

# **Relatively Famous**

**By Jessica Park**

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***For Mom. This one is all for you.***

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## Chapter 1

“Dani? Phone for you!” Leila called, hoping her voice would carry over the music blasting from her daughter’s room. “Danielle!”

“Coming!” Dani bounded out of her bedroom, and hung her head over the stair railing. “Toss it up, Mom.”

“Fat chance. Come down here and get it. It’s Samantha. And make it quick. Alan needs your help with the pasta sauce.”

Dani ran down the stairs and took the wireless phone. “Hey, you look nice, Mom.” Tonight was her mom’s five-year anniversary with her boyfriend Alan, and Dani and Alan were putting together a dinner to celebrate. Leila had just cut her dark hair into a short style, and the soft curls around her face suited her perfectly. The deep red wrap-dress that hugged her body was cheery and festive—perfect for the occasion. “You’re a hot Mama!” Dani hopped back up the stairs.

“And you’re a nut. Five minutes, Dani, okay?”

Samantha had been Dani’s best friend since kindergarten, and the two could be on the phone for hours. Dani held the phone in the crook of her neck. “Hi, Sam. What’s up?” Dani shut the door to her room and peered into her closet, looking for something nice to wear for dinner.

“Hey, Dani. I’m in desperate need of your help. Actually, your wardrobe’s help. I have Spanish class with Steven Meyer tomorrow, and I have nothing to wear. I only have two weeks to get his attention before school gets out and he disappears for the summer. Can I borrow something?”

Sam’s parents were on a really tight budget and didn’t have extra money to buy their daughter every latest fashion. Not that Dani’s own closet was overflowing with pricey designer labels, but her mother made enough money as an interior designer to treat her to the occasional shopping spree. There was good food on the table, presents under the tree at Christmas, and the occasional summer vacation to the coast of Maine. Apparently all the bills were paid because they still had electricity and a decent cable lineup, which was, at times, more than Sam could say. Dani had gone to Sam’s after school one day to find that the house was dark and freezing; the electric bill was past due, and Sam had been horribly ashamed.

“You can borrow whatever you like. I can bring some stuff over tomorrow morning before school if you want. Sound good?” Dani started yanking shirts from her closet and throwing them on the bed. “I’m picking out your boy-catching outfit as we speak. I gotta run. We’re having Mom and Alan’s anniversary dinner tonight. See ya in the morning.”

She leaned into the mirror on her wall and carefully applied a touch of lip-gloss. It was a light shade of pink so perhaps her mother wouldn’t notice. *Yeah, right*, Dani thought. *Mom notices everything!* She ran a brush through her long dark brown hair and wished her straight hair was thicker and had more body to it. More shape, more bounce, more oomph! She’d finally convinced her mother that some highlights weren’t going to be the first step toward becoming a child bride, and Leila had begrudgingly agreed to a barely noticeable tint.

Dani put on a simple pair of silver hoop earrings. There was another battle Dani had fought for a number of years: getting her ears pierced. With the way her mom had argued you would have thought Dani had been asking to get a life-size eagle tattooed above her butt. All of her friends had gone off to the mall to have their ears pierced and got to pick out adorable butterflies or hearts as their starter

jewelry. Dani had to go to the doctor's office with her mom. A clean, sterile environment! So Dani had returned home with plain silver studs and then spent six weeks smelling like the rubbing alcohol that her mother doused her with every chance she got.

Leila was constantly moaning that her baby was growing up.