

Keily Book 2: Dating My Enemy |

Choices on the Football Field

Choices on the Football Field

It's the big day. The air was alive with anticipation as I took my seat in the crowded stands.

I was surrounded by eager faces, all awaiting the start of the Westview High VS Jenkins High football game. The stadium buzzed with excitement.

I'm surrounded by my friends. They all look so happy, so excited.

Other students had made banners, and they waved their team colors with fervor. But amidst the jubilant atmosphere, my mind was consumed with worry.

All I could think about was James. I haven't heard from him since our fight.

I had texted. He hadn't replied.

I'd double texted. Then triple texted.

And still, my messages went unanswered. I scanned the crowd.

My heart skipped a beat as I spotted James's dad sitting a few rows down. His expression was unreadable as he watched the Westview players warming up on the field below.

I couldn't help but wonder what was going through his mind. Where was James?

As the players walked onto the field, a surge of excitement rippled through the crowd. Their cheers echoed off the walls of the stadium.

But amidst the cacophony of sounds, my heart pounded with a different kind of anticipation. My eyes scanned the field in search of James.

I saw Lucas first. He looked focused and ready for the match.

With each passing moment, my anxiety mounted. My gaze darted frantically across the turf as I searched for any sign of James.

I saw other players first like Keith and Axel. Maybe James had chosen academics.

Maybe he'd prioritized MIT above football. Maybe he wasn't here.

The players took their positions— And there was James.

His familiar figure was clad in his team's uniform. A wave of conflicting emotions washed over me as I watched him.

It was a mixture of sadness, disappointment, and resignation. It wasn't that I begrudged him his love for football—if anything, I admired his passion and dedication to the sport.

But what hurt the most was the knowledge that this wasn't what he truly wanted to pursue. James had made it abundantly clear to me time and time again that his aspirations lay beyond the football field.

He'd told me that his dream was to join me at MIT. And yet, here he was, sacrificing that dream for the sake of his father.

I eyed Mr. Haynes who hadn't seen me yet. He rubbed his chin with his fingers as if in deep thought. The game kicked off.

As I watched James move across the field with practiced ease, a pang of sadness pierced my heart. The weight of his decision settled heavily upon me.

It wasn't just about football versus college—it was about James living his life for someone else, sacrificing his own happiness and fulfillment in the process.

I wish he had answered my text. I wish we had time to talk about this beforehand.

Now James stood tall, his presence commanded attention. He was prepared to win, wasn't he?

As the team captain, Lucas barked out orders. From where I was sitting, I couldn't hear what he was saying.

On the opposing side, Westview High's quarterback, Ryan, eyed the field with a steely gaze. He seemed to calculate each move as he prepared to face off against Jenkins High's formidable defense.

Collin, their star running back, stood ready to charge forward, his muscles tense with anticipation. The first quarter unfolded.

The game surged back and forth, each team vying for dominance on the field. James, playing tackle and cornerback, showcased his versatility with every play.

His athleticism and skill were evident as he deftly maneuvered past opponents and made crucial tackles. James really was our star player.

Drake, Jenkins High's running back, proved to be a formidable force. His speed and agility left the opposing defense scrambling to keep up.

With each carry, he gained ground, inching closer to the end zone with unwavering determination. Meanwhile, Axel, a rising star on our team, showcased his prowess as a wide receiver.

His lightning-fast reflexes and precise routes left defenders in his wake. With every catch, he electrified the crowd, igniting cheers of admiration and awe.

As the game progressed, tensions mounted. The score teetered on a knife's edge as both teams fought tooth and nail for victory.

I watched with bated breath. My heart pounded. The score was tied.

The tension in the stadium was palpable as the clock ticked down to the final minutes of the game. Lucas threw the ball at James, who caught it just like he had when they practiced in his backyard.

With the ball in his hands, he charged forward. His eyes locked on the end zone as he weaved through defenders with lightning speed and precision.

The crowd cheered. "Run James!" Addison screamed next to me.

My friends encouraged James onward as he pushed through the opposing team's defensive line. With each stride, he gained ground, drawing closer and closer to the goal line.

Defenders lunged at him from all sides, but James was unstoppable. He dodged and evaded their tackles.

With one final burst of speed, he broke free from the pack. TOUCHDOWN!

James crossed the goal line with a triumphant roar as the stadium erupted into applause and cheers. The scoreboard flashed with the news of his touchdown, declaring victory for Jenkins High.

We won! In that moment, James was a hero.

His name echoed through the stadium as his teammates swarmed around him in jubilation. It was a moment of glory.

Yet, a pang of sadness tugged at my heart. Although I reveled in the team's victory, I couldn't shake the feeling of loss that gnawed at my soul.

James had chosen football over everything else. He'd chosen football above MIT.

I couldn't help but wonder if I had lost him forever, if our dreams of a future together had been dashed on the unforgiving turf of the football field.

My friends went wild. But I couldn't bring myself to cheer. Instead, as the crowds began leaving the stadium, I did too.

I stopped when I reached Mr. Haynes. His usual stern expression was soft. He smiled at James as he sprinted towards the sidelines.

As James approached, his father's nod of approval and the curve of his lips spoke volumes. There was a silent understanding between father and son, a shared moment of pride.

James stopped close to us, but he didn't attempt any hugs. With a deep breath, James addressed both his father and me, his voice carrying a newfound sense of vulnerability and honesty.

"Dad, Keily," he began. "I need to talk to you both."

O-oh.

"I love football," James continued.

"It's been a huge part of my life, especially growing up playing with Dad. I'll always have fond memories of us, bonding over football games in the backyard. But," James hesitated, his gaze meeting his father's, "I don't want to pursue it professionally—I don't want to be in the NFL. My heart just isn't in it."

The admission hung in the air. The weight of James's truth palpable in the silence that followed.

His father remained silent, his expression unreadable as he processed his son's confession. I couldn't believe James had told his dad that.

I was so proud of him. "I hope you can understand, Dad," James said. "I have other dreams, ones that truly resonate with me."

He took my hand in his. Mr. Haynes looked from James to me and to James again.

There was a moment of tense silence as James's father contemplated his son's words. Eventually, he let out a heavy sigh, his shoulders sagging with the weight of his emotions.

"If you're sure this is what you want, son," his father finally said, his voice carrying a hint of resignation. James nodded, "It is."

"I'll see you at home," Mr. Haynes said, as his father turned to leave.

His shoulders were tense and his lips pressed together. Clearly, he was upset by James's decision.

"Will you two be okay?" I asked, worried about their relationship. "He'll come around, Keily," James said, his voice filled with a sense of reassurance.

"He always had a stoic nature." And that was why James struggled to talk to him.

But now that he had, I felt so much better for them. James smiled at me.

"I need to finish the English assignment," he said. "I'm going to have to pull an all-nighter in order to finish it on time."

Oh my goodness. He was really going to try to go to MIT with me.

"Will you help?" he asked. "Of course I will!"

Next Chapter

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