Gifts and Dreams

by GinnyK

Summary

J/D Post Ep to Abu el Banat - While this is not exactly a Josh and Donna story it contains my answer to the question----What did Josh get Donna for Christmas?

Notes

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I'm standing against the wall, listening to the carolers in the lobby. Donna's by my side. We're not quite holding hands; after all we are in public. But we're close enough so the back of my hand keeps brushing against hers, a comforting feeling. The Bartlet girls are in front of us giggling over some inside joke. For a moment things feel right with the world.

Someone opens a door nearby and I shiver as the cold air hits me. "Josh, you ok?" asks Donna as she reaches to actually hold my hand for a second.

"Fine, just cold," I answer, realizing she must have thought the music was getting to me. After three years of Paxil and bi-weekly therapy I feel I can listen to some Christmas carols without a problem.

When the singing ends Donna goes over to talk to Ellie for a minute, while I make small talk with Liz. We avoid the subject of Doug. We talk about Gus and his fear of lighting the Christmas tree.
Out of the corner of my eye I see Zoey head out into the hall. She catches my eye and waves me over. "I'm going out for some fresh air. You want to join me?"

"Sure, let me grab my coat and send Donna home," I reply with a smile.

I turn around and don't see Donna so I head for my office. She's sitting at her desk shutting down her computer. "You leaving now?" I ask her as I lean against the door jamb.

"Yeah, you should go too. Get some sleep."

"In a while; I have a date," I say as I watch for her reaction. A brief glimpse of disappointment comes over her face. I'm not sure how that makes me feel. "Zoey want to take a walk," I smirk as I head into my office to grab my coat. I put a handful of Hershey Kisses in my pocket and return to Donna's desk. Handing her a few gets me a smile in return. "I'll see you tomorrow."

"Early you have staff at 7:30," she reminds me. She looks like she wants to say something more.

"OK, call me and make sure I'm up. Oh and Donna..."

"What?"

"It's not socks."

She laughs and throws a Kiss at me. I toss it back to her with a laugh and head down the hall. When I get to the door I turn around to see if she's watching me. She is and she gives a wave as I wink and push the door open.

When I get outside Zoey's already there. She's watching as the lights on the Christmas tree are flicking off and on. Hey," she says with a smile as she kisses my cheek.

"What's up with the lights?"

"Dad took Gus out in his pajamas to flick the switch. Gus thought it would just be him and my Dad before. That's why he freaked.

We watch until we see the pair heading back towards the White House. "So, how have you been? You look great."

"I'm pretty good. Some days are better than others. Thanks for the candy you sent, by the way."

"You're welcome. Guess it was nice having your sisters here tonight. How was dinner?"

"Dinner?" she snorts, "Ellie was late, Liz is pissed and Dad got called away."

"So, the usual?" I smirk as I pull a Kiss out of my pocket for her.

"Yeah, but it is nice to all be together. I will admit that."

I just nod. I'd do anything to have a family dinner with my Mom, Dad and Joanie.

"How's your Mom? Did she come up for Thanksgiving?"

"Yeah, it was nice. She cooked dinner for the two of us. Friday we got up early like all the other insane people and went shopping."

"You went to the MALL?" she teases, knowing shopping is not my favorite activity. This is why
Donna is the designated shopper.

"Yes, I went to the mall," I say with my best wounded face on.

"And you bought Donna socks?" she says as she reaches up and smacks me on the back of the head.

"Oww. Who told you that?" I mutter as I rub the back of my head.

"Donna and I were talking. She told me what she got you and she told me about the socks. Don't worry, she didn't actually believe you."

"Good. You wanna walk out to the tree?"

Zoey nods and takes my arm as we head towards the Ellipse. "So?"

"So what?" I ask, trying to act innocent.

"What did you get her?"

"More than one thing, actually. The first one, while a little extravagant is rather useful and something she really needs, and wants."

"A new car?"

"Uh, government salary Zoey," I point out. "I bought her a laptop." Zoey's just staring at me. That's not a good sign. I have no idea what she's thinking. "Zo?"

"A laptop? Well, it's certainly generous and useful but...but it seems like it's more useful for you."

"That's what my mom said. So when we were at the mall she steered me towards the jewelry store."

Zoey stops dead in her tracks, nearly sliding on the packed snow. She turns to face me. She's got this excited look on her face. Now, I'm in trouble. I know what she's thinking. "No, no, wait, not a ring," I start to explain as her face falls a little. "Zoey, we've never been on a real date. I think proposing is jumping the gun just a little," I tease.

"Yeah, but I just had this vision of a Rose Garden Wedding," she says wistfully.

"You can have the Rose Garden Wedding. Anyway I didn't get her anything at the jewelry store. Everything seems too....too much," I mutter, knowing exactly what I mean but unsure if I'm making myself clear. Zoey nods so I guess she understands. "Anyway we went to this really nice gift shop. Have you ever heard of the Cat's Meow?"

"Aren't they those wooden pieces with pictures of different buildings and stuff on them?"

"Yes. So I got her some of them."

"Meaningful ones? Or just the first ones you saw?" she asks.

"Of course meaningful ones. Do I look like a complete loser?" I tease as I hold up my right hand to make an "L" on my forehead."

"Not right now," she remarks dryly.

"I stood there for over an hour trying to decide which ones to get her. Anyway, I got her the Lincoln Memorial, cause it's "our place", the state flags of Wisconsin, cause that's where she's from, New Hampshire because that's where we met. I also got the White House for obvious reasons. And I got
one more but I'm not sure about giving it to her."

"What," asks Zoey as she stops walking.

"State flag of Hawaii. For when...."

"For when you finally take her there?"

I nod, suddenly feeling rather shy.

"Joshua Lyman, you're actually blushing," Zoey teases.

"Are you sure they're ok? Not too cheesy or cheap?"

"Josh, they are not at all cheesy. And it's not the amount of money you spend. It really is the thought that counts. And Donna will love the fact that you put a lot of thought into her gift." Zoey assures me as she pats my shoulder. We walk in silence for a minute admiring the tree.

After circling the tree twice I let Zoey pick our next destination. "Let's head back. I'm not exactly dressed for the snow," she points out as she glances down at her dress boots and bare hands. She's wearing a coat that looks suspiciously like Charlie's. I'll tease her about that later.

"So are Doug and Liz leaving early tomorrow?"

"After breakfast. Which I suppose my father will insist we all sit down to together."

"It's not like you had dinner together. Family is a precious thing Zoey. Remember that. I'd give anything to have a family dinner." She looks up to me with a sad smile and takes my arm.

"What is it you want Josh?"

Her question throws me for a minute. I'm not sure what exactly she means. So I answer honestly and off the top of my head. "I want to get my life together, to be happy for no particular reason. I want something to live for that doesn't have anything to do with this building," I gesture towards the White House, "with this city. I want the white picket fence and the Little League games on Saturday afternoon. I want a family of my own. A little boy to take out in the snow in his footie pajamas and boots, just the two of us.

"And this little boy, he wouldn't by any chance have blond curls and blue eyes would he?" teases Zoey.

"In my dreams he does," I admit with a sad smile.

"Life's too short Josh. I almost learned that the hard way. Don't waste anymore time."

I stop short, thinking about how Zoey and I have both been given second chances. She walks about 20 steps before realizing I'm not next to her. As she turns around and heads back towards me I don't even try to hide the tears that have suddenly started streaming down my face. Zoey reaches me and wraps her arms around me, her own tears starting to fall. We must make quite the pair, two people clinging to each other desperately trying to make sense of their lives, each of us searching for the piece that will glue everything together...and make us whole.

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