

CHLORA'S GIRL SCOUT STUFF

Story excerpt from

CHLORA'S LITTLE GOODY BOOK OF THE MONTH: *January*

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Photography by Rice R. Jackson, III

** indicates links in the online version, to be released soon on www.gingergeyer.com)*

..... Chlora goes to her Girl Scout meeting.....

Today the troop heard all about Juliette Low,
founder of the Girl Scouts.

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When Juliette Low married her Romeo,
they were out standing on a balcony
and people threw rice at them and a grain of rice lodged itself
in her eardrum and put it out till she was stone deaf.

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*



Chlora imagined Juliette as a nice Victorian lady
who didn't like to wear pink or lace,
who sometimes stared out the window,
hiked up her satin skirts and walked into her daydreams.
When people queried "a penny for your thoughts?"

Chlora, like Juliette, would not answer, knowing her thoughts were more valuable than that. They both had yearnings they might never see realized, but it was those hopes that kept them going. Chlora's unspoken longing was her hard-earned badge of honor. If anyone ever made an embroidered badge of it, she would sew it onto an imaginary sash right alongside the badge of courage for remaining who she was.

Chlora's Girl Scout Stuff

adaptation of Thomas Eakins' Portrait of Gertrude Murray)

4" x 16 ½" x 15", with one loose cookie

2008, glazed porcelain with gold, white gold, acrylic



Mom next showed Chlora's big sister's green sash, chock full of badges. This was something to look forward to, sashaying around like a beauty queen. Chlora re-imagined it as her own sash with even more badges

crawling up the back side. She'd already circled all the ones she wanted to do in the Junior Scout handbook.

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Especially the Gypsy badge, so she could go on pilgrimage

*

She was well on her way to earning the Collectors badge,

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either with the bug collection she kept in the freezer,

or her rock collection, or with her Picture collection.

She cut out anything of interest, art work or whatever.

First she pasted these into a three ring notebook,

then she went to file folders and boxes. But there was not

enough storage in the whole world for all the pictures,

so she began collecting poems instead.

Collecting would be her Magnificent Obsession,

*

the way to have it all and make order of it.

She ached for a moon rock but knew it was impossible.

*

That is the problem with collecting; you wanna have it all.

You want the whole enchilada but have to settle for a taco.

Mom was telling the troop that badges help you build up experience.

But what, actually, IS experience?

Too much of it seemed to be bad.

It seemed odd that there were no badges

for public policy, social justice, peacemaking, charity, care-giving,

*

compassion, confrontation... maybe you have to be older for all

of those, older and wiser, full of experience like a politician.

The fly up ceremony next week sounded fun.

*

Chlora might just fly away. Or at least fly off her beanie

like a Frisbee before trading it off for some silly beret

*

that looked like a French bohemian artist.

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But hopefully it wouldn't need so many hairpins.

Onward to snack time, thank goodness.

The mothers in charge said good dining manners

would be part of their upcoming Hostess Badge

requirement, thus today they would have fancy

refreshments instead of a free-for-all

on all the unsold Girl Scout cookies,

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although there was one obligatory box opened.

It was everybody's favorite, Thin Mints,

and she knew these would not last long,

so she pocketed some for later on in the spring

when Thin Mints would be as scarce as hen's teeth.

Since it was cold outside, surely the chocolate icing

would not melt off in her pocket.
Then she headed around the dining table for the real brownies.



They toasted to the New Year with cut glass cups
of cherry punch, as sickly sweet as cough syrup.
Chlora yearned for a swig out of her canteen.
She wiped her mouth with the back of her hand,
like on a TV western. Why couldn't they just go camping?

Chlora dived into the soft, still warm
homemade brownies that her mother had brought.
Powdered sugar went up her nose and onto her chest
and chocolate goop stuck itself onto her front teeth.
A girl commented that she was eating herself
like a good little Brownie should.