

Keily Book 2: Dating My Enemy |

Valentine's Dance

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James
on my way.

It was the night of the Valentine's Dance, and I was waiting for James to pick me up. As I stood in front of the mirror, the soft glow of the room cast a warm light over me.

I couldn't help but marvel at the reflection staring back.

The dress hugged my curves in all the right places, accentuating my assets and minimizing any insecurities. The deep blue fabric cascaded elegantly down to the floor. It was as if the dress had been tailor-made for me, the way it accentuated my figure with such effortless grace.

The bodice of the dress was adorned with subtle embellishments. It hugged my torso snugly, cinching at the waist and accentuating my curves in the most flattering way possible. It was tight around my waist, but the material was firm enough not to show my rolls. Then, it also pushed my boobs up to my chin.

Even I couldn't stop staring at them.

With each breath I took, I could feel the fabric molding to my body, creating an aura of confidence that I hadn't felt in a long time. Then there was the intricate lace detailing that truly stole my breath away. Delicate and feminine, it adorned the long sleeves. They gracefully draped over my flabby arms, hiding them.

As I admired myself in the mirror, a smile spread across my lips. For the first time in a long time, I felt beautiful.

With my black hair cascading in loose curls around my shoulders, I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride in the hours I had spent perfecting my look. The silver earrings glinted softly against the backdrop of my hair, adding a touch of elegance to the ensemble. I had opted for a subtle nude lipstick, allowing my eyes to take center stage.

Speaking of which, I had dedicated a significant amount of time to perfecting the smoky eye makeup, following along with a YouTube tutorial until I had achieved the desired effect. The dark hues brought out the natural depth of my eyes, making them appear larger and more luminous than ever before.

“He is here!” Mom called.

She must have seen his car. James hadn’t texted me yet, which made me think he was going to knock on the door.

My heart raced as I made my way to the front door. I was eager to see him, yet also nervous about his reaction.

And then he was there.

He stood by the front door, which my mother had just opened. In his hands was a bouquet of lilies. It was a sight right out of a fairy tale.

His gaze locked onto mine with a look that made my stomach flip in the best possible way. The way he stared at me, as if I were the only girl in the world, sent a wave of warmth cascading through me. I didn’t feel one bit insecure.

Without saying a single word, I twirled for him.

When I faced him again, he had the biggest grin on his face.

In that moment, I felt truly seen, truly appreciated for who I was. It wasn’t just the dress or the makeup; it was the way he looked at me, with such intensity and adoration, that made me feel loved in a way I had never experienced before.

“You look beautiful, honey,” my mother said.

I offered her a grateful smile before turning my attention back to James.

He finally walked into the house and held out the flowers for me. Accepting them with a soft “Thank you,” I couldn’t help but notice his uncharacteristic silence.

I headed to the kitchen, and after a moment, he followed. As I busied myself with arranging the flowers in a vase, I couldn’t shake the feeling of anticipation building in the air.

“Aren’t you going to say anything?” I finally asked, my gaze meeting his expectantly.

“I’m finding it a bit hard to speak right now…” His words trailed off. “...mind fetching me a napkin so that I can wipe off the drool?”

I couldn’t help but laugh at his playful remark. The tension dissipated into the air as I realized he was just as nervous as I was. Taking his hand, I pulled him closer, the warmth of his touch reassuring me more than words ever could.

But he hesitated, a question lingered on my lips.

“What?” I prompted, my curiosity piqued by his sudden pause.

“I want to kiss you but I don’t want to ruin your makeup…” His voice was soft, filled with a tenderness that made my heart swell.

“Kiss me anyway,” I whispered. A smile tugged at the corners of my lips.

And with that, he leaned in, his lips meeting mine in a gentle embrace that sent shivers down my spine. As we pulled away, a sense of contentment washed over me, knowing that no amount of makeup could ever compare to the feeling of his lips against mine.

Grabbing my shoulder purse, I followed him to the car.

“Bye, Mom!”

“Have fun, Keily! Don’t forget your curfew!”

James helped me into the car and closed the door after me. I touched up my lipstick in the car mirror.

We drove.

As James and I arrived at the school, the buzz of excitement surrounding the Valentine’s Dance enveloped us. Parking the car, we made our way towards the entrance, hand in hand.

As we stepped inside, the familiar faces of our friends greeted us eagerly. Addison, Sadhvi, Lola, Matt, Keith, Lucas, and Axel were already there, their smiles warm and welcoming. I couldn’t help but feel a surge of happiness as we exchanged hugs and greetings.

Where was Chad?

I looked around until I saw him. He was surrounded by other students. They stared my way and snickered.

For a moment, I considered letting their taunts get to me. But then I glanced at James, his hand still intertwined with mine, his eyes filled with nothing but love and adoration.

I ignored them.

When Mr. Crones walked onto the stage, the students quieted down. He picked up the microphone. "Good evening, students!"

We cheered.

"There will be a few different events at the dance. Conga lines, limbo competitions, object treasure hunts, all with a Valentine's twist."

The energy in the room surged with excitement.

"Conga lines are first! Anyone can join!"

He put the microphone down and the music started playing. Matt and Lola wasted no time, eagerly taking the lead on the dance floor. Their dance lessons paid off. They drew cheers and applause from the crowd.

Meanwhile, James took my hand, pulling me towards the dance floor. Despite my reluctance, I found myself swept up in the lively atmosphere, laughing and twirling alongside him as we joined the conga line.

But as the song continued, I began to realize that dancing wasn't exactly my forte. I felt heavy on my feet and struggled to keep up.

So, I left the dance floor. I joined Lucas, who had been watching from the sidelines.

"Dancing's not really my thing," I admitted sheepishly.

"You looked great out there!" he said.

"I'll go back if you join me," I said.

"I'd rather stick to football," Lucas replied with a chuckle.

Before long, James joined us.

As the song came to an end, the crowd erupted into applause, and Mr. Crones stepped forward to announce the winner of the conga line. With a flourish, he presented Lola with a bouquet of red roses and a small tiara, the very one I had made earlier.

As the limbo competition kicked off, James eagerly joined in, his competitive spirit shining through. I watched from the sidelines, knowing that my back couldn't bend far enough to even attempt the challenge. Instead, I cheered James on.

He made his way under the increasingly low bar with impressive agility.

Despite his best efforts, James eventually faltered, unable to maintain his balance as the bar dipped lower and lower. But to my surprise, he didn't seem disappointed in the slightest. Instead, he flashed me a grin and returned to my side.

As the competition continued, a smaller, more athletic girl won. With a triumphant smile, she accepted the accolades of the crowd as Mr. Crones presented her with a small tiara and a box of chocolates.

"Next is a treasure hunt," Mr. Crones said. "Whoever finds the hidden teddy bear first, can keep it!"

Participants scattered in search of the hidden teddy bear.

"Bet I find it before you do," I said to James.

"Oh, game on!"

I set off in a different direction than James, scanning the room for any signs of the elusive plush toy. I looked under the tables and chairs...

And then Chad was there.

"I didn't find the bear. Only a fat cow," he said as he looked at me.

His words stung. I was reminded of the cruel rumors that had been circulating about me. Ignoring him, I quickly moved away.

But I really wasn't in the mood to search for the teddy bear anymore. I looked for James instead.

"FOUND IT!" a boy I didn't recognize emerged victorious, clutching the coveted teddy bear in his hands.

Mr. Crones gave the boy a crown, which he handed to his date—along with the teddy bear. I was too upset about Chad's words to even think about the stupid bear.

"Keily!"

James had found me. At the sound of his voice, I turned around. He looked as cheerful as ever, oblivious to the bullying that Chad put me through. But his face softened as he realized I was feeling down.

"I'll have to buy you a bear sometime," he said, misreading the reason behind my sadness.

"Maybe a cow would be better," I said, bitterly.

"I could get you a cute, cow stuffy with big eyes and adorable ears," he said, looking deeply into my eyes. The request was so sweet and innocent.

And he had a point—stuffy cows were cute. I couldn't help but grin.

"There is that smile I love so much," he said. He victoriously kissed me.

"Now it's time for the main event. The cupid poll!" Mr. Crones spoke, interrupting our kiss.

I pulled away, suddenly feeling sick.

"Couples, please line up on stage."

Matt and Lola walked eagerly. She had a bounce in her step that wasn't usually there. Matt squared his shoulders and looked like he took the whole thing seriously.

James's hand closed around mine and he led the way. He had to drag me a little bit. I felt like I was a pig on the way to get slaughtered.

My heart had never beat faster. I kind of wondered if it would stop. I told myself not to think. All I should do was focus on putting one foot in front of the other.

And then we were lined up.

I fidgeted with my skirt. My hands were clammy.

There were ten couples in total... Who would be last? Who would be first?

“And in tenth place...” Mr. Crones said.

In the last place.

“Is...”