

BY EVAN JACOBS



# THE TABLET

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?

## CHAPTER 1

## ONLY THE BEST

“Try to get along better with others, Sonny,” Principal Legend says to me as I leave his office.

I nod. “Okay, I’ll try.”

This is silly. I can’t believe I got in trouble in PE. It wasn’t even my fault.

Some boys were playing basketball with me. One of them yelled at me for traveling. But I wasn’t traveling at all. I made sure I was dribbling the ball as I ran. He was wrong. That’s why I stood up for myself and yelled right back at him. Still, everyone else took his side. They started barking at me. We got into a shouting match.

“Sonny!” one boy said. “Why do you always cause problems?”

“Yeah!” another added. “Just accept the call! You know you were traveling.”

That boy was actually my teammate. He still took

the other side. This really made me mad. It was like I was being attacked. I'd had enough.

“You just don't like that I have new shoes!” I blurted. “Not everyone is into the old gear that all of you have!”

What can I say? I like high quality stuff. Everything I own must be the best and newest. Shoes, clothes, and devices are all included. The other boys' jealousy made perfect sense to me.

Our argument escalated. Soon I was shouting at the whole PE class. Some of my classmates were getting too close to me. What I did next came naturally. I started pushing them away. It's too bad campus security saw this. They didn't like that I made things physical. Of course, I was the troublemaker to them. Before I knew it, I was in Principal Legend's office.

Some students are afraid of him. The principal is tall with big hands and a bushy mustache. But he doesn't scare me at all. He says what most adults tell me. I need to be more respectful of others.

But how can I do that when people don't even respect themselves? Some of my peers wear and use some pretty old stuff. Now I have to *respect* them? I'll never understand why. All in all, it's just another day

in the life of me, Sonny Naveen, at Scarecrow Middle School.

As I walk to math class, I start thinking about this school. Nothing about the building is modern. It's old and musty inside. Outside, this place is made of ugly white stones and has big windows. Two other large buildings are behind the main one. The first is the gym and the other is a multipurpose room. There's also a track back there that's falling apart. Saying this school needs updates is a serious understatement.

High school should be so much better. It's just too bad that I'm only a sixth grader. Two more years of this awful middle school await me.

I walk into Mr. Harlin's math class. He's going over some problems on the digital board. The students follow along on their gray, outdated, school-issued tablets.

"Glad you could finally join us, Sonny." Mr. Harlin says.

I've never liked him, and he has never liked me. He and his teaching are the definition of boring.

The only good thing about this class is my friend, Joe Morgan. He's pretty tall, so he sits in the back of the class, which is exactly where I want to be.

When he sees me, he flips his long blond hair

and gives me his usual goofy grin. He's not trendy at all. His style is completely from the 1980s. Even the music he likes is almost all '80s hard rock. But he's cooler to me than most of the other students. I think it's because nothing about him is fake. Joe likes what he likes and is comfortable just being himself.

"Did you get in trouble?" he asks me in his usual slow, sleepy kind of way. Joe's voice always sounds like he just woke up from a nap.

"Sonny," Mr. Harlin snaps. "Please take out your tablet. You're already behind."

I open my new backpack and glance at Joe. "Yeah. Just over some dumb stuff in PE." Then I reach inside to get my tablet.

To my surprise, it isn't there.

## CHAPTER 2

## TOO MUCH

Joe and I are walking home after school.

“So you really have no idea where your tablet is?” Joe talks to me with Bluetooth headphones over his ears. Whatever loud music he’s listening to seeps through. Somehow, he’s still able to hear me.

I shake my head. “No idea. And I hate that tablet. It’s so old and slow. Now it’s going to get me in trouble. Can you believe Mr. Harlin made me work on notebook paper? How ancient is that?”

Joe shrugs. “Maybe losing it doesn’t matter much. You usually use your own tablet for school anyway.”

“It matters enough. My parents will have to pay for the school’s tablet. That’s going to come out of my allowance. I need that money to buy the new Zoodle T-shirt I want. That brand is so popular now.”

Joe glances at me. “Those shirts cost so much. You’re really saving up all that money?”

I look at him as though he should know better.

“Um, yeah. Zoodle shirts are huge right now. There’s no way I’m going to pass up getting the newest design.”

Just then, the wind whips through my hair. I look up at the sky. As always in this small town of Scarecrow, California, the sky is overcast. The gray clouds never seem to leave. Maybe it hasn’t always been this way.

The town used to be nothing but strawberry fields and swamps back in the early 1900s. That’s when Scarecrow was founded. Birds used to eat farmers’ seeds. It got so bad that farmers put up scarecrows everywhere to keep birds away. This is how the town got its strange name.

I think the worst part nowadays is Scarecrow Plaza. Joe and I are approaching the plaza now. It’s filled with places to shop and eat. But most of the shops are outdated and sell cheap stuff. Still, everyone hangs out here after school. This place is bigger than Scarecrow Mall, but the mall has the trendier stores that matter. That’s where I shop. The rest of Scarecrow is just old parks, homes, and drab buildings.

“How much do you think that tablet is going to cost?” Joe asks me.

“More than it’s worth, I’m sure.” The thought of giving the school money for that old tablet makes me mad. I despise even thinking about anything old.

To make matters worse, Joe walks up to Vintage Rose Antique Shop. I would never go there. Everything in it is ancient.

“You’re not going inside, are you?” I ask.

“Yeah,” Joe says. “My grandma’s birthday is coming up, and I want to give her a nice gift. But I used my money on these headphones you told me to get. Remember? They cost way too much.”

Joe was going to buy some cheap headphones online. There’s no way I could let him do that. After I convinced him, he bought a more expensive brand. But they’re the best.

Joe continues. “A dude at school told me that Vintage Rose has something called a Pass-Along Section.”

I smile smugly. “Let me guess. It’s filled with free junk that people have *passed along*?”

Joe shrugs. “It could be something like that. But maybe it’s not all junk. Look, we won’t be here long. I’m going to try to get something.”

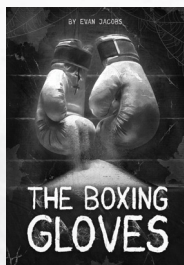
# VINTAGE ROSE MYSTERIES



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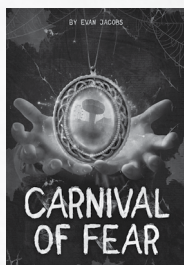
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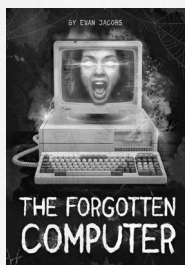
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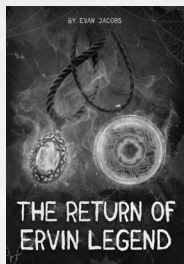
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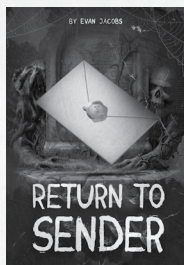
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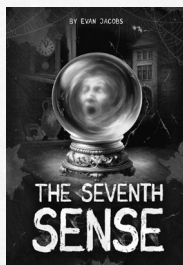
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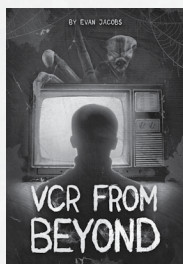
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# VINTAGE ROSE MYSTERIES

## THE TABLET

Sonny only wants the best of everything, including the latest tech. After losing his school-issued tablet, he finds a dusty old replacement for free. He thinks it's a lucky break until things begin changing around him. When his best friend starts acting strangely, Sonny really worries. Will Sonny uncover what's behind the glitchy device before things get too out of control?

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