

Keily | Crossing a Line

Keily

Crossing a Line

We were at a stoplight, so I craned my neck to see what she was looking at. My eyes bulged.

It was a screenshot of a picture taken from Instagram. A picture of James and me kissing by the poolside.

I blushed at how intimate we looked with our bodies molded into each other and lips locked so feverishly.

For the first time, a voice inside me didn't nag about how big or fat I looked in a photo, because his large stature embraced mine so well. *We look perfect.*

"You kissed James!" Addison shrieked.

I gripped the steering wheel tighter as the light turned green. "I didn't mean to."

Anxiety flooded me. The whole school will have seen that photo by Monday. Sure, we'd kissed in public, but I'd never expected someone to snap a shot of it!

Why can't people mind their own business?!

"Pull over right now."

"Addison, it's late—"

"No. We need to talk about this, Keily!"

I sighed and pulled into an empty Walmart parking lot. As soon as I shut off the engine, I took out my phone—partially to avoid Addison's stare as she berated me.

"Are you drunk?" she asked first.

“I’m not an idiot, Addison. I’m driving, aren’t I? I didn’t touch alcohol.”

“Then, why the fuck were you smooching James?!”

I opened Instagram, scrolling through different group chats where our school’s students posted. “It just happened…”

Her interrogation of me fell on deaf ears when I finally found the picture.

It had been uploaded ten minutes ago. My mouth felt dry when I saw how many likes and comments it had gotten in such a short time. I tapped to read the comments.

Our tackle got his heart tackled :x
Who knew James was crushin’ for some thick meat? :P
She’s chubbily cute and James likes that
No! James is taken :(
She’s fat
Never thought James would go for her...
My heart UwU
Haynes likes them big.
Both must work out hard at the gym. One lifts weights, the other lifts herself.
LOL
Is James a chubby chaser?
Is she the new chick?
That’s Keily Harris. She’s in my class.
I wish someone would kiss me like that.
The live show was way hotter ;p

The stream of comments continued, which was expected since James was very popular. My cheeks tinted darker with each comment.

From calling us the new star couple to ridiculing me, every opinion was there. I felt self-conscious seeing so many comments were about my body, be it good or bad or plain objectifying.

People were really blunt with their thoughts online.

By the time I finished reading them, the magic of our picture had faded. Like always, negativity outweighed positivity.

As I stared longer at the image, I began noticing my flabby arms and stocky legs against James's trained and muscular body.

Familiar self-doubt and insecurities about my weight surged, and I felt stupid for even fantasizing about him. He was way out of my league.

Tonight was just a beautiful mistake.

Next to me, Addison had fallen silent, but she was staring at me, awaiting my response, my explanation. She was incensed, wanting to know every detail about how I'd ended up kissing my nemesis.

After reading the judgments of strangers, I didn't want to face Addison's judgment too.

"Addison, please, can we talk about this later?" I glanced at her.

Something in my expression caused hers to soften. She sighed through her nose and nodded. "Fine. Let's go home."

My Saturday afternoons were usually reserved for lazing around and washing away the whole week's tiredness.

However, today, rest wouldn't come easily when my mind was a whirlwind, not willing to calm down for a second. The reason behind it, lo and behold, was James.

I couldn't stop replaying the passionate kiss we'd shared last night and the heart-wrenching interaction we'd had afterward—and the equally awful revelation that we were now the subject of school drama.

One moment, my stomach fluttered, thinking about how good his lips had felt against mine. The next, I felt like I was going to vomit, remembering the post on Instagram. Addison's outrage that I had fallen for *James* of all people.

And she was right. I hated how unapologetic he was about all the verbal abuse he had hurled at me.

For him, those degrading remarks weren't *serious*.

It seemed targeting me for my body was just harmless fun to him, but to me, each snide comment was a knife that chipped away my self-worth little by little, leaving me an insecure mess.

I'd never wanted to become this sensitive, but after facing body-shaming for my entire teen years, I kind of had. So, his insults struck where it hurt the most.

I soooo need a break from him.

"You didn't reply to my messages," said Addison, her narrowed eyes warning me. One wrong answer, and she would blow up.

"I told you we would talk later," I mumbled, settling into the passenger's seat and shutting the door.

"I thought *later* meant the next day, not the whole weekend." She started the engine, and we were on our way to school.

Monday morning had arrived, and all I wanted was to crawl back into the safety of my blankets instead of facing James or my classmates.

After that Instagram post, I expected stares and crazy rumors in the hallways and classrooms for the next few days.

I hated the thought of people gossiping about me, especially in relation to James.

Considering how good looking he was, it wouldn't take long for others to comment on my appearance, and soon they'd criticize and make fun of me.

I'd already had a sneak peek of their *very funny* fat jokes on the internet.

It was no surprise that I was nervous about attending school today. And Addison's snappy attitude wasn't helping.

"I'm sorry," I sighed. "That Instagram post really put me off."

"Oh, that pic where you and James were eating each other's faces off?"

This was why I didn't want to talk to Addison. I didn't feel like being scolded by her when I was already tired of beating myself up.

My cousin was impulsive and never held back her opinions, which were admirable qualities, but not right now. From her tone, I had gathered that she absolutely didn't like me being intimate with James.

"I'm already regretting it," I lied. Kissing James had been a mistake, but it had felt so good that regretting it felt wrong.

"I'm really mad at you," she said, taking a deep breath and glaring at the road ahead. "When James kissed you, you should have taken that opportunity to punch him for assaulting you, not return his advances."

"Actually, it was me who kissed him," I muttered shyly, looking at my lap.

"What the fuck?!" Addison stared at me, horrified.

"You're driving," I reminded her when her eyes stayed on me longer than necessary.

She whipped her head back, cursing under her breath and clenching and unclenching her fists on the steering wheel.

Okay, she was being even more dramatic than I was after I'd kissed him. Her investment in my drama was a little odd.

"Don't worry. He still hates me," I said, trying to pacify her.

A minute passed in silence.

"Say something, Addison."

"What do you want me to say?!" my cousin bellowed. "I thought I asked you to kiss Lucas, not *that* bastard."

"Will you stop with Lucas?!" I hissed. "He has a girlfriend—Myra. Were you really trying to hook me up with a guy who's with someone else?"

"What are you saying? Myra and he broke up months ago. He's not in any relationship."

"Not what it looked like when she showed up at the party, and Lucas was gaping at her like she was his unicorn. They've been together for years, and Lucas hasn't looked at any other girl. He's still very much into her."

“Who told you that?”

“James.”

“So, instead you decided to smooch that bastard.” Addison’s eyes narrowed into tiny slits, still fixed on the road. “I don’t get girls like you, Keily, who just fall for any jerk. He might have a thing for you, but he also bullied you. That’s toxic.”

My fists clenched at all those reminders, as if I hadn’t already spent two days pondering over them.

“What do you like about him, huh?” she continued. “His good looks, his influence, his wealth, his popularity—”

Okay, that crosses a line.

“Or maybe I don’t have control over my feelings like every other human being!” I yelled. “You should know. After all, you were busy getting naked under the sheets with Sadhvi.”

The fight left her eyes, and her face fell in shock. Whatever there was between her and Sadhvi, it was a touchy subject. I almost regretted snapping, but she’d started it.

“How did you—”

“I saw you guys in an upstairs room when I was looking for you to take us all back.”

Addison nodded, her expression returning to an angry scowl. “You have no idea what’s between Sadhvi and me.”

“And neither do you about James and me.”

During the rest of the drive, neither of us said a word. The silence between us felt heavy, and distress was radiating around us in waves. We never talked to each other like that.

I hadn’t even stepped inside the school, and my day had already gotten worse.

What was up with me? I was making everyone hate me: first James, now Addison.

When we reached school, Addison didn't walk with me to our lockers like always, making the excuse that she had something to take care of. I knew she just wanted to be away from me to cool off.

I needed to cool off too. But as I walked through Jenkins's hallways, I missed her.

As expected, I was showered with stares, finger-pointing, and whispering. Some students even waved and smiled at me, while others openly leered. I blushed, shrinking under all the different gazes.

In three weeks, I'd grown used to living under Addison's shadow, so this new attention was overwhelming.

I only wished for the rumors to simmer down soon and to have this spotlight on me removed.

My nervousness reached new heights when I found James standing near his locker with one of his teammates, who had his back to me.

The moment he saw me, his demeanor turned icy, as if I were his biggest enemy. Sudden sadness rippled through me at his cold attitude. But what else had I expected?

I moved to my locker, trying to make myself as invisible as possible, which was hard because I could feel *his* eyes on me.

"I saw Myra with Lucas at your house," I heard the guy say to James as I shuffled inside my locker. He was being too loud, so it was impossible not to hear him. "Are they back together, or what?"

I dropped all shame to satisfy my curiosity and focused my ears to eavesdrop on their conversation.

"I don't know," James replied.

"Yeah, how would you know? You were too busy hooking up with the new chick." The guy cackled, unaware that I was behind him.

“You were all over that poor girl. Is she even alive, or did you suck out all of her breath while shoving your tongue down her throat?”

My cheeks colored at his callous description.

“Can’t blame you. She’s hot—”

“Shut up!” James cut him off. My body tingled, feeling his gaze harden on me. I peeked at him from behind the locker door and flinched at the harshness in his eyes.

“She was the one who came on to me.” He leaned his shoulder against the locker, smirking cruelly while holding my gaze.

“I was just being friendly, and it turned out that was all it took for her to throw herself at me. How desperate can a girl be? But then again, what can you expect from a whale like her?”

My vision blurred. I hid back in the safety of my locker before letting the tears fall.

He’s vicious.