

Thirteen - Girlfriend

Who knew that working in a café would be such hard work? I am run o my feet which deserve a nice foot massage from a loving boyfriend I don't have, and the orders are all jumbled up in my head serving me a nice big achy headache. At least it serves as a distraction from the Zander situation for a couple of hours. I just wish he would talk to me and not keep me in this troubling suspense.

"Nell there are three dirty tables now. New customers are waiting, can you hurry up." Amanda the 'assistant manager' demands snootily.

"Ok, sorry." I mutter.

Ok, so new development: she hates me. She is always criticizing me and sending me dirty looks like I'm an insolent child. It is so freaking annoying! I talked to John about it who has calmed his flirty-ness down and is actually quite a decent guy, and said apparently she has a massive borderline creepy crush on Sheub, but Sheub obviously has a thing for me, which is why she is acting like such a self-entitled bitch. Well she can have that Jackass! Some girls I swear. If they learned how to talk instead of letting things grow out of control in their minds, a lot of hurt, nastiness and anger could be avoided.

We are all working apart from Roxie today, and I am sharing the brunt of the work with Darcy. She is a sweet girl with a baby face and raven-black pixie cut. She has freckles covering the entirety of her face like star constellations, and deep cinnamon skin highlighting her Spanish roots. Once the clock hits five thirty the evening rush winds down, and I can't wait to get home, relax and overthink my non-existent love life. Amanda skipped o early today as she is training for her black belt in karate (not surprised in the slightest, she could definitely beat most people up), meaning it is a lot more laid back and John and I are able to have a relaxed conversation.

When the doorbell chimes I think nothing of it, continuing to giggle with John over a video he showed me earlier of one of his high friends convinced that they were a chicken. But when I look over and see the customer standing there, staring at me with a deadpan expression, the smile on my face dies and my heart starts beating faster.

"Z-Zander?" I gasp in surprise.

I guess he is done ignoring me then.

"When do you finish?" He asks quietly.

He isn't smiling or acting friendly, which is a very odd look on him and makes me feel crestfallen. I have never seen him act unhappily to anyone, especially not me. How is he still so heart-stoppingly handsome? Somehow his coldness is hotter then when he is being all-sweet.

"In an hour." I announce nervously a er I gulp.

"I will wait." He declares before turning and slinking o to a table in the corner.

Oh great, I can tell this conversation is going to go well. Not.

"What was all that about?" John whispers when he is out of earshot, but I shake my head showing that I don't want to discuss it now.

For the rest of my shi I am nervous and on edge, and I can't help glancing back at him occasionally to see if he is still there. What is he going to say? I am so scared he is going to take it all back. It makes me sick to the core. I find myself delaying finishing, conjuring extra jobs out of thin air to postpone ripping the Band-Aid o and possibly getting my heart cut up into shreds. But a er I wipe down the counters for a third time and John hu s impatiently wanting to leave, I know now is time.

A er I collect my coat and bag, desperately trying not to freak out in the sta room, I trail over to Zander's table where he has been waiting all this time. Darcy asked him if he wanted a drink, but he refused, so he has literally just been sat there staring at the red matte walls drumming his fingers on the table.

"You ready?" He asks as I stop at his table with my heart in my hands.

When I nod, he gestures for me to follow him out of the shop. John sweetly checks if I'm ok leaving alone with him, and I nod gratefully before we lock up and part ways. I follow Zander through the town and to the park, awkwardly shu ling side by side in complete silence. Well, this is the most awkward walk in my life. It is a beautiful evening even though we are heading into winter, and the calm dusty blue sky with a scattering of pink clouds manages to soothe me a little. Zander walks with his hands tucked deep inside his pockets, a frown on his face and keeps a safe distance between us. I swallow unsurely as it feels like he is withdrawing himself from me.

A few moments later, we stop by an empty bench just o the gravel path, and Zander sits wordlessly. I quickly follow suit, leaving a sizeable gap between us. I wait for him to talk as I nibble on my plump bottom lip and clasp my hands in my lap. We have a beautiful view of the park here, with a few kids screaming in childish wonder as they chase each other and their hands-on father, as well as a group of women with prams taking an evening stroll. One elderly gentleman is walking along at quite a pace with his head buried in a book, and is very close to tripping over a misplaced football, but he doesn't even realise. The green of the park lined with evergreen trees and chirping birds soaring overhead would be peaceful if I wasn't waiting for my heart to be ripped out my chest, or perhaps be put back in.

I don't think I have ever been as nervous as I am now for what Zander is going to say. I side-glance at him noticing he is just staring soulfully at the scenery. Does he have to keep me on edge? Anyway, you never know, maybe he is just nervous to reveal his real feelings for me... I don't think I can ever go back to being 'just friends' now that we have admitted we love each other.

"Nell I have to tell you something." He suddenly blurts out.

"Ok..." I say slowly as I turn to face him, really worried as I notice he looks agitated and stressed, constantly running his hands through his already messed-up thick black hair.

Ah, I am so nervous! I feel like there is a party of elves in my stomach tying my innards into knots. I literally feel sick, but I am just praying to a God I don't really believe in that Zander is going to say he loves me.

"I have a girlfriend." He announces a er a deep breath, causing my heart to fall out of my chest and my world to spin o its axis.

I sit there at a loss for words. I definitely didn't expect this! What the hell is he on about?

"W-what?" I gasp, not daring to believe that it could possibly be true.

"You know her... Viv. I just wanted to tell you before you heard it from anyone else. She's a lovely girl, and..." He feebly tries to explain.

"No. You're lying." I butt in with an adamant shake of my head, standing with a pain in my heart.

It is taking all my strength and willpower to stop the tears collecting in my eyes from falling.

"Monday night you said..." I insist.

"Forget Monday night Nell." Zander says with a firm shake of his head as he rises to tower over me. "I was drunk... nothing I said was true or made any sense."

"Haven't you ever heard of drunk words sober thoughts?" I snap bitterly with pain flashing in my icy blue orbs.

"I'm sorry Nell..." He whispers hoarsely, refusing to look me in the eyes. "Listen, you need to just forget Monday ever happened. I was drunk... not thinking properly. I think its best we distance ourselves from now on. I'm with... Viv. She is my priority now." He says emotionlessly, not even bothering to look me in the eyes.

"Why are you suddenly with Viv? Last week you said you couldn't stand her! You know what Zander, I think you are lying. You like me - love me even - but are too scared to do anything about it, which is why you are pretending you like Viv. Well you know what that makes you Zander - a coward." I spit angrily, attracting the attention of a cute couple who pass by us, the woman giving me a pitiful look.

Keep moving people, not everyone has a perfect relationship like you!

"No Nell you are wrong, I don't like you so just, just stay away from me!" Zander exclaims heatedly causing me to flinch.

He has never raised his voice at me before. Hell, we have never even argued before! How could he do this to me? To us? And for what? Viv?

"Fine!" I scream. "Have a nice life with Vivian what-ever-her-surname-is Zander Tomlinson!" I spit before turning and angrily stomping away, feeling hot all over, slightly dizzy from my pounding heartbeat and like I may cry a whole ocean tonight.

"No... Wait..." I hear Zander groan behind me before he curses and it sounds like he kicks some gravel up, but I am already gone and I do NOT want to see him again! If I do, I am not going to be able to hold back the dam of my tears.

I tuck my arms into my chest and furiously blink so that the world will stop swimming around me. I just can't believe that this is real. Zander can't be with Viv! He just can't. They would look horrible together! Zander doesn't like Viv - he said he couldn't stand her last week! This can only mean one thing.

He is only with her to distance himself from me, most likely because of my over-protective brothers. I am sure if they see how happy and great we look together then they will accept it though! I won't allow them to take my chances of true love away, and I won't allow Zander to replace me with someone who will never love him like I do.

Let the Jealousy Games begin 

Edited

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