just the four of us in the room.

"You know, Cheryl, you and I go way back, and so do our daughters. I even considered Raven one of my own."

"What are you getting at, Hailee?"

I look at Raven, and this time she doesn't look away. I can see her lip is still badly bruised. Serves her right.

"What I am about to say, I mean no disrespect by it. But, that little bitch—asshole you call a daughter took those pictures of my child and sent them to the dean. I don't take—"

"Hey! Watch who you are calling an asshole. That is my daughter."

"I know, and I said what I said. That little asshole you call a daughter took and sent those pictures. I never had a problem with how you raised her. You know I never spoke of it because clearly, it wasn't my business.

"However, the lack of guidance has resulted in your child doing something so stupid. I love your child, and I always will, but when she comes for mine, I will stop at nothing to destroy her.

"But seeing as Raven has slept over at my house numerous times, gone on shopping trips with me and fashion weeks around the globe, I have a soft spot for her."

My mother takes another folder out of her purse, sliding it across the table to Raven's mother. Damn, my mom is on a roll here.

"What is this?" She looks at the pages.

"These are copies of the text messages between Raven and Candace on how to set up Charlotte. You see, Raven entered the cooking competition for an academy that Charlotte also entered.

“Seeing that Charlotte would win, Raven thought it would be best to eliminate the competition. I didn’t bring it to the university because I think my daughter beat her up enough for her to remember what she has done.

“The thing is, I don’t feel satisfied. So, what you will do is withdraw your daughter from this school. I don’t care where she ends up, I just don’t want her near my child.”

“No. Raven is going to stay here, and Charlotte beating up on my child will b—”

“Mom, it’s okay. I think Mrs. Withers is right. If you don’t withdraw me from the school quietly, she can show these messages to the board, and who knows what they will do, and that will follow me for the rest of my life.

“I think I caused enough damage to Charlotte to see this punishment is nowhere near enough.”

I can see the tears forming in her eyes, and I quickly wipe my cheek as a tear escapes mine. “Charlotte, I am sorry for what I did. I don’t know what came over me—I really don’t know, and I am sorry.”

I am speechless, and all those feelings are rushing back to me. She was my best friend, like a sister to me, and she did the unforgivable.

My mother stands up, collecting her things and helping me to my feet. I inhale and exhale deeply before uttering a word to Raven.

This will be my last time seeing her, so I should make this last impression stick with her for the rest of her life.

“You know, Raven, after what you did to me, I always thought it was my fault. Like I wasn’t being a great friend to you or give enough attention to you...I’m not sure.

“But then I realized it was never me...you’re just a mean bitch, and I am so grateful I will never see your face again.”

Ladies and gentlemen, I have finally grown the backbone everyone has been telling me I needed, and it feels good. I quickly walk out of the conference because this is the first time I’ve cursed in front of my mom.

I don’t know how she is going to react, and if she is going to kill me, I’d rather she not do it in front of Raven and her mother.

“Sweetie, where are you going?” My mother closes the conference room door and walks down the hall.

“Sorry for cursing.”

“Don’t be sorry, there are times when being polite is just not enough. You said your piece whether it was mean or nice, you said it, and for that, you will be able to move on and grow from all this.

“I wish I could stay longer, but your father and I have to fly out to California today. We will see you in a couple of days at RCA. Are you excited?” She throws her arm over my shoulder as we walked out of the building.

“Yeah, about that, Mom...”

“Hey! How did it go in there?” Darren spots us first and then all the guys came, bombarding me with questions. I look at my mom, and she kisses my forehead before trailing my dad to the awaiting SUV.

I’ll deal with that tomorrow. Right now, I just need a tall glass of chocolate milk and some ice cream to forget about this day.

Why can’t I be done with college already?

Next Chapter

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