Mistakes

Julie pulled out her ALL ACCESS pass and had her door open before she had a chance to wipe away the tears that had fallen. She took a deep breath and tried to center herself. Seeing him like that and the things he had said, had sobered her up faster than 10 cups of coffee and a good night's sleep. She had every intention to throw herself on the bed and wallow in self-pity, until she saw her Mickey Mouse pajamas lying nicely on the bed. She wouldn't blame him if he never forgave her. She didn't think she would ever forgive herself.

She picked up her phone to turn on some tunes and make the silence go away. It was as if fate had known what she had done. It was still in her BSB playlist. A song was already started, but only a little bit into it. She sat on the very edge of the bed and listened to the lyrics. AJ's haunting voice sang to her.

You had me fooled
You were so good at that
I'm so unglued
Too many pieces to put back
And you were the best by far
How did we end up like this?
Don't even know who you are
I can't believe it's like this
I wanna know

How does it feel to be a fallen angel?
Your wings are lying on the ground
How does it feel to be a fallen angel
Forever is a long way down
You were everything that I thought I wanted to be
But everything has disappeared for me
So how does it feel?
How does it feel to be a fallen angel of love?

She didn't make it through the full song. She turned her player off, setting her phone gently down on the bed. Julie took a deep breath. The words were right. She was a Fallen Angel. How had she come to that?

She went into the bathroom and drank a large glass of water as she took the rest of the pins out of her hair that held up her curls before she washed off all her dark make up.

Julie went to her suitcase and got her basic white bra and panties and her ballet slippers out. She changed into her Mickey pajamas and white undies, brushed her hair as straight as she could, and put on the barest of make-up. All she wanted now was to look like Alex's girlfriend. Before she left the room, she took another deep breath and sent him a text.

JULIE: I will understand if you never forgive me. I can't forgive myself. I don't know why I was being so shallow. Just know that no matter what, I love you, Alex. Leaving my phone in my room.

She plugged her phone in to the charger in the bathroom and looked at herself one more time. She couldn't help but let out a deep sigh. She didn't want to go back to the party, but she needed to be there for her friends.

Julie had just walked into the ballroom when the woman that had been in charge of the karaoke contest, took the stage. Julie moved quickly to stand by Kate's side. She didn't say anything, but the look on Kate's face said it all. Julie hung her head in shame.

The woman introduced herself as Charlotte. She went on to talk about all the amazing groups that had performed, but they had to get it down to only ten groups. She said the finalist would be performing at the beach party, on the main stage, as an opening act for the BSB Beach Party Concert. The crowd was in frenzy over the news. Julie saw Lauren turning white. Kate reached over and gave her hand a reassuring squeeze.

Charlotte went through the list, eight groups had been listed and Julie was beginning to feel defeated. The evening had already gone to hell, so this would just be the icing on the cake. The ninth was announced and they were still not listed. Tessa looked like she was about to cry. As she was about to announce the final group, all four girls reached to the closest girl so they all were holding each other's hands. Julie and Kate both held their breath as they heard Charlotte say Kate's name, followed by Julie, then Lauren, then Tessa. The girls had made it to the next round. They all hugged each other and bounced up and down, as best they could without hurting Kate's belly.

AJ and Nick were sitting on one of the couches on the stage, watching the announcement. They both were happy the girls had moved to the next level. The DJ was just starting another set. Nick turned to AJ, checking on his friend.

"Are you ready to tell me what happened?" Nick asked, deep concern in his voice.
"She was drunk, Nick. Why would she do that? And did you see what she was wearing? This is worse than what happened at my house!"
Nick had seen what she was wearing. All of the guys did, but none of them had wanted to be the one to point it out to him.
"What happened at your place?" Nick wasn't sure he wanted to know.

AJ went on to tell him about the comment Julie had made, about him not wanting her anymore. He kept out other details that were not important. He then told Nick about Julie pushing him out the door earlier.
"What did you say?" Nick asked. It seemed out of character for Julie to just shove him out. AJ had to have said or done something.
AJ sighed, trying to recall what had happened.
"I had asked her about her head, I could tell it was bothering her. Then I told her sex was the best

cure for a headache." He looked up sharply at Nick, realization across his face. "Ah, shit. What I said was something like, having sex with her favorite Backstreet Boy."

Nick started laughing. He patted his best friend on the back of the head.

"Dude. Are you really that stupid?" he teased.
"Excuse me?"
"Think about it. Julie and Kate weren't there to see us in Minneapolis. They were there for New Kids. Julie is the only girl on the entire boat that would take offence to being offered to have sex with a Backstreet Boy, and you said to her. I am sure she was upset when you said that. She loves Alex. Not AJ."

Nick's words hit him hard. He had been completely wrong. He pulled his phone out and looked at Julie's text again. She was feeling like she had ruined everything, but he had been the one to start it. He stood up, looked at Nick, nodded, and walked off the stage.

"Okay, girls. I am outta here. I really need to get out of this party. I really screwed things up and I don't want to have to face the music." Julie turned to walk away, to go back to her room, but Kate gently grabbed her arm.
"Are you sober now? Because I don't think you will be alone for long." She indicated with her chin, the direction to look.
Julie looked over her shoulder and saw AJ and his entourage of girls behind him, walking with too much speed, towards them. He had a look of resolve on his face.
"Yeah. I am sober. But I can't do this. I can't have anyone else see me with him." Julie turned and quickly walked away, hoping to get some distance.

Julie was stopped when she got to the security to her hallway. In her rush, she had left her ALL ACCESS lanyard in the room. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't convince the security guy that her room was down the hallway. She even showed him her key, which she had remembered to put in her bra, but he still wouldn't let her pass.

She was just about to give up and go walk along the decks outside when AJ stepped up. Not caring about the girls following him, his arms slipped around her waist and his chin rested on her right shoulder.

"She is with me," was all he said.
The security guy moved out of the way so they could get past. AJ stepped back from her, but moved to stand beside her and took her hand. He led her to his door, not even asking her if she wanted to go.

When he opened the door, she looked around, barely moving in. His room was basically the same as hers. He had dropped her hand when they had entered. She stood by the closing door, watching him walk up to the edge of the bed. He took a deep breath before he turned back to her.

Julie wanted to weep at the look in his eyes. She involuntarily took a step backwards. She looked down at her black ballet shoes and whispered, "I am so sorry."

He heard her, but barely. He moved to stand right in from of her, lifting her chin to force her eyes to meet his.
"Are you upset about what I said, about having sex with a Backstreet Boy?"
Julie began to tremble.
She nodded.
"I was just joking, you know," he said, frustrated that she had misinterpreted.
"I don't want AJ; I want Alex," she said, her voice almost inaudible.
"Julie, being a Backstreet Boy is part of who I am. And I'm sorry you misunderstood my intentions but next time, you need to just talk to me. I'm not a mind reader."

Tears leaked from her eyes, leaving a little trail down her cheek. He reached up to wipe one away. She just stood there in that moment, her thoughts kept to herself, her eyes going back to her feet.
"I'm sorry," she said again.
"Alcohol is not the answer. Trust me." He walked over to sit on the edge of the bed. It was hard to watch Julie do the same destructive things that his friends and family had watched him do.

She stepped closer to him, but not wanting to invade his space, she sank to the floor on her knees in front of him with her head down and eyes on the floor.
She hadn't wanted to tell him about the letters, but the more she thought about, the more it made her realize it was part of what lead to what happened. She looked up at him, her eyes still swimming with more unshed tears. She wanted to wipe them away. She never cried, but her emotions seemed to run much higher around AJ.
He just sat there and waited for her to talk.

"Do you remember when I got pushed in the pool?" she asked.
His face turned a shade whiter.
"I could never forget. I thought I was going to lose you."
"I don't think it was because I was dancing with Donnie." She paused for a moment. "The next morning, when I went down for breakfast alone, I was given a note. A rather unpleasant note."
He waited for her to continue. He could see something in her eyes. Almost fear. But for what he didn't know.
"The note was threatening. But I blew it off as a jealous fan." When he started to say something, she held up her hand to stop him. "I didn't tell you because I didn't want you to worry about it. I thought it would just go away."
"But it didn't, did it?"
"No. I got another one today. And then, when we were kissing in the hallway, one of the girls saw us and," she paused for a moment, remember the girl's face. "If looks could kill, I would have been dead. She confronted me later, at the bar. I don't know if she sent the notes, though."
"To me, that would say you need to be more on alert, not drunk."
"I know. I could come up with a dozen excuses, but they are just that. Excuses. I think that whoever is sending these thinks I am just a fan dating a Backstreet Boy. And what you said to me, it made me think that you *wished* I was just a fan, adoring you. I know, it's stupid, but that's what I was doing. Being a half-naked, drunk fan." He was about to interrupt her, but she spoke again before he could.

“And I now know that I'm jealous of the fans. When I was there tonight, in my underwear,” she blushed a deep shade of red, ”pretending to be a fan, it was thrilling to be like them, trying to get your attention. And then you sang to that girl and I...I lost it," Julie said, her voice trembling.

He moved off the bed, dropping down in front of her. He took one of her hands into his and kissed her knuckles. She looked up into his eyes.
“This is why I love you, though, because you are not just a fan. You are my Jewels. My New Kids girl," he said smiling.
A hesitant smile crossed her lips.
"But no more holding back, ok?" He said seriously.
She nodded, taking a shaky breath.
"First, do you still have the notes?"
She nodded again.
He stood up and walked to the room phone.
"I need ship's security to my room please."
AJ went with Julie to her room to retrieve the notes. He made her tell the story of how she received them to security, so they could launch an investigation.

Kate had sent up a silent prayer as she watched AJ take off after Julie. She spent the next couple of hours hanging out with Tessa and Lauren. Nick and Howie had performed some of their solo songs and the girls had all danced.

Kate was getting tired and she was planning on getting up early. She said goodnight to the girls, telling them she'd text them in the morning. When she got back to her room she realized that she didn't know if Julie and AJ were in his room or theirs. He decided to play it safe and let herself into Nick's room, grateful he had given her a key earlier. She didn't even bother turning on the light as she crawled into his bed.

When Nick arrived an hour later, he was surprised to find Kate sound asleep in his bed. She hadn’t even blinked when he had turned on the light upon entering to room. He quickly turned it off and crawled in snuggling up behind her. She made a contented sound as his body pressed up against hers, his hand naturally going to their growing baby.
"Is the party over?" Kate said, sleepily.
"Yes."
"Did you have fun?"
"Well, I have to say, the best part of the night was finding you here," he said kissing her neck.
Kate sighed contentedly. Nick knew that she quickly fell back to sleep because her breathing evened out and her body relaxed against him.

After AJ and Julie were done with the security people and back in his room, Julie felt like her nerves were raw. She was still shaking, not so much from fear, she was just emotionally overwhelmed. Alex looked at her and suggested a hot bath. She just nodded before heading to the bathroom. She started the water, making it as hot as she could stand. Alex came up behind

her and poured a small vial of oil that he had picked out from a little basket of oils on the edge of the tub. The room was quickly filled with the comforting sent of eucalyptus.

Julie just stood there, nothing to say, as the water filled the tub. Alex reached over and turned the water off. He turned to face her, taking the hem of her shirt into his hands. Without speaking, and without breaking eye contact, Alex undressed Julie. She stood before him, naked. Not just physically, but in every way possible. She had never felt so vulnerable in her entire life.

She stepped into the tub, pulling her knees up to her chest and wrapping her arms around her legs. She rested her forehead on her knees, letting out a deep sigh. She didn't think he would join her, but she was pleasantly surprised as she listened to him shed his own clothing before stepping in behind her. Alex pulled her back against him so their skin met. He was surprised to find her skin was so cold. He reached for a wash cloth and used it to pour water over Julie's shoulders.

Julie rested her head back against his shoulder, turning inward to face his chest, so her stitched were not touching him. Alex turned his head to her and kissed her gently. Julie felt like he was forgiving her, but she didn't feel like she deserved his forgiveness.

"I can't tell you how happy I was though, to see my Julie come back to the party," he said quietly. Julie lifted her head to look at him, slightly confused. He saw the look on her face and explained. "When you came back, for the karaoke announcement, you were my Julie again, the Mickey Mouse jammies." Julie smiled weakly. It was because of Kate. If Kate had not put Julie's jammies on the bed, Julie may not have come back. She had to remember to thank Kate for that later.

He picked the cloth back up and began washing Julie. It was almost metaphoric, like they were washing away the night, together. His hands started out just washing, but then became exploratory. Julie closed her eyes as his hands moved over her body, causing her to shiver in pleasure at times. She could feel his body began to change, the bulge behind her pressing against her.

Julie sat forward and turned in the tub, splashing water over the edge. Facing him, she slid her legs over his, so he had to scoot forward to accommodate her long stems. Her hands went to the back of his neck, pulling him closer for a deep, powerful kiss. Everything that had happened that night was still within her, needing to be set free. She lifted herself up and impaled herself upon him. They both sucked in their breath at the tightness of her sheath.

She rode him, water moving with the motion of them. It splashed over the edges, but they didn't care. Her body milked him, drawing them both to a fevered pitch. When his mouth found her breast and he began to suckle, it did her in. Her body burst into a million pieces and she cried out in ecstasy. He bucked under her, trying to get his own release. She rode out her own orgasm, pushing him to his own. When his own ending came, he gripped on to her, pulling her close to him, their lips meeting. His body shuttered as his body released. They lay there for a moment; their bodies still one, as the water began to get cold.

“I love you, Alex,” Julie whispered.
“I love you, too, Julie.”