

## Keily | Sleazy Fuckers

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### Sleazy Fuckers

An online article I'd read a week ago said fruit juice could be as unhealthy as soda when it came to sugar and calories.

*Really!* Just when I thought I was making the right choices with fruit juice, the internet had to slap me in the face.

With a defeated sigh, I moved on from the large shelf containing various colorful brands of different fruit juices—marketed as healthy—to the *fresh* fruits and vegetables section.

Someone should sue these companies for their half-true—sometimes even false—claims. According to the article, I needed fiber too, not just liquid fructose, to reap full benefits.

On the way, I dropped two cans of soda from the fridge into my cart. I wasn't big on them, but if I was giving up four liters' worth of juice in a month, my body could afford two small cans of soda.

*Balance.* That's what my parents drilled into my head when I fell sick due to crash diets at sixteen. *Balance your meals. Don't starve yourself of food that you like. Just limit it if it's unhealthy.*

It was a lazy Sunday morning, and Mom had dragged me out of my bed to run her errands. She'd handed me her card and a grocery list before waving me out of the door after breakfast.

I wasn't in the best of moods after being woken up before 8 a.m. on Sunday, but at least shopping for my own food was better than nagging my mom to get the right cereals.

I could be such a kid sometimes.

As I collected apples in a paper bag, I spotted a familiar tall brunette in the aisle with one of the store's small baskets in her hand. *Myra. Lucas's girlfriend...or ex-girlfriend?*

Before I could decide whether to say hi or pretend to not know her, her eyes had already found me.

Her brows knitted in recognition as she looked back at me, and it didn't take her long to start marching toward me.

I couldn't help but notice how perfectly primped she was, unlike me in a worn-out sweatshirt and track pants. Her Latina features stood out beautifully against her green eyes.

"Hey," she said, her smile sickly sweet. "You're that girl from the party?"

"Keily," I answered, gripping the cart's handle tightly.

"I'm Myra."

"I know."

She nodded, her eyes assessing me up and down. "So, I heard you and Lucas are *good friends*." Her tone implied something else.

I felt confronted, and the height difference between us only added to my apprehension.

"We're just friends."

"Sure you are." She chuckled, but there was no humor. "Walking down the hallways together, having his arm around you, kissing at Keith's party. You two absolutely look like friends."

"Are you spying on him?" I asked instead, not knowing how to refute her claims. Lucas treated me like Addison and other girls, but he did get touchy-feely with me around James if only to rile him up.

"I'm not spying. I have better things to do." Myra rolled her eyes. "Just saying that others at your school are watching. There's always some truth to rumors. And going by your face, there is."

I should have accounted for Lucas's popularity before playing this game with him. Of course, other people had noticed, and gossip had traveled to Westview High.

"I saw that post of you kissing James too," she added, causing me to blush. "So, are you two-timing them?"

"D-did you just come here to insult me?" I choked, taken aback by her blatant disrespect.

"I'm just saying." She shrugged, trying to look aloof but failing. She was 200 percent jealous. Lucas and she had their thing going on, and somehow, I had fallen between it.

Who could've guessed Bradford had so much drama to offer me?

"I'm not two-timing anyone," I said. "I'm a friend to Lucas, just like Addison. And so you know, I never kissed Lucas at Keith's party or anywhere else."

Myra's eyes trailed my body, and a smirk stretched on her lips. "I guess I should believe you. No matter how much of a douche he is, Lucas's taste can't be that bad."

"Watch it!" I snapped, probably attracting others' eyes, and glared at her. I was tired of being put down because of my body—first by my old classmates, then by James, and now by her.

Was *doormat* tattooed on my forehead?

"You have your problems with Lucas—don't drag me into them. He and I are good friends, which I value. And if you don't like that, take it out on him. Also, calling me fat isn't going to resolve your relationship issues."

Her smirk dropped and her features softened, making her look regretful. *Good!*

When she didn't say anything, I moved past her to continue with my shopping. I felt proud of standing up for myself and not letting her stomp on me.

"Wait!" Myra called.

I stopped, and she was in front of me once again.

"Sorry. I was out of line. I got a little carried away," she said.

I nodded at her apology. I knew she had strong feelings for Lucas despite their fight.

"Honestly, I shouldn't say anything to you even if you two *were* dating. You're right. My problem is with Lucas, not you." She sighed. "Do you know why we broke up?"

I shook my head. Lucas never talked about her, and I didn't insist, not wanting to make him uncomfortable. He never pushed my boundaries, and I wanted to reciprocate that.

"Well, three months back he dumped me, claiming that I was cheating on him. He didn't even let me explain. He was too stubborn.

"Granted, we were going through a rough patch back then with some other stuff too. So, communication wasn't going that well.

"Turned out the idiot saw me with my cousin, who was visiting our family. He suspected I was cheating with him." She rolled her eyes. "One thing led to another, and here we are."

"Did he try to make it up to you when he found out?" I asked.

"Yeah, he did, but he doesn't get the easy way out." Her lips twisted in a scowl. "The shit he said and the way he acted when I tried to reach him was hurtful. I'm now giving him a taste of his own medicine."

"Why are you telling me all this?"

"If you're good friends with Lucas, you should know." Myra shrugged. "Since he didn't tell you, I did."

I shook my head, pressing my lips together to hide a smile. "You're just trying to ward me off him. You're staking your claim on Lucas."

"Uh—" Her light, dusky skin hid her blush. "I'm..."

"It's okay. I'm not interested in him that way anyway," I reassured her. "By the way, I thought you two got back together at James's house?"

"We didn't," she said simply, indicating that was all she was going to share.

"Okay."

"So, you didn't kiss Lucas, but you sure as hell kissed James. Are you two a thing?" questioned Myra.

My face heated. "It's complicated."

Her brows raised. "Relationships are complicated," she muttered.

"If there's anything I can say about James, it's that he's a good guy—sometimes a little callous with the people he's close to, but still good. Rest is up to you."

I nodded. Yeah, James had been very callous to me.

"I guess I should go." She looked at her watch. "I have to be somewhere. Again, sorry for that...earlier stuff."

I smiled. "No worries."

I watched Myra drop some vegetables in her basket and rush off to the counter before I went back to picking out my fruits.

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Someone always had to jinx my Mondays.

Every time I returned to school from the weekend, something always hung heavy in my mind...and it was somehow always related to James.

*Maybe he's the one who jinxes them.*

Today, it was embarrassment about what had happened after the game.

It was English class, and Mr. Crones was going on about *The Crucible*, one of the plays that we were going to read this year.

James was beside me. We hadn't spoken to each other since the football game. I was embarrassed about the brawl that had almost started on my behalf.

I glanced at the source of my racing thoughts. His brows were furrowed, and his lips were pressed together in concentration as he glared ahead at the board, where Mr. Crones was writing.

He was gorgeous. I could have stared at him all day.

Suddenly, James's dark eyes were looking back at me. My cheeks reddened at being caught. I darted my gaze away when he smirked.

Small goosebumps went through my arms, and I blushed harder, feeling his eyes on me. *No matter what, he'll remain cocky as ever.*

Something hit my neck from behind, and a crumpled note fell on my lap. I opened it.

*"Our boy is a veteran. He doesn't fall without a fight. If you want him, kiss him like you did at the party."*

I frowned and turned around to find a few guys at the back of the room chuckling to themselves, looking at me. They were on the football team with James.

The note was snatched out of my hand. James was reading it, clutching the edges tightly. He faced back and threw a menacing glare at the guys until their snickers stopped.

They looked surprised. Apparently, they hadn't been expecting James to not join them in their joke.

"Sleazy fuckers," I heard him mutter as he settled back. He looked at me. "If anyone else gives you trouble, come to me."

"I can handle myself," I whispered, even though I felt fuzzy knowing he wanted to look out for me. But I didn't want a repeat of the football game.

"Plus," I added, "no one here can match you when it comes to giving me trouble."

"Good," he said, amused. "No one should match me. Only I'm allowed to pester you. I won't let anyone else do that."

I frowned.

He leaned forward and smiled. "You're only mine to trouble, to fluster, and to have. You're mine, Keily."

My body lit up, my cheeks undoubtedly resembling ripe tomatoes. "W-what if I don't want to be yours?"

“Then, I’ll make you.” He grinned, his white canines shining like those of a predator. He was so teasing me. And enjoying it.

*You can’t take the bully out of this guy.*

“But something tells me you won’t mind being mine.”

I glared at him, ignoring the damn zoo fluttering in my stomach. We both knew my angry facade wasn’t working. “You’re the worst,” I groaned, looking away. “Asshole…”

“I know you like to call me that, but maybe you should start searching for a more endearing nickname. You’re going to need it,” he teased, and leaned back in his chair when Mr. Crones narrowed his eyes at us.

*What about assbat?!*