

Charlotte and the Seven Frat Brothers |

Chapter 56

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CHARLOTTE

“Slow down, Cupcake,” Chase tugs on my arm, pulling me back. “Where’s the fire?”

I don’t answer him and continue pulling him to Skyla’s office. I pray that she didn’t lock it. I need to talk to him in private. I don’t—no, I can’t afford someone hearing me.

I twist her doorknob, and it’s freaking locked. I pull him down the hallway into the janitor’s closet. Once the door closes, he attacks my lips.

I push him back, giving us some space in this tiny closet. “Chase, I didn’t bring you in here for that,” I whisper.

“So, what did you bring me in here for?” It’s dark in here, but I am 100 percent sure he is frowning.

“Are you considering taking over the company?”

His hands find my waist, and he squeezes gently.

“I was actually going to talk to you about that tonight. My dad wants to step down and spend more time with my mom...he wanted Jasper to take over, but he has Autumn, and I don’t want him stressing out, so I am considering it.

“But I was going to run it by you first. Did Jasper tell you?”

“Don’t do it.” I bite down on my bottom lip. “Please don’t do it.”

“What’s going on?” One of his hands lifts off my hip, and the light flickers on. “What happened?”

“Promise you won’t get mad and do something stupid.” His eyebrows come together, and I know what he is thinking. If it’s about me, he can’t promise me that. “Chase, promise me.”

“Not without knowing what it is. Just say it, Charles, we talked about not holding anything back nor keeping secrets.”

I take a deep breath.

"I overheard your dad talking to Rebecca about manipulating you and Xavier into taking over the company. They set Ember up as well. She can't keep a secret, and they used that to their advantage.

"I don't know what your dad has in store for this company, but he wants you to go down with it."

I can't fix my mouth to tell him his dad has been cheating on his mother with Rebecca. Yes, I heard it, but I don't want to be the one to deliver that kind of news. I'm already delivering this.

"What?" he looks more confused than before. "What are you talking about?"

"Exactly what I just said. Your father is manipulating you into taking over the company." I squint my eyes at him. "You don't believe me?"

"I do. I just don't get—I need to have a chat with my father." He opens the door, and I quickly close it.

"Chase, you promised you wouldn't do anything stupid."

"I'm not. I just want to have a chat with my dad."

"And say what? You have a very short temper, and I know you will explode. You need to think before doing. I swear if you do something stupid, I will leave—I swear to you I will leave."

He lifts my chin. "I promised you I wouldn't do anything, and I am going to keep that promise." He pecks my lips.

"I just need to have a chat with my dad. I won't bring up what you just told me, but I will pick his brain for any indication of any sorts." He kisses me once more and leaves the closet.

My phone buzzes in my pocket, making me jump in surprise.

Mom

We need to talk.

Mom

I will call you.

"Hi, Mom," I say softly. I don't know what mood she is in right now. Hopefully, a good one.

"Hey, sweetie. I have to apologize for that night. I didn't mean," she pauses. "I didn't mean to drag you into your father's and my mess."

"I don't ever want you to feel like I don't love you nor want you. I was wrong, and I am so sorry, sweetie."

"Mom, what you did...it hurt my feelings, and I don't want to ever have to choose between you, Dad, or Autumn. All of you are my family. Why can't we just be that? Dad loves you and you love him."

"Your *dad* has filed for divorce." She sniffles and everything around me just stops. Divorce? "We're meeting with our lawyers tomorrow, and I thought—"

"You thought what, Mom? Call and tell me this and think everything will be okay? Mom, you and Dad are getting divorced. I have to go; I am at work and I can't think about this right now. I will call you back later."

I exit the closet and stop. Xavier is walking down the hallway and smiles when he sees me. I stuff my phone back into my pocket and walk with a purpose.

He doesn't say anything, and I am thankful, but then he grabs my wrist as I walk past. I let out a deep breath.

"Yes?" I look at his hand and then his face. "Let me go." He does without a protest and smiles again.

"Your bodyguards aren't around, are they?"

"You mean my best friends?"

"Whatever you want to call them, yes?"

"No, and I have somewhere to be. Catch you never." I walk away.

"Wait. Can I talk to you?"

"All you do is flirt," I say over my shoulder. "I'd rather you *not* get beat up again."

"Charlotte, I'm not going to flirt with you. You already must know I've been hooking up with Ember. I just need to talk to you about this company." He sounds desperate.

I want to stop, Lord knows I want to stop, but I can't. I won't.

"Meet me at my place tonight, say seven-ish. I am sure you know where I live." I stop walking, turning around. Xavier has a huge grin on his face. "The guys will be there too." The smile slowly fades from his face.

"You don't think I would be stupid enough to have you over at my place alone? I don't trust you, Xavier, and I think you are a bad person, but I'm naturally nosey, so I'll hear you out. See you tonight."

It's my turn to smile at him before walking off.

Tristan is sitting at my desk, spinning around in the chair. Why? Why is he so childish? I stop the chair, and he looks up at me with a goofy grin. I push the back of the shoulder, gesturing for him to get out of my seat.

He shakes his head no and leans back.

"Don't you have work to do?" I asked, placing my hands on my hips.

"I do, but I don't want to do it. Skyla keeps bitching at me over the littlest things. Like how am I supposed to know not to CC certain people on the emails? She never told me not to." He tosses his hands in the air, frustrated.

"Why didn't you just ask?"

"I did," he says in a duh tone. "She is too busy sneaking off fucking Jasper, her mind is all mind-fucked."

"You knew? You know?" I whisper.

"Knew...know...that she is fucking Jasper? Yeah, we all know."

"They must have been busy on his desk the other morning because they definitely dialed her office, and I happened to be in there trying to hook up with the new intern."

"Let me tell you, Dani loves to get off to other people doing it. She was—"

"Tristan, shut the hell up. That is gross." I push him again and he gets up without hesitation. "You are gross. Ugh, please get away from my desk and go do some work." I rub my temples.

"Hey, I was just about to get to the good part. Guess. You will never know."

"And I don't ever want to know."

He laughs and walks off.

"Oh, Tristan!" he stops. "I am cooking dinner tonight. See you guys at seven." His face lights up and he fist bumps the air.

“The guys are going to be fucking excited,” he shouts and everyone looks at him. I dunk my head and pretend I’m typing something on the computer.

Tristan can be so embarrassing at times. Now, all I have to do is wait for Chase to stop by and I will tell him about Xavier and tonight.

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