

Two



It was late afternoon, the day of the pop concert. Sesame had been trying out some new nail varnish and had painted her nails sparkling pink, yellow and green. While she waited for them to dry, she gazed out of her window, wondering what to wear. She could hardly believe that in only a few hours she'd be meeting her favourite girl band, Crystal Chix. It was like a dream come true. Her tummy flipped, just thinking about it.

Her dad, Nic, was a press photographer. He'd been booked for a photo shoot at the concert, and had three free tickets. So he was taking Sesame and two of her friends. Before the show, they were all going backstage to meet the band!

Sesame was still daydreaming, when she spotted Chips in the garden. He was stalking a bird! Horrified, she watched as he crouched in the long grass – ears flat, body quivering, eyes fixed on a robin.

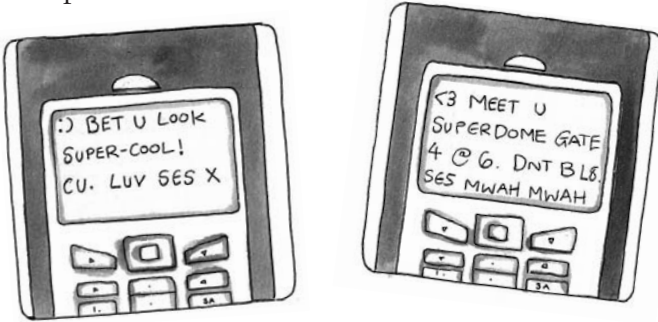


“Chips!” she yelled. “No!”

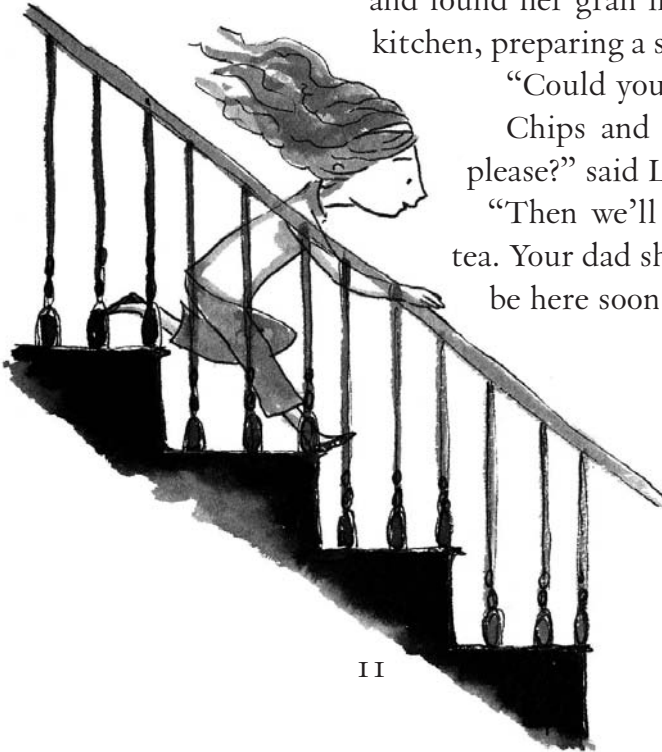
Her warning didn’t deter him and before she could shout *Shoo!* – he sprang. But to her relief (and Chips’ fury) the robin flew into an apple tree, where it sat on a branch, singing. Just then Sesame’s mobile jingled. It was a text from Gemma, and there was a message from Maddy, too:



Sesame smiled. It was going to be fun. She'd be with her best friend Maddy Webb and crazy Gemma Green who was always doing wicked things. Sesame sent replies:



As she switched off her mobile, she heard Lossy calling her. Sesame jumped downstairs two at a time and found her gran in the kitchen, preparing a salad.



“Could you feed Chips and Pins, please?” said Lossy.
“Then we’ll have tea. Your dad should be here soon.”

“I’m SO excited,” said Sesame, dancing to the cupboard for cat food. “I couldn’t eat a thing.”

“You must eat *something*,” insisted Lossy. “Goodness, look at your nails!”

Sesame waggled her fingers.

“Funky!” she said.

“Frightful,” said Lossy, with a smile.

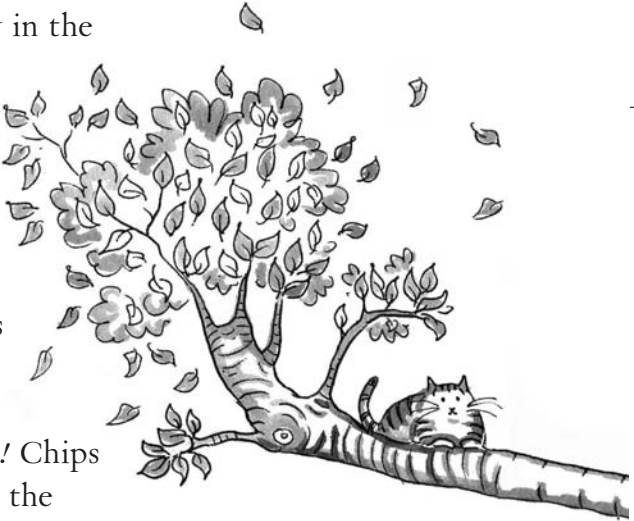
While Sesame shook biscuits into bowls, Pins watched her, purring.

“Where’s Chips?” asked Lossy. “It’s not like him to be late.”

“He’s probably in the garden,” said Sesame. “I saw him stalking a bird.”

She went outside to look. At first there was no sign of him, then she heard a pitiful *MIAOW!* Chips had climbed into the apple tree, and no amount of coaxing from Sesame could get him down.

“I’ll fetch a ladder,” said Lossy, “or you’ll be there all night.”



Climbing the ladder was easy. The difficult part was persuading Chips to let go of the branch. He clung on with his claws, hissed, spat, and yowled. Chips refused to move but Sesame wouldn't give up either! She stepped off the ladder and wriggled along



the bough. It was then she felt it sway. She heard the leaves rustling in the breeze, saw their shadows fluttering like butterflies in the afternoon sun . . .

Sesame felt wobbly and wrapped her arms tightly around the scratchy bark. A glint of sunlight struck the bell on Chips' collar, and silvery stars danced before her eyes! For a split-second she felt herself falling. What was happening? Had she found a way into Karisma . . . ?

MIAOW! Chips' wail jolted Sesame back in an instant. She reached out her arm, grabbed him and brought him safely down. A few minutes later he was happily eating from his bowl, as if nothing unusual had happened.

While Sesame helped Lossy set the table, she thought about the weird, muzzy feeling she'd experienced in the tree. She felt disappointed about *not* finding herself back in Karisma, but maybe there was a reason? She was still puzzling about it when her dad came in, waving three backstage passes for the concert.



Thoughts of Karisma flew out of her head, and all she could think about was meeting the Crystal Chix!