



The Goldflower Adventures:

Sisters of Chaos

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Early Morning

Olivia had been awake since 6:00 a.m., and she knew it would take every bit of energy she could muster to get dressed and feed her dog, Speedy. Today was the last day of school. Olivia was excited not to have to worry about getting up early for the next couple of months. However, the thought of not seeing her friends every day filled her little heart with sadness.

Olivia loved her friends as much as her family. She and Josie had been friends since preschool. Ming-Lin and her family had moved to the area from California a couple of years later.

Although Olivia liked to look nice, she wasn't very fashionable. She was happy wearing shorts and a T-shirt, as long as she had her matching striped socks. Now Ming-Lin on the other hand, she was a natural fashionista. She knew which colors went well together and had lots of fashion magazines that she read every day. She even had a wall in her bedroom filled with pictures of elegant movie stars she had cut out of books and newspapers. Ming-Lin lived and breathed fashion; she knew how a garment should fit perfectly. She'd made her first dress when she was only eight years old. Sure, they were only nine now, but that was a huge accomplishment for a little girl. Olivia was proud of Ming-Lin and knew that one day she

would see her with her own fashion show in Paris. If only Ming-Lin was there now to help her pick out what to wear to school.

“Good morning, sleepy head,” Olivia said to Speedy as she tapped on the bed for him to jump up there. She wasn’t sure why he was on the floor. He usually slept at the foot of her bed. The two of them were inseparable since she’d gotten him for her birthday a few months ago. She couldn’t move around in the house without him being right behind her. He was a loyal companion, as brave as a lion, and smart, too. He was a good sniffer, just like the dogs in the movies that she and her dad watched. She would often catch him sniffing around in her room as if he were hunting for clues. She laughed to herself as she pictured him do that.

It was 6:05 a.m. now, and she was still half asleep. She moved her feet around on the floor

trying to find her slippers. Speedy licked her face as she giggled, “No, Speedy, don’t kiss me; we need to brush our teeth.”

Olivia knew she only had a few minutes every morning to get herself and Speedy ready for the day, but the time always seemed to fly by. She walked slowly into the bathroom, put Speedy down on the counter near the sink, and proceeded to wash her face. She then reached for her toothbrush. Once she was finished, she looked at Speedy and said, “Come on, little fella, now it’s your turn.” He looked at Olivia and backed away. “Oh no, not today. You wiggled your way out of getting your teeth brushed yesterday, but today it has to happen. I can’t let my best mate go around giving kisses with bad breath, can I?” Speedy reluctantly made his way closer to Olivia. He sat still long enough for her to brush his top teeth, and then jumped down off the corner. “Okay well, I

guess that's better than nothing," she snickered.

Olivia looked in her closet and pulled out her white shorts and light green shirt. Speedy was at her heels. She stepped over him, walked to the bed, and continued to get dressed. She could hear her mom downstairs in the kitchen making coffee. That was her way of knowing she only had a few more minutes before her mom would be calling for her to come down. By now, Speedy was sitting on the window seat across from the bed, staring out the window. It was a beautiful summer day. The weatherman last night on the news said it was going to be another hot one with no clouds and a light breeze.

"Olivia, it's time to go," her mom called out. Olivia had let the time get away from her again. She ran to the nightstand and pulled her gold-flower watch from the jewelry box, while trying to slide her feet into her sandals. She reached over

on the bed to get her backpack when Speedy started barking. “What’s wrong, buddy?” Speedy continued to bark as if he wanted Olivia to look. “I know you want to go with me, but I have to go to school. It’s the last day, so I should be home early.” Speedy wasn’t listening to Olivia; he was too busy staring at something outside. Olivia leaned over, trying to see what he was looking at. “Did you hear me?” Speedy barked and paced back and forth on the window seat. Her bedroom was on the backside of the house, so all she could see was the woods behind her house. She picked Speedy up. “Look, there’s nothing out there, but it is a little windier than the weatherman said it would be. Oh look, there’s a squirrel. Is that what you’re all upset about?”

“Olivia! Olivia Kennedy! I’m going to give you two seconds to get down here, little lady,” her mom yelled from the bottom of the stairs.

“Oh no, now you’ve gotten me in trouble. I have to go.” Speedy ran behind Olivia down the stairs. “I’m sorry, Mom. Speedy was barking. I think he saw a squirrel and got all excited.”

“You know I have a meeting today, and we still have to pick up Josie and Ming-Lin on the way to school.”

“Yes, ma’am, I know. Will it be okay if I let Speedy play outside in the backyard? It’s going to be such a nice day, and we’ll be home from school early. Ming-Lin’s mom is going to pick us up. I’ll ask her to swing by to get Speedy, and then all of us can play at Ming-Lin’s house until you get off of work.”

“Okay, but make sure he has food and water in his doghouse. I have to work late, so your dad will get you when he gets off of work.”

She was happy to hear that because she knew she’d be able to talk her dad into ordering pizza

for dinner, especially since their favorite detective movie was on tonight. A half-day of school, pizza, and a movie with her dad—maybe this wasn't going to be such a bad day after all, Olivia thought to herself.

She swung her backpack on and ran to the back door.

“And make sure the gate to the fence is locked. I don't want him to get out and dig up our neighbors' flowers again,” her mom reminded her. “I'll be in the car waiting. Don't take too long, Olivia.”

“Yes, ma'am.”

Once outside, Olivia filled Speedy's bowls with food and water. She asked him to be good while she was at school and promised to come and get him as soon as she could. Speedy wagged his tail and licked Olivia's face. She smiled. “See, now your kisses smell like peppermint! Aren't you

glad I brushed your teeth?” Speedy barked as if he agreed with her.

Her mom was blowing the horn. Olivia waved goodbye to Speedy and raced around to the front of the house. She thought she heard a whisper as she passed the weeping willow trees but brushed it off as just being the wind.