

BY EVAN JACOBS



# THE BOXING GLOVES

A decorative title box with a black, ornate border featuring scrollwork and floral motifs. The text inside is centered and reads "THE HISTORY OF THE VINTAGE ROSE ANTIQUE SHOP". The background of the page is white with faint, light-colored spider webs scattered across it.

## 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?



VINTAGE ROSE

CHAPTER 1

LUZER

Leave me alone, Melissa,” I say nervously.

I’m between classes at Scarecrow Middle School. Melissa Ortiz is giving me a hard time again. Her typical routine is to stand in my way. She makes sure I can’t get around her. Today is no different. This is the way she treated me last year too. My only hope for a break from her is next year. We’ll be at different schools when she starts ninth grade at Scarecrow High. Thankfully, I’m a grade behind her.

Melissa continues standing in my way. She chuckles. “Just go to class, *Luzer*. I’m not stopping you.”

I hate when people call me Luzer. My name is Luz Vega. When *er* is added to the end of Luz, it sounds like loser. Melissa loves that.

Every time I move to the left or right, Melissa does too. There’s no way I can push past her. She’s tall and strong. Melissa is the Intermediate Boxing Middleweight Champion for our town of Scarecrow,

California. The girl is about 140 pounds of muscle packed into jeans and a T-shirt.

She wears a purple jacket every day. Ortiz Boxing Club is on the back of it in gold letters. Her family owns that gym. Most of the boxers at our school train there. Melissa's two friends standing with her now, Aubrey and Savannah, box there too.

Boxing is my favorite sport to watch. I love that there are so many female pro boxers. This sometimes makes me wonder if a girl like me could ever box like them. Then, almost immediately, I snap back to reality.

It would be my dream come true if I could learn to box. I'm kind of tall. But that probably wouldn't help much. My wiry frame is way too light. At least Melissa thinks so. She points that out every chance she gets.

My best friend, Genesis, has more muscles than I do. She stands behind me as Melissa continues to block me. Genesis looks dismayed as Melissa's friends laugh every time I'm blocked. It's too bad that these girls intimidate Genesis too. Otherwise, she could probably use her size to help this situation.

Genesis does speak up more than I do. She eyes

Melissa. “You say you’re not stopping her. But you won’t let her pass.”

“Shut your mouth!” Aubrey barks.

“Yeah!” Savannah adds. “No one is talking to you, curly-top.”

The girls use that name to taunt Genesis. It’s because of her curly blonde hair. But I love that Genesis does not stay quiet. This gives me the courage to try moving past Melissa again.

As soon as I do, Melissa steps in front of me. Aubrey and Savannah laugh.

What Melissa does next makes them laugh harder. She puts her arms behind her back. That’s to prove her dominance. It shows that she can stop me even in the most unthreatening position. This always embarrasses me. Usually, Melissa messes with me until she gets bored. I hope she gets tired of this soon.

The warning bell for class rings.

Melissa smiles. “Oh, wow. Saved by the bell.” She puts her hands on her hips. “For now.” Then she walks away with Aubrey and Savannah.

Genesis and I hurry to class. We have a long way to walk before we get there. This school is huge. Every

day, I feel like it's swallowing me up. The way it looks on the outside is daunting too. It's a big white stone building with oversized windows. Two buildings are behind it. One is a gym and the other is a multipurpose room. There's also a track and field. I was so lost here last year—mentally and physically. Now I can find most things. But the feeling of being lost still lingers. My friendship with Genesis helps with that.

She glances at me as we speed walk to class. "You need to take boxing lessons."

"I wish. My parents don't think I should."

"Do they know about Melissa?" Genesis asks.

I look down for a moment. "Sort of. Telling them too much is a bad idea. The last thing I need is for them to complain to the principal. Then Melissa would get in trouble. She'd blame me and want revenge."

## CHAPTER 2

## SOMETHING NEW

It's after school. Genesis and I are looking at our phones as we walk home.

I start thinking about our small town of Scarecrow. In cities, it seems most students use buses or cars to get to and from school. But here, most places are within walking or biking distance.

Honestly, there's not much around here anyway. Scarecrow has some strip malls with shops and places to eat. It has one regular mall, a public library, and some parks. The town's size doesn't bother me. I like that it's small. But the one thing I wish was different here is the sunlight. We don't get enough of it. This town is in a part of California that must be under a perpetual cloud. Here, it is always overcast. Leaving town is the only way to see the sun. That has always been weird and kind of creepy to me.

Something else that's odd about Scarecrow is

the origin of its name. The town was founded in the early 1900s. Scarecrow was filled with swamps and strawberry fields back then. But birds kept eating farmers' seed. Farmers fixed the problem by putting up scarecrows everywhere. Then the town was named Scarecrow. Sometimes, I try to picture this town with scarecrows all over it. I bet it looked even creepier than it does now.

Genesis and I are approaching Scarecrow Plaza. It's the biggest strip mall in town. I think it may be even bigger than the only mall.

The plaza is a popular hangout. When we get there, I see so many kids from school.

Genesis looks up from her phone. "Do you want to go inside Vintage Rose?"

I stop scrolling and glance at Vintage Rose Antique Shop. The shop is hard to miss. It's on the first corner of the plaza. "Why?"

Genesis walks toward it. "We never go in there. Maybe we'll find something cool."

I follow her. "Wouldn't you rather go somewhere that sells stuff from *this* century?"

She giggles as she reaches the shop. "We always go to normal places. Come on. Don't let Melissa Ortiz ruin your sense of adventure."

Genesis always knows when something is still bothering me.

I peer into one of the shop's windows. The place is dimly lit. It's hard to see anything. But what I do see looks very old. There's nothing in there that I would ever want. But Genesis and I differ. She loves old items. This makes me want to go inside for her sake. Genesis is probably right too. Checking out the shop's stuff might take my mind off Melissa.

Still looking in the window, I shrug. "Okay. Let's go in."

Genesis swings open the Vintage Rose door. Bells on it jingle. I follow her inside.

As soon as I enter, the shop's smell hits me. It's strong and unpleasant. *Isn't this what dead roses smell like?* I wonder. But I don't see flowers anywhere.

I try not to dismiss everything in here as junk. But it's hard. Random items fill the place. The shop is packed with old gadgets, trinkets, carpets, paintings, books, and furniture. There are even items that I have no idea how to categorize. This place truly looks like it's from another time.

A girl from school is behind the counter. She's an eighth grader. I can't remember her name. A man is standing next to her. He's helping a customer.

The girl smiles at Genesis and me. “Hi! Welcome to Vintage Rose.”

Genesis smiles back. “Thanks!” She’s friendlier than I am.

“Hi,” I mutter to the girl.

“Tenley, can you help me with something?” the man asks.

That’s right. Her name is Tenley. I heard this shop is family owned. Maybe the man is her dad. Tenley starts helping him as Genesis and I browse.

Genesis looks like she’s in her happy place here. I try to find something that might interest me. But I become distracted by all the dust on everything. This stops me from picking anything up. The thought grosses me out.

My friend doesn’t seem to mind it at all. Genesis is constantly picking up items and examining them. “Isn’t this cool?” She holds up an old telephone.

I try to keep my voice low. “Yeah, if we were in the 1970s. Look at the cord on that thing.” Then I giggle. “It probably reaches all the way to the sidewalk. And what’s up with the smell in here? How can you stand it?”

Genesis grins. “I think this super long cord is awesome.” She twists the phone’s curly cord around

her finger. “The smell in here is kind of strong. But it’s not bothering me.”

After about five more minutes, I’m over Vintage Rose. I just don’t want to ruin Genesis’s fun.

To entertain myself, I take out my phone. But I’m careful to not let Genesis see me. She’d know that I’m bored here. Then she would want to leave.

Looking at my phone is not very entertaining either. It’s not surprising that I have zero new texts. The only person who really texts me is Genesis. Then I check my social media. No one wants to connect, and there are no reactions or comments on any of my posts. I put my phone away.

Genesis is examining something on the other side of the shop. I’m wondering if I should give this place another chance. Maybe if I walk around longer, I’ll see something nice.

That’s when I notice two red boxing gloves. They sit on a shelf. Their laces are tied together. The gloves look unused. It surprises me to see something new in here.

I pick them up.

“Do you like those?” Genesis asks.

She startles me. *When did she walk over here?* I wonder.

“Yeah,” I say to her. “And I can’t believe they’re in such good condition.”

Genesis nods. “Someone must’ve taken good care of them.”

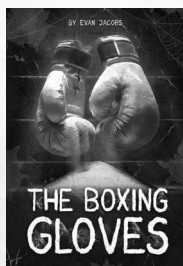
# VINTAGE ROSE MYSTERIES



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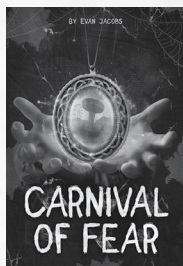
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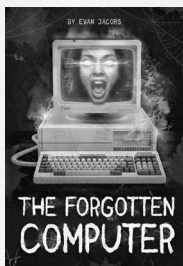
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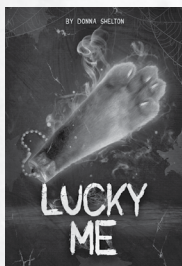
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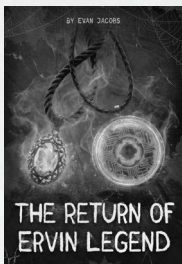
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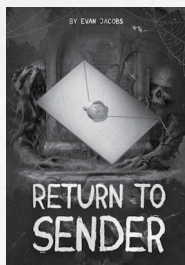
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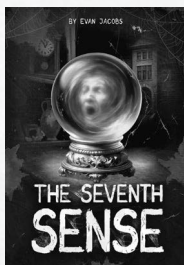
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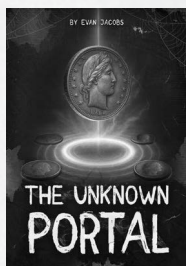
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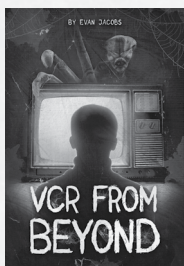
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# VINTAGE ROSE MYSTERIES

## THE BOXING GLOVES

Luz is tired of being bullied at school. When she finds a pair of mysterious red boxing gloves, everything changes. Suddenly, Luz is learning to fight, gaining confidence, and getting stronger than she had ever imagined. But every punch comes with a price, and Luz will have to decide how far she's willing to go to win.

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