

## Keily | Your Place or Mine?

### Keily

#### Your Place or Mine?

James's eyes scanned me from head to toe again, and suddenly, the smirk was gone. His glare intensified, coming back up to my face.

Oh, he was angry.

"When were you planning to tell me about the project, Piggy?"

*Oh God.*

How the heck had he found out?! My already red face reddened even more as I started imagining the million ways James would use to torment me after this.

"Or were you planning to do it all by yourself to get the credit?"

"I... I was going to tell you. I just didn't get the chance," I stammered as I glanced up and down the hall for an exit to this conversation.

James leaned closer, forcing me to press my back against my locker.

"So, you're saying after all the times you saw me, you didn't get a chance to relay that tiny piece of information?"

He had a point.

I just stared at him, fumbling inside my mind to come up with some believable reason.

*Oh heck! What have I got myself into?*

Like an angel sent from heaven, suddenly Addison arrived next to us. "Hey! Sorry for rushing off, but I just *had* to get that essay in before the bell. I'm already pushing my luck with Mr. Walters."

My face was flaming bright red, and my body had turned clammy. If she noticed, she didn't say, and instead glanced at James, taking in his expression.

“Oh, someone’s not having a good morning,” she commented.

James’s glare moved from me to her. “Well, I think today I have a right to be a little preachy,” he gritted before turning his furious eyes on me.

“*Someone* kept a very important message to themselves, which could affect my grades.”

“I swear I was going to tell you today about the project,” I immediately said. I felt Addison’s eyes on me from my side.

His brows knitted further. “You had almost a week, Piggy.” He moved closer. “Instead, I come to know from Seth that there’s a project, and you’re my partner.”

“Why are you making such a big deal out of it?” Addison came to my defense, but she didn’t sound as forceful as usual. I guessed even she thought it was my fault.

“Don’t give me that bullshit, Addison. If the same thing happened to you, you’d be shouting at the top of your lungs right now.”

While his attention was on her, I slipped away from the lockers to stand next to my cousin.

“You know how much credits and GPA mean to get into college,” James continued. “That project is at least twenty-five percent of our grade.”

Addison pursed her lips.

“I wasn’t going to keep anything from you,” I jumped in. “Plus, Mrs. Green is going to check our project every week, so it’s not like I would have succeeded.”

In reply, I received a reprimanding look from James.

“Don’t worry. I’ve already started on it,” I blurted, which turned out to be a mistake.

“You started without me?!” James yelled, making me flinch.

“Don’t talk to her like that.” Once again, Addison spoke up from my side. “If anything, you should be glad. You were going to make her do all the work, anyway.” She huffed.

“Addison, she has her own mouth,” James said, “and don’t make ridiculous assumptions. I don’t trust her to do the whole project by herself.”

Okay, that line of thinking was ridiculous when he was the one who wasn’t good at coding.

I held Addison’s arms, stopping her from hurling another comeback. Asshole as James was, this time it was my fault, and Addison shouldn’t have had to burden herself with protecting me from him.

“Look, I’m sorry, James,” I began, and his scary demeanor faltered a little. “It was wrong of me to not tell you earlier. I’ll text you all the details of the project, and we’ll do it together.”

*No matter how much I don’t want to.*

“You should be sorry.” James gave me a mean look, but his glare wasn’t sharp like before. Admitting my mistake had had a desired effect, and he didn’t look like he wanted to jump on me anymore.

“I’ll talk to you later, Piggy.” He threw a quick glance at Addison before storming away.

I released a sigh of relief once his back disappeared around the corner.

“That was so tense,” Addison quipped. “For a second, even I was scared.” We started walking.

“Well, he *is* scary.”

“No, not like that. He’s always mean, but I rarely see him intense like that—maybe sometimes during games.”

I frowned. “He’s always like that.”

“Maybe he’s always like that *to you*. I guess Lola was right that he has something for you.”

*Not this again.*

“Let me make a guess what that ‘something’ might be,” I chirped with mock enthusiasm. “Disgust and hate,” I deadpanned.

“I don’t blame you for thinking like that. He acts like an ass.” She chuckled.

“Be safe while working on your project with him. And if he continues his assery, be cute just like you did now. He’ll melt...”

I raised one eyebrow at her.

“Okay, maybe he won’t melt, melt,” she said. “He’s too much of a bastard for that. I think in the end, you have to rely on good old punches—”

I cut her off. “What do you mean by being cute?”

“Didn’t you notice how he became a thousand times less intimidating the moment you said sorry?”

“Well, he deserved an apology from me. I don’t see what’s cute about that.”

Addison gave an amused smile. “But you sounded so modest and looked so cute with that blush; it even made me gooey. I can’t blame him for softening. Keep that trick up your sleeve just in case.”

What is the meaning of this world anymore?

“I don’t get it. I wasn’t even trying to—” I choked on my words, seeing her smirk.

*Aah. Cousins are so infuriating.*

“What is it with you trying to ship me off with guys?! I’m very satisfied with my singlehood.”

“Oh, Keily, it’s my duty as your cousin and friend to look out for your potential suitors. But don’t worry, I still ship you with Lucas.” She winked at me.

I could only groan.

After teasing me some more, Addison and I finally parted ways and went to our respective classes.

The day gradually dragged by, but my attention wasn’t at its best. Lola’s crazy theory about James and my cousin’s remarks had managed to latch onto my mind.

Every time I caught sight of him in the school hallways or cafeteria, I felt my eyes staying on him a little longer and found his dark ones right there to meet mine.

Sometimes there was fluttering in my stomach, which I chalked up to fear and nervousness.

Did he really like me? The question swirled through my thoughts. I blamed the girls for putting the ridiculous idea in my head. It was silly.

When I saw him in Calculus, I hoped my face didn't reveal those absurd thoughts. Lucas wasn't here yet. Keeping my eyes anywhere but on James, I aimed for my desk.

"Piggy," James called as I was passing by his seat.

I paused and looked at him. The amusement dripping from his face warned me he was up to no good.

"You mentioned you already started on the project."

I nodded.

"What did you do?"

"I only half drew the layout of the website," I answered.

"You're fast," he taunted, his lips lifting in a barely noticeable smirk. I didn't know what I preferred—an angry devil or an up-to-no-good asshole.

"I'm going to be busy next week because of the game. Even the coming days are going to be hectic, since the season's starting next month. I don't think I can do much work with you on the project in school."

Was he dumping all the work on me, after all? My hopes lifted.

"But I can make time after school," he said. "I decided we should work at each other's houses. That's more efficient."

My hope zipped away like a popped balloon. I'd rather have him dump the whole project on me.

My reluctance must have been evident on my face, because his amused expression only intensified.

“We should meet tomorrow and complete that layout. So, your place or mine?” James didn’t even bother to hide his smirk at the innuendo.

Resigning myself to the devil, I settled on the safer choice, as that was the only say I was getting in this matter. “Mine.”

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