

BY EVAN JACOBS



# THE MIRROR

A decorative title box with a hand-drawn, ornate border. The border features intricate scrollwork and floral motifs. The background of the page is decorated with faint spider webs. The title text is centered within the box.

## THE HISTORY OF THE VINTAGE ROSE ANTIQUE SHOP

The story begins with a sorcerer named Ervin Legend. He had a talent for making money. While traveling, Ervin bought items all over the world. He would have called himself a collector. Others might say hoarder. Once he grew tired of things, he sold them for a profit. "One man's junk is another man's treasure," he used to say.

Eventually, Ervin wanted to settle down. His home was in Scarecrow, California. But he needed somewhere to put all of his things. Ervin opened the Vintage Rose Antique Shop in 1912. It was a place to keep his collections. His wife, Visalia, inspired the shop's name. She loved roses and kept them in vases all over the shop. "Roses mask the smell of old things," she would say.

After the shop opened, Ervin kept traveling. He collected pieces to sell from all over. In 1949, Ervin and Visalia went to Cairo, Egypt. While there, the couple disappeared. Nobody knows what happened to them. Some say Ervin's love of sorcery might have been to blame. He may have looked into something he shouldn't have.

Family members took over the shop. None were quite like Ervin, though. Without his passion, the business began to fail. His sister believed it was cursed.





In 1979, the Legends put the shop up for sale. Rose Myers bought it. She was odd, like Ervin. Her passion for old things was like his. "Everything has a story," she would say, with a twinkle in her eye. From a young age, Rose had looked for bargains. She would resell things for a profit. Buying the Vintage Rose was her dream come true. The place was old. It was filled with odd treasures. Plus, Rose was part of the name of the store. It seemed like this was meant to be.

Rose ran the shop for 40 years. When she passed away, it closed. The business had been left to her nephew, Evan Stewart. He was Rose's closest living relative. The Stewart family moved to Scarecrow. They reopened the shop in 2019.

Today, the shop still holds many treasures. Collectors come from all over. Some have purchased these mysterious relics. Are they magical? Do they watch over the store? We may never find out. Or will we?

## CHAPTER 1

## A GOOD LOOK

I push my eyeglasses up on my nose. “It’s so ridiculous. I’m mature enough to go to Ivan Nguyen’s party. But I’ll be missing out next Saturday. My parents won’t let me go. They ruin all my fun.”

My best friend, Kimberly, shakes her head. “I didn’t even ask my parents. If you can’t go, Grace, I don’t want to. There’s no way I’d ever go without you.”

She and I walk down the street. Today is another overcast Sunday in our town of Scarecrow, California. It’s a shame that I have to leave here to get some sun. I wonder if these gray skies were ever a problem for the farmers who started Scarecrow. Wouldn’t crops need more sun to grow?

Everything here used to be swamps and strawberry fields. That was ages ago. Farmers had trouble with birds eating their seeds. Then the farmers tried to fix the problem by putting up scarecrows everywhere.



This is how the town got its name. At least people here never have to worry about too much sun giving them wrinkles. I guess that's one benefit.

Wrinkly skin is something Kimberly and I never have to think about. We spend extensive time perfecting how to apply our makeup. It's essential that we find the best ways to complement our brown complexions. Every Friday night, we work on this during our sleepovers.

Sometimes we experiment with hairstyles too. When my jet-black waves are loose, they rest on my shoulders. Kimberly usually wears long braids that flow down her back. But both of us love trying new styles. We like the ones that make us look more mature. But nothing is better than applying makeup. It always makes us appear older. We're in eighth grade. This means we'll be in high school next year. Why not start looking the part now?

Most students say my dark hair and glasses make me look serious. But I love that. It adds to my mature appearance. Kimberly, on the other hand, laughs and giggles a lot. This gives her a fun-loving look that people adore. It doesn't take away from her maturity at all. Classmates are drawn to us for totally different reasons. We complement each other perfectly.

Kimberly glances at me. “Guess what.”

“What?” I ask.

She flips her braids. “My mom made a comment about my makeup today. It wasn’t a positive one.”

I roll my eyes. “That sounds just like my parents. They always have something to say about my makeup too. My mom even told me that she would take my phone away if I put too much on. Can you believe that?”

Kimberly looks shocked. “Wow! No way. We never wear too much. I think the amount we apply and how we do it is perfect.”

I tap the camera app on my phone. Then I change it to a selfie view to use it as a mirror.

Kimberly is doing that with her phone too. Sometimes it’s like we share the same brain.

I study myself. “I’m barely wearing any makeup right now. Just some foundation, mascara, eye shadow, and a little lipstick.”

Kimberly and I look at each other.

“Me too!” she says. “Our parents act like we wear so much!”

Trevor Adams slowly passes us on his skateboard. “Hey, Grace! Want to hang out sometime?”

I glance at him. Trevor is a nice boy. But he’s in our



grade. The only person my age I want to hang out with is Kimberly.

“No, thanks,” I say. “But cool skateboard!” I don’t want Trevor to feel bad.

Kimberly covers her mouth. She doesn’t want him to see her laugh.

We stop walking as Trevor rides his skateboard farther away from us. Then we wave goodbye to him.

Trevor waves back. “Okay, thanks. See you two later!” He rides away.

As soon as Trevor is out of view, Kimberly bursts out laughing. “That was hilarious! Trevor is so nice. But you did the right thing.”

“Yeah, I know. We can’t afford to be seen hanging out with other middle schoolers.”

Kimberly nods. “Of course not. That’s what makes me so sad about Ivan’s party. We *need* to go to a high school party. I know we have good reputations now. But imagine what going to that party could do.”

I sigh. “Right. My parents say I can’t go just because he’s a sophomore.”

“It’s so unfair,” Kimberly says. “We’ll be at the same school with him next year.”

I get a text. It’s from my little brother, Greg.

Greg

Did you get mom's gift?

*Mom's gift! Oh no!* Her birthday is a week from today. My dad, Greg, and I are taking her out to brunch with my grandma. I totally forgot that I'd planned to get her a gift from Greg and me.

Grace

Not yet. But I will. And you're paying half.

Greg

K. Don't break the bank!

"What a dork," I say.

"Who?" Kimberly asks.

"My brother. But I'm glad he reminded me to get my mom's birthday gift."

We approach Scarecrow Plaza. It has various shops, stores, and places to eat. Vintage Rose Antique Shop is there. I've been inside a few times. It's filled with all kinds of old items.

"Let's go in Vintage Rose." I walk toward the door. "Maybe I can find something for my mom in there."

Kimberly laughs. "Really? Everything in there is so old. Your mom would want something like that?"



“Oh yeah. She loves old stuff. Or I should say, *antiques.*” I smile.

Kimberly and I giggle. We lock arms and walk into the shop.

## CHAPTER 2

## REFLECTION

Tiny bells on the shop's door jingle as we enter.

A girl in a T-shirt and jeans talks to a big guy. "You're taking it down there. I did my part. Now you do yours."

"No." The guy taps on his phone. "I already took stuff down there."

"When?" the girl snaps.

"Yesterday," the guy mutters.

The girl rolls her eyes. "But nothing today. Just like I thought." She looks at us. "Hi. Let us know if you need help with anything."

I recognize her from school. Her name is Tenley, I believe. I've never seen the big guy before. He looks like he's in high school. But he doesn't seem like the kind of older student I would ever want to hang out with.

"Thanks!" I wave at Tenley.

Kimberly tries to stifle her laughter as she watches Tenley and the guy. She whispers to me. "Those two



must be brother and sister. And doesn't this shop smell funny to you? It's like old flowers."

I nod. "Yeah. I smell it. But I'm sure there's something in here my mom would like."

We look around. The shop is packed with old gadgets, paintings, books, and trinkets. This place looks like it's from another time.

I hear Tenley and the guy continuing to argue. She calls him Jay. Then she takes a box and walks to the back of the store. Tenley goes through a door. It closes behind her.

Kimberly had been listening to them too. "What's the big deal about going to the basement?" she whispers.

"Who knows?" I chuckle. "But I wouldn't want to go down there. Would you?"

She shakes her head. "In this creepy place? No way!"

Then I see a mirror. It sits on a small shelf. I pick up the mirror and look at it. Something about it draws me in.

Its beautiful gold frame has an ornate design. For such an old-looking mirror, its glass is spotless. I can't help admiring my reflection. Then I turn it over. An odd geometrical design is on the back. It's made of circles and triangles.

I turn it back to the glass side and stare at my reflection again. It's almost like I'm in a trance.

"Are you going to buy that?" Kimberly asks me.

"I think so," I say. "It's really cool looking. My mom loves stories about long ago. This mirror seems like it could've come from back then."

Kimberly eyes the price tag. "It's ten dollars. That's not bad."

We go to the counter. I set the mirror down. Jay sits behind the counter but never acknowledges us. He just stares at his phone.

"Excuse me," I finally say.

Jay jerks up his head. "What?" Then he looks at the mirror. "Oh. I was busy with my game."

Kimberly and I flash fake smiles.

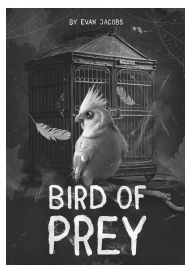
Jay takes the mirror. He reads the price tag. Then he pushes buttons on the cash register. Like everything else in Vintage Rose, the register looks ancient too.

He glances at us. "Ten bucks, huh? That's a good price. This should probably be more. It could be really valuable."

"Well, the tag says ten dollars." I pull out some cash.

Jay tells me the price with tax. I give him the cash, and he hands me the mirror. Kimberly and I leave the shop.

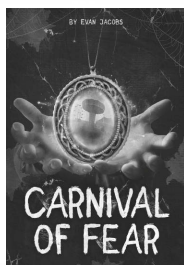
# VINTAGE ROSE MYSTERIES



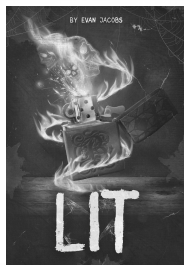
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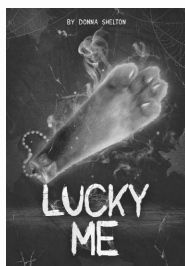
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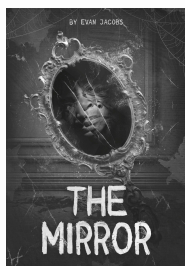
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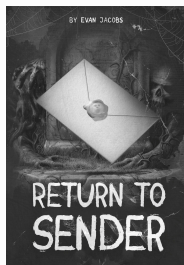
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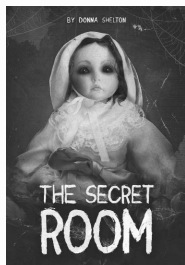
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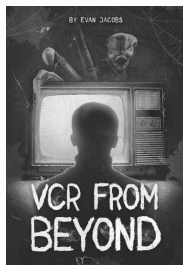
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# VINTAGE ROSE MYSTERIES

## THE MIRROR

Grace and Kimberly can't wait to get to high school next year, but they're ready to look the part right now. The girls purchase an ornate mirror at Vintage Rose that they love to use for practicing their makeup. But will the mirror help them perfect their mature looks, or will it lead them to much more than they bargained for?

 **SADDLEBACK**  
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING  
[www.sdlback.com](http://www.sdlback.com)

LEXILE HL390L

ISBN: 978-1-63889-330-1

