

## Keily | Sit with Us

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### Sit with Us

When I walked into my English class the next day, I wished it hadn't come at all.

James sat right next to my desk as usual, scrolling through his phone, casually unaware of the dread he filled me with. A cold shiver ran through me as I moved to take my seat.

I felt his eyes the second I reached the place beside him. Highly conscious of my every movement, I sat down and started taking things from my bag, not daring to meet his gaze.

"Why so shy now, Piggy?" James said, making me stop and look up at him. My cheeks heated as our eyes met. His glare was fierce and accusing and, like always, pinned me into submission.

"What happened to the animal that couldn't keep her hands off Lucas the other night? Or the psycho that shows up to a house party wearing"—James took a second to compose himself—"that."

If I could have sunk into the floor, I would have. "Stop it. It wasn't—"

"Oh, wasn't it?" He cut me off, leaning against the back of his chair. "You're the one trying to be something you're not. A pig in human clothes." His eyes traveled over my whole form, and I squirmed in self-consciousness.

I was wearing a pink-and-white striped top tucked inside a blue denim skirt, which reached right above my knees. I'd never thought the outfit was bad, but under James's scrutinizing gaze, I hoped it didn't make me look too fat.

"Look at you." His gaze bore into me again. "No wonder you're so desperate that you would take advantage of my drunk friend."

His words felt like a punch. "James, I wasn't taking advantage of anyone."

"Then, what were you doing?"

My mouth shut. I didn't think it was a good idea to tell him what Lucas had suggested and *why*.

James scoffed when I didn't say anything. "If you want it so bad, why go to Lucas?" He sat up, an arrogant smirk appearing on his lips as he leaned toward me.

He didn't stop until our faces were only a few inches apart.

My body froze, but my senses became hyperactive at his close proximity. A trace of rich cologne mixed with his own musky scent surrounded me.

I saw the pupils in his dark eyes dilate when they moved to scan my face—just like at the party. His smirk fell a little as his gaze moved down to my lips, lingering there longer.

I noticed his haughtiness slipping away and something else replacing it, something intense.

My skin burned under his eyes, goosebumps appearing all over. I had no doubt that my face was at its brightest red. A damn zoo was fluttering in my belly, probably with fear. It had to be fear, right?

"Leave me alone, James," I whispered.

Those words were enough to wipe the dazed look off his face. In an instant, the taunting gleam in his eyes was back, along with that gloating smirk.

Seeing this, I finally reacted and moved back a little, but James grabbed a lock of my hair on my shoulder and yanked me into him again. I knew something malicious was going to come.

"If my Piggy is so desperate," James began, his minty breath stroking my face, "she can come to me. I'll give you that kiss you want so bad... Maybe you'll even turn into a princess."

With one last look, he let me go and sat back in his chair comfortably, acting as if he hadn't just insulted me. Like I was desperate enough to kiss anyone just for the sake of doing it.

*Asshole!*

I wanted to slap him hard or shove his face into his own desk and watch him writhe. Anything to hurt him like he had hurt me.

It was awful, and my self-esteem stung. Where was the Keily that had stood up and taunted James to his face while she wore *lingerie*?

I wish it didn't take so much alcohol for me to be brave... Or had that alcohol just made me stupid and irresponsible?

Now all I could manage was to stop a pathetic whimper from escaping me at his degrading remark. *I am such a coward.*

Punched down and defeated, I went back to my stuff on my desk. I opened my textbook and kept reading the same sentence again and again to hold back the tears until Mr. Crones arrived.

I did my best to pay attention to our teacher and forget what James had said, but I couldn't.

My bully, as always, managed to be on my mind with his vicious ways, making me replay his insult on repeat.

And the tingling that coursed through my body every time he looked at me didn't help either.

*I hate him so much.*

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"You should come to the tryouts this afternoon," Lucas said to me. "It's better than being alone in the library. Also, you can see Addison shaking those pom-poms."

He gave a teasing grin to Addison, who was on my other side.

My cousin glared at him. "With the way you guys ogle us on the field, I thought you would have noticed we aren't using pom-poms this season."

"No!" Lucas frowned. "But that's where all the fun lies. You guys should use them."

Addison rolled her eyes.

It was lunchtime, and Addison and I were walking to the cafeteria when Lucas joined us.

I was a little apprehensive about seeing him due to the incident at the party, but Lucas acted like nothing was out of the ordinary, taking any awkwardness out of our conversation.

He didn't mention the party, and neither did I. But I had an inkling Addison was dying for us to talk about it, if the suggestive glances she was throwing my way were any indication.

"Come on, Keily. Come to tryouts. You'll be waiting for Addy, anyway," Lucas said.

That was true. Whenever Addison stayed late for cheer practice, I went to the library to wait for her and meanwhile completed my homework.

But unfortunately, with them would be the one person whom I despised.

I didn't want to see James's face after how he treated me in English, and I had a feeling he, too, wouldn't like seeing me there; given his track record, he'd let me know by trampling over me with his cruel insults.

I was even dreading our next class, Calculus, together.

*And* I still hadn't told him about our project together. It was difficult to find a moment between his savage jabs and vicious comments.

"Keily?" Lucas turned to me, his brows raised, waiting for my answer. He appeared so hopeful.

So, I relented.

"Sure," I nodded.

Even though the thought of seeing James there was not pleasant, I didn't want to disappoint Lucas—especially when he was so caring and always tried to make me feel included.

Also, Addison would probably murder me if I refused.

He smiled, and Addison smiled wider. *Oh God!*

When we reached the cafeteria, the first person to catch my eyes was, of course, James. He was sitting at his table with the other guys, his blazing eyes already watching me.

I could almost see the darkness looming over his face on finding Lucas next to me.

I was appalled at his entitlement. He had no right to shoot daggers at me after how he'd acted, and with a sudden flare of my own anger, I wanted to show him that.

"Lucas, why don't you sit with us today?" I asked him with a bright smile, feeling a certain asshole's glare intensify.

"The guys are waiting—" He glanced at his regular table, where James was also sitting, and appeared to change his mind.

"You know what? Let's go. I have the reputation of a quarterback to keep, and that means surrounding myself with beautiful girls."

"You're so cheap," Addison said, but her face was lighting up with a wide grin. She was looking between him and me, not at all trying to be discreet about imagining our baby's name.

"I actually am," Lucas teased back. "So, are you going to pay for my lunch?"

"Don't worry, I'll pay for it," I offered. It was the least I could do after he'd been so good to me.

"And she's the queen." Lucas threw his arm around my shoulder and bowed his head, making me chuckle.

But it stopped when my eyes drifted to James, who was seething and gripping the fork in his hand tightly. I would have been lying if I'd said I wasn't, at the very least, unsettled.

Lucas let me go when we moved to get in line for our lunch, and afterward, he sat with us—Addison, Sadhvi, Lola, and me.

I would have been reveling in my small victory if not for my nemesis, whose furious eyes promised me retribution. *I'm dead.*

Next Chapter

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