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Siobhan McNally

DIARY OF A SINGLE MUM

All at sea for our family Christmas

Nothing says Christmas like... fish and chips on a Norfolk beach.

My daughter Jesse and I, plus pug Boris, spent the festive season with the family in Cromer - less winter wonderland, more Santa-on-Sea.

This year, we decided to rent a big place so we could all get together without having to squeeze 13 people into a normal size house. In previous years, the sheer number of family to one room has led to a build-up of toxic gases, especially the time someone accidentally served creamy leeks to Jesse's auntie Joce.

Turns out winter is the perfect time to be beside the seaside, especially as the T-shirt weather meant it was warmer than most of our British summers.

But our plans to work off the festive excesses by taking Boris on long beach walks were scuppered by the chip shops.

"Let's go and see if there are any crabs on the groins," said Aunty Emm during one

colorific ramble, which made me wonder if she's taking her new public health job too seriously.

My niece Leo was briefly back from France, mainly to collect her presents and taunt Finn, her 15-year-old brother.

On Christmas morning, I saw Finn playing with a pop-up rubber sucker, one of Jesse's stocking fillers. "Don't stick that on your forehead," I warned as I walked past.

Five minutes later, Finn appeared in front of me looking sheepish. Lifting his fringe, he showed me a perfectly round bruise from the sucker. "You have the mark of the fool, Finn," I sighed.

Also joining the fun were Lara and Carey, the cousins from South Africa, or as Jesse kept calling them, "Cara and Scary".

My daughter's quest to expose Santa as a big fat fraud continued, despite the items on her list turning up on Christmas morning - doll's bed, magic set, and a secret journal with a lock and two keys (just how explosive can a six-year-old's revelations get?).

Which is ridiculous as Jesse still believes in unicorns and fairies, including the one found in her stocking, which unfortunately looked more like a uni-cow than a unicorn.

While walking along Cromer pier, Jesse happened to look closer at the tag sticking out of the uni-cow's bottom. "Hang on a minute, Mummy, this label says 'made in China'. Father Christmas has a workshop in the North Pole."

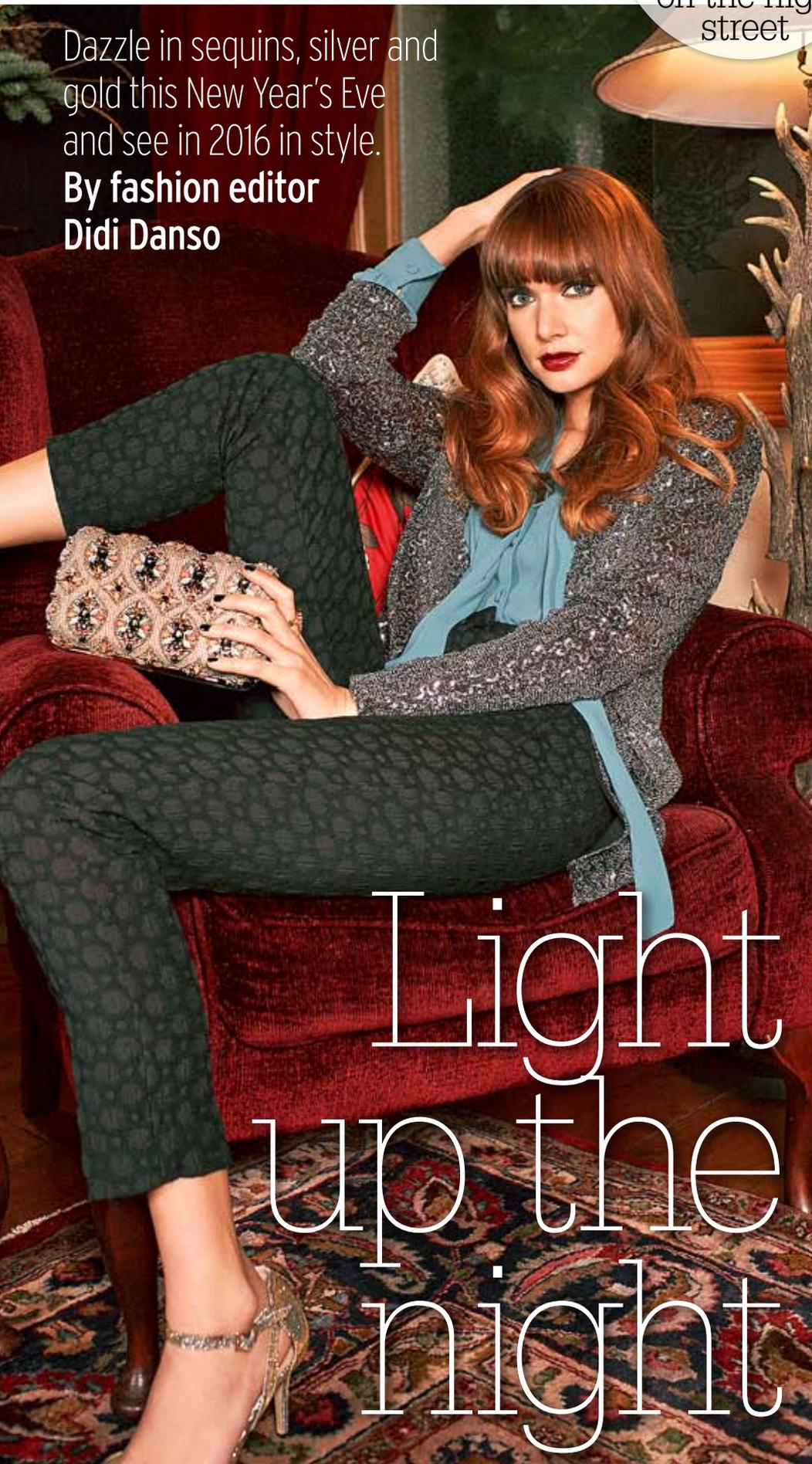
"Ahhh..." I stuttered, "even Father Christmas has to rely on cheap imports." "I don't believe you," she grumbled. "You're Father Christmas."

Frankly, after four days of doughnuts, ice creams, and salt and vinegared chips, I'm inclined to agree with her.

Follow me at @mcnally_siobhan

Dazzle in sequins, silver and gold this New Year's Eve and see in 2016 in style.

By fashion editor **Didi Danso**



Light up the night



Give a navy velvet suit a lift with a shimmering sequin top
Navy velvet blazer, £79 and trowsers, £45, Both M&S. Bronze sequin top, £14, George @ Asda. Black skinny scarf, £12, Asos. Black sandals, £15, Matalan



Make a statement in a gold jumpsuit
Gold jumpsuit, was £59, now £35, Rare London. Gold clutch, £22.99, New Look. Gold cuff, £10, Asos

with facial glue for an exact and long-lasting finish.

■ Add some sparkle to your locks with Claire's Glitter Hair Colour (£1.80, claires.co.uk). It's available in a range of colours, from simple silver to striking neon yellow. It washes out with shampoo.

■ The only nail varnish to be seen in is L'Oreal's Sequin Explosion (£4.99, superdrug.com). This



textured-effect polish is surprisingly easy to apply.

■ Rock a glittery eyeliner with Urban Decay's Heavy Metal Glitter Liner (£14, urbandecay.co.uk).

■ For sparkly lips, invest in some glitter lipgloss (£3.50, hemashop.com). This can be worn alone or over your favourite lipply.



■ Eyelure's Party Perfect Starlight lashes (£3, eyelure.com) are adorned with subtle sparkles to ensure all eyes are on you.

■ For lashes with serious sparkle, treat yourself to Hard Candy's Lash Tinsel Mascara (£3.99, ebay.co.uk), which is full of

brilliant glitter and comes in a selection of colours.

■ Add a little glow to any get-up with these temporary tattoos (£2, hobbycraft.co.uk). The instant body art is easy to apply.



■ Pick up a body lotion with a subtle sheen, such as Dove's Summer Glow with Soft Shimmer (£5.25, boots.com).