

*Dear Santa,*

I've been a good mom all year.

I've fed, cleaned, and cuddled my two children on demand, visited the doctor's office more than my doctor, sold sixty-two cases of candy bars to raise money to plant a shade tree in the school playground, and figured out how to attach nine patches onto my daughter's girl scout sash with staples and a glue gun.

I was hoping you could spread my list out over several Christmas', since I had to write this one with my son's red crayon, on the back of a receipt in the laundry room between cycles, and who knows when I'll find anymore free time in the next eighteen years.

**Here are my Christmas wishes:**

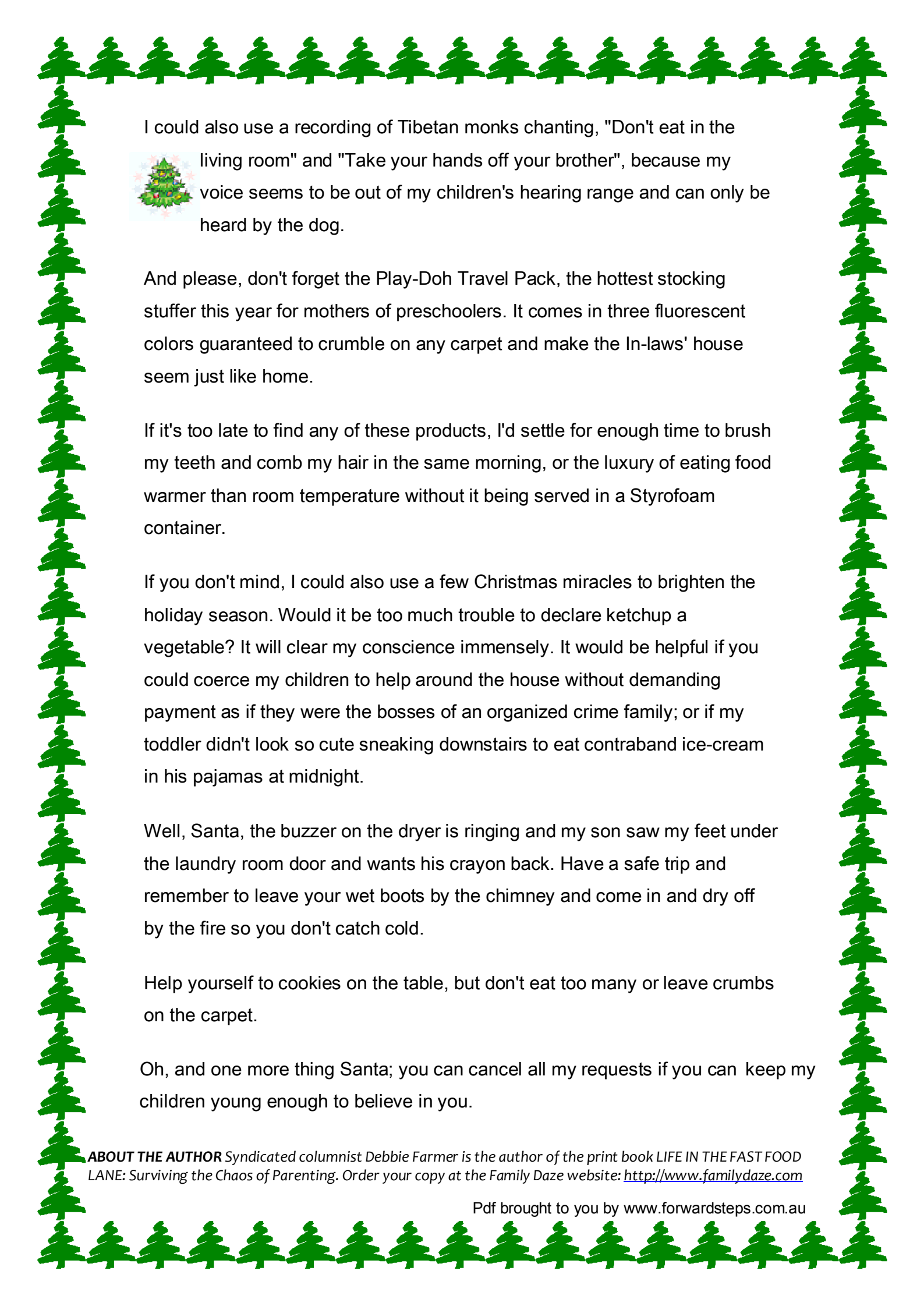
I'd like a pair of legs that don't ache after a day of chasing kids (in any color, except purple, which I already have) and arms that don't flap in the breeze, but are strong enough to carry a screaming toddler out of the candy aisle in the grocery store. I'd also like a waist, since I lost mine somewhere in the seventh month of my last pregnancy.

If you're hauling big ticket items this year, I'd like a car with fingerprint resistant windows and a radio that only plays adult music; a television that doesn't broadcast any programs containing talking animals; and a refrigerator with a secret compartment behind the crisper where I can hide to talk on the phone.

On the practical side, I could use a talking daughter doll that says, "Yes, Mommy" to boost my parental confidence, along with one potty-trained toddler, two kids who don't fight, and three pairs of jeans that zip all the way up without the use of power tools.



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I could also use a recording of Tibetan monks chanting, "Don't eat in the living room" and "Take your hands off your brother", because my voice seems to be out of my children's hearing range and can only be heard by the dog.



And please, don't forget the Play-Doh Travel Pack, the hottest stocking stuffer this year for mothers of preschoolers. It comes in three fluorescent colors guaranteed to crumble on any carpet and make the In-laws' house seem just like home.

If it's too late to find any of these products, I'd settle for enough time to brush my teeth and comb my hair in the same morning, or the luxury of eating food warmer than room temperature without it being served in a Styrofoam container.

If you don't mind, I could also use a few Christmas miracles to brighten the holiday season. Would it be too much trouble to declare ketchup a vegetable? It will clear my conscience immensely. It would be helpful if you could coerce my children to help around the house without demanding payment as if they were the bosses of an organized crime family; or if my toddler didn't look so cute sneaking downstairs to eat contraband ice-cream in his pajamas at midnight.

Well, Santa, the buzzer on the dryer is ringing and my son saw my feet under the laundry room door and wants his crayon back. Have a safe trip and remember to leave your wet boots by the chimney and come in and dry off by the fire so you don't catch cold.

Help yourself to cookies on the table, but don't eat too many or leave crumbs on the carpet.

Oh, and one more thing Santa; you can cancel all my requests if you can keep my children young enough to believe in you.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** *Syndicated columnist Debbie Farmer is the author of the print book LIFE IN THE FAST FOOD LANE: Surviving the Chaos of Parenting. Order your copy at the Family Daze website: <http://www.familydaze.com>*

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