

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

Chapter 5 Chapter 5

CHARLOTTE

His mouth is on mine, hot and demanding. One second I'm on his lap, the next I'm in the air.

Chase stands, lifting me like I weigh nothing, and presses me against the wall. My middle school self would be impressed. My now-self is impressed.

My legs wrap around his waist on instinct, my fingers tangling in his hair. He tastes like whiskey, which isn't my drink, but I am not minding this cocktail. All I can think is how big his hands are, how strong his chest feels against mine, how much I've wanted this even if I denied it.

Then—

A scream.

We break apart, both of us breathless, our eyes snapping to the door.

"Chase?!"

It's Natalia.

He freezes.

"Shit," he mutters, letting go of me.

Too fast.

I lose my footing and fall. The back of my head hits the wall hard and pain explodes through my skull. I'm seeing stars.

Natalia's already pushing into the room.

"Are you serious right now? I leave for twenty minutes and you're hooking up with her?"

I'm still on the floor, blinking up at the ceiling, my head pounding. Chase glances between us, panicked.

Um, maybe help up the possibly-concussed woman you were just making out with?

Nope. Instead, he turns to Natalia and pleads. “It wasn’t like that,” he says. “She kissed me. She—she took advantage of me. I didn’t even want it.”

Excuse me?

I sit up slowly, hand on the back of my head, and glare at him. “You started it. You kissed me first.”

“You are delusional,” Chase blurts, voice louder than it needs to be. “You’re not even my type.”

“You’re unbelievable,” I hiss as I manage to stand. “You kiss me, then you throw me down, and now you insult me?”

“I’m just telling the truth. You seemed so desperate, I felt bad. It was pathetic. I should have swerved you.”

Then I slap him. Hard.

The sound cracks through the hallway just as the guys appear.

They freeze at the sight—Chase red-faced and furious, me trembling with rage.

Chase takes a step toward me, his eyes wild.

“How dare you...” he starts to yell, but thankfully Darren grabs his arm. Miguel steps in too.

“Don’t,” Darren warns.

“She fucking slapped me!” Chase says, still not backing off.

Then someone notices.

“Is that blood?”

All eyes turn to me. My hand is slick and red. My vision’s swimming.

“She’s bleeding,” Raven shouts, rushing down the hallway. “Oh my god, Charlotte!”

Everything explodes. Voices rise. The guys storm in, and suddenly Chase is being shoved out of the room as he tries to explain himself. No one wants to hear it. Darren’s shouting something about crossing the line. Miguel yells for someone to get ice.

Raven rushes to me, gently taking my arm. "Does anything hurt?" she asks. I shake my head no. That's a lie. My head is absolutely throbbing.

I glance over at the guys. They're staring at the wall, pissed.

"Hey Rave, I'm okay, really. Just go back to your dorm room. I'm going to get in the shower and call it a night anyway." Half-truth, half-lie.

"I think I should stay. Chase might come back and do God knows what." She is angry and has every right to be. Everyone should be angry right now, including me.

I just can't seem to be angry with him after that kiss.

"I'm not leaving you," she says.

"Come on Rave, I've been through enough in the last ten minutes. I just need to be alone."

She huffs. "Fine, but you better call me if anything happens. I will be over here in a nanosecond."

"I will. I promise."

All I want to do is shower and go to sleep, but as soon as Raven leaves the room the guys walk in like they own the place.

"We're kicking Chase out of the house," Vincent says.

"Wait, what? Why?" I ask, actually confused.

"Um, because you're bleeding," Miguel deadpans.

"It was an accident." I look at them. "Guys seriously, it's no big deal."

I can't tell them that what really hurt the most wasn't the fall or the yelling. It was that the kiss got cut short—and then he had the nerve to say I wasn't his type. Was he lying to Natalia, or was that how he really felt all along?

"We are kicking him out, and that's final, Charles." Darren's voice leaves no room for argument, but I don't care. This is so unfair for everyone involved. He is their family...

"I'll leave so he can stay."

"He must've hit your head harder than we thought. I think we should take you to the hospital," Miguel chimes in.

I stare at Austin. He's the only one who hasn't said anything, and that must mean he doesn't like the guys' decision either.

"Austin, what do you think about this? Huh?" I ask.

"Charlotte, this is a house rule. It's always been a house rule, since before our time. Whether you leave or not, Chase still can't come back."

"Don't think he's banished from the house, because he isn't. He just can't live here for the next two months," he explains. I know this is a fight I can't win.

"Fine." I cross my arms at my chest.

"Your safety is our number one concern." Vincent looks at me, his facial features soften.

I know what they're doing is the right thing, but this is Chase, their best friend, brother. He's family to them. I cannot stay here for two months knowing he must stay God knows where. This isn't fair to him.

We kissed each other, which probably shouldn't have happened. And he was a jerk, which he definitely shouldn't have been. And I slapped him, which, well, that was deserved. But dropping me was an accident. He doesn't deserve to get kicked out.

"You still want to leave," Austin says.

"I need to know what kind of kiss he put on you, for you to defend him the way you are." Tristan shakes his head.

"Charles, welcome to the SFC." Everett claps. "I think you should be the president."

"Dude, shut the fuck up," Darren snaps.

"What's that?" I ask.

"SFC stands for the Silly Female Club. You know the girls who take their man back after he has done something wrong and then—"

"Get out! All of you get out right now! I didn't want to be here in this stupid house in the first place. Just leave me the hell alone," I scream at the top of my lungs.

They look reluctant at first, but leave one by one, saying they're not sorry for their decision, but they will miss me if I leave.

All I want to hear is the sound of the shower running and then the sweet melodies of *Niall Horan* to put me to sleep.

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