

I WANT TO BE A GOLDEN GIRL

The Girls created a true 'family' for themselves, and I crave the same

by Janice Eidus | Saturday, April 2, 2016



My 13-year-old daughter and I want to be Golden Girls. We wish we could be as sassy as the Girls and say out loud in "real life" the kinds of things they're able to say eternally in TV syndication.

When my daughter was seven, she took her pink plastic purse and thrust her wrist through its strap. Imitating the diminutive Sophia, the oldest Golden Girl and her favorite, who wore her omnipresent bamboo handbag the same way, she proudly strutted around our apartment repeating Sophia's catchphrase: *"Picture it: Sicily, 1922 ..."*

The other day, we were watching the episode in which Sophia hilariously tells Dorothy about how difficult and painful giving birth to her was, and how her pet name for the awkward, nearly six-foot-tall Dorothy as a child was "Big Foot."

"Sophia is like a really cool, sassy grandma," my daughter grinned. "She's nothing like my 'real' grandma."

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This is true. My mother-in-law, whom my daughter genuinely loves, is *never* sassy, and would never allow my daughter to sass her, as Dorothy does in response to Sophia's complaints, declaring that she'd like to "choke" her but doesn't because they're "in a hospital with resuscitating equipment."

My daughter could never say to her—as Dorothy says to Sophia, in another episode, causing us both to guffaw—"You are a furry gnome, and we feed you too much!" If she did, my elegantly coiffed mother-in-law would unsmilingly say, with a steely gaze that could kill, "Did you just dare to say to me what I believe you said to me!"

Had I ever spoken to my late mother that way, she would have wept, called me "ungrateful," while lamenting the fact that she'd ever become a mother—and, she would never have forgiven me. Sophia, however, doesn't question that Dorothy would lay down her life for her, no matter how many times Dorothy might call her a "furry gnome" or worse.

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And, maybe it's just me being a "mean girl," but don't we all secretly harbor fantasies of (sometimes) calling at least a few of our friends, "idiot, twit, nitwit," as Dorothy, Blanche and Sophia do to the forever blond and hopelessly naïve Rose? We wish that our friends would instantly forgive us as Rose does, because she knows that the Girls adore her, despite their moments of impatience.

In reality, of course, were I to express such annoyance with one of my "posse," it would not end with her joyously singing, "*Thank you for being a friend/You're a pal and a confidante!*"

The Girls have created a true "family" for themselves, and I crave the same. Many of us—myself very much included—don't feel that our biological families have ever provided the unconditional love and support we yearn for. We spend our lives trying to create such a "family" through long-cultivated friendships. Yet, I often find myself wondering: Will my close friends be there for me the way the Girls are for one another, through illness, grief, and even poverty? (Certainly not, if I called them "idiots, twits and nitwits.")

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I crave, too, being able to be as attractive, vivacious and sexually alive as the Girls are in their so-called "golden years." They defy society's mandate that middle-aged women become sexless, dull creatures. Sure, people tell me that I look good in middle age, but I know I don't turn heads as I did in my twenties. But Blanche, in particular, whose nightgowns are always flamboyant and usually diaphanous, still turns plenty of head and is hot-to-trot 24/7. And, I say, "Bravo, Blanche!"

And, then there are the clothes. My usual wardrobe consists of black jeans, simple jersey tops and sneakers. But I wonder what it would feel like to dazzle the world, as the Girls do, wearing appliqué and sparkle, football-sized shoulder pads, lace, frills and the occasional plunging neckline. Would I feel silly for being so ostentatious and non-*chic*? Or would I feel empowered by looking so outrageous? Most likely, I would feel some utterly delicious combination of the two.

Speaking of delicious, I savor this conversation between Dorothy and Sophia:

Dorothy: Ma, I do not snore.

Sophia: Please! I had to turn you away from the windows so you wouldn't inhale the drapes!

I'd like to believe that one day when my daughter is all grown up, she and I shall be as strong and solid in our love for each other as the Girls are in theirs. And that we will have a similarly wicked conversation, and then kiss, hug and share some cheesecake out on the lanai.