

Fat Keily - Free Story by Manjari

Chapter 2

I shoved my books inside locker and slammed it shut, my actions rather forceful. Haynes insult still burned in my mind, dampening my mood. Coward that I was, my locker took the brunt of my anger instead of the boy who was responsible for it.

“Keily!” Addison was sprint-walking toward me, another girl - who introduced herself as Lola this morning - following her.

“How’s your day going?” I asked when she reached me.

“So far so good.”

I looked at Lola, not wanting her to feel left out.

She just shrugged. Lola didn’t talk much.

“C’mon, let’s go. Sadhvi must be waiting for us,” Addison said, hooking her arms with mine and Lola’s, and rushing us to cafeteria. It was lunch. Addison had invited me this morning to sit it out with her and the girls.

What a cool cousin I have!

“What about you? Any scandals yet that us cheerleaders must gossip about?” My cousin asked.

I let out an ugly snort. “I’ll let you know.”

“I heard that your English class is taken by Mr. Crones.”

I nodded.

“He’s a pretty cool guy, mind you annoying, but cool. Although this entire year you’re going to be saddled with lots of assignment, so be ready.” Addison groaned. “We got stuck with old man Whitman, that bitter crow. You’re lucky K.” My first impression of Mr. Crones was also of a laid back guy. He was too enthusiastic for my taste, but at least he was friendly with us students.

The smell of food assaulted my nose as we entered cafeteria. The booming noises of students' chatter lit the large room. My mood lightening, until my eyes landed on *Haynes*. He was already looking at me. He was at the table just beside window, sitting there like a king at his throne.

His eyes narrowed, and I looked away. *Jerk.*

"Let me introduce you to the boys," Addison said. She waved at the guys at *his* table. Other than him there were four more guys, two of them waved back. *No!*

"It's okay, we don't have to disturb them," I refused but Addison had already began dragging us to their table. Despite my reluctance, she carried me as if I had weighed nothing, and that was saying a lot. *What does this girl eat?!*

"You'll love them, except James. He's a prick."

We reached their table. Addison high-fived a blond guy. Lola greeted them all with a single nod. And I looked anywhere but *him*, all the while feeling his glare.

"Is she the cousin you were talking about?" Blond guy asked Addison.

Addison nodded. "Keily, this is Lucas. Lucas this is Keily."

"Hey." I gave a small smile, my shyness peeking its head. Lucas was a handsome guy, his facial features were sharp with green eyes and heart-shaped lips. He probably had many girls vying for him.

"It's good to have a beautiful face around," Lucas said with a most genuine smile. "I hope we'll have some of our classes together. Addison's cousin is my... friend."

"She better remain your friend. We don't want you dating a cow," a voice commented. *Haynes.*

My smile dropped. *That hurt.*

"Shut up James." Addison glared at him. So he was called James. "You just want everyone one to be as miserable as you, don't you?"

James Haynes rolled his eyes.

“Okay okay.” Lucas jumped in, his eyes dancing between Addison and James, who were in a glaring competition. “James, you’ve been in a bad mood since history. God knows why? But you don’t have to take it out on others.”

Addison huffed, putting her arm around my shoulder. I felt like a dwarf, a grateful dwarf. She stood up for me. Only if I could do the same for myself.

“We’re leaving,” my cousin spat, “Sadhvi is waiting for us anyway.”

As we began to walk, Lucas stopped us. “Hey, don’t let this sourpuss ruin your mood. Don’t go, by now Sadhvi must’ve found other girls.” He looked at me. “Keily, I apologize for him. He’s having a bad day.”

“That’s not an excuse,” Lola muttered.

“Yeah, it’s not.” Another guy stood up. He was wearing glasses, they gave him a look of maturity. “Look, why don’t you guys sit here with us. We all want to know Keily.” He became 100 times charming as he smiled. “It’s going to be our treat.” Poor guy added when Addison didn’t reply.

I heard James scoff, probably holding in some remark about my weight and how I’d eat too much.

Addison glared at him but relented anyway. I hoped she didn’t, but by now we all had established she was our leader. We did what she said.

I settled in seat beside Lucas, hyper aware of how much space I occupied. It didn’t help James was right in front of me, looking like he wanted to chop my head off for sitting beside his friend.

Am I that bad?

Other guys introduced themselves.

Matt, the guy with glasses, Axel and Keith, the other two, went to grab our lunch. It was their treat after all.

“So Keily, are you having a good time here-” Lucas stopped, his face scrunching in a cute frown. “Let me rephrase that, you’re not getting bored too much, are you?”

“Not much. Teachers here are pretty okay.”

“Cool. By the way, if anyone here gives you trouble come to me? I’ll take care of them.”

‘Take care of your friend,’ I wanted to reply.

“You don’t have to play hero Lucas. She’s already got me for that,” Addison chimed.

“Addy, let me impress your cousin.” Lucas pouted. He was so sweet.

A chuckle slip past me at his adorable shenanigans, but it dropped as soon as it came when I saw James looking at me with narrowed eyes.

Matt, Keith, and Axel joined us, carrying food of twenty people for just eight of us. Everyone dug in like hungry animals that teenagers are, but I was cautious not to take too much, especially with James sitting here. I didn’t want to give him anymore ammunition. It felt like my every action was controlled by how he’d react.

As food reached our mouths, the chit-chat at table ensued. I learned Lucas was the captain of our football team. I had suspected him to be athletic with all the muscles and height he was packing. James was also in team. The two seemed good friends. I gathered that much when Lucas kept throwing insults at James, and received equally harsh ones back. According to Matt, James and Lucas were their key players. I took him at his words.

Keith and Axel were in track team. Addison spent most of their talking to them about their next tournament. Lola listened quietly as Matt whispered in her ear. He was so close that he almost sat on her lap.

“They’re dating,” Lucas informed when he caught me glancing at them.

Lucas asked me about my town and previous school. I answered all his questions, and he listened patiently. It was flattering that a guy like him would pay any attention to me. His amiable nature gave me courage to ask him questions myself. We talked about football, but when I couldn’t keep up with him, he switched conversation to what subjects he was taking. I learned we shared calculus and P.E..

This lunch would’ve been the best one that I had in a long time, if not for James Haynes. I tried to block him out, but it was difficult when he kept throwing glares my way. Thankfully, he didn’t make another remark about me.

He didn't even say a word to me, silently settling on a 'I-won't-mind-killing-you' look.

I should've given him that stupid pen.

"Keily."

"Yes." I looked at my dad. We were on the couch.

After returning from school, wolfing down some snacks and sleeping for an hour, I had finished my homework. It wasn't much since it was our first day (Although I'm yet to start on Mr. Croner's assignment). Now it was approaching seven, and my dad and I were in the living room. I was on my phone, and he was doing his work, glued to his laptop.

Dad had already prepared dinner. We were waiting for mom to return from work.

"Which color is better?" He asked turning the screen at me. Two browser page side by side with a heading ample.com stared at me. He was asking about the theme color. One was brown, fading into light brown. Other was also brown but a different shade.

I pointed at the first one.

"I also like this one." He smiled, and closed the web page. My eyes were still on his screen, when I noticed unfamiliar software.

"Wait, why aren't you using Atom? It's your favorite tool," I asked. He always used Atom IDE to design websites.

"Client wanted me to use this one."

"Is the software new? I haven't seen it before."

"Yeah, it was launched previous year." He began typing on his laptop before stopping again. He looked at me, his brown eyes gleaming. "Do you want to see its features?"

I nodded eagerly. I guess I shared my father's interest in designing websites and coding.

“Okay kiddo, don’t make fun of me. I’m still learning.”

“I can’t promise you that.” I smiled.

Because of my dad, computer science was my favorite subject. Today I had been excited to attend that class. However, the excitement had poofed out of me when I saw James sitting in the computer lab. I could’ve handled that, but teacher asked us to sit alphabetically, and because K comes after J we had to sit side by side. For almost an hour I had to endure his judging gazes, and if I ever made the mistake of looking back, I was showered with fat jokes.

My two favorite classes, literature and computer, had now turned into... not so favorite. If that wasn’t enough we shared calculus too. But Lucas had been there to keep him checked, so it was bearable. Even though I was grateful, I felt bad that Lucas had to fight his friend for me. He was such a kind person.

If only I can fight for myself.

Our front door opened, and Mom walked in.

“Welcome back,” I said before turning back to laptop screen.

“I’m going to take a shower.” She put her purse down on the free chair. “And I want this laptop closed, and you two on dining table before I come back,” with a warning she headed upstairs.

“Yes Mom.”

“Yes Sweetie.”

Dad and I muttered together.

I prepared myself for the upcoming interrogation about the first day of school at dinner. My mother already got lot on her hands with this new office branch of hers. She didn’t need to hear her daughter moaning about a mean teenage boy.

I’ll probably leave out the James part.
