

December 24

Zoe,

Merry Christmas Eve! Sorry it took me an extra day, but Dad has been insisting on spending most of our time at the hospital with Rachel (never mind that 8 of us in the hospital room makes it seem like a can of sardines). We finally got Rachel and Elisabeth home tonight, which is great, but means that we won't be sleeping for a while now. I have a feeling I'll be spending lots of late nights at Cuppa Joe's. That is one thing I like about my step-mom's management - she believes no hour is too late for coffee, including two in the morning. The graveyard shift is barely staffed, but if I ever can't sleep, it's a great place to hide.

I did read Gabe's letter and you can tell him we're cool... for now. What he said to me goes for him too, though since you've been friends for longer, it's less likely to be needed. He'll know what I mean. I am curious what you told him about us, though, because his comments about our friendship are interesting.

I will try to get better at detecting your humor. I am not used to having someone else snark at me. When I read your answers, I automatically read them the way most of the people in my life would say them, because, let's face it, I have very little frame of reference. I haven't heard you talk, so I don't know when you are likely to be sarcastic.

I don't know if high school has to be all drama, but it certainly seems like our lives are going to be. And "dispensed with the drama?" The Lissa/Thom problem hasn't exactly been dispensed with, you're just making do. When you're talking to someone that close to someone you absolutely detest, there's bound to be drama, sorry.

The more you try to keep me away from your cousins, the more I hope they find our letters. What are you so afraid of them telling me? It's not like you're the one who has been recalcitrant and unforthcoming.

Two days? I can do math. You're getting a Christmas present for me, aren't you? That means I have to do one for you. *Sigh* Let me think about it, and get back to you.

Honestly? I don't know what I'd say to my mother. I've spent twelve years without the woman, and that's plenty of time to put her out of my mind, you know? I got used to the idea she didn't want me, and I'd convinced myself that I could be okay with that, that I didn't need her. I don't KNOW what I want to say to her, and I don't exactly have the time to think about it with everything else going on. You've dealt with this recently, kind of, that's the only reason I mentioned it.

The baby's crying and it's my turn to change her. I think that's everything anyway, so I'm gonna leave it there. Sorry this is so short. I'm kind of exhausted, you know?

Alex

Christmas Presents

Boxes in paper, ribbons and string
Inside a book, a picture, a ring
Some have great meaning, others have none
Small children think unwrapping is fun.

Gifts from the heart are better than most
Whether sent by hand or delivered by post.
Since I can't be there with you at home,
For Christmas I wrote you this silly poem.