***It’s My Party Lyrics*:**

It's my party, and I'll cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

You would cry too, if it happened to you

Nobody knows where my Johnny has gone

But Judy left the same time

Why was he holding her hand

When he's supposed to be mine?

It's my party, and I'll cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

You would cry too, if it happened to you

Play all my records, keep dancing all night

But leave me alone for awhile

'Til Johnny's dancing with me

I've got no reason to smile

It's my party, and I'll cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

You would cry too, if it happened to you

Judy and Johnny just walked through the door (walked through the door)

Like a queen with her king

Oh, what a birthday surprise

Judy's wearing his ring

It's my party, and I'll cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

You would cry too, if it happened to you

Oh, it's my party, and I'll cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

Cry if I want to

You would cry too, if it happened to you

It's my party, and I'll cry if I want to

* *Lesley Gore (1963)*

**It’s Her Party**

The record player was being worked hard as someone put on a Chubby Checker vinyl. As his voice floated out of the player, I scanned the room for Lesley, but my search was unsuccessful. I concluded she must be in the powder room and turned back to my friend Rhonda who was twisting to the music. I laughed and mimicked her bad dance moves. As I twirled around, I came face to face with a frown.

There was Lesley, eyes fuming.

“Baby, what is it?”

“It’s *my* party! I’m your girlfriend. You should be dancing with me. Instead, I find you with Rhonda?!”

“Sweetheart, I’m dancing with Rhonda because I couldn’t find you. I thought you were in the powder room or somethin’. As soon as you got back, I was gonna dance with you.”

The ground trembled as Lesley’s foot hit the ground.

“Stop lying to me! If what you said was true, you would be dancing with me.”

“Lesley! Babe!”

My call fell on deaf ears as she stormed away. Rhonda grimaced and her hand fell on my shoulder, comfort radiating from it.

“I know you were speaking the truth, but Lesley’s just being Lesley. Always overdramatising things. What’re you going to do?”

I spied the drinks table and a plan formed to apologise. If I brought her a drink, she would undoubtedly be happy again. Leaving Rhonda, I snaked through the throngs of the crowd towards the table. *Apologise to Lesley. Just like always.* An unexpected wave of frustration bubbled up. Not thinking, I snatched the ladle and grabbed the bowl, aiming to tip it and make a mess when I felt a hand on my shoulder.

“Now that wouldn’t be all too nice, would it?”

I pivoted to see a smiling face looking back at me.

“Oh, I uh was just,” I looked down at the ladle and then over to the pile of cups stacked on the far corner of the table, “yeah, you got me.”

She laughed and held out her hand.

“Judy.”

“Johnny.”

I went to shake her hand, surprised by her forwardness but she laughed again and pointed to the ladle still clutched in my death-grip.

“Most folks use that to get a drink, which I happen to want.”

Judy’s cool attitude washed over me, and I felt my rage fade as I handed her the ladle.

“Well, would you look at that there ring. That’s the prettiest little thing I’ve ever seen! Where’d ya get it?”

I looked down at my ring, the inset jewel stone winking in the light.

“From the record shop down the street.”

“A record shop? Honey, I know I’m not from ‘round here, but I know that record shops don’t *normally* sell rings.”

A smile pulled on my cheeks.

“I’m not foolin’ you. This record shop also happens to sell handmade pieces of jewellery. The man runnin’ the store, Phil, his wife got sick or somethin’ and um,”

“Honey, why don’t you just take me there and Phil can tell me himself? I’ve been meaning to get a little souvenir from my trip, I rarely visit New York.”

Before I answered, my eyes flickered to Lesley who was huddled in the corner with a friend, hands gesturing and mouths running miles. I could tell she was complaining about me. She probably didn’t want to talk to me, and I didn’t really want to talk to her. I snapped back to Judy with a smile.

“You know what? Sure!”

“One issue. I don’t know how I’m gonna make it through the crowd to the door. Whenever I try to walk through a crowd, no one listens, and I end up stuck in the middle.”

I turned to survey the crowd and felt like I was in Grand Central Station at peak hour.

“I’ll go first, you can take my hand and I’ll clear a path.”

Judy smiled.

“Thanks honey.”

So out we went, Judy following closely behind me, hand in mine as I weaved through the crowd like a needle.

Once outside, Judy let go of my hand and we strolled down the street, the sunny rays bathing us in golden light. We started talking about how Lesley and Judy were best friends growing up, but Lesley’s family moved away. As the sound of a motorbike roaring down the street harassed my ears, Judy told me of her boyfriend in Texas and how he wanted to come, but she didn’t want to frighten Lesley. *He stands at 6 feet and his beard is as bushy as you can hardly imagine! He’s a biker, and Lesley never was one for a rough, tough man.* We’d laughedat the image of little, sweet Lesley dancing with the hairy biker.

I pushed open the door and the familiar bell tinkled in protest.

“Johnny! What a nice surprise.”

“Hey ya. I was telling my new friend, Judy, about your wife’s ring business but I just couldn’t tell the story like you do and she wanted to buy one anyway, so I brought her down.”

As Phil pulled out the ring selection and started his story, I drifted towards the new records and let my mind wander, conjuring up the memory of Lesley’s face from before. Even when she was angry, she was foxy and the more I thought about it, the more I wanted to apologise to her. I fiddled with the ring on my finger. Lesley always loved it. When we first started going out, she would comment day after day that it was *just so gorgeous!* I think she’d wanted me to give it to her, but I could never find the right moment. I’d planned to give it to her later tonight as a birthday gift. I could see her face now, her twinkling laugh flowing out of her smile. Her eyes lit up with love and glee. Although we had our arguments, I always loved her, and I wanted to be with her. As I heard the till chime, I looked over to Judy who was slipping on a ring.

“So, what’d you go with?”

She held out her hand and I raised an eyebrow at the ring on her finger, identical to mine.

“I wanted to remember the record shop and sweet Phil here told me that this was Cecilia’s favourite ring to make, so I had no other choice but to buy it!”

As we traipsed back down the street, I turned to Judy.

“Thanks for saving me earlier at the party. I would’ve made a fool of myself, and Lesley would never have forgiven me. I would hate to lose her.”

“Of course, honey, that’s what a friend does.”

Eager to show her new ring off, we hurried the rest of the way back to the house. At the door, she shook her hair and walked in, head held high, like a queen.

Holding the door open, I heard a wailing woman’s voice.

“It’s my party!”

As I recognised the voice I hurried inside, coming to a stop next to Judy. There was Lesley, standing in the middle of the room, wailing inconsolably, and repeating *I’ll cry if I want to!*

A hush came over the crowd, leaving only Chubby Checker’s singing to be heard.

Lesley sniffled as she looked up and saw me.

Judy’s hand flew to her mouth as she saw the scene.

The inset jewel of her ring caught Lesley’s eye and she burst into a new set of tears…