

## Keily Book 2: Dating My Enemy |

### Under the Night Sky Under the Night Sky

I braced myself.

“FOUR!”

He was going to yell at me, wasn't he? I deserved it.

“THREE!”

I had avoided him most of the evening. I'd run from him. I'd made his night difficult.

“TWO!”

But instead of the expected confrontation, James surprised me. His intense gaze softened.

“ONE!”

His lips crashed onto mine in a sudden, possessive kiss that stole my breath away.

In that moment, the world around us faded into a blur as the intensity of the kiss deepened. James's embrace was commanding, pulling me closer until there was no space left between us.

Time seemed to stand still as we lost ourselves in the heat of the moment. Our lips moved in a desperate, hungry dance of passion. Each touch, each caress was laden with an overwhelming intensity that left me trembling with desire.

I ended the kiss. My chest heaved as I tried to catch my breath. But as I looked around, I noticed the curious stares of onlookers. Their eyes lingered on James and me. When some of them noticed me noticing them, they quickly looked away. Others met my gaze with their judgmental one.

Panic welled up inside me.

But before the panic could consume me, James's voice cut through the haze of my thoughts.

"Look at me, Keily," he commanded, his gaze locking onto mine with a fierce intensity. "Forget about everyone else. It's just you and me. That's all that matters."

His words were like a lifeline, grounding me in the present moment. With a shaky breath, I tore my eyes away from the prying stares of the crowd, focusing instead on the unwavering determination in James's gaze.

And then, without a word, he leaned in to kiss me again. His lips claimed mine with a possessive urgency that left me breathless. As our lips danced, I felt like he was exactly who I was supposed to be with.

As the kiss finally ended, I felt a surge of guilt wash over me. My cheeks flushed with embarrassment at the spectacle we had made of ourselves.

"I'm sorry," I murmured, my voice barely above a whisper as I averted my gaze, unable to meet James's eyes.

"You have nothing to be sorry for, Keily," he said, his voice unwavering as he reached out to gently lift my chin, forcing me to meet his gaze. "You have every right to be here, to share this moment with me. Don't ever apologize for that."

His words were like a balm to my wounded soul, soothing the doubts and insecurities that had plagued me for so long. In that moment, I was reminded once again of just how perfect James could be.

I could never be that perfect.

But as I looked at him, a nagging question echoed in the recesses of my mind: what had I done to deserve someone as amazing as James? In a world filled with uncertainty and doubt, he was the one constant, the rock upon which I could always rely.

As the weight of his words sank in, I couldn't help but feel a sense of awe and gratitude wash over me. How had I been so lucky to find someone who saw me for who I truly was, flaws and all, and loved me unconditionally? It was a question I couldn't answer, but one thing was for certain: I would cherish James with every fiber of my being, for as long as he would have me.

As we stepped out of the party and into the cool night air, the weight of the evening's events began to lift from my shoulders, replaced by a sense of calm and contentment. I walked side by side with James. Away from the party. Away from the gossip. Away from the judgmental eyes.

"So, back to school after winter break," James said, breaking the comfortable silence between us. "It's going to be a busy few months, huh?"

I nodded, a smile tugging at the corners of my lips. "Definitely," I replied, the excitement bubbling up inside me at the thought of the adventures that lay ahead. "But I'm ready for it. Senior year is flying by, and I want to make the most of every moment."

James chuckled, his arm slipping around my waist as we walked.

"That's the spirit," he said. "We've got a lot to look forward to, Keily. And no matter what challenges come our way, I know we'll face them together."

His words filled me with a sense of reassurance. James was good at using his words to make me feel better. But he was also good at backing those words up with his actions.

As we strolled away from the party, the conversation turned to more serious matters, and I couldn't help but notice the furrow that creased James's brow as he spoke.

"I've been thinking a lot about college lately," he admitted. "Senior year is already stressful enough with all the academic pressure, but now I have to figure out what I want to study next."

I squeezed his hand gently, offering him a reassuring smile. He didn't know what career he wanted to pursue and that was okay.

"You don't have to have all the answers right now," I said softly. "You'll figure it out in your own time."

James nodded, his expression thoughtful as he considered my words.

"Yeah, I know," he replied, a hint of frustration creeping into his voice. "But it's hard not to feel like I have to have everything figured out already."

I listened as he spoke and realized that maybe I had my future figured out better than he had his. Maybe I could help him somehow.

“Do you still want to play football in college?” I asked, curious to hear his thoughts on the matter.

James hesitated for a moment before shaking his head.

“I’m not sure,” he admitted. “Part of me wants to, but another part knows it’s not really what I’m passionate about.”

I nodded in understanding, knowing that James had always been more than just a football player. He played it because his father wanted him to. But, he shouldn’t have to live his life for his father. I wondered how much pressure he must be under to live up to his father’s expectations.

Last time we’d talked about his family he’d redirected the conversation. Therefore, I didn’t bring his father up again.

As the conversation turned into silence, my thoughts turned inward. I wrestled with the urge to open up to James, to lay bare the insecurities that gnawed at my heart. But even as the words hovered on the tip of my tongue, I hesitated.

James had reassured me countless times of his feelings. I knew that he loved me deeply, that he saw me for who I truly was and loved me all the same. And yet, the fear of burdening him with my insecurities loomed large in my mind.

I didn’t want him to think that I didn’t trust him or that I doubted his feelings for me. He had been patient and understanding, always there to lift me up when I needed it most. The last thing I wanted was to push him away with my own self-doubt.

So, I held my tongue, swallowing down the words that threatened to spill forth, burying them deep within the recesses of my heart. It was a risk, I knew, to keep my fears bottled up inside, but for now, it felt like the only option.

As we walked on in the quiet of the night, the faint echo of my insecurities lingered in the recesses of my mind.

Why couldn’t I just be confident?

Why couldn’t I just feel self-secure?

I felt James's reassuring presence beside me. His hand found mine. Our fingers intertwined and it was the most perfect thing ever.

Perhaps, as long as James was by my side, I could find the strength to face whatever judgments or criticisms the world might throw my way.

I allowed myself to believe that maybe, just maybe, the opinions of others didn't matter as much as I had once thought. There was always going to be someone who had something negative to say about me. There was always going to be someone who judged me. There was always going to be someone who gossiped behind my back. And there was always going to be someone who looked down at me.

But, as long as I had James by my side, maybe it didn't matter.

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