

Chapter 12

Confessions Gone Wrong

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Gillian felt like her stomach was doing the flips. Ever since the second she woke up, her mind was in turmoil. Then again, she hadn't had a good night's sleep in awhile. But it wasn't the lack of sleep that was making her body shake with unease. Physical exhaustion was nowhere near as weary as the ordeal that she had cursed herself with.

“Hey!” Daniel's enthusiastic voice snapped Gillian out of her thoughts. She looked over her shoulder to see that he was bending down toward her level, eyes beaming like a happy child's. “Did you wait long? I specifically came early, but you beat me to it...”

“Good, aren't I?” Gillian said lightly, trying to choke back the dryness that gathered at her throat. Don't get her wrong. She loved seeing Daniel and the way he smiled every time she was in his presence. It wasn't the smile that bothered her. It was the notion that the smile might mean something else, did.

“Not fair,” Daniel sighed. “I didn't want to make you wait, Gillian.”

“It's okay.” Gosh, Daniel was such a gentleman and a sweetheart. It nearly cracked her heart knowing that she was about to crush his happiness.

Yeah. Gillian thought about this thoroughly. Last week, Gillian had never felt so anxious and fearful when her secret was almost revealed by Ruby. In those seconds, Gillian felt so scared that she might be losing Daniel. But another part of her shockingly felt relieved and liberated, almost. Perhaps in that second, Gillian felt like she didn't have to continue living a lie.

Edison was right. All this time, she had been conniving. Although she had her reasons, it did not give her the right to do this to Daniel. As long as Daniel continued to harbor feelings for her, everything was bound to end in a mess.

So her final decision?

Gillian was about to end this once and for all--by telling Daniel the whole truth and the fact that she was indeed his sister and why she came back. Call her crazy or impulsive, but Gillian just didn't want to be tortured like this anymore. It was the only reason that she was here today, all by herself with Daniel. She figured it was a good time to tell him, especially when none of the gang was around to interfere or make matters worse.

“Um... so I was thinking...” Daniel began with a childlike tone. Was it her, or did she detect signs of nervousness on his face? “Have you gone boating before?”

“I don't think so...” She replied honestly.

“Oh great!” His eyes instantly lit up again. “Well, since it's such a beautiful day today, why don't we make a trip to the lake?”

Any blind person could see that the love-stricken boy thought this was a date. It almost horrified Gillian. “Umm...” Hesitance sprawled on her face. Shit. Shit. Shit. This was not supposed to be a date!

But Daniel was entirely oblivious to her hesitance. “Come on. It'll be fun. I promise.”

Such eagerness was hard to deny, Gillian had to admit. It'd make her feel like a grouchy grandma to say no to that face. “Fine,” she succumbed. “But you're going to have to save me in case if we end up in the water. Swimming is not exactly my area of expertise.”

At this, he laughed. “I promise not to let anything happen to you.”

If any girl were in her shoes, they'd probably melt. But for Gillian, guilt was smothering her. Oh god. Why couldn't the day just end with her throwing out a piece of paper that had everything she wanted to say? She could have done that... but no, she didn't. She had a lot more respect for her Daniel to treat him like that.

“What music do you like?” Daniel asked casually as they were making their way towards the lake in his car.

“Anything, I guess,” Gillian replied. “I'm not exactly a music fiend.”

“Oh yeah?” He replied, shuffling through his iPod. “Are you sure? Because I'm just going to play some really slow music that probably will bore you, as it does to most people.”

“I don't mind.”

He beamed. “Well, that's a first. Usually, Edison would call me an outdated prick and throw my iPod out the window.”

“Well, it's actually kind of cute.” What the hell? Where did that come from?! Gillian wanted to smack

herself. She was NOT supposed to be saying those kinds of things.

“Not as cute as you are,” he replied with a wide smile. She already felt the lump beginning to form at her throat but put in all the effort she could muster not to say anything else. “In case if you're wondering, I'm a very trusted driver, so you need not worry. Like I promised, I won't let anything happen to you.”

“I never said I doubted your driving skills,” she replied lightly.

“Yeah, but assurance doesn't hurt, does it?” He said. “Alrighty, Heaven Lake, here we come!”

Fifteen minutes later, they were gracing the entrance of the lake. Daniel was right. It was the perfect day to go out into the lake. Gillian could see the mobs of kids around in the playground area, the occasional joggers, the family picnics sprawling on the grass, and...couples. Damn it. Why couldn't the couples go somewhere else and not here to be a nagging reminder of her wretched situation?!

“Are you okay?” Daniel's concerned tone made Gillian jump a bit, startled.

“Sure, I'm okay. Why wouldn't I be?” She tried to sound as normal as possible but it probably failed because she could see that Daniel wasn't at all convinced.

“Are you sure?” He asked, scratching the back of his head. “I really don't want to think that I'm boring you... but if I am, just say so. I can handle it.”

Oh, no. Boring wasn't the word at all when it came to Daniel. He was so kind, charming, sweet, lovable... A close resemblance to any girl's image of a prince. But how could she tell him that she wasn't about to be one of those girls without wrecking their growing bond?

“Nope. I'm not bored. In fact, it's the opposite,” she said, hoping that'd cheer him.

“Good to hear,” he said. “Alright. I'm going to go inside and rent us a boat. Wait here, okay?” With that, he disappeared into the small house up ahead. Within minutes, he returned. “Alright, let's go over there. I think we can get on a boat now.”

And so they did. Gillian sat at the end while Daniel rowed.

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Meanwhile, Edison was bored to death as he tried to tune out Ruby's yapping voice. He seriously had no idea how the hell the both of them ended up on a boat in the middle of an awfully stinky lake. Oh wait... he remembered now. He and Ruby were supposedly an 'item' again after that impulsive kiss last week. As much as he tried to avoid it, reality was a total bitch because no matter what he did, Ruby did not hold back from showering him with affection.

Which brought him to his number-one frustration—why on earth did he kiss Ruby?!

Okay... so she was about to blurt out Gillian's secret to Daniel, but wasn't that exactly what he wanted? Why did he stop Ruby?

Questions, questions. Edison was sure his puny head was about to explode from all the nonsense that was taking its stroll inside. Not only was he confused, Ruby, being the epitome of a high-maintenance brat, was starting to drive him crazy. God should forbid anyone from being that insufferable!

“Edison!” Ruby screeched, knowing that he wasn't listening again. “Did you hear what I just said?” Two hands were set on her hips, and her mouth curved into a scowl.

“Um, no,” he replied. “What did you say, sweetie?”

“I said, can you row a little slower?! ” she practically screamed. “You're not romantic at all!”

Edison wanted to roll his eyes, but since he brought this upon himself, he might as well play it good. “Sorry, honey. I'll row a little slower, okay?”

“Hmph.”

Edison sighed inwardly as they were making circles around the lake. First of all, romance wasn't even his forte. Second of all, pretending to be romantic was even painfully harder. Oh god! Why did he do it?!

Actually, a part of him knew exactly why he resorted to such measures. Edison, as surprising as it sounded, almost felt guilty when he saw how fearful Gillian was at the very second Ruby was about to blurt the secret to Daniel. Even though he accused of her as being a total witch, conniving and all, Edison could somehow sense that deep inside, Gillian probably didn't want to hurt his best friend. Revealed or not, the secret was sure to affect Daniel in unimaginable ways.

Not only that, but perhaps he was faltering toward Gillian. It shocked him that he was trying hard to understand her point of view of things. Maybe she had her reasons for doing the things she was doing.

When he witnessed her breakdown that day, he could see how soft and frail she was. How could such a soft girl like her be capable of devious plans?

“You like her, don't you?”

Several moments passed before Edison realized that the words came from Ruby. Confusion ran across his forehead in the form of wrinkles. “Huh?”

“Gillian. You like her, don't you?” Ruby repeated more softly.

Edison tried to fathom what she said. He almost thought he heard wrong. “I whaaaa?”

“Don't lie to my face, Edison Chen!” Ruby turned her face and yelled this time. “I know you like that stupid bitch.”

“Um, no, I'm going out with you, Ruby dear,” Edison said. “Last time I checked, you're the one that I kissed.”

Silence swept in for a moment as Edison watched Ruby's flustered expression changing. It almost seemed like she was trying very hard to suppress her emotions which was a complete astonishment because Ruby Lin was never known for holding back her emotions no matter what the circumstance was.

“Ruby?” Edison stopped rowing, and the boat floated on the water. “You okay, honey?”

Out of nowhere, Ruby shot up from her seat which was a bad move because it shook the boat.

“Whoa!” Okay, on second thought, maybe Ruby really wasn't holding back. She was even more ferocious with expressing her emotions now. “Calm down, Rubes!”

Surprisingly, she did. She sat back down. Minutes passed before she spoke again. “Don't think I don't know you're just using me.”

“Um, what are you talking about?” he said.

“You're. Using. Me.”

“For what?”

Ruby sighed. “I don't know. Obviously, you don't like me. You're just going out with me to help her hide her stupid secret.”

For the first time since he had known her, it occurred to Edison that maybe Ruby wasn't such a brainless bimbo after all. It definitely surprised him that she figured the reason behind his actions. “Then why...”

“Why did I play along?” Ruby shrugged and flipped her hair in her usual arrogant poise. “Don't know. Call me foolish. Maybe I just like being with you, even if it's fake.”

Truth be told, Ruby could be unbearable in her nasty attitude and repulsive manners, but when it came to the matter of love, she definitely could be passionate and completely devoted. She wasn't one to give up easily, either. Suddenly, as if an electric shock had just zapped him, Edison remembered why he was attracted to her once before.

“What, surprised that I'm so smart?” Ruby suddenly laughed. “Please. I may be a bimbo, but bimbos do have brains still.”

Edison shrugged, not really knowing how to react. Truthfully, he felt kind of stupid now. All this time, she knew that he was pretending, and yet, she still played along. Did that mean that she was having fun torturing him while he was trying his best to pamper her? “Oh, so you were acting all bitchy on purpose huh? Fancy making me look like a fool, huh?”

She stuck her tongue out. “You deserve it, Edison Chen. For falling out of love with me.”

“Oh yea?” Edison said in a challenging tone. “Oh, then you deserve this!” He splashed her, and she screeched. “For being an unreasonable and manipulative!”

“Shut up!” she yelled. “At least I admit that I have feelings for you!”

“I do NOT like Gillian, okay?”

“Yeah you do. I know it.”

“No. I don't. Never ever. Ever. Ever!”

She shrugged. "Well I don't give a damn if you do or not, because I am going to make you my boyfriend regardless. Screw that bitch. We're meant to be, Edison sweetie."

"Don't call me that!"

"Too bad. We're going out, remember?" At this, Ruby smiled triumphantly. "Sorry, Edison sweetie, but if you want to help out your Gillian, I'm afraid you going to have to put up with me." Ruby's eyes focused in the distance. "Speaking of that bitch, is that her?"

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Gillian did not know how much time had passed, but she was beginning to have the idea that maybe she should just sped to the point. Don't get her wrong. Spending time with Daniel was very engaging. He was witty and had a lot of interesting to say, but she couldn't enjoy his company when her mind was raging in unease.

"Thanks for coming out today," Daniel suddenly shifted the conversation and beamed widely at her, making her heart drop a thousand zones. "It means a lot to me, Gillian."

Gulp. What was she supposed to say to that? "Um, no problem. Boating is actually more fun than I thought it would be."

He nodded. "I thought so, too."

Silence enveloped the air. Perhaps it was the perfect moment to finally bring it up. Gillian mustered all the courage she had within her and cleared her throat. "Daniel?" she began.

He turned to look at her, eyes sparkling in adoration. "Yeah?"

"I have something to tell you," Gillian said slowly, looking down at her feet, suddenly nervous.

Daniel gazed at her, sensing the sudden change. Did she not enjoy the day so far? He couldn't help but plunge in self-doubt.

"You know that I really like you as a person, right," Gillian looked up in his eyes. "I really do. I admire you. And I know you admire me too, but..."

All Daniel could hear now was rejection. Was that it? Was she trying to be nice?

"Oh..." He had never sounded so disappointed in his life. "It's fine. If you don't like me--"

"No! That's not what I meant!" Gillian was haste to fill in. "I like you, as a person. But we just can't--"

Suddenly, a noise caught both of their attentions. Gillian looked down to see that a pebble landed inside their boat, and confusion drew her eyebrows together.

On the nearby boat, Edison just stared at Ruby in confusion . "What the hell did you do that for?" he hissed.

Ruby snickered. "Can't you see? They were having their lovey-dovey time. Gross!"

"Idiot, now they can see us!"

"So? It's not like we're stalking them on purpose."

Daniel caught the sight of Edison and Ruby, and instantly without a thought, he concluded that they were up to no good. Mood already dampened, he sure as hell wasn't exactly pleased to see two of the people he least wanted to see right at the very important moment. He did the most uncharacteristic thing he could have done. He picked up the pebble and tossed it back.

It hit Edison in the chest. "Fuck!" Edison cursed, immediately grabbing his chest in pain.

"Oh my gosh! Are you okay, Edison sweetie?" Ruby asked eagerly.

"Is that how he wants to play it?" Edison spoke out loud, displeasure and determination wrinkling his face at the same time. "All right. That boy asked for it." Picking up the paddles, Edison rowed closer to the other boat. Again, he picked up the pebble and sent it flying towards Daniel.

Daniel immediately caught up and grabbed his bag that he set aside earlier and threw every item he could find at Edison.

"Shit!" Edison yelled, realizing he had no ammunition. He glared at Ruby. "Give me your shoes!"

"What! No! They're Prada's for your information--" Too late, Edison yanked her feet and slid them off.

In no time, a fake food fight ensued as items were thrown back and forth. Ruby cowered helplessly as she decided to stay out of the war of the men. Daniel didn't know what overtook him, but the sight of Edison just bugged the living daylights out of him. Edison, well, just couldn't stand losing.

Fed up, Gillian shouted. "Stop!" But to no avail. She stood up on the boat and decided to yell some sense into the two lunatics. "Daniel! Edison! STOP THROWING THINGS RIGHT NOW--" Wobbling, Gillian suddenly lost her balance.

SPLASH!!

"She fell into the water!" Ruby screamed, but no one was paying attention to her. "Hello!!" she screeched.

"Gillian!" After Ruby's constant cries, Daniel suddenly snapped out of it, realizing that Gillian had just fallen into the water. Edison did as well. Gillian wasn't a swimmer, so both guys immediately dived into the lake. Five seconds passed. Then fifteen. Then finally a minute.

"Oh my god!" Ruby exclaimed frantically. "Somebody, help!!!"

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