

## **Omaha**

As they pulled into Julie's neighborhood, she let out a sigh of relief. She was so glad to see her house. It had been a very long weekend. Although she wouldn't change it, she realized how tired she really was.

They pulled onto the driveway and Julie opened the garage. All she could think about was how dirty the catbox was, if there was any dirty clothes on the floor, anything that would be bad. Kate must have sensed her though pattern. She stepped up to Julie and whispered in her ear. "It's too late to worry about anything. He has already fallen for you. I don't think anything will matter."

Julie just smiled at her friend and they all entered the house.

Jasper was the first cat to meet them at the door. Julie picked him up for a kiss and he went straight to her shoulder. Julie didn't let him up there often but she had been gone for four days so she let him up. AJ just laughed as the cat looked at him defiantly. The cat was telling AJ he was alpha. Not the human.

Julie quickly gave a tour of her two story house. They walked in the foyer and past the dining room. She showed them her living room and kitchen before moving upstairs. There were three rooms upstairs. The one at the very top of the stairs was her office. Across the hall was the guest room, and where Kate, and now Nick, would be staying. Just further down the hall was the master suite. Julie blushed when she showed them. She would be sharing her bed with AJ for the next few nights. It was one thing making love to him at a hotel. But in her own bed? Once he left, she would always have the memories. Everytime she would walk onto the room, she would remember. It made her chest hurt thinking about it.

They guys offered to go to the car and bring in the luggage. While they were out, Kate turned to Julie.

"So... What's the plan?" Kate asked.

Julie looked at her watch "Well it's about 7 so I figure that gives us a couple of hours to clean up and get ready to go out. Karaoke doesn't start till 9."

"Sounds good." Kate said.

Kate met Nick back in the guest room. She walked up behind him as he set the bags down. She wrapped her arms around his waist leaning against his back.

"How ya doing, baby?" He asked placing his arms over hers.

Kate sighed, "Tired actually."

He turned in her arms. She tilted her head back to look at him.

"We don't have to go out you know. I'm perfectly happy just being here with you."

She smiled.

"You are so sweet. No it's ok I'll be fine. I'll just have a red bull when we get there."

"When are we leaving?"

"Not for a couple of hours."

"Why don't you rest for awhile?"

She looked longingly at the bed.

"That is so tempting. But what are you going to do while I sleep?"

"Oh I don't know I thought I might do something crazy like join you."

Kate smiled.

"Ok you talked me into it. But just for like an hour." She said.

Kate stepped down the hall to Julie's room. She didn't see Julie but AJ was sitting on the bed, flipping channels on tv. He looked over at Kate as she walked in.

"Hey Nick and I are going to rest for about an hour, k?"

"Sure." AJ smiles.

Kate turns to walk back to the room but stops and turns back AJ.

"I wanted to say thanks." Kate said

He looks confused.

"I know Julie was scared about her first time and she is so happy and I know that's thanks to you."

He looked down at the remote before meeting Kate's eyes again.

"I really care for her, ya know."

"I know. Me too." Kate said smiling and heading back to her room.

Nick was already stretched out on the right side of the bed when Kate walked in.

"Scoot over." She told him.

He looks confused.

"I can lay on my right shoulder for a long period of time."

"Why not?" He asked as he scooted over.

She grabbed a light weight blanket out of the seat at the end of the bed.

"Ever since I broke my collar bone it makes my shoulder ache if I lay on it to long." She explained as she crawled onto the bed throwing the blanket over them. She rested in the crook of his arm, her head on his chest.

He wanted to know how she broke her collar bone but he knew there would be time for that later. He lay quietly, running his fingers through her silky smooth hair. It was so soft, just like her. She put on a tough girl image but underneath she was just as vulnerable as anyone else.

Julie worked quickly to get her chores done. She left AJ in her room while she cleaned the cat box and started a load of laundry. When she walked into her room, a basket of clean laundry in her arms, she smiled when she found him asleep, Jasper curled up between AJ's knees. She set the basket down and headed to the kitchen.

Julie went through her freezer until she found what she was looking for. She got started on cooking. She wasn't the least bit tired and wanted everyone to have something home cooked to eat when they woke up.

Nick came down the stairs first. He smiled at Julie when he walked into the kitchen. The smell of hot biscuits filled the air. Julie was at the stove stirring something in a large pot.

"You didn't have to cook. We could have gone out to eat."

Julie smiled at him.

"I know. But growing boys need good homecooking."

Nick laughed.

"I think I am done growing."

At 6'1" he towered over them all. He didn't need to grow anymore. He looked over her shoulder to see she was making home made chicken noodles soup. "I do appreciate the thought. And it smells really good."

Before long they were all sitting around Julie's kitchen table eating. Kate suggested the girls get changed before they headed out. AJ had one request.

"Do you have any more 50's style dresses?"

Julie blushed.

"Yeah. I have a few. Why?"

"Would you wear one for me? And the red thing underneath?" Julie smiled and nodded. She had a yellow halter style dress with a red rose at the waist that was fashioned after the style of 1957 prom dresses. The red petticoat and her red heels would go great with it.

Kate changed as well. She had brought a summer dress to wear out for Julie's birthday. It was a white dress with black trim and black floral designs on it. It had a v neck line and wide shoulder straps. She wore the black petticoat underneath to make the skirt look fuller. Black satin shoes with lace trim complemented it.

"Wow I feel under dressed." Nick said as the girls walked downstairs.

He was wearing dark washed blue jeans a black muscle tank top and his blue long sleeve button down shirt that was completely unbuttoned. He also wore his black fedora because he knew Kate liked it.

AJ was wearing black faded jeans, a gray t-shirt with skull and cross bones, Black hoodie and his black ascot hat.

"I think you look great." Kate told Nick. "Besides I don't want you turning too many girls heads. I want to keep you for myself."

"Well shall we go?" Julie asked.

They piled into Julie's car again and head to Sundowners. As they walked in AJ groaned. Nick laughed.

"What?" Julie asked.

"You brought me to a country bar?" He asked.

Kate and Julie looked around. There was a small stage about 3 feet off the floor and a large wooden dance floor in front of it. Table surrounded the dance floor and there was a large bar in the back.

"It doesn't look like a country bar to me." Julie said.

AJ pointed up in the air indicating the music.

Kate laughed, "What's the matter AJ? Are you a little out of your element?"

He grimaced. Nick put a brother arm around AJ.

"Look on the bright side. We probably won't get recognized here."

"And it'll be fun. Come on try something new." Kate said leading the way to a table.

The place was pretty empty and most of the patrons were sitting close to the stage. Kate chose a

table next to the dance floor but closer to the back of the room so they'd have some privacy. A waitress came up and took their drink orders while they watched a couple of singers.

"So you gonna go sing?" AJ asked the girls.

"I wonder if they have a book?" Kate asked.

"It looks like it." Julie said, "There are some on other tables."

"Well go get us one." Kate prodded.

Julie walked up to the karaoke host. He gave her a couple of books to bring back to the table along with some slips to fill out. They all browsed thru the books. Kate had a stack of slips in no time.

"How many you planning on singing?" Nick laughed, thumbing through her slips.

"Well at home I just make a list and my brother decides what I'm singing as the night goes on. So I guess tonight you can pick. Well everything but my warm up song."

"You have a warm up song?" AJ asked.

"Yeah I always sing It's My Party first. It gets me comfortable with the audience because I don't need the words."

Kate went and turned in a slip for her and Julie.

"So are you guys going to sing tonight?" Julie asked.

They exchanged a look.

"We sing every night." Nick explained. "This is our night off."

"True. Good point." Julie said, "ya know we could go somewhere else."

"Nah this is fine. Like Nick said we won't be recognized." AJ said

"Won't you be bored just sitting here?" Julie asked.

"Well we do have you to keep us company." He smiled at her.

Kate walked back up to the table.

"So I talked to the DJ and he said that since there isn't a very big crowd he usually goes thru the rotation then plays a few songs, then does more karaoke."

"Cool so we can dance!" Julie said.

"Yup! And I requested a few songs." Kate says proudly.

"Did you request our song?" Julie says with a devilish grin.

"Duh!" Kate laughs.

"And what song would that be?" AJ asks.

"Oh I think you'll just have to wait and find out." Julie said.

The next singer sang Brand New Man by Brooks and Dunn. Julie squealed and jumped up. Kate leaned over kissing Nick's cheek.

"Gotta go dance."

Nick and AJ watched as the girls danced the cowboy cha cha. Nick couldn't take his eyes off Kate. The joy on her face brought a smile to his.

The girls returned to the table slightly out of breath, laughing. The DJ called Kate up to sing.

"Of course!" Kate says taking quick drink before heading up to sing.

Just a few notes into the song, the crowd fell into a hush. Kate's beautiful voice had most of the room captivated. Even the bartender stopped to listen. Kate was so into her song, she did not even realize almost everyone was listening to her. When it was over, the crowd cheered. Julie shrank back in her chair. She hated going after Kate. She felt her voice was inadequate to begin

with. But the DJ called her name and she slowly walked up to the stage.

“Time after Time” started playing. It was one song she could lose herself in. She didn’t care how badly or good it sounded, it was the words she became lost in. When it was over, she blushed at the applause she got and quickly moved to sit next to AJ. He reached over and took her hand.

“It wasn’t nearly as bad as you had me thinking it would be,” he whispered in her ear, sending goosebumps over her skin.

“It was bad enough,” she replied. He kissed her softly

“No, it wasn’t. Will you sing again?”

“Yeah, but next one is a belter. You might wanna go outside when I sing that one.” She smiled at him, letting him know she was slightly teasing. But only slightly.

The girls were able to dance a few more times, when someone sang a country song they knew. One woman, who was truly amazing, sang ‘Any Man of Mine’. As soon as the first note hit, Kate was outta her seat, grabbing at Julie. Julie did not recognize the song right away, it took her a moment, and then a wide smile splayed across her face. They moved to the center of the dance floor, facing the guys.

Neither guy had ever seen the Sleazy Slide and were quite shocked when the girls kicked up high, Julie’s red petticoat flaring up. The girl’s moves drove the guys crazy. Not only Nick and AJ, but most of the other guys in the bar as well. They returned to the table, out of breath. Nick slid his arm over Kate’s shoulder, pulling her in tight.

“Wow. We could go home now. I really won’t mind.” Kate laughed, but as it happened before, the DJ called her to sing right after dancing.

“I gotta go sing now, but soon. We have one more dance for you.” She moved quickly to the stage, leaving Nick wondering what could be better than what he just saw.

Kate sang Can’t Fight the Moonlight from Coyote Ugly.

Julie knew she would be next. As Kate was finishing up, Julie turned to AJ.

“You really might want to go outside now. This is not gonna be pretty.”

“Is it gonna fun? For you?”

“Um. Yeah. I like to sing this one. But it never sounds very good.” He kissed her sweetly.

“I am sure you will do just fine. I am not going outside. I will sit right here and support you. Terrible sounding or not.” They both laughed and she headed up to sing.

Julie sang ‘What’s Going On’ by 4 Non Blondes. She pushed with her vocals, causing her voice to be overpowering. For once, she had stopped the crowd. They turned to see the 50’s house wife belting out a song sang by a group of brunette tattooed smokers. It was a little shocking.

Julie was proud of herself as she walked back to the table. She only went off key twice. And it was the same spot she always went sour on. When she sat down, AJ put his arms her.

“How did you know I love that song?” He asked her.

“I didn’t. I just happen to like that song. It’s the only one I can get really loud with and not kill it too bad.” They both laughed before he pulled her closer to him, so he could kiss her better.

The DJ took a break to play a few songs. When Sweet Home Alabama came on Kate dragged Nick on to the dance floor. They were having so much fun goofing off that AJ decided that he and Julie should join them. The 4 of them danced having a blast. As the music changed to Crazier by Taylor Swift the guys pulled the girls in for a slow dance. Kate sang softly to Nick as he gazed down into her soft green eyes.

"Will you sing a song with me?" Julie asked AJ.

"What song?" He asked suspiciously.

"Summer Nights from Grease." She smiled, "I love that song but I never have a guy to sing with."

He smiled back at her. She was so unexpected. All the songs they could sing together and she wanted that one.

"Oh alright." He said trying to sound like it was a big inconvenience.

When the song ended a new round of karaoke started. Someone sang Trouble by Travis Tritt. Kate pulled Nick back out for a fast swing dance.

"That looks like fun!" Julie said.

"Well come on!" AJ said leading her back to the dance floor.

Soon it was Kate's turn to sing again. When she belted out the first few notes of It's In His Kiss by Cher there were cheers from the audience.

"Whoa!" Nick said.

"I know she's good, huh?" Julie commented.

"Has she ever tried to go pro?" he asked.

"No she doesn't think she's good enough."

"She is." Nick said his eyes riveted on Kate.

Kate was heading back to the table when Julie's name was called.

"Come on," Julie said, "We're all doing this one."

"What are we singing?" Kate asked.

"Summer Nights." Julie said leading the way to the stage.

The DJ had 4 mics. The guys put their own twist to the song.

A few more singers went up before the DJ called out he had a special request for some pretty ladies to dance to. Before the music even started, Kate had Julie on the dance floor. She knew he was talking about them.

Julie and Kate started the dance they had choreographed it.

"Shit!" Nick muttered.

"I agree." AJ said.

They joined the girls after the chorus.

Kate was so hot and bothered by dancing with Nick all she could think was to get him alone somewhere. He had dirty dancing moves she had never heard of.

Out of breath they all returned to the table.

"Let's get outta here." AJ said.

"I couldn't agree more." Nick said.