

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers | Chapter 35

Chapter 35

CHARLOTTE

Jasper signals me to sit next to him once I walk through the conference door. Ember makes a sound of annoyance as I walk past her seat.

If only she knew how ridiculous she is being, and for no reason at all. She reminds me of girls back in high school. They were in a relationship with their crush—without the crush actually knowing about it.

I never understood that. I never did that, not even with Chase... I don't think. I sit down and move the chair slightly away from Jasper.

"Is everything alright?" he leans over whispering.

"Yes," I say.

"Did you find everything alright?"

"With?"

"Your cubicle."

"Oh yes, I've *a*lways dreamed of having a cubicle." I hope this wasn't his definition of small talk because it sucks.

Jasper laughs, catching the entire room off guard. The look on their faces—he must not laugh ever around anyone.

I sit still, closing my eyes. Being the center of attention is not what I signed up for.

I am pretty sure when I came out of the womb, I signed an imaginary contract that stated I will be invisible until after I become head chef of my own restaurant.

People who love to be the center of attention are a different type of evil. Like why put yourself through something so exhausting?

"I am sure that's not what you dream about." His laughter dies down. I open my eyes to see everyone going back to minding their business.

I'm surprised to see Ember not paying us any attention. She's talking to an older woman, going over some spreadsheets I believe. "Is it?" he asks.

“No. I don’t think I’ve ever dreamed of being in a cubicle at all.” I look down at my notepad, tapping my pen against it.

“What are your dreams... goals?”

Why is he making small talk? I don’t do well with small talk, especially since I am lying here.

Thankfully, Kole Bellinger and his team came walking in. Everyone seems so calm, cool, and collected, and here I am literally smiling from ear to ear.

Kole is an average built guy, maybe five-foot-nine, with gorgeous dark brown skin. He scans the room and his eyes land on mine briefly, before turning his attention to a stocky guy he came with.

“Charlotte, take notes once we begin.” He whispers before standing up to greet Kole.

Jasper has to go through the introductions with everyone and they are standing up for a bit, talking in hushed tones before he gestures for them to take a seat.

I sit quietly taking notes and trying not to gawk at Kole, but with a guy that handsome it’s hard not to. Jasper seems to pick up on it, because once in a while he steps on my foot—not hard, but just enough to know he knows.

The meeting was coming to an end, and I wanted an autograph so badly. I don’t know if it would be unprofessional of me to ask, but I am not going to be here after today, so I can. I flipped to a clean page and patiently waited.

“We look forward to this interview and cover shoot.” The stocky guy, Kole’s manager, stands.

“As do we,” Jasper adds.

“Before we leave, I would like to know who will be conducting my interview.” Kole looks at Jasper.

“That would be me,” Ember speaks up. I don’t know what her job is at the company, but I guess she is a reporter of some sort.

“Yes, Ms. Cunningham will be conducting your interview. She has done a few before... Tinsley Ware, Scarlett McNally, and Eliza Odell.”

Jasper assures him with those names. I read the Scarlett issue and I loved it. Kudos to Ember.

“Ahh, the Eliza Odell one. I wasn’t a fan of that interview. The other two I haven’t read, so I can’t judge. I was wondering if the lady next to you can do my interview.” Kole glances at me.

I don’t know who said no louder, Ember or me. I can’t do an interview. I’ve never done it before, and I am not sticking around to find out how.

I would love to get to know the man behind the music, but this isn’t for me. I don’t ask the questions, I just read the blogs, magazines, and so on.

Kole raises his eyebrows.

“What my two employees are trying to say is that Ms. Withers only got here as of yesterday.

“She is an intern—however, Ms. Cunningham has been with us for quite some time and is transitioning from the PR department to journalist. She is the more qualified candidate to do the interview with.”

“I won’t be doing an interview.” Kole sits up in his chair, his face gravely serious. He locks eyes with Jasper. “I want her to do my interview or I walk.”

“What?!” Ember’s face is turning several shades of red. This is not good.

“Ms. Cunningham, there will be more projects for you to work on. I want you to show Ms. Withers everything she needs to know to do this interview in the upcoming two weeks.”

Jasper un-balls his fist that is sitting on his lap and stands up. “Kole, we will be in touch with you, regarding the time and place where the interview with Ms. Withers will be conducted.”

“Can’t wait.” Kole smiles at me and follows his manager out the conference room, the rest of his team behind him. I don’t think it has fully processed with me—that Kole wants me to interview him.

More employees leave the room and it’s just Jasper, Ember, and I. I should just blurt that I was quitting today and hopefully save Ember from going into her drama queen mood.

“You know this is all her fault, Jasper!” Ember yells, determined to state the obvious. “She practically was drooling over Kole.”

“Ember, give me and Charlotte a moment.”

She doesn’t say a word and walks out of the room, slamming the door behind her.

“Charlotte...” he drags out my name until I look at him. “You know Ember is right.”

I quickly stand up. “Excuse me?”

“I’m sure everyone at the table saw the way you were looking at him. I know seeing a celebrity up close is probably new to you, but we have to make sure we don’t overstep our boundaries.”

“Unfortunately, you have to do this interview, but Ember will help you with everything you need to know.”

“No. I am not doing it.”

“You are doing it.”

“Mr. Tucker, I came here as an intern, not a reporter or whatever you call it. I don’t want to, and I don’t have to do it. I can quit any time.”

I toss my pen on the table. I see the whole stubborn and demanding personalities are a thing he and Chase share. I don’t have to tolerate this crap from him.

“Where are you going?”

“Back to Georgia. Good luck with that interview, *Mr. Tucker*.” I storm out and gather my things. If I want to put up with a moody Tucker, I’d rather it was my boyfriend.

I make it back to the apartment and call Chase.

“Hello?” Chase’s voice sounds like he just woke up. I look at the time. It’s still early morning.

“Where are you?” I ask. His voice sounds far away and muffled.

“Hmm?” I hear murmuring in the background.

“Chase? Where are you?” I can hear my heart pounding in my ears.

“In bed.”

I hear shuffling. “What are you doing?” I ask suspiciously.

“Getting out of bed, you did call at...eight in the morning.”

“I got into a mini argument with your brother this morning. You two are actually alike and it’s a bit annoying,” I begin to vent to him.

“Chase, where are you going?” I hear a lazily female’s voice in the background and my heart drops. I end the call quickly, powering it off.

I grab my laptop and check my emails and there it is, an email from Everett. They had a party last night. He professed his love for me to just turn around and cheat.

My heart is tightening and I honestly don’t know if I want to cry or cry. I do nothing but sit in silence staring out the window. He cheated on me.

Seconds turn into minutes and eventually hours as I stare out the window. Feeling nothing. I don’t know why I thought I could tame someone like Chase Tucker. I don’t know why I thought this would work out.

My stomach growls loudly enough to get me on my feet and out the door. There is a Chipotle a few blocks away, and I want nothing more to eat my heart out right now.

“Charlotte.” There is a bench in front of the elevators, and Jasper is sitting there. Why? Why? Why? “Charlotte, can we talk?”

“Not in the mood, Mr. Tucker.” I continue to walk.

“I think we should talk... you can’t just quit. You signed a contract.” He falls into step with me. I see Jimmy standing outside in front of the sleek black SUV.

He opens the door when he sees us and I make a right. I maneuver through the crowd of people walking, praying Jasper will get the hint. “Charlotte?” he grabs my elbow, stopping us in the middle of the sidewalk.

“Get your hands off me.” I snatch my arm from him and continue my mission to Chipotle.

“If you quit—”

I come to a stop, waiting for the light to change.

“There is no if, Jasper. I quit. This was just an internship, and right now all I want is to be left alone so I can eat and cope with my breakup.

“I don’t need you—are you like this with all your employees? If so, this is definitely an HR issue.”

“You are my last hope.” He runs his fingers through his hair.

“My father is thinking about giving my position to someone else, and I worked my ass off for this position. If you quit and I don’t get that interview, I can kiss my job goodbye.”

His face softens and I feel bad for him, *but* all the Tuckers are the same. Liars and manipulators.

“Well, I guess you better get to kissing it goodbye, because I am done.” The walk sign flashes and I leave him there standing on the corner. Tuckers are spawn from hell and I won’t dare get burned by another one.

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