

## Keily Book 2: Dating My Enemy |

### Confronting the Bully Confronting the Bully

Chad was waiting for us. His eyes narrowed as he watched James and me draw near.

His posture was tense with anticipation. I could feel James's grip on my hand tighten.

I wanted to run away, but these high heels and dress would make it difficult. Besides, with James by my side, I didn't need to be scared.

I didn't need to run. Instead of fleeing, I walked toward Chad. I was done letting this asshole bully me.

"Chad," James said, his voice steady despite the tension crackling in the air. "What are you doing here?"

Chad's lips curled into a sneer as he straightened up, pushing himself off the car with a casual nonchalance that made my blood boil. But beneath the I-don't-care act, I saw the slight shaking of his hands, the glossiness in his eyes.

He cared a whole lot. "I thought you and I should talk," Chad said to James, ignoring me.

"Talk? After what you said in there?" James pointed at the gym. "I didn't even know you didn't approve of my relationship with Keily!"

"No one approves!"

"It has nothing to do with anyone!"

Their voices got louder with emotion. Chad's expression darkened, his eyes narrowing into slits as he glanced down and noticed the sashes draped over James and my shoulders.

His sneer faltered for a moment, replaced by a flicker of surprise before his mask of disdain returned. "What's this?" he scoffed, gesturing towards the sashes with a derisive sneer. "Some kind of pity party for the losers?"

James's jaw clenched, his grip on my hand tightening almost imperceptibly as he fought to keep his composure. I could see the anger simmering beneath the surface, a volatile energy ready to explode at any moment.

Chad glared at me. "How can you even look at me after all the things you've said and done to me?" I blurted out, my voice trembling as the words spilled from my lips, driven by a surge of frustration and hurt that had been building up inside me for far too long.

James's brows furrowed in confusion, his eyes searched mine for answers. "What things? What are you talking about?" he asked, his tone laced with concern, his hand tightening around mine in a silent gesture of support.

I hesitated. I didn't want to speak poorly of Chad. But I also didn't want to keep secrets from James any longer.

As I met James's gaze, the weight of his unwavering support gave me the courage to speak my truth, to lay bare the pain that had been festering beneath the surface for far too long. "He has been bullying me," I confessed, the words heavy on my tongue as I fought to keep my voice steady. "Every chance he gets, he calls me names, pokes fun at my weight, and tells me how I'm not good enough for you."

The words hung heavy in the air as James processed the gravity of my revelation. For a moment, there was silence, broken only by the distant sounds of the night, the hushed murmurs of the crowd fading into the background as the weight of our conversation hung heavy in the air.

Then, without warning, James dropped my hand and turned to face Chad. His expression was dark with anger, his fists clenched at his sides as he confronted his friend head-on. "Is this true?" he demanded, his voice low and dangerous.

Chad's eyes widened in surprise. His usual bravado faltered in the face of James's fierce gaze. For a moment, he seemed to consider denying it, to deflect the blame onto someone else, but then the truth spilled from his lips in a reluctant confession.

“Yes.” His voice was barely audible above the pounding of my heart.

James punched him. His fist connected with Chad’s jaw with a sickening thud. The force of the blow sent Chad staggering backward. His hands flew up to clutch at his face as he stumbled to regain his balance.

James lunged for Chad but I stepped in the way. I placed myself between Chad and James. My hands were raised in a gesture of peace as I tried to diffuse the situation. “Stop, James,” I urged, my voice firm but gentle as I placed my hands on his chest. “Violence won’t solve anything. Let’s talk about this.”

James’s eyes burned with anger. His fists clenched at his sides as he glared over me at Chad. His chest heaved with the effort to control his temper. But as my words sunk in, a flicker of hesitation crossed his features.

I have a feeling that he only stopped because it was me who was asking him to. With a deep breath, James forced himself to step back. His muscles tensed with the effort to rein in his anger.

“You’re right,” he conceded. “But he can’t just get away with this.”

Together we faced Chad. He looked like he wanted to run away. To his credit, he didn’t. A bruise was forming on his jaw.

“Why, Chad?” James demanded, his voice low and dangerous, his gaze piercing as he locked eyes with his childhood friend. “Why would you do this to her?”

Chad hesitated, his eyes darting nervously between James and me as he struggled to find the words to explain his actions. For a moment, he seemed to consider denying it, to brush off the accusation with a flippant remark or a dismissive shrug.

“Tell me.” Chad still hesitated.

“Tell me or I will never speak to you again.” James’ threat hit home.

“I was jealous,” Chad admitted.

“Jealous? If you wanted to spend more time with me you just needed to ask,” James rolled his eyes.

“No, you don’t understand,” Chad said, running a hand through his hair. “I like you.” Pause. “I like you more than friends.”

For a moment, the world seemed to tilt on its axis. “You were jealous... because you like me?” James repeated. His voice was barely above a whisper. His eyes widened with shock as he struggled to process Chad’s confession.

Chad nodded. “I know it’s... messed up,” he admitted, his voice tinged with self-loathing. “But I can’t help how I feel.”

“I... I don’t know what to say,” James stammered, his voice thick with emotion as he struggled to find the right words.

My mind drifted back to all the times I had seen Chad and James together, the way Chad always seemed to cling to James. I had thought he was like James’ shadow. I remembered the way Chad’s eyes would light up whenever James entered the room.

How he would gravitate toward him like a magnet. And I couldn’t shake the memory of all those little moments, the subtle touches, and hugs that always seemed to linger a second too long.

Evidence of Chad’s feelings had always been there. But now, in the wake of Chad’s confession, it all seemed so painfully clear, like pieces of a puzzle falling into place to reveal a truth that had been hiding in plain sight all along.

“I don’t swing that way,” James said. Chad looked down. “I know.”

“How you feel about me isn’t an excuse to bully Keily,” James stated. But his words weren’t harsh anymore, and it didn’t look like he was going to kill Chad.

Chad’s expression softened, a flicker of remorse crossing his features as he met James’s gaze. “Yeah,” he agreed. “After seeing how much you care for Keily, I feel really ashamed.”

I watched in surprise as Chad’s gaze shifted to me, his eyes filled with a sincerity that I hadn’t seen before. “I’m sorry, Keily,” he said, his voice thick with emotion. “I never should have treated you the way I did.”

His apology caught me off guard, my heart softening at the sincerity in his words. For so long, I had harbored resentment toward Chad for his hurtful

actions, but in that moment, I saw a vulnerability in him that I couldn't ignore. It was a gesture of humility, a recognition of the pain he had caused, and I couldn't help but feel a sense of compassion toward him.

"I accept your apology, Chad," I replied.

"So, what now?" James asked.

"I'm going to go study abroad again and take some time for myself," Chad decided. Good. I almost couldn't believe it. Chad was going to go away again, and our lives would go back to the way they used to be. I was excited for him to leave.

"I wish you two all the best," Chad said as he looked at James and me.

"Bye, Chad," James murmured. "Bye," I repeated softly.

Chad walked away. There was a sense of finality in his departure, a closing of the chapter on the bullying.

On one hand, I was relieved that Chad had finally come clean about his feelings, that the truth was out in the open and we could move forward. But on the other hand, I couldn't quite shake the lingering resentment that had festered within me for so long, the hurt and anger he had caused.

"You should have told me the first time he did it," James said to me. My heart tightened because he was right. I shouldn't keep secrets from him and he shouldn't keep secrets from me. We should be able to tell each other anything and everything.

"I was scared," I replied. "Scared you'd choose his side."

James looked into my eyes, "I'll never choose anyone above you." I nodded because I believed him. James had made it clear that he'd choose me first. He'd made it clear that I was a priority to him. He made it clear, to the whole school, how much he loved me.

"Then no more secrets from here on," I said. "Deal," he quickly agreed.

I looked after Chad. A newfound understanding began to dawn within me, a glimmer of empathy for the pain and confusion he must have felt. Maybe, just

maybe, if I had been in his shoes, I might have reacted the same way. Maybe if James had been in love with someone else, I might have gone crazy too.

Next Chapter

Continue to the next chapter of Keily Book 2: Dating My Enemy