Stuck in a Watery Situation

“Jered you made sure we had gas right?” I had to double check after reminiscing on the last time we got stuck on the lake because we ran out of gas. “Yes, Reina, you literally came with me to the gas station.” We were both laughing because we both knew, with our luck, something like that is bound to happen again. I couldn’t wait to get out onto the water. After being in school for the past nine months, I missed hanging out with my best friend and not partaking in our crazy adventures that we were used to. Jered is a tall brown haired guy who never plans anything, probably has an ounce of camouflage on whenever you see him, and dresses like a dad. When Covid-19 hit during our junior year of high school, we started to fish everyday. Soon those fishing trips turned into bike rides, off roading, camping and other activities and soon enough I found myself spending everyday with Jered without even noticing it. But finally, summer had started, the time change left the days longer and the nights were warmer than the brisk Boise nights I was used to. We knew we had to take advantage of that by starting it off with one of our fishing trips.

Being away at college, I forgot how beautiful Lake Shasta was, and it was right in our backyard. Although the lake levels were low, Jered claimed we would for sure catch something, so I trusted him that we would. I watched Jered, as he was wearing his matching Hawaiian shirts, pull the cord to start the motor on his fishing boat, and zipped across the lake. This boat was Jered’s first big purchase on his own. But when I say boat it was more of a tin can that floats on water with a very old engine that looks like it doesn’t even work. Jered is always wanting to take on projects, so he couldn’t pass this one up. After he bought the boat, he first painted it camouflage green, of course, made a deck that had storage compartments underneath with a bunch of 2x4’s, plywood, and some carpet to finish it off. It was one of a kind, to say the least, and that was something I always admired when I thought about Jered.

It was always a competition between us, and in this case, it was who caught the most fish. One fish: Jered. One fish: Reina. Two Fish: Jered. Two Fish: Reina. I couldn’t let him win. After hours of fishing and Jered catching more fish than me, like he normally would, we noticed the sun was beginning to set. After we set our last casts in the water, we reeled our lines back in, put the bait away, and stored our poles in the storage Jered made for underneath his boat. Shivering in the shade we were under from the shadows of the mountains and wearing a t-shirt and shorts, I couldn’t wait to get back to the warm truck.

Sput, sput, sput. I heard the motor go as we started to come to a stop. “Jered literally stop messing with me I’m so cold,” I said laughing at this prank he was playing. I was always used to Jered playing tricks with me and never keeping anything serious. So I didn’t think anything bad was happening when this first crossed my mind. “No, Reina, it wasn’t me, the motor actually stopped working.” “You’re kidding.” I wasn’t smiling and laughing anymore. I sat there trying to stay warm, with my hair in a big knot from the wind blowing when the motor was just working. I was getting a sense of deja vu; this was not the first, second, but third time I have been stranded with Jered from going on our adventures. I look into the distance to see nothing but water, the sun setting, and the truck being nowhere in sight. I knew this was going to be a long ride back.

Somehow in this moment, I wasn’t mad or frustrated, but rather not surprised this happened. One thing about Jered and I is that we never come prepared when it comes to the two of us. With no service and no one else on the water besides us, we began to search for the oars, but then we realized what happened the last time we ran out of gas. There was only one wooden oar in Jered’s boat. But of course we would have to make do.

Unlike the last time when we were stuck on the lake, we had the trolling motor that was available to us. A trolling motor is used when a fisherman does not want to start their loud motor that may disrupt the fish and allows for complete control of the boat. This may sound great for our situation right? But something else about a trolling motor is that, in our case, it goes approximately three miles per hour. Regardless of this speed, we had to use what we had. I sat in the front controlling the trolling motor, while Jered was in the back, rowing with the one oar we had.

Through it all, I continue making jokes with Jered, laughing and just enjoying the company, regardless of the situation we once again found ourselves in. “Jered you might as well start kicking your feet in the water your rowing is terrible.” “Reina I don’t see you doing a single thing!” I accepted this comment as I just sat at the front of the boat, of course, not helping Jered. I knew it would take us hours to get back to the truck. But slowly but surely, we finally saw the marina in the distance, but at this point, the sun was set and the stars were appearing, and we still were not back yet. The marina was bright and lit with the other boats and houseboats docked for the season. I remember thinking, if only we owned one of those boats, we would not be in this situation, because they looked like they probably ran flawlessly. But of course we were only 19 and did not have the money to afford something like those.

“LAND AHOY” I shouted to Jered once we finally got back. Jered got off the boat at the dock, and began to back his truck down the ramp to load the boat onto the trailer. I started to receive messages from my parents, “Are you okay?” “Are you guys back from the lake yet”. These texts were sent two hours prior. “Yes, we just got off the lake! Ran out of gas again but just made it back!” All I received back was a laughing reaction to the text; they expected this out of us.

While I originally thought we ran out of gas, Jered was right, he did fill the tank off with me before we left. The real problem was when he added a gas mixture to the tank so it would run better. This gas mixture had to be at a certain ratio in order for the motor to run correctly, but one thing about Jered is that he is not a perfectionist. I could easily picture Jered dumping the whole bottle in without reading the instructions and just calling it good. And in this case, it got to the best of him as he did not add the correct ratio, which left us stranded again. After a long day of fishing and a slow trip back to the truck, I wouldn’t have traded it for anything else and I looked forward to what would be the next adventure with Jered, and what kind of situation we would find ourselves in next.