

# My Version

## Las Tres

### 1.04.05

It's the morning after the De la Fuentes welcome back party.

Evie is horrified when her mother announces she invited the Diaz family and the De La Fuente's for brunch that Sunday morning. There is no way she is ready to face Dee Dee and Raquel just hours after last night's catastrophe. How could her mother be so clueless? Evie's father, however, is looking forward to the brunch. He is anxious for everyone to sample his newest line of "manteca free" pan dulce. Evie's mother is excited for her husband, but worried about Evie. First, the constant curfew problems, then the blue hair, and now the return of a childhood friend who so rudely arrived hours late for her own party, then abruptly leaves with not such much of a "thank you" or "good bye." Vicki Gomez can sense something is going on with Evie's social life. As she carefully arranges the sugar topped pan on her fanciest serving tray, Mrs. Gomez looks over at Evie and sighs. Should she get involved? Things were so much easier when Evie was younger. Why can't Evie be more like her older sister, Sabrina? Studious, serious, less dramatic?

Unfortunately, brunch doesn't go very well. First of all, when Dee Dee shows up with her parents, she's lugs in a platoon sized supply of Noah's bagels. "I just *love* these things!" she exclaims as she carelessly pushes aside the pan dulce that Vicki Gomez had so painstakingly arranged to make room for the bagels on the serving tray. During brunch the parents chat about old times, new times ahead and, of course, who can offer the De la Fuentes better floor seats for the Lakers. Evie fronts a stiff smile as she and Raquel sit across from Dee Dee, who is constantly checking and rechecking her cell phone. The three girls don't speak to each other, that is, until Raquel grabs a bagel and asks Dee Dee to pass her some cream cheese *without jalepenos*. "What kind of mexicana doesn't like jalepenos?" Dee Dee smirks. Raquel bites back, "What kind of *Mexican* brings bagels and cream cheese to a brunch? I mean, Vicki went through a lot of trouble here...eggs benedict, mimosas..." Dee Dee laughs a fake laugh and sneers out of the side of her

mouth, “Maybe I should have brought a muzzle... for you to give that drooling boyfriend of yours. Que un perro!”

Raquel looks at Evie for back up but finds none. Evie, for some reason, remains uncomfortably silent. Just because Dee Dee batted her plastic baby blues at Jose at the party, how could she possibly know Jose had a girlfriend? Jose, if anything, should *not* have been flirting back. Besides, she is getting a bit tired of Raquel’s aggressive behavior.

The parents are oblivious to what is going on and Raquel, who can get aggro at the drop of hat, pushes away up from the table and announces, “Well, I’ve had enough.” She then looks at Dee Dee. “I’m *quite* full.” She storms out of the Gomez’s dining room as Dee Dee says under her breath. “Yeah, full of *something*.”

While the Diaz’s apologize profusely for Raquel’s abrupt departure, tension becomes thicker after Graciela De la Fuentes comments negatively about Ruben Gomez’s pan dulce. “With all respect, Ruben,” she insincerely explains. “But the heart of pan, true pan *mexicano* is the *manteca* that holds it together. Ay,” she shakes her head. “There is no *corazon* in these rolls.”

Evie’s head is spinning. The brunch was her mother’s biggest mistake. Evie is fed up with everyone’s rude behavior. She isn’t quite sure what she thinks about anything or anyone, anymore. Finally it’s the end of brunch. All the guests leave except Dee Dee who, of course, drove herself over to the Gomez’s and for some reason is lingering around. Doesn’t she have a precious long distance call to make? Suddenly, to Evie’s surprise, Dee Dee exaggerates a stretch and a yawn and then perfectly mimics Evie’s father’s inflection, “*Big fiesta...*” Dee Dee starts in a sing songy way.

Evie is taken aback and she can’t help but add, “...*long* Siesta!” She suddenly feels a smile take over her face. This is the playful banter Mr. and Mrs. Gomez did after both Dee Dee and Evie spent play time together as kids and Evie’s parents insisted that Dee Dee had to home so both girls could their obligatory naps. What a wonderful memory and Evie is touched that Dee Dee still remembered it.

Dee Dee looks at Evie and smiles. “Okay, so I’m sorry if I came on strong last night. I was in, you know *una moda mala*,” Dee Dee claims. “I had just had a fight with mi novio.”

“Yeah,” Evie confesses, “Me too.” Dee Dee raises her eyebrows in surprise and asks, “Oh, *you* had a fight... with your boyfriend, too?”

“Uh, no,” Evie quickly corrects herself. “I was in a weird, bad mood, as well.”

Both girls laugh. And Vicki Gomez, who overhears everything from the kitchen, is relieved. It seems like something good did come out of the brunch, after all.

Dee Dee starts Villanova Prep and Evie offers to show her around on her first day. She discovers how well this arrangement works out since Raquel makes it very clear by first period that she isn’t on speaking terms with Evie. Raquel feels Evie could have been a better friend at the party and at the brunch. Following Flojo code, Jose and Mondo follow suit and ignore Evie, as well. Evie is hurt, but relieved she still has Steve. Steve, not surprisingly, is the only Flojo who doesn’t get caught up in drama. “*My* reception doesn’t get Spanish novelas,” Steve rolls his eyes when he witnesses Raquel’s silent treatment towards Evie. “But *grandma’s* TV does.” Yes, Evie concludes, Steve is really a great guy.

Dee Dee and Evie enter the school’s cafeteria together and Evie accidentally bumps into Raquel in the food line. It is an awkward moment as neither of them says a word to one another. The Sangros, however, flutter around Dee Dee, interested in the new “fresita” on campus. Dee Dee looks suspiciously like them, Sangros, but *what* could she possibly be doing with Evie Gomez, a Flojo?

When the school day is finally over Dee Dee invites Evie to hang out, but Evie reluctantly declines. As much as she’d like to get close to Dee Dee again, she knows she should patch up things with Raquel, and quick. Evie heads out to the student parking lot to catch her usual ride to Sea Street where she and Steve surf and where Jose, Raquel and Mondo sit on the roof of Mondo’s Maurader to hang out and smoke out. But as she waits for Steve in the parking lot, Evie sees Raquel, Mondo, and Jose getting into

Mondo's car and all three Flojos drive away without saying anything to her. She realizes that today may not be the best day to go on to Sea Street.

On Friday issues come to a head when Dee Dee and Raquel meet, seemingly alone, in the girl's restroom. All the rage from the last few days explodes and soon the girls are yelling at each other. Alejandra De los Santos (who Dee Dee has now clicked with) walks out of a bathroom stall. "Della," she asks Dee Dee as she touches up her make up in front the bathroom mirror, not even looking at Raquel, "Is this Flo-*Ho* bothering you?" Dee Dee clicks her tongue and says, "Ay, no mujer. This Flo just about to go." Then she looks at Raquel. "*Right*, Rocky?"

The lines have been drawn. The Flojos and the Sangros on opposite sides and Dee Dee, Raquel's childhood friend, is definitely on the Sangro side. It is war.

Dee Dee leaves the bathroom with Alejandra. Raquel leans over the sink and, uncharacteristically, tries to regain her composure. When Dee Dee called her Rocky, her childhood tag, it hit a vulnerable spot. Minutes later, Evie happens to walk into the bathroom, unbeknownst what had just taken place. Raquel fronts her tough side instantly. "You know," she tells Evie as she starts to leave, "You oughts be careful with that new pally of yours. Sangros don't wear fake contacts and so much make up unless they wanna be hiding something." Raquel gives Evie a knowing look and then walks away. Evie's stomach begins to hurt. What is happening to her world?

It's Friday night. Dee Dee has invited Evie to go swimming at her house. Her parents are going to the opening of the Hispanic Heritage Museum and will not be home for most of the evening. "And oh," Dee Dee starts, "I invited that surfer friend of yours, Esteban? He *did* promise he was going to teach me how to swim. Que chulo!" Evie feels funny about the last comment. Ever since the De la Fuentes welcome back party, Evie has had a feeling about the connection between Dee Dee and Steve. But she knows that Dee Dee has a man, back in Mexico City. A man, as Dee Dee so often puts it, is "un guapo rico!" And, Evie reasons, Dee Dee is always racking up minutes with him on her cell phone.

Besides, why does she *care* if Steve, her fellow Flojo “friend” *does* like her dear childhood friend? What’s the big deal? Right?

At the last minute, Evie backs out of swimming at Dee Dee’s. But later into the evening, she starts thinking of Steve being alone in the pool with Dee Dee, showing her those “basic strokes” he had promised to do at the welcome back party. Evie feels oddly possessive, envious and ... jealous? She quickly grabs a clean pair of board shorts off her bedroom floor and finds a swim top and heads over to Dee Dee’s. As she pulls up in her mother’s late model Saab, she’s surprised to find shiny expensive cars in the De la Fuente’s drive way. Perhaps, Evie thinks, Graciela and Frank De la Fuentes changed their minds and were merely having dinner with a few friends. Not wanting to interrupt their dinner, Evie heads right back to the pool where there she finds... Wait! Is she going cray-cray? The backyard is full of Sangros! Evie’s first instinct is to get back in her mother’s car and drive away, but she can’t help and crouch down between the cypress trees and be fascinated by the scene. First of all, *where* did the Sangros find such bathing suits? Was that Christina, the plumpest Sango in a gold lame thong? And oh God, Dee Dee’s hot pink bottoms revealed she too, had a “Tramp Stamp,” a trendy tribal tattoo on her lower back. And what was this? *Heels* by a swimming pool? Was this the Miss Mexico Beauty Pageant? These girls didn’t belong at a pool party, but rather grinding around a pole in the middle a stage! Evie decides to leave, but suddenly sees Steve, shirtless in his faded red lifeguard trunks, chatting with a Sangro whose C-cups *overfloweth*. He has a smile on his face, but his neck is flushed bright pink. Evie knows that’s how he gets when he is nervous or, she guessed, *enormorado*. Evie clenches her fist and grits her teeth. She would *not* be returning home. She undoes the top button of her board shorts and folds the waistband down a bit. She then rolls up her knee length board shorts to reveal more thigh. She looks down at her feet and cringes. Her Flojo flip flops reveal chipped blue nail polish. Maybe she *could* learn a thing or two from Dee Dee.

Evie enters the back yard, determined to get just through the evening. Dee Dee, however, takes Evie under her wing and makes it clear to the Sangros that Evie may be a Flojo but, just like Steve, is “una buena persona.” Evie actually starts to loosen up after her first drink. Man, Sangros sure know how work a mean margarita! As Evie lounges poolside



with Steve, nursing her second drink, she couldn't feel happier. By the end of the night everyone is tanked, drunkenly singing their lame school song and, believe it or not, the Mexican national anthem. The Sangros laugh as Evie sings off key and struggles to follow the words. They find her "fun, in a funny way" and actually invite her to go shopping at The Grove the next day. "And," one Sangro slurs looking over Evie, "the first thing after Jamba Juice... we going to find you a new bathing suit!" They all laugh. And surprisingly, Evie laughs with them.

After The Grove shopping expenditure and over the next few days, Evie's finds the Sangros actually tolerable. When her older sister, Sabrina, calls from Stanford, Evie finds herself chatting excitedly about Dee Dee, her new "sorta friends" and all the cool places she's been going. Sabrina laughs and confides that their mother is pleased with some of the minor changes in Evie's mood and appearance.

A few nights later, Evie is at Dee Dee's house and she suggests that Evie changes the color of her blue hair. After all, it's now been a few weeks and Evie has about an inch of black roots. Before she knows it, Evie lets Dee Dee talk her into dying her hair to a totally different color...*blonde*. "You'll be un taco de ojo!" Dee Dee claims as she holds up a box of hair color. Evie wonders, could Steve be into blondes?

"Oh, before we get going with this," Dee Dee says. "I have something for you." Dee Dee goes into her closet and comes back with a wrapped package. "You know, this won't be the first time you've had blonde hair." Evie is confused by the remark and unwraps the gift. She finds a tin metal frame with a photo of both she and Dee Dee. There is an instant tightness in her chest. The picture was taken by Dee Dee's mother. She and Dee Dee are just young kids in the picture and they are dressed up for the Beach Bathing Beauty Contest they used to have near Sea Street. Just about every girl at the contest dressed as the Copper Tone Girl, including Evie and Dee Dee. There they are, documented in the photo, in fake blonde wigs and a light blue two piece bathing suit with the bottoms strategically pulled down to expose a bright red sunburn. "I *still* don't understand why we didn't win," Dee Dee clicks her tongue. "I mean, our tans are for real and they gave first place to a gabacha!" Evie laughs. Dee Dee then reminds Evie that they will have a

chance to dress up again, at Villanova's Dia de los Muertos party. "And this time," Dee Dee says, "one of us *will* win the costume contest." The girls laugh more and Evie's eyes fill with tears. They hug each other and unlike the forced embrace at their first reunion at the welcome back party, this hug is real.

Evie goes to school with her new hair color (blonde!) and she is nervous. She even went as far to borrow a slightly padded bra from Dee Dee, making her appearance go from flat chested muchacha to *muy* mucha mujer! But why not? Evie asserts. A lot of South Cali girls her age get boob jobs and, in comparison, wearing such a bra is nada, to say the least. Unlike Raquel, Dee Dee is so encouraging about Evie new look. And the response she receives at school is phenom! Evie is usually in Raquel's shadow or just the freaky Flojo with the blue hair, but now she is getting attention she's never felt before. She loves it. Raquel and Jose stroll by Evie and Raquel rolls her eyes at her. Evie can't help but feel a bit smug when she notices Jose checking her out as Raquel smacks him on the arm.

As Dee Dee becomes closer with Alejandra De los Santos, Evie, inevitably, starts spending more time with the two of them. Soon they are a threesome. A new Las Tres? Raquel *who*? Okay, so maybe the Sangros are materialistic and superficial, but they have money and they *love* to spend it. From shopping trips to The Grove to backstage parties at Roc en Espanol concerts, Evie is having a blast! Much different than life in the slow Flo lane where the Raquel, Jose and Mondo do nothing but smoke out, watch TV or, if she was lucky, come watch her and Steve surf off Sea Street.

Although Evie is sporting a semi Sangro look, deep down there's still a lot of the same old, awkward Evie. This is evident as she frets for an entire hour getting ready for another little Sangro get together. Should she, as Dee Dee's suggests, give up her Flojo flip flops (gasp!) for a pair of platforms sandals. Dee Dee says there would a few college guys and that Evie might want to appear a bit more "mature." Eventually, wear the platforms and does meet a college guy at the party, the much older cousin of Sangro, Vivian. He is visiting from U.N.A.M. and is breathing his achievements down Evie's chest. She feels pressured to be polite as he goes on and on about his family's money, his worldly travels