

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

Chapter 40

To: Ember Cunningham

Subject: Kole Bellinger

Date: November 11, 2016 15:52

Ember,

I have forwarded you the email about the meeting with Kole Bellinger. I don't know your work ethic, but I am pretty sure you worked hard for this. Don't mention it to Jasper.

Charlotte x

~***~

From: Ember Cunningham

To: Charlotte Withers

Subject: RE: Kole Bellinger

Date: November 11, 2016 16:06

Withers,

What's the catch? Did you send me the wrong information?

Ember

PR Assistant, Paperlove

~***~

From: Charlotte Withers

To: Ember Cunningham

Subject: RE: Kole Bellinger

Date: November 11, 2016 16:12

Ember,

No catch. All the right information. I just don't want to do it. I have a lot on my plate, and I won't be able to do it. Besides, I don't know the first thing about doing an interview.

Charlotte x

~***~

From: Ember Cunningham

To: Charlotte Withers

Subject: RE: Kole Bellinger

Date: November 11, 2016 16:21

Withers,

You're right. You have no idea what to do...great call with this one. I guess I can cut you some slack—FOR NOW.

Ember

PR Assistant, Paperlove

One problem down, and hopefully the Xavier problem will be dealt with by Monday too.

I need to have Ember off my case about Chase because there is something going on in this company for everything to be kept so secretive.

A young lady with curly brunette hair walks over to my cubicle. She looks friendly, but then again, she might be friends with Ember and here to make my life a living hell as well.

She is carrying a red trench coat in one hand and a very expensive Gucci bag in the other. Hopefully, she isn't another Malibu Barbie—even if she is curvy.

"Hello." She leans against the cubicle frame. "I am Skyla Savage." She extends her hand.

"Charlotte Withers." I give her a firm handshake.

"I know. I was wondering if you would like to go grab a bite and possibly drinks."

I look at her strangely.

"Oh no, I am not into women. I am the new payroll manager."

"No... no... I wasn't thin—sorry," I finally say, hiding my face from embarrassment.

"It's quite alright," she says.

"How do you know me exactly?" I look at her and she doesn't seem to be thrown off by my death glare. Well, I hope that's how I look.

"The gossip mill on my floor is insane. I had to meet the new girl who has caused quite the ruckus in the building. Also, I hear you are friends with the new guy, Tristan."

"He starts work with me on Monday. I would like to know what I am getting into when it comes to him."

"Did you want to meet me out of curiosity, or do you just want to know about Tristan?" I raise an eyebrow at her. I've seen things like this happen before. Not with me, but other girls.

I didn't want her to try and befriend me just to get close to Tristan.

"Okay, you caught me. I really want to know about Tristan. But I would still like to get to know you as well."

"At least you're honest about it." I give her a small smile. "Where would you like to grab a bite?" I need not judge her so quickly.

"Seriously?" she is surprised.

"Yes."

“Okay, I was thinking we can stop at this restaurant not too far from here. The food is amazing.” She slips on her coat.

I take that as my cue to wrap things up for the day. Signing out of my computer, I gather my things. I honestly don’t know if going out to eat with her will be a good or bad thing. I have my pepper spray just in case.

“I have to make a quick phone call and then I will meet you at the elevators.”

She nods her head and walks off. I wait until she is no longer near to hear my phone call and dial the number.

One thing I’ve learned by dealing with seven possessive and overprotective guys was just to be honest and let them know your whereabouts.

Skyla and I are sitting in this nice French restaurant called Balthazar. There are a decent number of patrons around this time of day. I look around, taking it all in. I wonder if she is French.

I take time looking over the menu, not sure what to get, and I ask Skyla but she says when she comes here, she gets the same thing and wants to try something different—no help there.

The prices are too high here and now that I am trying to manage life without calling my parents for help...

“Do you want to go back to my apartment?” I ask.

She chokes and her cheeks are a bright red. She takes a sip of her water and smiles at me. “Are you hitting on me? Shouldn’t we eat and get to know each other first?” she teases.

I bury my face in my hands. “Oh, my God.” I groan. I don’t know what’s worse, Skyla teasing me about it or the group of men who overheard and are now glancing over at our table.

I regain my composure. “I can make a good meal for us and we can actually talk about things without having to censor ourselves,” I say the last part looking over at the group of men.

“It’s the prices, right?” She nods.

“Yeah,” I bite down on my bottom lip. I haven’t thought too much about it, but does Everett come from money? Something I should have thought about before.

I don't care if he does or doesn't but for the lie's sake, I should know things about him and his family. I will have to catch up with him this weekend about it.

"I have a refrigerator stocked with food, and I am pretty sure Hulu has a show we can binge-watch."

"Convincing." She pauses and looks around and then back to me. "Let's go."

We head back to my apartment and she is eerily quiet once we arrived at my floor. I dig in my purse for my pepper spray and keys. I will if I have to. I don't fully think about what I put myself into until it's too late.

So, yeah now I'm worried about whether I made the right decision bringing her back here.

I turn around apologizing about how junky my purse is, and I can never find anything in it. She looks up from her phone and tells me it's okay.

"Is everything okay?" I ask, hand still on the pepper spray in my purse.

"I...maybe it's nothing." She shakes her head.

"It must be something. You don't look too happy right now."

"Are you sleeping with Jasper?" she whispers.

"No." I look at her as if she has three heads. "Why would you—"

"It's just that you are staying here at his apartment."

I sigh loudly and deeply. "No, I was supposed to stay at a hotel, but next thing you know I was driven here. I didn't know it was his place until Chas—my cousin, Everett told me. Wait...how do you...this is his place?"

I release my hand off the pepper spray and take my key out, unlocking the door.

"I had my final interview here," she says with so much shame. I don't need her to elaborate any further. I can read between the lines.

"Good thing you got the job or that would be pretty messed up—not on you, on him—I mean it's not your fault—you know what, let's just change the topic.

"Make yourself at home. You should know where everything is, or should I give you a tour to make it as if you have never been here before? Did I just..."

"It's okay, Charlotte." She smiles. "You are one very weird girl. I like that. You're different and not like the other women I have encountered in New York. Don't worry about me, I am fine. Let's not bring this up again. Okay?"

"Whew, I can agree to that. So how about I just give you the tour anyway. You probably didn't see much of the penthouse your first time...right?"

"It's okay, how about I just help you make something to eat?" She takes her coat off, placing it on the back of the couch, and I do the same. I don't know why I always make things so awkward.

I don't know if it's the only child syndrome thing I got going on or I was just a loner for way too long. I don't try to say anything at all. I just nod my head, and we walk into the kitchen.

I let Skyla lead the conversation while we cook. I'd rather not put my foot in my mouth again. I can tell Skyla is grateful for that too.

However, throughout cooking, I can tell she isn't used to being in the kitchen. We are making a simple pasta, and she is even worse than Raven when she started out cooking.

I'm trying not to rip her head off, so I politely tell her to go find something for us to watch. So now we are sitting in the living area eating pasta and sipping on some cranberry juice that I found in the fridge.

I was just as surprised as Skyla was when we found out there was no wine.

"So," she places her clean plate on the coffee table. "That was very delicious. You should be a chef, not working as an assistant for a magazine."

"Uh—never thought about it," I lie.

"Well, you should, or even ask to work with Naomi. She is the overseer of the restaurants that the company has invested in. I bet she can help you out a ton. She has a ton of connections."

"Yeah, I don't think cooking is for me." Another lie. "So, what would you like to know about Tristan?"

I don't like to tell lies. I actually think it's the worst thing to do...if I have learned anything from the last couple of months, it is that lying and keeping things from people is not the way to go.

"How is he as a worker?" She makes herself comfortable on the couch, and I do the same. "A slacker or a go-getter?"

“I would assume he is a go-getter. I haven’t really worked with him before.”

“So how do you know him?”

“College.”

“Oh—”

“Are you sure you are from payroll? If you were, you should know—seeing you have our files, no?” I calculate the distance from where I am sitting from my purse.

“Yes, I am payroll—I like to give employees their privacy. I have only been with the company for two weeks. Besides, if I was to go snooping, there isn’t a file with Tristan’s name on it. I looked.”

“You know, I want to like you, but I have been burned and set up so many times—I just can’t seem to trust you fully, and I really want to.”

I have to be honest with her... well to a certain extent. I just don’t want to screw this up and let something slip to someone whose intentions aren’t good towards me and the guys.

“I can understand... what would you like to know?”

Next Chapter

Continue to the next chapter of Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers