

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

Chapter 52

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CHARLOTTE

The rest of the day went by quickly after talking with Jasper. There was so much that needed to be done before the day was over, with so little time.

I'm so swamped with work, I don't see Miguel until he stops by my cubicle with yellow roses in hand. I look around to see if anyone is watching, and we are in the clear.

"Miguel, this is a surprise." I clear my throat.

"I tried calling you—no answer. I can see why. You are buried deep in work." He shoves the roses forward. "These are for you."

"Yellow," I take them and smile.

"Is something wrong?" he asks, taking a seat at the edge of my desk.

"Oh, nothing. I just wasn't expecting yellow roses—I mean, any roses for that matter."

"I just want to apologize for avoiding you lately. Not really one of my best moments." He looks down.

"It did hurt that you guys have been steering clear of me."

"That was never our intention. We have been giving Chase some space as well, so don't think it was just you." He shrugs.

I feel a tiny bit better knowing they didn't choose sides. Chase has been getting the same treatment as me. Good.

"Don't some of you live with him?" Not too sure how they can avoid him when some of them live with him.

"Nope, everyone has been crashing at Everett and their place. Chase has the apartment to himself for right now. So, about dinner tonight—"

"For my lady," Vincent interrupts our conversation, holding a bouquet of yellow roses as well.

“I said in ten minutes. Damn, do you listen?” Miguel looks at him.

“What, I thought you meant from the time you left the lobby.” He looks at me and smiles. “You look lovely today.”

“Thank you,” I take the roses, placing them in Miguel’s hands. “And thank you. I put little effort into my attire today.”

“Oh,” he says.

“What do you guys want? Dinner?” I ask, just cutting to the chase. Miguel opens the door for it, so I might as well get it over with.

“That and to apologize for everything. The past couple of days have been wicked. You and Chase not talking. Us not talking to you and Chase.” Vincent winks at me. “We should—”

“Did she accept?” Tristan asks, holding yellow roses. Behind him are Everett, Austin, and Darren, all with a bouquet of yellow roses. I am actually overwhelmed by all of this. “Oh, hell, don’t cry Charles.”

“Why are you so emotional?” Darren asks, and I just shrug my shoulders, crying more. I finally feel appreciated for something.

“Are you pregnant? Because that’s the only way to describe this behavior. No one is *this* emotional about everything,” Everett asks, and I freeze.

“Charles, you’re pregnant?” Austin’s voice goes up an octave.

“Are you?” I snap my head at the sound of Chase’s voice. The guys move out of the way so I can get a better look at him. The red roses are now at his side as he watches me warily. His eyes flicker from my face to my stomach. “Well?”

“N-no, noooo way.” I sniffle. “I can’t be. We haven’t done anything since last month.”

“I think you don’t know how it works. Just because you haven’t had sex since last month doesn’t mean you’re not pregnant now.”

Tristan looks at me weirdly. I know I am not pregnant. My period is due any day now.

“I think she knows how it works, stupid.” Austin hits him upside his head with the roses he is holding. “Besides, she should be on it now.”

“What?” everyone said, turning to him.

“Dude, you should not know her cycle.” Miguel backs away slowly. “That’s gross.”

“No, it’s not gross, I have sisters and a girlfriend. It’s normal to know these things. Charles always gets super moody and becomes a crybaby...around this time every month. I just picked up on it.”

I look down at my phone and frown. He is right. I was so busy, I didn’t notice it before. I’m three days late. I mentally calm myself down, not wanting to freak anyone out.

I cannot have a baby right now. Chase and I are not ready to be parents—we can’t even communicate properly.

“Are you bleeding?” Vincent whispers.

“Guys, I don’t want to talk about my period.”

“Aww hell, she is pregnant,” Darren shouts. “We need to babyproof all the apartments.”

It is like a chain reaction. They are all freaking out, pulling out their phones ordering God knows what. Chase just stares at me and I open my mouth, but nothing comes out.

Darren and Everett start to argue about who is going to be the favorite uncle. Everything just feels like it’s moving in slow motion.

“Guys...guys!” I scream, slamming my hand on the desk. “Please stop,” I beg.

“Cool down everyone. Mama is talking.” Tristan winks at me.

I close my eyes, trying to keep my attitude in check.

“Charlotte, can we talk in private?” Chase speaks up and I am thankful. I need to get away from these six clowns before I blow. Opening my eyes slowly, I look at Chase and smile.

“Sure, I was calling it a day, anyway.” I stand, collecting my things. The guys hand me the rest of the roses and Chase helps me to the elevator. We don’t speak as we wait for the elevator to reach our floor.

“Did you catch your umm...lady thingy?” Chase asks as we step onto the elevator.

“No.”

“Do you think you might be?”

“I don’t know,” I look at him. “I don’t feel different. It could be stress that’s preventing it from happening.”

“Do you want to grab a test before heading home?”

“Yeah.” I look away. “Thank you.”

“How long does it take?” Chase asks me for the fifth time in less than thirty seconds.

I wasn’t one hundred percent sure if I wanted him here when I took the test, but he is just as involved in this as I am. I could be carrying his child. The thought of me being pregnant is scaring the crap out of me.

I wouldn’t even know where to begin. I reach out for Chase’s hand, stopping him from pacing back and forth.

“You’re making me more nervous,” I tell him. “The box said rapid results in a minute. So about thirty seconds to go.”

“You know, no matter wha—”

I stand up. “Let me go check.” I don’t want us to be having this kind of conversation. We are too young for this and in all honesty, not very mature at the moment. I go into the bathroom and pick the stick up off the countertop.

“What does it say?” Chase asks from behind.

I look in the mirror at him. “We are not pregnant.” I smile.

Oh, thank the heavens, I am not pregnant. I still have so much to do and a whole world to see.

“That’s great.” Chase looks at me through the mirror.

“Then why do you look sad?” I turn to him.

“I don’t know.” He shrugs. “A part of me wanted a little you or me running around.”

“Chase, we aren’t ready for that.”

He sighs. “I know, but a guy can wish.” He leaves the bathroom and I am right on his heels.

“We need to talk...like actually talk.” I sit next to him on the couch. “What are we doing? We are so good together and our love is real, but we’re always at each other’s throats. Why is that?”

"Charlotte, I honestly don't have an answer for that. I just want to make everything right again. I want us to be able to talk to one another and not hide anything. I just don't know how or where to start."

He leans back on the couch.

"I do." I stand up, rushing to get some pens and paper. I come back to the living room, handing him a paper and pen.

"So, I've learned verbally we are horrible at communicating, which we should work on ASAP."

"For now, we will write down our secrets—well things we've been hiding from each other or things we recently just found out and also, things we just want each other to know."

"No holding back, and then after we write it down, we can discuss it."

"That's too much work. How about we just talk about it?"

"No, Chase, we aren't very good at that. We will argue about one thing and then never get to the other things. This way, if we do argue, we have a list of things we can just pick to defuse the other situation," I explain.

"You make no sense, but I will try it your way." He grabs a magazine and starts to write on his paper. I watch him for a few seconds and start to write my own things.

I don't know if this will really help us or be pointless like he said. Either way, I am trying to make it work. About thirty minutes later, Chase and I finish our list, and we exchange papers.

Sweet hell, his penmanship is horrible. I try to make out what he has written so I can ask a question, but he beats me to it.

"You saw Raven. How was that?" He looks at me smiling.

"I didn't fight her again, if that's what you wanted to know." I playfully glare at him.

"We talked, and I realized that I am not in the right mindset to forgive her and move forward with anything pertaining to her." I take a deep breath. "I really wanted to slap the hell out of her."

Chase chuckles. "I figured that much. Glad you didn't."

"Okay." I skim over his page. "You're babysitting Autumn next weekend?" I know my face is lit like a Christmas tree. He nods his head.

“Oh, my, can I babysit with you? I would like to spend more time with her...wait, why are you babysitting?”

“As you know, Jasper and my dad are flying to Ireland next weekend with Rebecca. My mother is going on a shopping trip with her girlfriends. I always watch Autumn when I come home to visit, so no biggie.

“And yes—yes, you can babysit with me. My turn.” He looks down at the paper. “Why do I love you?”

“Just curious.” I bite down on my bottom lip.

“Easy.” He scoots closer to me. “You fascinate and inspire me. You influence me for the better. You’re the object of my desire, the reason for my existence.

“I love you very much, and can’t wait to share many more years with me by your side.” He gives me a quick kiss on the lips.

“My turn,” I say, looking down at the paper. “Why do I lie so much to you?”

“You lie a lot, why is that?”

“I don’t think I lie a lot. I just don’t tell you the entire truth.”

“Cupcake,” he says sternly.

“Fine. I lie because I am scared to disappoint you, and I want to show that I am strong. I can take care of things myself, and I don’t need you there all the time to fight my battles.

“I am not weak, or a damsel in distress. You make me feel like I am some pretty arm candy. I’m not Natalia.”

“Whoa, I never said you were,” he quickly defends himself. I shake my head.

“I never said you did, but that is who you were seeing before me, and she loved to be arm candy. I don’t. You are used to girls doing as you say, and I am not like that.

“I left my dream school behind to help you out, and yet you still don’t see—”

“I didn’t ask you to give up RCA for me. I didn’t want you to come here at all. We could’ve been back in Croakington fucking like wild rabbits right now. I never saw you or ever will see you as a damsel in distress or arm candy.

“You are everything those other females weren’t. I asked you to marry me because you are my other half. We were made for each other. The lies are what’s tearing us apart.”

“So why didn’t you tell me about Lily?”

“I didn’t want to tear up your household, and it really wasn’t my story to tell. Eventually, you would have found out because we would be getting married. Lily was a manipulator in a way.

“My brother and parents didn’t even know you were related. Lily blackmailed me not to say anything.”

Lily must have had a great reason for not wanting him to tell anyone I was her half-sister. I think it has to do with my mother at that.

“Chase...” I pull him in for a kiss, and he stops me.

“Let’s get through all the bullet points we have, and then I will devour you, Cupcake.” He winks at me, licking his lips. “Alright, let’s see what we have here.”

He brings the paper closer to his face, and I think I know which bullet point he just spotted.

“Rebecca is trying to get my father voted out of the company. As in Rebecca Michaels, his partner and long-time friend for centuries? That Rebecca?”

I nod my head.

“Where or who did you hear this from?”

“Ember told me today.” I don’t think I should have written that one today. Ember could be lying, for God’s sake. “I don’t know how true it could be. I mean, Ember could be lying. I should have never written that down,” I rush out.

He stands up. “No, I had my suspicions about Rebecca since working for her. She is especially intrigued about my family and why I don’t want to take over after my father retires—whenever that is. Shit. Shit. Shit.”

He pulls out his cellphone and then stops. “You know what? I will deal with that stuff tomorrow. Tonight, it’s about you.”

Music to my ears, but that is more important. “Chase, you should deal with that first. I will be here.”

“It’s too late, and I would rather not bother my father tonight. You are my main focus, and I want us to be stronger than ever after this. No more lies, no more secrets, and we come together as a united front.

“I can’t lose you. Rebecca will get what’s coming for her, but I am not worried about it.”

I get off the couch and leap into his arms. "I love you so much, Chasey."

"And I love you more, Cupcake."

Next Chapter

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