

Keily Book 2: Dating My Enemy |

Toxic Game

Toxic Game

I swung open my locker door, anticipating the usual array of textbooks and loose papers. Instead, a cascade of sticky notes greeted me, each one adorned with hurtful words.

“FAT BITCH”

“FAT COW”

“FAT PIG”

“FATTY”

They were scrawled in bold, mocking letters. My heart sank at the sight, and a knot formed in my stomach.

I closed the door slightly so that no one else would see the notes. But there was nothing I could do about the blush that coated my cheeks. My hands began shaking, so I gripped the door harder.

I scanned the hallway, searching for Chad. Obviously, this was his doing! But how had he gained access to my locker? Maybe he’d somehow picked the lock.

Anger boiled within me, mixing with a sense of helplessness. I tore down several of the notes. One by one, I ripped them up, until only small pieces remained. One couldn’t even make out what had been written on them.

I didn’t feel one bit better.

It had been a few days since Chad started “testing” my love for James. The weight of his manipulation was beginning to take its toll. Each day brought a new barrage of taunts and tests, each one chipping away at my self-esteem.

I had endured his torment in silence, afraid of the consequences of speaking out against him. But as the days wore on, the stress of his relentless harassment began to wear me down.

Was I resilient enough to make it through this torment? I'd never been strong. I'd always been pathetic. Soft. A pushover.

I couldn't understand Chad's twisted logic. I couldn't fathom why he was so determined to sabotage my relationship with James when all of our mutual friends had accepted it. Why couldn't he?

I couldn't shake the feeling of unease that gnawed at my insides. There was a constant fear of what Chad would do next. Each passing moment brought me closer to my breaking point.

I didn't want to break.

"Hey, Keily," Addison greeted cheerfully.

As she approached, I swiftly shut my locker. I concealed the remaining hateful notes plastered inside. "Ready for lunch?"

I nodded, forcing a smile as we made our way to the cafeteria. The weight of Chad's malicious words lingered in my mind, casting a shadow over our conversation.

"I'm so hungry!" Addison said. "Are you thinking pizza or hamburgers today?"

"Pizza," I said.

After purchasing our food, Addison said, "Let's go sit with our friends."

"Yeah, let's grab a seat," I replied.

We walked to our friends who were sitting at our usual table. My heart sank as I noticed Chad sitting next to James. Of course he was. I couldn't shake the feeling of unease that washed over me, knowing that Chad's presence would only add to the tension already bubbling beneath the surface.

Chad saw me. "Hey Keily! I'll scoot over so that there is room for you."

His calculated gesture of "making room" for me only heightened my insecurity. It was a subtle reminder of his judgment, his disapproval. There had been more than enough space for me, and no need to move.

None of my friends noticed the subtle jab at my size.

As I settled in beside James, I didn't take one bite of my pizza. I stole glances at Addison, her slender figure exuding effortless confidence as she laughed and chatted with the others. Sadhvi's graceful movements and delicate features only served to underscore my own inadequacies, while Lola's radiant smile seemed to highlight the stark differences between us.

Even James, with his athletic build and easy charm, seemed worlds apart from me in that moment. I couldn't help but feel like the odd one out. Again.

Thanks, Chad, for making me feel like shit.

I felt exposed and vulnerable, as if every glance and whispered comment was a direct attack on my sense of self-worth. But no one was even talking about me.

They were mainly listening to Chad telling stories about his time abroad.

"Do you like to travel, Keily?" Chad brought me into the conversation.

I couldn't help but feel a twinge of irritation beneath the surface. He was only pretending to be kind because we were surrounded by friends. His friendly demeanor grated on my nerves, especially knowing the true nature of his intentions. Yet, I plastered on a smile and nodded along as if everything was perfectly fine.

"Yeah, I love traveling," I replied, forcing myself to maintain a polite tone despite the turmoil churning inside me. "I just haven't had the chance to do much of it."

As Chad continued to charm the table with his effortless charisma, I couldn't shake the feeling of isolation that washed over me. Everyone seemed to adore him, reveling in his presence and basking in his infectious energy.

"Did you make any friends abroad?" James asked.

"Yes, but none who I love as much as you lot," Chad replied, looking at James.

The group let out an affectionate chorus of "Awh," and I couldn't help but notice a subtle flush creeping into Chad's cheeks.

"Any girls?" Matt queried.

“Nah,” Chad dismissed with a nonchalant shrug. “I knew I didn’t have much time there. I didn’t want to date someone if we were only going to break up when I went home.”

Sadhvi, ever the optimist, suggested, “You could have done long distance.”

Chad shook his head, the certainty in his voice unmistakable. “Not my thing. I like to be close to the ones I love.” His eyes drifted from James to me.

James grinned and threw his arm around me.

Chad was always making James grin.

James’s smile would usually melt my heart. But now I just felt sad that I wasn’t the reason behind it.

I kept my frustration and resentment carefully concealed, burying it beneath layers of forced smiles and polite conversation.

“Look at those little hearts!” Lola exclaimed, drawing everyone’s attention to the decorations.

They were all over the cafeteria’s walls. I scanned the room, taking in the vibrant red and pink hearts that adorned the walls and ceilings, giving the otherwise dull cafeteria a cheerful atmosphere.

“Yeah, the student council has been putting them up for Valentine’s Day,” Matt chimed in, pointing out the obvious.

It was almost Valentine’s Day already? Wow, time went by fast. I glanced at James and I couldn’t help but feel a rush of happiness. Most Valentine’s Days were lonely. I’d watch kids spoil their valentine and laugh at me for not having one. But this year was different for me. I had James as my Valentine, and that meant everything. The thought of spending such a romantic day with him filled me with warmth. I knew it would be special.

“Apparently they’re doing a ‘Cupid Poll’ where students can vote on how good couples look together and find the ‘school’s best match,’” Addison explained, her voice filled with amusement. The idea seemed silly, but it elicited giggles from our group nonetheless.

“We need to be a part of that!” Lola said, grabbing Matt’s hand and shaking it.

“Yes, dear,” he laughed. “Whatever you want.”

“I wonder who it will be,” Lucas mused, his eyes drifting across the room as if searching for potential candidates.

“You and Myra would have been the perfect match, if she went to school here,” Sadhvi couldn’t resist teasing him.

“We’re not back together,” Lucas retorted, rolling his eyes at Sadhvi's.

Matt chimed in with a warning, “Ask Myra to be your Valentine before someone else beats you to it.”

“Maybe,” Lucas said.

“Come on, dude,” James gently shoved him. “Imagine another guy asking her before you do.”

Lucas looked pale. I knew James’s words had gotten to him.

“It’s not like you two can be in the Cupid Poll. You won’t have any eyes on you,” Chad said. Okay, he approved of Lucas and Myra. Why couldn’t he approve of me and James?

“You two might win the Cupid poll,” Addison motioned to Lola and Matt.

The idea of being voted the “school’s best match” seemed absurd. But in that moment, surrounded by friends and laughter, it was kind of fun and funny.

“But... on the other hand... James and Keily make a cute couple,” Addison continued. I could sense her genuine warmth and support, a silent encouragement to embrace the newfound happiness blossoming between James and me. But I think she also said this to lift me up.

“You might win!” Lucas chimed in, his tone light and teasing, a subtle acknowledgment of the past flirtations that had once lingered between us. It was a gesture of acceptance, a sign that he had moved past all that.

Chad’s smile at me and James.

It was nothing more than a facade of innocence masking his true intentions. I felt a chill run down my spine.

“Now everyone will get to make it official how perfect you two are together,” he said, his words dripping with honeyed sweetness that rang hollow in my ears.

I looked at James, but he just grinned. He thought Chad was being genuine but I could see right through him.

I just wished James could too.

Next Chapter

[Continue to the next chapter of Keily Book 2: Dating My Enemy](#)