

Chapter 63

Georgianna.Ford
I spy with my little eye. The sexy men of Croakington.

Lakriha.Hayes
I've heard they are back wasn't too sure.

Georgianna.Ford
They are indeed back.

Denver.Jones
You know I already jogged by the house and Snow White is rocking one huge ass ring.

Natalia.Cumbler
Don't be silly they're not back.

Georgianna.Ford
Sent One Image.

Georgianna.Ford
They are de nitely back...zoom in and check out that rock Snow is sporting.

Lakriha.Hayes
Do you think they got married?

Natalia.Cumbler
Of course they didn't. Chase isn't stupid.

Denver.Jones
Duh, because he is in love!

Georgianna.Ford
Nat, you let him slip through your fingers just and someone else.

Natalia.Cumbler
I am heading over to the house now. I will put this stupid rumor to bed before it spreads around campus.

Lakriha.Hayes
No need to...Everett just emailed us. Sorry hun, the truth is already out there. See you girls tonight.

Denver.Jones
This is so exciting. You think Juju will show her face?

Georgianna.Ford
It wouldn't be a kick-ass party if there wasn't a tad bit of drama. she is going.

Natalia.Cumbler
Chase is a dead man walking!

Denver.Jones
Told you so. Laterz

To: *exclusivestudentpartiers*
From: *Everett.Sawyer@Walsh.edu*
CC: *Charlotte.Withers@Walsh.edu, Darren.Reed@Walsh.edu, Tristan.Beckett@Walsh.edu, Vincent.Beckett@Walsh.edu, Miguel.Jackson@Walsh.edu, Austin.Kramer@Walsh.edu*
Date: *Saturday, December 10th, 4:41 pm*
Subject: *DRUNK IN LOVE PARTY*
Alright, ladies and gents, we are celebrating something huge at Croakington!
AFTER ONE LONG MONTH & TWO WEEKS AWAY WE ARE BACK!! AND WE HAVE NEWLYWEDS IN THE HOUSE...CHASE & CHARLOTTE TUCKER!
YUP, THESE TWO CRAZY LOVE BIRDS TIED THE KNOT!
I'm still available FYI so come keep daddy company tonight.
We are opening our house once again to you beautiful people to party hard and fuck harder. (DONT FUCK IN OUR HOUSE THOUGH.)
As always, liquor will be provided but we encourage you to bring more. Let's try to keep the SLOPPY DRUNKS home.
We STILL don't like cleaning your fucking vomit out the kitchen sinks. LACROSSE TEAM, YOU'RE STILL FUCKING PUSSIES!!
Upstairs is STILL o-limits to everyone!! I catch anyone trying to sneak a fuck; I am throwing you out butt ass naked. 😊
Peace don't bring any gifts, we have no space for those shits.
NATALIA AND JUJU ARE NOT WELCOME! I REPEAT NATALIA CUMBLER AND JUJU VASQUEZ ARE NOT WELCOME!
Peace out Fuckers!

~***~

"Everett, I told you not to send the email yet." I walk into his room, reading the email once more. "Why do you never listen?"

He turns around in his chair. "It's a party, Charles. I never listen when partying is involved."

"Chase isn't here yet. I don't know if he is even going to make it this weekend."

It's true. Chase has been in New York working hard to get the company back on track. I took everything in me to get on the airplane, leaving him behind. I cried the whole night back.

"He is the CEO. He will make it."

"No, that's not how it works. He can't up and leave anytime he wants. Chase has to show he is committed to the company. Taking random trips every weekend is verboten." I get up and leave his room.

Talking to Everett is something I don't have time for. I head down to the kitchen, hoping a little baking therapy would do the trick.

"Hey, Charles." Darren sounds pissed. "You have a visitor."

I stop mixing the brownie batter, wiping my hands on the apron, and I make my way to the front door. I smell her before I see her.

Certain smells will always bring you back to the good times, to the times when everything was fine. It was she and I against the world at one point. Her face lights up when I come into view.

"Uh, hi, Raven."

Darren doesn't move. If anything, he moves closer to me, shielding me in a way. I place my hand on his arm, telling him I'll be okay. He grunts but goes into the living room.

"Hey Charlotte, how are you?"

"I'm good, and yourself?" I see her move an inch forward as if I'm going to let her inside. I don't move, and she doesn't bring up the fact that I won't let her in.

"Fine. I see they're still overly protective of you." She tries to make a joke, but it falls flat.

"Extra detail now." I raise my left hand, showing the ring. Since being married to Chase, the guys have been aggressive with others a lot.

I don't know if Chase put them up to this, or they feel the need to go the extra mile. "So, what brings you here?"

"That." She looks at my hand. "I read the party email that you got married, and I wanted to congratulate you in person. I knew you two would end up together. I called it the first day you walked in here."

"Umm, thank you." There is a brief moment of awkward silence. "So, I thought you were back in Paris or London. Last time I saw you, you said that."

"I did go back. I'm here for the holidays. Not *here*, but at my parents' house."

"Oh," is all I can say. Raven and I aren't the same anymore, and this conversation is proof. I don't want to be rude and rush her out, but I'm so uncomfortable with this conversation at this point.

Best friends to strangers. Never thought I would see the day.

"Cool. Cool. Well, I got to go." I grab the doorknob.

"Oh, sure." She looks as if she wants to say something and I pause. "It was nice seeing you, Charlotte, and I'm sorry about everything."

"What's done is done. We can't keep living in the past. Everything was a learned lesson. Take care of yourself. Rave." I smile at her and slowly close the door.

"She is the worst kind of human." I jump in surprise. Darren walks back into the foyer. "What did she think, you were going to take her back with open arms?"

I smile at him walking back into the kitchen. "Do I get no privacy around here?"

"None at all. She is a snake, and I can't have her around you. Once a person crosses the line, they can never come back over." He sits at the kitchen island. "What are you baking?"

"Brownies."

He stands up and grabs something out of the cabinet to the right of me. "Add this."

"Oh no. What is that doing in the house?"

"Charles, live a little. I can help you make them. I normally bake them, anyway." He waves the bag in my face. I scrunch up my nose, backing up. It stinks.

"We are not making weed brownies." I had a feeling the guys dabbled with Mary Jane due to all the air fresheners and candles lying around the house. I just never caught them in the act.

The house would always have a faint smell of it, lingering around.

"Why," he tips the bag contents into my batter. "Tonight is a celebration!" He starts to stir, and I stare at him dumbfounded.

"I'm going to leave you to it." I walk out of the kitchen and back to Chase's bedroom. Being without him now has driven me to sleep in his bed. The smell of him makes me content.

Some of the guys are doing their own thing before the party, and well, the others are just doing things to annoy me. So, I believe I can get a few hours of sleep in before the party.

"Charles! Charles!"

I'm lifted o the bed only to fall back on it, repeatedly. Opening my eyes Tristan, Darren, and Everett jumping on the bed.

"I swear I'm going to kill you guys." I reach out for one of their ankles, no luck. "Come on, guys, stop." They keep jumping, ignoring me. "I will call Chase, crying," I yell, and they stop instantly.

"Party pooper." Darren jumps o the bed.

"You better not lie to us." Everett points at me. "I know where you live and I will come for you." He jumps o the bed, and Tristan does the same.

"Guests are starting to arrive. Don't you need to get ready?" Darren asks. I look at the clock on the nightstand. Holy hell, I slept for five hours.

"Nope, this is what I am wearing."

"But you're wrinkled." Everett's eyes widen.

"So, I am not trying to impress any of those people down there. Has anyone heard from Chase?" I ask, grabbing my phone. He hasn't called or texted me in hours.

"Uh about that. He can't make it this weekend. He said he would try to come down next weekend. I think he is going to call you, later on. He and Jasper are still in the office," Tristan replies.

I want to cry. A newlywed party without the husband.

"See, Everett, this is why I told you to wait. Now I have to go through this alone."

"Technically you are not alone. You have the six of us." Darren says. "And I got some brownies for you too."

"I am not eating those."

Austin's voice can be heard yelling at us to come downstairs and join the party. The house is full of people, some I know from passing, and others I have no clue.

Darren offered to stay by my side for the night, and I told him to go have fun, I'll scream if need be. He said okay, but I knew he wasn't going to listen.

All six of them spread out, talking with other people, yet they are still close enough to come to my aid in a nanosecond. If this is what it's like to have older brothers, I am glad I met them now and not growing up.

I need a drink. The kitchen is the less crowded spot in the house, and I am thankful. I grab a cup out of the cabinet and fill it up with some apple juice.

"Charlotte, it's so nice to have you back on campus," Wolf walks in from the back door.

"Wolf, I didn't expect to see you tonight. How are you?" I mentally count down from ten. For some strange reason, my heart is beating a mile a minute.

"Good, good. I read somewhere that you are married now. Congratulations. Chase is fortunate."

"Thank you." I act like I'm going for the liquor, making myself very noticeable to the guys. I hope they are watching. "So are you staying for the party or..."

He moves towards me, grabbing my left hand. "He went all out for this, huh?"

"I suppose." I snatch my hand back. "Any special woman in your life?" I know the answer to that, and it's no, but it doesn't hurt to ask.

"I was hoping you and I would have had a chance."

"Yeah, you and all the other dickheads around campus—not going to happen." I hear the anger in Miguel's voice.

"Hey, Charlotte, long time no see." Valerie says. "Why don't you come with me and we can go hang out in the game room, and catch up. Miguel tells me New York was interesting."

"I think that's a good idea." I see Darren leaning against the wall. Tristan and Austin are in the doorway. They want Wolf gone, and if he puts up a fight, they aren't going to hesitate to show him out.

"We will be right out to check on you. We need to have another chat with Wolf and his friends out back."

"Straight to the game room. I believe Everett is in there showing o to some chick." Austin gestures his head for us to leave. Valerie grabs my hand, taking me to the game room. I need Chase here, like right now.