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Episode 04: Fresh Blood

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EPISODE 4: Fresh Blood

Standards of Behavior contains mature language, content and themes. Please listen with care.

1. Charlotte’s nails begin to TAP on the metal desk. The Hearing Moderator FLIPS/SHUFFLES through papers.

    HEARING MODERATOR
    Thank you for waiting – we have so much to get through. It’ll just be a few more minutes.

TAPPING FINGERNAILS stops.

    CHARLOTTE
    No problem at all, take your time.

The Hearing Moderator still SORTS through papers. Charlotte takes a SIP of water. The Hearing Moderator PRESSES PLAY on the tape recorder.

    HEARING MODERATOR
    Testing one, two. Testing one, two.

TAPS on machine. Recording button PRESSED.

    HEARING MODERATOR
    Alright, let’s begin. Please state your full name for the record.

    CHARLOTTE
    Charlotte Michaels.

    HEARING MODERATOR
    Please state your age, your major and what year you are at the university.
CHARLOTTE
I’m 20 and I’m a junior. Wait -- scratch that, I’m technically a sophomore now. I transferred here from a different university at the beginning of the semester. It’s all a little confusing.

HEARING MODERATOR
That’s quite alright. I noticed that on your record. What made you transfer to the university?

PAUSE.

CHARLOTTE
I wasn’t really clicking with my previous university. It didn’t really feel like home to me. I guess I just wanted a change of scenery, you know?

HEARING MODERATOR
Really? That’s interesting.

CHARLOTTE
I guess you could say that.

2. FLASHBACK – CALMING BACKGROUND MUSIC. Charlotte is TYPING on her laptop. Pauses, takes a SIP of her coffee. Begins TYPING again. Her pet bird, Sunny, SWINGS in his cage. BIRD NOISES.

CHARLOTTE (aloud)
Sweet, I’m almost done with this story! And I’m ahead of schedule. Mental note: I totally need to treat myself after this. What do you think about that, Sunny?

SUNNY
(Tweets)

KNOCK on the door. CHARLOTTE stops TYPING.
CHARLOTTE
Hmm, weird. Wonder who that could be.

Charlotte PUSHERS her chair from the desk. FOOTSTEPS to door.

CHARLOTTE
Oh wait, it’s mail day! Awesome! Is this what I think it is?

Charlotte SHAKES the box. She then RIPS it open.

CHARLOTTE
Hell yeah, the name tag finally came! “Charlie Michaels, Campus Post Editor-in-Chief.” Look at me, Sunny, so official!

SUNNY
(Tweets)

CHARLOTTE
Let me make some room for this.

Charlotte SHUFFLES things around her desk to make room for her new nametag.

CHARLOTTE
That’s better. Ah, my office is finally coming together!

CHARLOTTE sits back at her desk and begins TYPING again, HUMMING along to the background music. She then gets an ALERT on her phone.

CHARLOTTE
Oh, it’s Billy.

BILLY
(reading his text to Charlotte)
Hey Charlie! Are you free right now? I really need to talk to someone.
CHARLOTTE  
(talking aloud to herself)  
Ah shit...this is not the best time  
Billy, c’mon!

CHARLOTTE begins to TYPE a reply to BILLY.

CHARLOTTE  
(reading her text aloud to the audience)  
This really isn’t a good time...I’m busy finishing up the paper. Why, what’s up?

Charlotte puts her phone down. TEXT ALERT.

BILLY  
(TYPING)  
Something happened. I don’t want to talk about it over text. Please, I need you.

CHARLOTTE  
Oh shit.

TYPING.

CHARLOTTE  
Alright, stop by the office. I’ll even make you some tea. How does that sound?

BILLY  
(TYPING)  
Wonderful, on my way.

3. Charlotte LOCKS her phone. She CLANKS mugs together, grabbing one. She fills the mug with WATER. Door OPENS.

BILLY  
Hey Charlie. Do you mind if I put my book bag down here?

CHARLOTTE  
Go ahead! Give me a second, I’m almost done with your tea.
Billy DROPS his backpack on the ground. CHARLOTTE CLANKS a spoon in the tea.

CHARLOTTE
Alright, here you go- Oh geez, Billy, you don’t look so good. Are you sick?

BILLY
No...I’m sorry for barging in like this, I know you’re always busy.

CHARLOTTE
You know me, I can never sit still! It’s okay, I could use a little break anyway.

CHARLOTTE SETS the mug on the table for BILLY. She TURNS OFF her background music.

BILLY
Thanks, Charlie.

CHARLOTTE
So what’s up?

BILLY
I don’t really know how to tell you... Can we just hang out for a bit?

CHARLOTTE
Yeah. You know you can always tell me anything, right? We’ve been friends since high school, since the awkward stages! We go way back!

PAUSE.

CHARLOTTE
C’mon, think about our braces!!!

BILLY
(Laughs)
God, those years were rough. I even tried to work that Justin Bieber hair... Yikes.
CHARLOTTE
Yeah…I’m so glad we had that glo’ up. If we can make it through that rough time of appearances, we can make it through anything.

BILLY
Exactly!

Charlotte begins to TYPE on her laptop again. Bily pauses for a moment, STIRS his tea for a bit. Billy SNIFFLES.

CHARLOTTE
What’s wrong?

BILLY
(teary-eyed)
Charlie, I was raped last night.

CHARLOTTE
...What? How did this happen?

BILLY
(sobbing)
I don’t even know.

CHARLOTTE
I…I don’t know what to say. Who was it?

BILLY
I’m not even going to say her name. She’s pure evil.

CHARLOTTE
Oh my God, Billy, I’m so sorry. What can I do to help?

BILLY
Nothing. What’s done is done. I thought about calling the police, pressing charges, you know?

CHARLOTTE
Yeah. Are you sure about that?
BILLY
I think so? I don’t really know where to turn.

CHARLOTTE
Hmm...

BILLY
What are you thinking Charlie?

PAUSE.

CHARLOTTE
I don’t really know either. Obviously, I want the best for you. You know that, right?

BILLY
Of course.

CHARLOTTE
I just... I just don’t know about that.

BILLY
Huh?

CHARLOTTE
I mean, think about it. Think about the stigma. The odds are already against you. I just don’t want you to become falsely accused for something you didn’t do.

BILLY
(sobs)
Ugh... FUCK SOCIETY!

Billy slams hands on Charlotte’s desk.

CHARLOTTE
Woah, Billy. It’s okay. I know you’re upset, what she did was terrible. Absolutely unthinkable! Just try to catch your breath.
PAUSE.

BILLY
(sniffs)
Alright. You’re right.

CHARLOTTE
Yeah?

BILLY
I just need to move past this. Act like everything is fine. Ah, God, I’m such a mess.

CHARLOTTE
It’s okay Billy! You’re strong. You know I’m always looking out for you... I’m always here for you. You know that right?

BILLY
Of course.

CHARLOTTE
Good.

BILLY
Ah, I should probably go. I’m so sorry for interrupting your grind. I just needed to talk to a friend.

CHARLOTTE
No worries!

BILLY
Hey, maybe I’ll see you later? What are you doing tonight?

CHARLOTTE
Oh, I don’t know. I might just stay in, de-stress from all the chaos that comes along with running the paper! Maybe wanna come over for some late night pizza?
BILLY
Eh, maybe. I think I’m just going to spend a night to myself tonight. I’ll keep you posted.

CHARLOTTE
Sounds good.

BILLY
See ya later, Charlie. Oh hey, thanks for the tea.

FOOTSTEPS. Door CLOSES.

4. Birds are CHIRPING. Charlotte’s alarm RINGS.

CHARLOTTE
(groans/talking to alarm clock)
Okay, okay, I get it. Just five more minutes?

Alarm still RINGS. Charlotte then turns it OFF. Charlotte UNLOCKS phone.

CHARLOTTE
Wait… wait… What? What the fuck? Why did Laura ask me if I’m okay? I’m fine…the last time I checked… Wait, who is this random number? Why are people texting me about Billy?

TEXT ALERT.

CHARLOTTE
(reads aloud)
Check the news. Check the news?

Charlotte OPENS app.

CHARLOTTE
Alright I’ll check the news. C’mon, load quicker, stupid phone. Alright, let me scroll through some headlines—Jesus Christ! No. No way. No.
Charlotte LOCKS phone.

    CHARLOTTE
    (begins to panic/sob)
    He’s dead? What? What the hell, Billy. This isn’t real. Nope, not real. It’s a dream- I’m dreaming, right? I need to call him, he’s fine.

Charlotte UNLOCKS phone.

    CHARLOTTE
    Wait, I have a voicemail? From who? Oh, no way. Billy! When was it? 3 a.m. Shit- I was asleep. C’mon Billy tell me something good.

LOUD BANG. NEWSCAST JINGLE.

    NEWSMAN/NEWSWOMAN
    And now for developing breaking news out of University Square. Local police have reported a student was found dead in the middle of the Main Street just outside of campus. Details are still developing. Stay tuned for more information.

END FLASHBACK.

5. Papers SHUFFLE.

    HEARING MODERATOR
    So, tell me about your social life.

    CHARLOTTE
    It’s pretty minimal. I don’t really go out and party too often. But at the same time, when there’s the opportunity to go out and chill for a bit, I like to take it.
HEARING MODERATOR
I’m assuming you saw the opportunity to go out to that house party, and you took it in order to unwind a bit, correct?

CHARLOTTE
I guess you could say that.

HEARING MODERATOR
Who did you attend this party with?

CHARLOTTE
Allison. Allison Jennings.

HEARING MODERATOR
How long have you known Allison Jennings?

CHARLOTTE
Not too long, I met her this semester. We live in the same apartment complex, so I met her right when I moved in. She actually saw me moving in and offered to help with organizing my stuff.

HEARING MODERATOR
Describe your relationship with her.

CHARLOTTE
We’re friends. It’s crazy how close we became in such a short time. She really welcomed me to the university with open arms, and I’m forever grateful for that. I needed a change of scenery... She helped me get used to the place.

HEARING MODERATOR
Got it. Would you say you spend a lot of time together?
CHARLOTTE
I mean, I’m always there for her if she needs it, and I know she’s there for me. It’s not like we’re attached at the hip or anything.

HEARING MODERATOR
Got it. Do you know who Allison’s friend group is on campus? Who does she hang out with?

CHARLOTTE
I mean, she has lots of friends in our apartment complex. She’s best friends with Will Thomas. They’re super close. She sometimes hangs out with my roommate Sofi Perez, and her best friend Roy Hammond. Then there’s me of course.

HEARING MODERATOR
Got it.

6. FLASHBACK – Coffeehouse MUSIC.

CHARLOTTE
Hi, yes, I’d like a grande iced coffee please. Can I have a splash of crème? Not too much though. Thanks!

DIALING NUMBERS. RINGING TONE.

MRS. MICHAELS
Hello?

CHARLOTTE
Hi, mom!

MRS. MICHAELS
Ah, Charlie! How are you sweetie?

CHARLOTTE
Mom, I go by Charlotte now, remember?
MRS. MICHAELS
Oh, right. I’m sorry about that.
It’ll take me a little bit of
getting used to!

CHARLOTTE
(muffled)
Thank you!

MRS. MICHAELS
Sorry, what was that?

CHARLOTTE
Oh, nothing. I’m at the coffeehouse
on campus and I got myself a
coffee. I needed a little pick me
up, plus I have a quick break
between classes so I thought I’d
give you a ring.

MRS. MICHAELS
So, how’s everything going? Are you
feeling more comfortable?

CHARLOTTE
Yeah, a little bit. I mean, it’s
definitely weird being here. Kinda
doesn’t feel like real life, you
know? It’s probably because I’m
still adjusting.

MRS. MICHAELS
Things like this take time,
sweetie.

CHARLOTTE
I know, it’s just super difficult.
Anyway, enough about me, how are
you? How’s dad?

MRS. MICHAELS
We’re all good over here! Dad’s
golfing, I’m keeping up with my
garden...the tulips are coming in
nicely! And we miss you of course.
CHARLOTTE
I miss you too.

MRS. MICHAELS
You know, I saw Mrs. Letterman a few days ago at the supermarket.

CHARLOTTE
...Really? How is she doing?

MRS. MICHAELS
I mean, she’s doing the best she can under the circumstances. She doesn’t look like herself...she’s a ghost. God, I can't imagine losing my only child.

CHARLOTTE
It feels like yesterday. I can’t get that moment out of my head.

MRS. MICHAELS
I know.

CHARLOTTE
I think about him all the time. I still feel like it’s all my-

MRS. MICHAELS
No. Don’t even go there, Charlotte. Do not even think about blaming yourself.

CHARLOTTE
(teary-eyed)
It’s just so hard. I should have been there for him. I shouldn’t have told him no. He should have gotten help. I needed to get him help.

MRS. MICHAELS
Charlotte, stop. Do not let this take over. He would not want you thinking this way. Think about how he would want you to live.
CHARLOTTE
I know. It’s just so hard.
(Sniffles).

MRS. MICHAELS
That’s why you’re at this university now. You know we want the best for you, that’s why you have this opportunity now. Here’s a fresh start, you need to run with it!

CHARLOTTE
You’re right. Wooo I need to calm down, alright. I’m alright. I just get so down about it sometimes. I’m sorry.

MRS. MICHAELS
Nothing to be sorry about! Have you met some nice people? Some good friends?

CHARLOTTE
Yeah, you know, I’m making my rounds. I met a girl named Allison a few weeks ago, we absolutely clicked! You and dad totally have to meet her. She’s so nice.

MRS. MICHAELS
She sounds nice! We’ll have to take her out to dinner sometime.

DOOR CHIMES.

CHARLOTTE
Actually, speak of the devil, she just walked into the coffee shop. Hang on a second, mom.

MRS. MICHAELS
No problem!

MUFFLED conversation.
CHARLOTTE
Hey, Allison!

ALLISON
Oh, hi Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE
Hey, are you okay?

ALLISON
Not really, to be honest.

CHARLOTTE
Hang on, let me say bye to my mom.

CLEAR conversation.

CHARLOTTE
Mom?

MRS. MICHAELS
Yes, sweetie?

CHARLOTTE
I gotta go. I’ll call you tomorrow.

CLICK hangs up call.

THE END