

Gifts for Deborah

By Deborah Heyer

Chapter 1

“Mom, that smells so good, I’m so hungry,” the newly-engaged couple agreed.

“Yeah, it will be ready in about two minutes,” as Deborah glanced at the clock, putting her oven mitts on, “Jake! Zach and Maria are here!”

“Hannah is at work and I just talked to Julia not too long ago, she should be here soon.” Deborah playfully greeted her family with oven mitt hugs. “Dinner is going to be so yummy; we have bruschetta and olives and—Hey there!”

Julia strolled through the front door. “Hey Mom! What’s up everybody? I’m hungry!” Deborah hurried to welcome her oldest daughter, and then led her into the kitchen for help with dinner. “Mom, you know I don’t belong in the kitchen,” Julia quipped. “Jake would rather help you out, right Jake?” Julia looked to her six-year-old brother accordingly.

Jake jumped to hug her tightly, “Mm, I love *yew*, Bambi!” Julia kissed him on the cheek lovingly and reached to the refrigerator. “Jake, why don’t you see what everyone would like to drink for dinner, okay?”

Julia looked over at her family from the hallway and thought to herself, *no wonder why we get looks when we all go out in public* as Deborah, Zach, Maria, and Jake sat down to enjoy their meal.

Deborah, in her 40s, didn’t look a day over 35. She was an attractive woman standing at five feet, seven inches with a curvy body (mostly on the backside). Deborah’s face was oval-shaped with honey brown eyes and plump pink lips and, to top it off, a cute pug nose. The third generation Virgo had nearly worked herself to death on her journey to grow up. Deborah led by example with her warm compassionate soul and her confident spirit which made it easy for those around her to instantly feel comfortable. Deborah mended: she cleaned up relationships and helped others to see things logically. A quirky dork at heart and somewhat of a control freak, Deborah enjoyed helping and listening to others around her. She

knew herself better than anyone and was always open to talk about anything.

Artistic, sensitive, outgoing and sexy, Deborah did admit two things she was *not* particularly good at: being on a date and driving on the freeway. She was always strong at intuition and believed that everything happened for a reason. Deborah felt that she was a tough match in a sexual relationship because she was extremely awkward around men.

At the young age of 21, Deborah became pregnant with a girl, Julia. She was Deborah's first born with ex-husband Mark, in Minnesota. Deborah and Mark met while they were both in re-recovery at a half-way house. They had Julia around 13 months later. The Caucasian-German-Norwegian mix seemed to be working out to the 23 year old beauty's advantage. Tall and slender with dark features and fair skin, Julia resembled her mother the most of the four kids in features and laid-back attitude.

Deborah's second child, 19-year-old, Zach, was also born in Minnesota, as that is where Deborah met his father, AJ, on a 3:00 a.m. 7/11 cigarette run on her 24th birthday in Minneapolis. Three years younger than Julia and a few shades darker, Zach was the tallest of the bunch. At 6 feet 3 inches, Zach's African-American-Caucasian-Native American heritage seeped through his reddish-brown skin tone and plump lips. Voted most flirtatious in a cheesy poll in high school, it seemed everyone agreed with Zach's charming good looks and kind personality.

Zach met Maria about six months ago and the two had recently decided to commit to a long-term engagement. As insightful and deserving as Zach's family saw her, Maria was clearly a product of a very controlled environment. The engagement seemed to be putting a strain on Maria's family's strong Catholic values, in comparison with Zach's informal Christian upbringing. Still, with a tall, thin model stature, Hispanic-toned brown skin and appealing features, it was easy to see what drew Zach to Maria and why their optimistic personalities were such a solid match.

Third child, Hannah, was a striking *Half-Rican* (her favorite slang for being bi-racial); she turned 16 last March. Deborah ended up meeting Hannah's father Peter on a fluke date with Peter's friend Christian when she was 22. With her light brown skin, black hair, and stunning features, Hannah was and always will be a diva; a 5 feet 2 inch diva. Contrary to Julia and Zach, Hannah has interpreted herself as the family quagmire. Indecisive on everything from her

style of clothing to her sexuality, she appeared to enjoy stirring things up in the house on an hourly basis. Slamming doors, slashing wrists, popping pills, and experimenting with anything she could get her hands on. Like all parents of *normal* teenagers, Deborah had her hands full—no, overflowing. Hannah had recently been diagnosed as bipolar with some psychotic features, and coping with this had brought a sort of light-hearted awareness to the entire family. Supportive and understanding, the rest of the family took everything that Hannah did or said in stride.

Rounding out the pack was the six-year-old fireball, Jake. Too stubborn, too smart, and too open-minded for most; Jake pushed everyone to their limits. Jake was the miracle after Deborah's first conceived son, Nathaniel (with Jake's father Anthony) died in utero one week before he was due. Born a year and a half later, Jake demanded spotlight, attention and, most of all, affection. Flamboyant, defiant, and loving are just a few words to describe the Afro-German-Caribbean mix of this young boy with Bambi eyelashes.

Since the beginning, Deborah did not believe in censoring her children, nor did she know how. Unfortunately, children don't come with a training manual. Not forbidding certain things led to an interesting upbringing for her children. Minimal restrictions also led to a lot of trust and a lot of trial and error.

Julia was raised from two until age eighteen with her father in Minnesota. Standing in the hallway of her mother's apartment in Southern California, she felt grateful to know this part of her family as well as she did.

Carefully carrying her utensils and drink to the dining/living room area, Julia squeezed between bodies to fill her plate with food from the table. "No worries, I'll just sit on the couch," Julia said to the table of worried faces as they realized all four seats at the table were taken.

With almost all shades present and silverware clanking, dinner conversation started slowly. Jake looked up from his plate of potato castle and organized meat to announce, "Zach and Maria can romantic kiss because they are going to get married tomorrow."