

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

Chapter 3

Juliet.Marcos

Saw some girl walking into the frat house with her suitcase. Wonder if she got lost.

Tessa.Powell

Either way, she is a lucky bitch.

Juju.Vasquez

Wonder who she had to sleep with to get placed there.

Tessa.Powell

Or who did she piss off...

Juliet.Marcos

I think it was that cook girl. The one who made those amazing brownies for the girls' night in last year.

Tessa.Powell

I think her name was Cindy...Christina.

Juju.Vasquez

Charlotte. She is in my cooking club. Wow, she got placed in Croak, that's hella weird.

Tessa.Powell

Well, I hope she knows what she just signed up for. That place is like a madhouse.

Juliet.Marcos

I don't understand why the school stuck her there. Anyway, you girls gonna be at the party there tonight?

Juju.Vasquez

Duh!!

Juliet.Marcos

Everybody is going to be there! Ciao, bitches!

CHARLOTTE

The music is pounding through the walls again. I roll onto my back and glare at the ceiling. Sleep is clearly a lost cause tonight.

With a sigh, I flick on the desk lamp and crack open my battered prep notebook. If I want to get into the Ramona Culinary Academy, I need to use every second I've got. Professor Duggan thinks I have a shot, which is saying something. It's so competitive though.

I'm halfway through a sauce breakdown when someone bangs on my door. "Go away!" I yell, flipping to the next page. The door creaks open anyway. Of course it does.

I look up to see which of the seven frat-bros it is, but am pleasantly surprised to see Raven. She has a crooked grin on her face and a Solo cup in hand. "Seriously? You're up here studying? There's a party downstairs with literal gods walking around shirtless and you're hunched over a textbook?"

I groan. "Rave, not tonight." She flops onto my bed like she owns the place. "How's it going with Chase Tucker?"

I blink at her. "What?" She wiggles her eyebrows. "You two falling for each other would be the perfect romance. Middle school crush, reunited in college, forced to live together, then happily ever after—wedding bells and baby bonnets."

I roll my eyes so hard they nearly fall out. "Back when we were kids, Chase was just Chase. Now he's Chase of Croakington, Chase the quarterback and captain, Chase the self-absorbed asshole." "Yeah, but he's also Chase Tucker the total hottie."

"First, can you stop saying his whole name like it's royalty? Second, Chase and I will never happen. He is not what I want in a boyfriend." Raven cocks her head. "How do you even know what you want in a boyfriend if you've never had one? That's like saying you hate Johnny Depp without ever watching his movies."

I stare at her. "That doesn't even make sense." "It does make sense. Anyway, please enlighten me: what is it you want in a boyfriend?"

I shrug. "I don't know. Just... not someone like Chase." She smirks. "You know when girls say stuff like that, they usually end up with that guy. It's like a known fact."

"You read too many romance novels." "Maybe you don't read enough."

Raven hops up and tosses me a dress from my closet. "Come downstairs. Just for ten minutes. If it sucks, we'll come back up and you can tell me about a bouillabaisse or something."

I glance at the dress. Black, snug, just enough shimmer to catch the light. Sexy, but not too sexy. I don't want to get yelled at by Chase again.

Downstairs the party is loud and crowded. The seven guys are spread out, each with a fan club of girls surrounding them. Vincent sees me and pulls me aside.

"I want to apologize on behalf of the guys," he says once we're alone in a corner. "Chase can be such a dick. You just gotta grow a thick skin and tough it out. I like you, Charlotte."

I give him a look. "What about the no dating a housemate rule?"

"Shit, not like that. You're not my type. I just mean I like you as a person. You cook and clean. It's nice. Like... mom-level nice. But I'm not calling you our mom—you know what I mean."

"Yeah," I laugh. "I get it. You don't want to do business after graduation like the rest of the guys?"

He shakes his head. "I want to be a photographer. The guys all talk about startups and investments, but that's not my thing. I can't sit in an office forever."

"I get it. Same."

"So, Charlotte, what do you want out of this thing called life?"

"RCA," I say, puffing out my chest a little. "Ramona Culinary Academy. Get trained by the best there, then open a restaurant, become head chef."

I let out a happy sigh just thinking about it.

"That's legit. You aiming for one of those shiny star things?"

"Michelin star? Heck no. Too much pressure. I just want to make amazing food and love doing it."

"Fair enough."

"Vincent, nice seeing you," a redhead in a cheer uniform says as she struts over. Her eyes land on me. "Who's the tramp?"

"Watch it, Dove," Vincent snaps.

"You hooked up with me all spring, disappeared for summer, and now you're with some blonde?" She glares at me. "He'll screw you and dump you too. It's what he does."

Okay, what the actual hell? I glance between them. Whatever this mess is, I don't want it.

“Dove, stop.” Vincent drops his arm from my shoulder. “Don’t start with me right now.”

“No, let’s talk. You’ve ignored me for weeks. What’s the deal?”

“Nah,” Vincent says. “I dumped you the second I caught you riding my brother. Don’t say you were drunk. You weren’t. And Charlotte has nothing to do with it.”

He grabs my hand and pulls me past her. “Next time you talk about her like that, I’ll make your senior year hell.”

If looks could kill, I’d be ashes. Dove Dorothy, queen of the mean girls, had just marked me as her enemy.

Regina George? Please. Dove would eat her for breakfast. And now I was on her list.

I spot Raven near the kitchen, standing with our friend Kat, both of them already two drinks deep and laughing way too hard at something.

“You alive?” Raven teases, handing me a red Solo cup.

“Barely,” I mutter, taking a grateful sip. Whatever it is, it’s strong. I don’t even ask.

Kat raises an eyebrow. “Was that Dove I saw going full psycho?”

“Yup,” I say, then glance around like Dove might pop out from behind a curtain.

“That tracks,” Raven says. “She once broke into a guy’s car because he ghosted her for three days.”

“Three *days*?”

“Yup,” Kat confirms. “With a hanger and everything.”

I take another sip. “So I’m doomed.”

Raven links her arm through mine. “Nope. You’ve got us now. Mean girls don’t scare us.”

Kat nudges me with her elbow, “Raven was just telling me that you’re basically playing Charlotte White and the Seven Frat Brothers this semester.”

I groan. “No one is living out a fairytale here. I just so happened to get stuck with them until the university can find me a real place.”

Just then, Austin walks up. He’s one of the quieter guys in the house. The girls around campus say he’s a good guy who just got sucked in by a bunch of frat-boy chaos. He’s

also famous for being the only one who's never slept with anyone on campus. Long-distance girlfriend in London. Super committed. Like, unicorn level rare. I don't even know why I'm thinking about this.

"Hey, have you seen Chase?" he asks, sipping from his cup.

I shake my head. "Nope."

Raven leans in. "Pretty sure I saw him leaving with Natalia like ten minutes ago."

Kat's eyes widen. "Seriously? I thought they were done."

"They were," Austin says. "Mutual break-up. Except she still sneaks out of the house at like six in the morning at least once a week."

Natalia and I are opposites. She's tall and toned, with this shiny black hair always pulled into a perfect high ponytail. Total model vibes. Her skin is flawless, and her eyes are this unreal stormy gray. Basically a walking goddess.

Then there's me—blonde hair thrown into the messiest bun imaginable, average height, and a face that depends heavily on the mood of my skin. Some days I glow. Most days, I just... survive.

"Natalia's here!" Tristan yells as he walks over with a few of the guys. "Hope Chase isn't going down on her in the laundry room again."

The guys burst out laughing. I nearly choke on my drink.

"Guys, please stop it," I say.

"Aww, come on, Charles. You know you got your kitty licked before," Everett teases.

My cheeks go bright red as I stare at the floor, hoping a hole will appear and swallow me.

"Holy shit!" Tristan's eyes nearly pop out of his head. "Charlotte, are you a virgin?"

Why me?

"Can we just drop it? I don't feel comfortable talking about this with you guys." I bury my face in my hands.

"Are you waiting for marriage? If so, just give that up, Charles. No one waits anymore. You gotta test the car before buying it," Darren chimes in like he's doing me a favor.

"I'm not confirming or denying any of this," I groan into my palms.

“Alright, guys, leave her alone,” Chase says suddenly. His voice is firm. Guess he’s taking a break from yelling at me to defend me?

I don’t lift my face as the guys awkwardly mumble apologies. A few pat me on the back as they walk away and say stuff like “nothing to be ashamed of” and “proud V-card owner.”

I think I’ll die of embarrassment every single time I see any of them now.

Chase lingers near me after the others walk away, a fresh drink in his hand and that annoying smirk back on his face.

“You gonna thank me or what?” he asks, eyebrow raised.

I cross my arms. “For what? Barely doing the bare minimum?”

He chuckles, but there’s something off in his smile. Softer, maybe. Or maybe it’s just the booze.

“I didn’t have to say anything,” he mutters.

“I’ll mail you your participation trophy.”

He stares at me for a beat too long. His expression shifts, like he’s really looking at me for the first time.

“Why are you always so mean to me?” he asks, quiet enough that I almost miss it.

I blink. “Me? You’re the one who acts like I’m some contagious disease half the time.”

He opens his mouth like he’s about to say something—something real—but then shuts it again. His jaw clenches. His eyes drop to the floor. Then he walks away.

EVERETT

Darren.Reed

Eve, come on, chill out.

Everett.Sawyer

I’m just saying she hasn’t been corrupted yet. Do you know how rare that is????!?

Tristan.Beckett

Evie, back off.

Everett.Sawyer

Fuck off! Don’t call me Evie, asshole! I know you all thinking it so imma just say it.

Miguel.Jackson

Yeah, I'm gonna agree with the guys on this one. Chase will beat ya ass. We all saw the look on his face when she didn't deny being a virgin.

Everett.Sawyer

Fuck all that.

Austin.Kramer

She is a wonderful woman and we need not be discussing her. She isn't one of the girls you guys hit and quit.

Miguel.Jackson

Naaaaaah, Everett, you buggin. Chase gonna beat that ass. Charlotte is his. *walking slowly away from the conversation lol*

Everett.Sawyer

So I can't get her because Chase has this unspoken rule about her? She is fair game. Chase always does this.

Austin.Kramer

Your funeral, man. I'm out 🖤☐

Darren.Reed

Weren't you just sleeping with Jenny or some other chick last night? Chase will flip. Go for another challenge instead.

Everett.Sawyer

Since when you dicks had morals for chicks?

Everett.Sawyer

Guys? Hello?