

## Club 209

Nick and AJ met them under the stage, they took the girls' hands and they headed towards their room.

Julie waved her hand under her nose, teasingly, "I hope you two plan on showering first, cuz you stink."

AJ Laughed, but Nick commented back,

"I don't stink, I smell like roses."

Kate pulled Nick down to her level to whisper in his ear.

"Don't worry, I'll work you up to a sweat later." She said seductively.

He pulled back to look at her face, shocked by her boldness. She smiled devilishly.

They laughed as they continued down the hall, conversing about the show.

Julie and AJ got to the guys room first. Still holding hands, AJ opened the door with his empty hand. They were laughing to each other about something Brian had done during the show. He brought Julie's knuckles to his lips as they walked in the room. AJ looked up and froze. In front of them was the last person he thought he would see.

Tall and dark skinned, her long black hair reached just past her mid back. Her hands were on her slim hips. She tapped one foot, her black stiletto shoes making a loud click each time it hit the tiled floor. Her dark eyes were filled with rage.

Nick and Kate were right behind them, stopping when they almost ran into AJ. Nick looked around AJ's shoulder to see why they hadn't gone all the way into the room.

"Oh shit," was all Nick said. He looked over to Kate. "We should go this way." He tried tugging gently on Kate's hand, to try and get her to go back the way they had just come.

"What is going on?" Kate asked.

"Rochelle is here." He got Kate to move slightly, just out of ear shot.

"Who?" Kate asked confused.

"That is AJ's fiancée." Nick confessed

Kate felt her cheeks turn red, but not from a blush, from rage.

"His fiancée? You knew he had a girlfriend and you let him spend the night with Julie. Why didn't you tell me?"

Back in the room, Rochelle took a step towards AJ. He dropped Julie's hand when he turned to look at her.

"I am so sorry," He whispered to Julie. He turned back to face Rochelle. "I thought you weren't flying out to meet up with us until St. Louis?"

"You stop answering my calls, so I thought I better come and make sure you didn't screw up again. I don't need the press to find out you went on a coke binge, right before we're supposed to get married," Rochelle chastised him.

Even though they were no longer touching, Julie could feel AJ shrinking back, almost as if he was turning into a shell of a man. She could see his pain, his whole demeanor changed like he

was becoming a different person.

But Julie didn't care. The fact that he lied to her, was all she could think.

"You're getting married?" Julie yelled at him. AJ turned to face her. "And to think, I almost gave my virginity to you!" She slapped him as hard as she could, putting all her force into it.

Julie pivoted on her good foot and headed out the hall. AJ couldn't even follow after her. Rochelle had stepped forward grabbing him by the arm.

"You have a lot of explaining to do, Alex." Julie heard Rochelle say as she stormed down the hall. She bumped into Nick and Kate. Julie stopped long enough to grab Kate's hand.

"We are leaving. NOW." Was all Julie said, tears finally starting to fall from her eyes.

Kate was so disappointed that Nick would be a part of this. He had encouraged them, saying how much he hoped Julie and AJ would hit it off. Why? So he could hook up with Kate for a few days. And to think, she thought she was starting to fall in love with him.

"Kate, wait!" He called after her, his heart twisting in his chest as he watched her walk away.

Down the hall, Donnie had heard the commotion and stepped out to investigate. His hair was still damp from his shower. When he saw Julie crying he moved into her path, so she couldn't get around him.

"Move." Julie said, just wanting to get to her car and as far away from there as she could."

"No." He said calmly, "Tell me what happened."

"Donnie. Get the fuck out of my way," Julie was so angry that her tears began to flow faster. Without asking permission Donnie pulled her into his arms as her sobs racked her. He let her sob for a minute before he backed up pulling her into his dressing room with him.

Jordan had come out into the hallway to figure out what was going on. When he saw Kate was tears silently sliding down her cheeks, he reached for her.

Nick, who was still standing in the hallway watching Kate, saw red as Jordan reached for her.

"Get your hands off her," Nick said, stepping towards them.

Kate stepped into Jordan's arms, allowing him to guide her into the dressing room. She slammed the door closed, letting Nick know, that was for him.

Nick sank to the floor his back against the wall.

"Not again," He thought, "I can't lose her."

Julie wiped the tears from her eyes, hoping her mascara hadn't run and given her raccoon eyes on top of the fact they were all red. Donnie had led her to a couch and sat her down, his arm still

around her.

"I take it you met Rochelle?" He asked. Julie pushed away from him.

"You knew about her, too?" Julie cried.

"I knew you were a New Kids fan, but I assumed you at least knew some stuff about the Backstreet Boys."

"No. I knew some of their songs and their names. That was about it. Oh, and I knew Brian had a heart problem. I told AJ that I didn't know anything about BSB. We talked about a lot of stuff the past few days, but he never mentioned he was engaged."

"What an asshole!" Kate chimed in. "I can't believe Nick didn't say something." She still stood close to the door. Jordan had an arm wrapped around Kate's waist.

Julie tried to get up from the couch. Donnie put one hand on her thigh, keeping her in place.

"Where do you think you are going?" He asked.

"Home. Kate and I are leaving. I don't want to be here anymore."

Donnie looked at her seriously.

"I don't think driving right now would be a good idea."

Julie sniffled as she considered his words. He was probably right. She could hardly see thru her tears and her foot was starting to hurt again. She relaxed against the couch, defeated.

"You're probably right. We should just get a hotel and sleep. Besides my foot is hurting again."

"Hey, Joe. Come work your magic again." Donnie called.

Joe came over taking Donnie's place on the couch next to Julie. Her whole body melted into the couch as he massaged her foot. Donnie moved to stand behind the couch, looking over at Kate, who was still in the same spot. He pointed to her.

"And you are under strict instruction not to let her leave tonight." He said.

Kate nodded. She was beginning to feel numb. Nick hadn't really done anything wrong., it was AJ who was the cheater. But why would he encourage AJ and Julie? It just didn't make sense.

Jordan took Kate's hand and led her to a chair. He sat her down and walked around to stand behind her. Kate moaned as his warm hands dug into the knots in her shoulders.

"I think these girls could use some drinks to help them relax." Jordan said.

"Good idea." DDub agreed, "Let's take them with us tonight."

"Where are you going?" Julie asked suspiciously.

"We have an after party to attend."

"No! I don't want to run into AJ." Julie said adamantly.

"Well first of all it sounds like he has his hands full right now. And I love those guys like my brothers, but sometimes even brothers can be little shits. Secondly, you'd be hanging with us." He looked over at Jordan, who nodded in agreement. "Normally, I wouldn't be vindictive like this, but, come on. He snagged you in Minneapolis, when I had clearly had dibs on you."

Julie threw her hands in the air.

"Called dibs? What the hell is wrong with you guys! Do you think that every girl at your concerts want to screw you?" Donnie tried so hard not to laugh. That was not at all what he had meant. He rested his hands on her shoulders.

"Easy there tiger. All I meant by that was, I wanted to hang out with you, chat with you, reminisce about that kiss in Chicago."

Julie shook her in exasperation, "You didn't even remember it was me until after the party was over and we all left. Otherwise you would have had a little more grind when we were dancing."

Donnie tipped her head back looking at her upside down. "I promised I wouldn't hurt you, remember?"

That was true. Julie had to admit she did remember that.

"We did buy these dresses, Jewels and I really don't feel like driving. You can't drive, you are such a mess. Let's go to the party." She said secretly hoping to have another glance at Nick. "Afterwards, we can get a hotel nearby and get a good night's sleep before we drive home. Besides I could really use that drink."

Julie nodded. She was not in any shape to drive.

"Ok." She said. Julie decided that if Kate could do it, and run the risk of running into Nick, then she could do it. Like Donnie said, AJ was busy dealing with his own problems. At least she would get to hang out with Donnie.

"So, should we head over there?" Jordan asked, his hands still resting on Kate's shoulders. Donnie walked around the couch and stuck his head out the door. The hallway was empty.

"It's all clear." He said walking back to help Julie up. "You coming, Joe?"

"Nah. I'm beat."

"Thank you." She said, leaning forward and kissing Joe's cheek.

The girls checked their make up before following Jordan and Donnie out through the doors they

had come in earlier in the day. They walked right past Julie's car, to a white, unmarked shuttle. The boys motioned for the girls to go first. Donnie took a seat right next to Julie and Jordan sat next to Kate.

As they headed to Club 209, Jordan reminded them that Howie would already be there. Both girls pointed out that they had no issues with Howie. When they arrived, the guys offered their hands and took them through the same doors they were going through. Johnny, Donnie's promoter, stood off to the side. He had a look of shock when he saw the girls. He didn't say anything as he handed them All Access lanyards. Donnie took the lead, headed straight for the DJ booth. Howie was spinning tunes when they walked up. He did a double take when he saw Donnie's arm around Julie's waist and Kate on Jordan's arm.

Kate didn't miss the look on Howie's face. It tore at her heart a little more as she remembered seeing Nick onstage with Howie.

As the girls walked past Howie pulled out his phone and text Nick.

"WTF! Why are your girls here with NK?"

Nick's text came back.

"Can this night get anymore fucked up?"

"What is going on?"

"Rochelle's here."

Howie almost dropped his phone.

"I'm my way." Nick text.

Once they got on the stage Donnie left Julie with Kate and Jordan. He walked to the edge of the stage. He was building a plan.

"How's everyone doing tonight?" Screams erupted from the fans. Without skipping a beat he asked everyone to exit the VIP dance floor. It was a roped off area in front of the stage that only those with the right colored wristbands got to party in. The girls complained, but did as Donnie asked. While they vacated the area, Donnie went to Howie and explained what he was planning on doing.

Donnie walked to the end of the stage scanning the crowd until he found what he was looking for in the very back of the room. Standing there all alone stirring her drink with her straw was a very plain looking girl. He called out to her, pointing to her so the security knew who he was looking at. The security guy helped the girl move through the crowd and into the VIP area. While she stood there alone, Howie announced he was going to sing his new single "100".

When Howie started singing, Donnie stepped off the stage walking up to the girl, seducing her with his dance moves. He offered her his hand. This girl was defiantly not use to this kind attention. She blushed as she reluctantly offered her hand in return. Donnie took it and pulled her close. He whispered something in her ear before he began spinning her around the floor. The look of joy on her face as he danced with her, warmed Julie's heart. Here was a man that no matter how famous he became never forgot who got him here.

Donnie danced with several girls before he saw what he was waiting for. AJ and Nick stood on

the balcony surveying the room. He climbed back on the stage. He hollered out if anyone wanted to hear Jordan sing his new single, Let's Go Higher. Jordan was more than happy for a reason to sing to Kate. He walked Kate to center stage as the music started. Donnie grabbed Julie and walked her to the center of the stage, leaving her standing by Kate. He jumped off the stage in a very Patrick Swayze like move causing the girls in the audience to scream again. He turned to offer his hands up to Julie. She stepped towards him his hands enclosing around her waist and lifted her, spinning her just before her feet hit the floor.

“Are you ready?” He asked, not giving her a chance to answer. He spun her around with a grace and fluidity she knew she did not have. He flipped her over, her skirts flying around her, the red petticoat making an appearance. Donnie moved so well that no one would have known she was so dizzy and had no clue which foot was where at what point.

Dark eyes stared from above, jealousy filling him. He couldn't watch. This had to stop. She had to listen. AJ looked over at Nick, who in turn was watching Kate with Jordan. Without saying a word, AJ just nodded at him and walked away. Nick stood there a little longer before heading downstairs himself.

On the stage, Jordan was singing to Kate. This was her favorite song but it wasn't the same without Nick here. She concentrated on singing along with Jordan. He played with her during the song, dancing up against her. He was dancing behind her, Kate moving with the rhythm of his body as he sang the line, “Your body's calling me, again,” reached up and gripped her stomach pulling her tighter against him. Kate leaned her head back against his left shoulder and reached her right hand up to run thru his hair.

“And I don't want to have any regrets, when I'm next to you. It's like ooo oo ooo oo, your touch is all I need, oh yeah“.

As the song ended Kate pulled away from Jordan but he pulled her back to him kissing her. His lips were soft and inviting, but he wasn't Nick. There was no fire there. She gently pushed away at his chest. She turned to look away, her eyes going to the back of the room, thinking it was a safe place to look. She was wrong. Nick looked at her, their eyes locking for just a moment. Sadness filled his eyes. When he turned and walked away, Kate felt her heart break. She couldn't believe she was in this spot. She jumped off the stage and headed straight to the ladies room.

Julie was so wrapped up in trying to catch her breath from her vigorous dancing, that she did not see Kate run away. Donnie helped her back up on the stage, but took Jordan's idea and made it his own. He took Julie's hand and spun her around one more time. She almost fell, as he hoped she would. He caught her in his arms and laid her back, bending at the waist. He leaned down as if to kiss her. Because of the position she was in, she couldn't see that someone had walked up behind Donnie. He looked over his shoulder to see who tapped him and faced AJ.

"I believe her kisses are mine. Not yours," AJ said to him. Donnie straightened Julie back up, stepping ever so slightly to the side so that Julie could face AJ. Julie's face went from smiling from the dancing, back to the rage she had felt earlier. His words to Donnie made her feel like he thought he owned her. That was it.

“My kisses belong to no one. Yours, on the other hand, belong to your fiancée.” As the words came through clenched teeth, her eyes burned with tears wanting to be shed. Before they could fall, Julie ran down the steps she had seen on the side of the stage and headed to the bathroom, where neither of them could follow.

When Julie walked through the door, she did not expect to see Kate standing in front of the sink, gripping the edge. She looked so torn up. Julie stepped up to her and put an arm on her shoulder.

“What happened?” Julie asked.

“Nick is here. Jordan kissed me at the end of his song, and Nick saw. The pain in his eyes was unmistakable. What have I done?” Kate was so torn. She had fallen in love with him, even in just a few days. She was so angry for what he did to Julie, encouraging a relationship when it was obvious there couldn’t be one. But the look in his eyes at that moment said more than any words he could ever say.

Julie understood what she was doing to her friend.

“Katy, he didn’t cheat on you. He just did something stupid for his friend for reasons we may never know. Don’t let go of him if you think this is right. Don't worry about what happened with AJ and I. You deserve to be happy and if that's Nick then don't let him go." Kate hugged her. Julie really was her best friend, who else would give her a chance to make things right with Nick. She had to go. She had to tell him she was sorry.

“Will you come with me?” Kate asked. Not sure she could face him alone.

“I will walk out there with you, but if AJ comes over, I am coming back in here. Okay?”  
Kate nodded.

As they stepped out of the bathroom, they both looked over to the DJ booth, in the middle of the stage. They expected to see Nick and Howie and Donnie and Jordan on the stage. But instead, Donnie and Jordan were gone and standing in a line were all four Backstreet Boys. Brian looked over to where the girls had just stepped out of the bathroom. He tapped Howie on the shoulder, pointing over at the girls. Howie then cut the music. Brian took a step towards the edge of the stage and began to speak.

“I know this is a little out of the ordinary, for all four of us to be here. But you see, we are all brothers, and brothers help each other out. And it seems that Nick and AJ made a mistake and really screwed things up.” As he spoke, Julie both put their hands on hips. Kate's eyes were locked on Nick. He still had his back turned. Julie began tapping one foot in irritation. “So we are gonna sing a song. We need our friends, Kate and Julie to come up on stage.”

Julie shook her head. No song would make this okay. She turned to Kate. “Go ahead; I am heading right back into the bathroom.” She turned to walk away. Kate grabbed her arm before she got far.

"If you jump I jump, remember." She said quoting the line from Titanic. She pulled on Julie, making her move a step forward. Julie decided she would go up there for Kate. But she was not going to look at AJ. There was nothing he could say to make things right She wasn't gonna be that girl.

"I bet they are going to sing 'The Call.'" Julie said sarcastically to Kate.

Kate pulled her to a stop and looked at Julie, "Please, for me, give him a chance. I- I think I'm falling for Nick."

She expected a rebuff from Julie but none came. Kate was usually the sensible one, the one who didn't believe in love at first sight and here she was confessing to love a man she'd known for 2 days.

They were allowed to walk up the side steps, the security keeping everyone else from bothering them.

Brian met them at the top. He offered them his hands before he lead them to the center of the stage. He picked up a mic and spoke again.

"This is a song from our album 'Never Gone'. Howie and I agreed this was a good song to sing to them."

The four of them stood around the girls. Nick and Howie were on either side of Kate and Brian and AJ were on either side of Julie. Julie kept her eyes out straight, not wanting to make eye contact with AJ although her eyes would occasionally wander there anyway. Kate on the other hand, looked right at Nick. They started singing. Nick sang the first verse. He stepped up to Kate, looking her deep in her eyes.

"Everybody knows that I was such a fool to ever let go of you  
Baby I was wrong  
Yeah I know I said we'd be better off alone (Howie joined in harmony)  
It was time that we moved on  
I know I broke your heart, I didn't mean to break your heart  
But baby here I am"

Nick took Kate's left hand. Her right hand covered her mouth and occasionally wiped off her tears. Howie pulled a hankie out of his pocket handing it to Kate.

AJ joined in, trying to make eye contact with Julie. She kept looking at either Brian or out into the crowd. Tears slipping down her cheeks no matter how she tried to stifle them.

"Banging on your front door  
My pride spilled on the floor  
My hands and knees are bruised and I'm crawling back to you  
Begging for a second chance  
Are you gonna let me in?  
I was running from the truth and now I'm crawling back to you"

(AJ sang solo, Brian joined harmony)

"I know you're in there and you can make me wait  
But I'm not goin' away  
It's the least that I can do, just to tell you face to face  
I was lying to myself, now I'm dying in this hell  
Girl I know you're mad, I can't blame you for being mad  
But baby here I am"

"Banging on your front door  
My pride spilled on the floor  
My hands and knees are bruised and now I'm crawling back to you.  
Begging for a second chance  
Are you gonna let me in?  
I was running from the truth and now I'm crawling back to you"

"If you could see these tears I'm crying  
Touch these hands that can't stop shaking  
Hear my heart that's barely beating  
(AJ sang the next line alone, reaching out to Julie , who still ignored him)  
You will see a different man."

(AJ sang alone, getting down on one knee in front of Julie, reaching out to touch her)  
"But baby here I am  
Banging on your front door  
My pride spilled on the floor  
My hands and knees are bruised and

(The other guys moved to the front of the stage and knelt on the floor to face them)

I'm crawling back to you (come on)  
Begging for a second chance  
Are you gonna let me in? (let me in)  
I was running from the truth, now I'm crawling back to you

(Brian and Howie stood, moving to the side of them, now singing out to the audience.)

Banging on your front door, darling  
My pride spilled on the floor  
I was running from the truth, now I'm crawling back to you, yeah  
Now I'm crawling back to you  
Crawling back to you  
Crawling back to you  
Crawling back to you

The ended the song, Nick and AJ on their knees in front of the girls. Kate was looking Nick deep

in the eyes, tears falling down her cheeks faster than she could wipe them with the hankie. She had fully forgiven him. She reached out to him, placing her hand on his cheek. He put his own on top, his eyes closing in relief. As he stood to his full 6' 1" height, he pulled her into his arms. She was shaking as she clung desperately to his neck.

"I am so sorry. There is a really good reason for all this. I promise I wasn't trying to be an asshole."

"I'm sorry too." Kate sobbed.

He leaned down and kissed her with a demand she didn't know existed.

Julie still had not looked at AJ. When he tried to take her hand during the song she had pulled away. Julie felt tortured as she turned to face him. His eyes were filled with agony. She was so angry but she still cared for him. What was wrong with her? He was a cheater and she felt self-entitled to be pissed.

"You can just keep on crawling." Julie said through clenched teeth before she turned and walked off the stage. Angry tears fell as her heart broke. She headed straight for the bar. When she asked the bartender for a Dr. Pepper, he asked if she wanted anything in it. "Just ice," she said. He looked at her funny, but handed her the soda without saying another word.

Julie looked over to the stairs she had seen that went to the balcony upstairs. She needed to get as far away as she could. The balcony was fairly empty, most of the crowd down on the dance floor. She found a dark corner with a small round bar table and two stools. She sat down and let out a deep sigh. Did he really think he could make everything better by singing to her? It only made her angrier. He had a fiancée. What did he need her for? Julie was so busy dwelling in her own pity party; she did not realize someone had joined her.

Nick took Kate's hand and led her out a side door to deserted alleyway. The door was recessed a little leaving a private alcove for them to talk.

"Katy, I'm so sorry." Nick said as he leaned against the wall. He pulled Kate to him, her purple heels between his black vans. Kate's wrist crossed behind his neck as she gazed into his gray eyes.

"I should have told you." He explained, " We've been trying to tell AJ that Rochelle was no good for him, for months, but he wouldn't listen. Then when we met you two, I thought he would finally realize..." His voice trailed off. He looked down unable to maintain eye contact. "And then I thought I'd lost you..."

"It's ok. I understand." She said softly, "I'd do the same for Julie."

She pulled his chin up to look in his eyes. They were wet with unshed tears.

"You didn't lose me. I'm right here."

She leaned in kissing him softly.

She pulled back looking into his gray eyes.

"I'm sorry too." She stopped him when he started to object. "I should have let you explain. It wasn't your secret you were keeping and I should have had more respect for your faithfulness to

AJ."

He pulled her close just holding her. The sweet smell of her perfume drifting up to him.

"I was afraid I wasn't going to get to do this again." He said as his cheek pressed against her hair. After a few minutes Nick's ears perked up hearing the words he dreaded.

"I swear that's him. Nick Carter is down there, come on, I'll show you."

"Come on Katy, time to move." He said taking her hand and leading her back inside. Kate didn't know why but she hated that nickname. It always made her feel like a little girl. Julie was the only one outside her family that was allowed to call her that. But somehow when Nick called her that she didn't mind. She knew he meant it as an endearment and she liked the idea of that.

Brian stood at the edge of Julie's table.

"Can I join you?" He didn't wait for an answer; he just pulled out the bar stool and took a seat.

"Don't worry. He has no idea I am up here." He said glancing toward the edge of the balcony. "I just felt that you deserved to know the truth."

Julie scoffed. She had the highest respect of Brian. He was a loving family man, a devoted performer, and a good friend to those in his life. She knew he would be honest with her, but if there was a truth to be told, it was only right that AJ told her. Who was she kidding; she wouldn't listen to AJ right now. She'd hear Brian out before deciding whether or not to let AJ explain.

"As you now know, AJ had a fiancée."

Julie nodded, biting her tongue, wanting to snap back about it.

"I won't lie to you; we have all been pushing AJ to get rid of Rochelle. She is not good for him. She continues to remind him of his flaws, instead of encouraging him to stay sober. I am honestly worried she is going to drive him to drink. Or worse." He paused for a moment, trying to judge Julie's reaction to his words. She had no expression on her face. "I understand Kate took it the wrong way when Nick was telling her how he hoped things worked out. We all hoped. As soon as Howie and I heard about you, and then met you, we knew this was exactly what we all needed. I don't want to scare you, but we looked at you as our salvation. You were someone who would love him for him, not his pedigree."

Julie felt knots begin to form in her stomach. She picked up her soda and drank it down fast.

"I think I need another." She said to herself. Brian looked down at her cup with disappointment. "It's just Dr. Pepper," She pointed out to him when she saw his face. The news brought a smile to his face.

"I can get you another if you like?" He offered. She just nodded at him. He left his seat and headed to the bar along the far right wall, opposite of where Julie sat. While he was away, she got out of her seat and moved over to the railing. She looked down to see that Nick was singing 'Falling In Love' Again to Kate.

Julie's eyes wandered of their own accord, looking for AJ. She didn't want to see him, yet her

heart called out for him. Brian would not lie to her, this she knew. But she felt like she could never trust AJ again. She hated herself for the feelings she had for him.

He must have sensed her looking for him. He caught sight of her as her eyes roamed away from where he stood, on the floor below, just off to the side of the bar. It appeared she didn't see him. The lights behind her lit up her chestnut hair, making bits look like fire. His heart twisted in his chest. He had finally found the right one, and lost her. He watched as Brian walked up beside her and offered her a drink. She turned away from the balcony and headed back to her seat. He was glad she wasn't alone. But he wished it was him she was with, not Brian. He knew he had to go talk to her. She deserved to know the truth, from him, as only he could tell it. He quickly finished his Red Bull and set the empty can on a nearby table before he headed to the stairs.

Julie caught sight of AJ before Brian did. Her heart skipped a beat. He walked up to the table, looking over at Brian first. They just nodded at each other. Brian got up from his seat then he turned to Julie giving her an encouraging smile.

"It was really good to talk to you. I really hope everything does works out." Like a dad or big brother would do, he gave her hand that rested on the table a little squeeze of reassurance. He then gave her a big smile.

"Thanks for sitting with me." Julie replied as Brian walked away and AJ took his seat.

Julie turned to her cup, swirling the ice around. She couldn't look up at him. She didn't know if her heart could take it, now that she had talked with Brian.

AJ sat there for a moment, neither of them speaking, Julie still staring at her soda.

"Julie, please," He whispered, his voice thick with emotion. "Look at me." He leaned in, his arms on the little table.

Julie's voice wavered. "I can't. If I look at you I might start crying." He reached out and took the hand Brian had just touched. When she didn't pull away, he took it as a good sign.

"I wanted to tell you. I had planned to tell you right before the show, but then Brian interrupted us. Then you and Kate took off shopping. And I ... I chickened out." He finished lamely. Julie took a sip of her soda while he paused.

"All I ever meet is BSB fans. I met Rochelle at a show I did at the O2. I had come to the conclusion that she was the best there was. Being with her was better than being alone. I never knew there was anything better. But then, you came along."

"But you lied to me." Julie replied.

"I didn't lie; I just ... omitted a few things."

"Omission is the same as lying." Julie pointed out.

"Just so you know, she is gone now. I broke off all ties." AJ stated.

"You shouldn't have left her because of me." Julie felt bad for the girl.

"I didn't. Part of what I've been working on this tour is figuring things out for myself. Rochelle was trying to make me perfect for her. The guys have been telling me this for a while. After I met you I began to realize I could be myself with someone and be happy. After you left, I told her I had had enough."

"But you were going to marry her. Spend the rest of your life with her. And now you are going to break up with her because of some girl that showed up at your concert?" Julie could feel herself getting angry again.

"First of all, you're not just some girl." He began to get frustrated.

He took a breath to calm himself.

"Have you ever had one of those days where you can't say what you are feeling because you are feeling too many things at once?"

Julie looked into his dark brown eyes. She could see the frustration not only in his eyes, but his entire body. She took a deep breath, thinking of the conversation she had just had with Brian. She would hear him out. It may not change anything, but she could tell her needed to get it off his chest.

"I'm sorry. Go ahead."

AJ took a deep breath before continuing. He looked down at his gothic manicured hands as he began.

"Every girl I have ever dated, since BSB was formed, has been all about dating a Backstreet Boy. It was either about who I was or the money they thought I had. Every show it was the same thing. Girls were throwing themselves at me, alcohol flowed like water. It was a never ending party. But I felt so alone. It was like I standing in a room full of people and no one could hear me scream. Then came the coke. Something that would ease the loneliness." He paused then. He looked up at Julie to gauge her reaction. She was surprised by his confession.

"I forgot, you don't know all about that."

Julie met his eyes as he searched her face waiting for the condemnation that always followed his confession. There wasn't any.

"I did know about the rehab. Donnie tweeted about it, and I remember it being on the news. But to be honest, I really didn't pay much attention, so I don't know all the details."

He sighed. It was almost a sound of relief. He could tell her from his point, why things were the way they were, rather than how the media made it sound.

"I met Rochelle a few years ago, at a BSB concert. She was beautiful and fun. Things were good in the beginning. She knew everything about me. Well, everything the media knows. Things seemed perfect. But after I proposed it began to change. It was subtle at first, she started buying clothes for me that I'd never wear or want me to go to out to country clubs and art museums. I

thought she was just trying to expand my horizons but the changes became more drastic and if we'd argue she'd always throw it in my face that I was a junkie and an alcoholic. Still I figured it was better to be with her, than to be alone. But in the past six months, all she has done is point out my flaws. She reminds me every day of my mistakes. She almost flaunts them. She loves nothing more than to sit on the couch in my theater room with a glass of wine and chat on the phone to her friends about her sugar daddy. The guys have been pointing this out for a while, but I didn't want to see it. Who wants to be alone? I was afraid that if I was, I would go back to the coke."

Julie felt so bad for him. All he wanted in life was so basic, someone to love him for him. How could she blame him for that? She reached out and took his hands into hers. He looked her deep into her eyes.

"You can't help who you fall in love with." AJ said. "I never meant for this to happen. I had already decided to break it off with her when we met up in St. Louis. I didn't think it was fair to do over the phone. Then when I saw you at the club, when you were icing your foot, I had a feeling come over me that I had never felt with her. Compassion. All I wanted to do in that moment was make things better for you. And you treated me like any other guy. I was not AJ McLean from BSB. I was Alex."

Julie smiled, remembering when he brought her the bag of ice. Although she had been surprised that a Backstreet Boy was standing in front of her, he was just a guy after all. She hadn't realized that he had caught that.

"So... where do we go from here?" Julie asked.

"Can we start over?" AJ replied.

Julie shook her head. AJ looked crushed.

"We can't erase what's happened. But I would like to try again." She said, reaching out to touch his cheek. A tear escaped from the corner of his eye to trail down and be lost between Julie's finger and his cheek.

"You would do that? For me? A recovering alcoholic and junkie?"

"No. I'd do it for you, Alex."

He stood up, walked over to stand in front of her and pulled her up into a hug.

"Thank you," he whispered in her ear, holding her as if his life depended upon it, which in a way, it did.

"Would you do me the honor of dancing with me?" He asked eloquently. Julie heard the music for the first time since AJ had joined her. She giggled as the end of Dirty Dancing was playing down on the dance floor. AJ took her just a few steps away from her little table and twirled her close to him. One hand landed on his chest. She wrapped the other around his neck. He started to slow dance with her.

"It's kinda hard to slow dance to something this fast," She teased. AJ pulled her a little closer.

“Does it really matter?” As if someone downstairs was watching, the music changed. It blended well with Dirty Dancing and the crowds cheers when ‘Time of My Life’, the theme song from the movie Dirty Dancing, began.

“Nobody puts Baby in the corner,” He whispered in her ear. Julie wasn’t sure if his reference was just to the movie, or the fact that she had just been sitting in a corner. She didn’t care. Julie felt her heart soar. AJ began singing in her ear as he moved her around. He took her hand from his chest to hold it so he could maneuver her better. Then, just like in the movie, AJ did a swooping dip to Julie. She began singing along.

“I’ve had the time of my life, and I’ve never felt this way before. I swear, it’s the truth. And I owe it all to you...”

The balcony was mostly empty, as it had been when Julie had first come up, so AJ had plenty of room to dance her around. They both sang and laughed as they danced. As the song was coming to an end, AJ pulled Julie so close, she could feel his heart beating through his shirt. Because of her heels, she was a few inches taller than him. So AJ had to look up into her eyes.

“Thank you.”

“For what?”

“For looking so ravishing tonight.” He lifted the hem of her skirt to reveal her red petticoat. He made a sexually charged growling noise. They both laughed. But then AJ’s face went serious.

”I’m sorry I hurt you. I won’t do it again. I am crawling back to you, asking for a second chance.” He went down on one knee to look up at her. Now Julie realized why Kate was able to forgive Nick after they sang that song. She thought back to the look in AJ’s eyes, down on one knee. How did she not see it? They really meant it, they were begging, their pride on the floor. She offered her hand to him, to get him off the floor.

“I forgive you,” She said. He ran his fingertips down the side of her face, from her temple to her chin. He then worked his hand across the back of her neck, making it easier for him to pull her in for a kiss. As their lips touched, her arms went instinctively around him, pulling them even closer. His lips parted, their tongues doing a dance of their own. Fire filled them both. Their hands explored each other, need driving them. The heat of their kiss was making them both short in breath. When they parted, AJ looked into her eyes.

“Are you sure you’re a virgin?” He teased.

Julie could feel herself blush. Just because she hadn’t had sex before, didn’t mean she didn’t know about passion, or feel desire.

“Yeah, I am sure. But if you ask me tomorrow...” She didn’t need to finish was she started to say. He knew.

“No.”

Julie looked at him, confused.

“No, what?”

“No. I won’t let you.”

She was really confused now.

“What are you talking about?” she asked. He stepped back before he answered.

“I don’t want you to feel like you have to have sex with me tonight. You mean too much to me. You need to understand that.”

Julie smiled. That was what she hoped he would say. She stepped up to him, putting her arms around his neck, grabbing her wrists so he couldn’t back away again. He put his hands hesitantly on her waist.

“I don’t want to have sex with you,” She tried to get a little closer, but he stiffened up ever so slightly. “I want to make love to you all night long.” This time, it was his turn to blush. He melted into her arms, pulling her so close; her breasts were pressed too hard against his hard chest.

“Are you sure?” He questioned.

“Yes. More now than ever.”

He took her hand and was rushing to get down the stairs. Julie stopped when they reached the bottom.

"Where are we going?" she asked, laughing from his urgency.

"I need to get you outta here." Julie felt her cheeks flush red.

"I at least need to tell Kate. I left my purse in Donnie's dressing room, so I don't have my phone. Kate will freak out if i just disappear."

AJ could understand her need to let her friend know. She was looking out for her. He nodded.

"I will let the shuttle know we are leaving before the party is over, you go tell Kate."

Julie kissed him quickly before running to tell Kate.

Kate was sitting next to Nick on one of the couches placed just to the side of the stage. His right arm was around her and his left hand was playing with hers. Julie decided to be mean. She tried to make her face look sad. She walked up the stairs slowly, her shoulders tilted forward, as if in defeat.

"Kate. I am leaving now. I need to get back to the arena and get my purse from Donnie's dressing room before they leave." Kate looked at her friend. She didn't look mad anymore, but she was alone. Kate let out a deep sigh, looked at Nick, then started to get up..

"You don't have to leave. Stay. Have fun. I just need to get outta here."

Kate's heart fell. Brian had come back and said things looked like they were going well. He had Howie play 'Time of our Lives', hoping to get them dancing. Something must have gone wrong.

Not knowing Julie's intentions to tease her friend, AJ ran up the four steps and wrapped his arms around Julie's waist, kissing her shoulder.

"Ready to go?" he asked. Kate wanted to smack Julie.

"So, everything is good again?" she asked.

"It's not good again. It's new."

Kate nodded. She knew what Julie meant. Brian came up the stairs on the opposite side of the stage and smiled huge when he saw Julie wrapped in AJ's arms. He ran over to them, almost tripping over Howie in his haste.

"Ready to sing again?" Brian asked. AJ just looked confused. "I really want to leave, Leighanne is waiting. But I think we need to sing one more song, letting everyone know that everything is ok. I have had so many girls come ask me why AJ was crying."

AJ looked at him, a scornful look across his face. "I told them you weren't crying. That you were just showing your sensitive side. Girls eat that stuff up."

AJ shook his head. Brian did have a way with the ladies.

Nick stood from the couch and offered Kate a hand to get up.

"I'm game. What are we singing?" Brian brought the four of them into a huddle to discuss the song they would sing.

"So what's it going to be, guys?" Brian said.

"I Need You Tonight?" Nick suggested.

"To slow." Howie said, "We need to pump this crowd up."

"Well that rules out Unmistakeable." AJ says.

"How about As Long As You Love Me." Howie suggests.

"No," Nick said, "Kate doesn't like that song. She says you can't love someone unless you know who they are."

Brian nods in agreement, "Oh! How about It's Gotta Be You."

"Perfect!" AJ agrees

Nick and Howie nod as they separate. Howie pulls up the tune.

The guys pump up the audience playing to them more than the girls. AJ and Nick both look over at Julie and Kate during the song. The girls sing along dancing on the side of the stage just like any other fans.

Screams erupted from the fans as the song ended. The guys took their bows. Laughing and heading to the back of the stage.

They AJ waved the girls over.

"Brian is heading back to the convention center. He can give us a ride and that way we can leave the other shuttle for Howie. Julie looks at Kate. Kate shrugs looking to Nick.

"I have to stay." He said. "Technically this is Howie and I's party and I've only sang one song off my album."

"Then I'll stay." She looked at Julie. "You guys take off. It's cool."

"What about the car?" Julie asked.

"Take it to the hotel. I have my key, I'll grab my bag when I get there."

"How will you know where I park, your phone's in the car." Julie asked worried.

"Um have AJ text Nick, duh" Kate said laughing at her friend's distraction. She leaned in whispering to Julie.

"Have fun and be safe. I'll grab my phone out of the car if you need me."

Julie blushed and looked at AJ and Brian.

"You ready?" AJ asked her taking her hand.

The smirk on Kate's face made Julie turn even redder. All she could do was follow AJ out to the shuttle.

Kate laughed as Julie walked away.

Nick gave Kate a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Back to work." He said walking back over to the DJ Booth.

Nick and Howie finished out their party. Keeping the crowd pumped up. Kate watched Nick her heart soaring.

When the night was over the 3 of them rode the shuttle to the hotel.