



Lena Garza

ACCIDENTAL DETECTIVE

BURIED GAME

PJ GRAY



CHAPTER 1

HOT DOG SOUP

Luna Garza adjusted the apron around her waist. It was tied too tightly. The girl stood in front of the crowd, trying to remain calm. She liked competitions. Still, they made her a little nervous. Her mom and Ann Watson were in the audience. Ann was their next-door neighbor and Mrs. Garza's best friend. They smiled and waved at Luna.

A woman stepped forward. She had big hair and a wide smile. The woman addressed the crowd. "My name is Ruby Roberts. I'm the director of the Apple Glen Community Center.

As you know, this weekend marks the 110th year of the Apple Glen Harvest Festival.”

Audience members applauded.

Ms. Roberts continued. “The community center is proud to sponsor many of the festival activities. That includes this year’s essay contest. Students submitted essays about what the Harvest Festival means to them. And we’re proud to have the top three finalists here today. They are Lucas Walker, Kimmy Hopp, and Luna Garza.”

Cheers erupted from the crowd.

The finalists stood behind a long counter. It was in the community center’s kitchen area. Luna glanced at Lucas. His legs trembled. She could also see he was sweating.

I think Lucas is going to be sick, Luna thought. He’s so shy.

Then Luna glanced at Kimmy Hopp. Luna and Kimmy weren’t good friends. Still, Luna could see Kimmy looked a little nervous too.

“I’m glad I’m not the only one,” Luna murmured.

Ms. Roberts went on. “The Harvest Festival is all about food. So, we decided to have a cooking contest among the essay finalists. They were tasked with putting a creative spin on their favorite dish. Before we meet the contestants, I want to introduce the judges.”

Luna knew two of the judges. One was Eddie Munson. He owned a local dairy. Beside him was Rosemary Shephard. She was the head chef at a restaurant called Hold the Mayo. The third judge was someone Luna hadn’t seen before.

“And finally,” Ms. Roberts said. “We have local businessman Dean Brown. He donated the land to build this community center and the new housing development that sits behind it. Mr. Brown has been generous, to say the least.”

The judges shook hands with each contestant. As Mr. Brown passed by, Luna felt a strangeness fill the air. But it passed quickly.

In the end, Lucas won the essay and cooking contest. His dish was a play on his favorite foods: hot dogs and soup. It sounded gross to Luna at first. But with the different spices and vegetables he added, it was surprisingly tasty. The judges thought so too.

Ms. Roberts reached out to shake Lucas's hand. But he turned and bolted.

Poor Lucas, Luna thought. Then she smiled and shook her head. *I can't believe I like hot dog soup.*



CHAPTER 2

MIRROR, MIRROR

Later that afternoon, Ann Watson got out of the car in the Garza driveway. She leaned into the backseat car window. “Congratulations, Luna. You did a great job.”

Luna smiled. She’d won second place in the contest for her meatball tortas. “Thank you, Ann.”

Ann looked at Mrs. Garza in the driver’s seat. “I had a wonderful time. Thanks for inviting me. Care to come over for a cup of tea?”

“I’d love to,” Mrs. Garza replied. Then she and Luna got out of the car.

Mrs. Garza wrapped one arm around Luna's shoulder. She gave her daughter a quick squeeze. "Hey, Miss Award Winner." Her mom winked. "Make sure you call your dad. He's five hours ahead in London now. Remember, he's battling a cold, so he's been going to bed early. But he wants to congratulate you before he goes to sleep. I'll be next door at Ann's."

Luna nodded. Then she made her way to her family's home. The two-story house was big and old. But Luna liked it.

She and her parents had moved to Apple Glen, Ohio, over a year ago. They'd left California because Mr. and Mrs. Garza wanted a new adventure. Apple Glen was a faded American town that had fallen on hard times. Still, some people tried to make it better. Luna's parents were among them.

While Luna's dad traveled for his job, Mrs. Garza restored their house. From that

work, she had created her own business. Now Mrs. Garza restored furniture and objects for other people.

Luna climbed the stairs to her room. She was still in a daze from the cooking contest. But Luna was excited to tell her dad about it, especially since she had won second place.

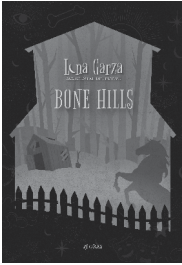
She pulled her phone from her back pocket. Then she sat down on her bed. Luna was about to call her dad, but there was something in her eye. Rubbing it didn't help. Wanting to check it out, she walked to the wall mirror. When Luna looked at her reflection, she froze.

Behind her was a boy standing in the corner of her room.

Luna Garza

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THE MYSTERY CONTINUES . . .



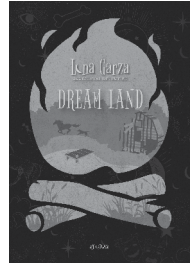
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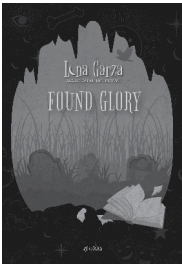
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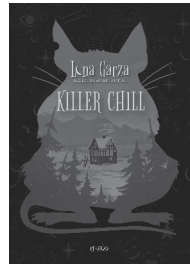
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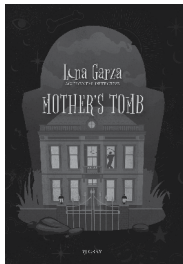
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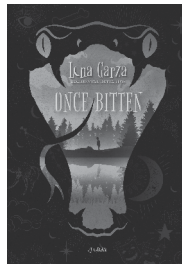
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BURIED GAME

When an unexpected visitor appears at the Garzas' house, Luna has many questions. Where is he from? Why is he here? But what begins as a question-and-answer game quickly turns into a serious investigation. To solve the mystery, Luna realizes she must dig deep to uncover the truth, no matter what lies beneath.

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