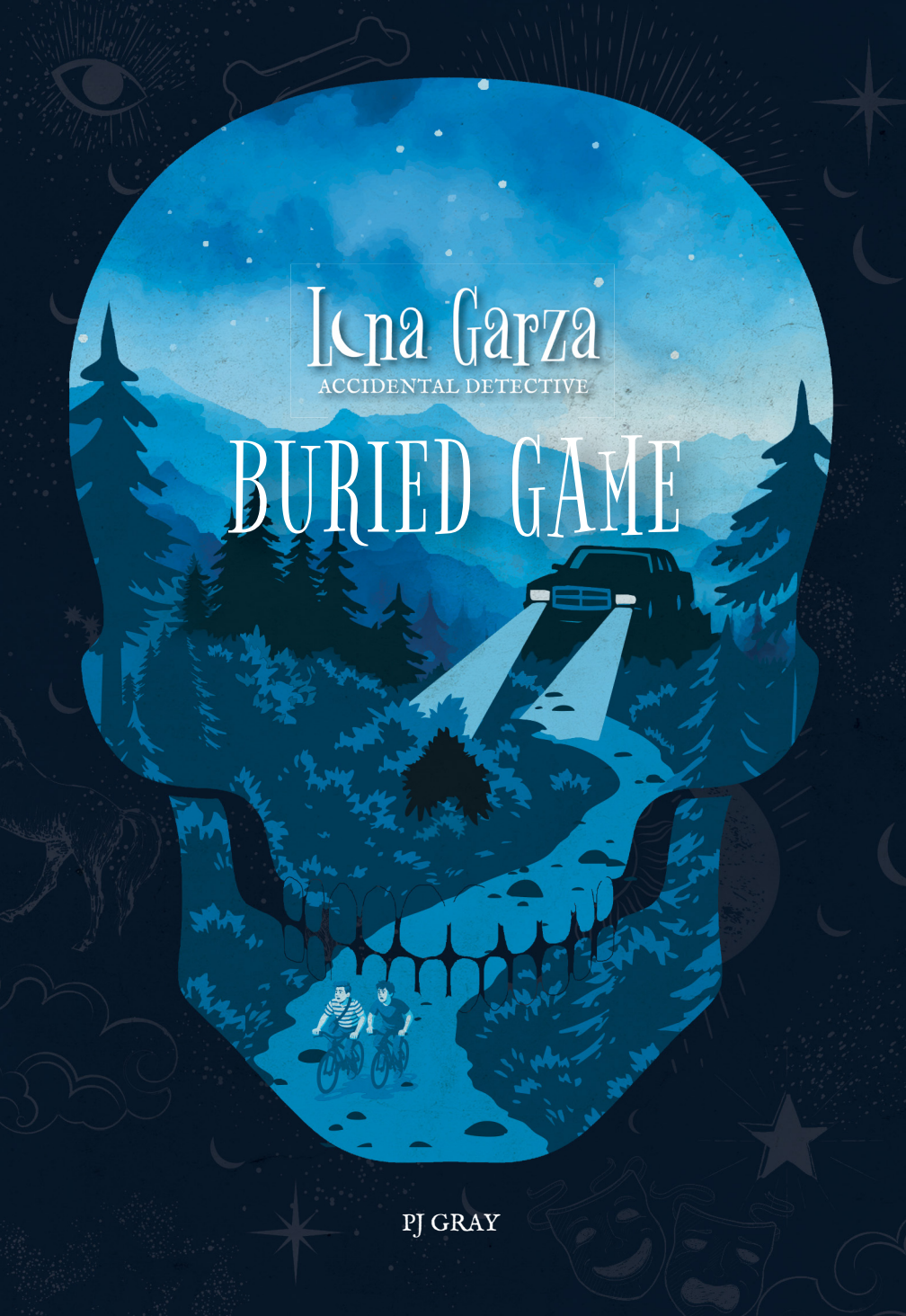

Luna Garza
ACCIDENTAL DETECTIVE
BURIED GAME
PJ GRAY



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

ACCIDENTAL DETECTIVE

THE MYSTERY CONTINUES . . .



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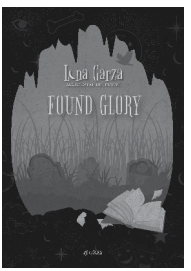
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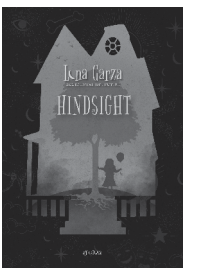
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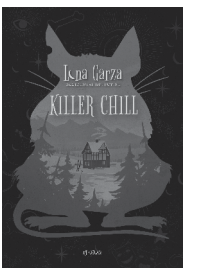
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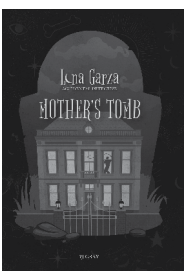
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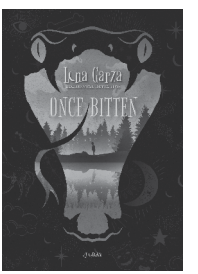
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Luna Garza

ACCIDENTAL DETECTIVE



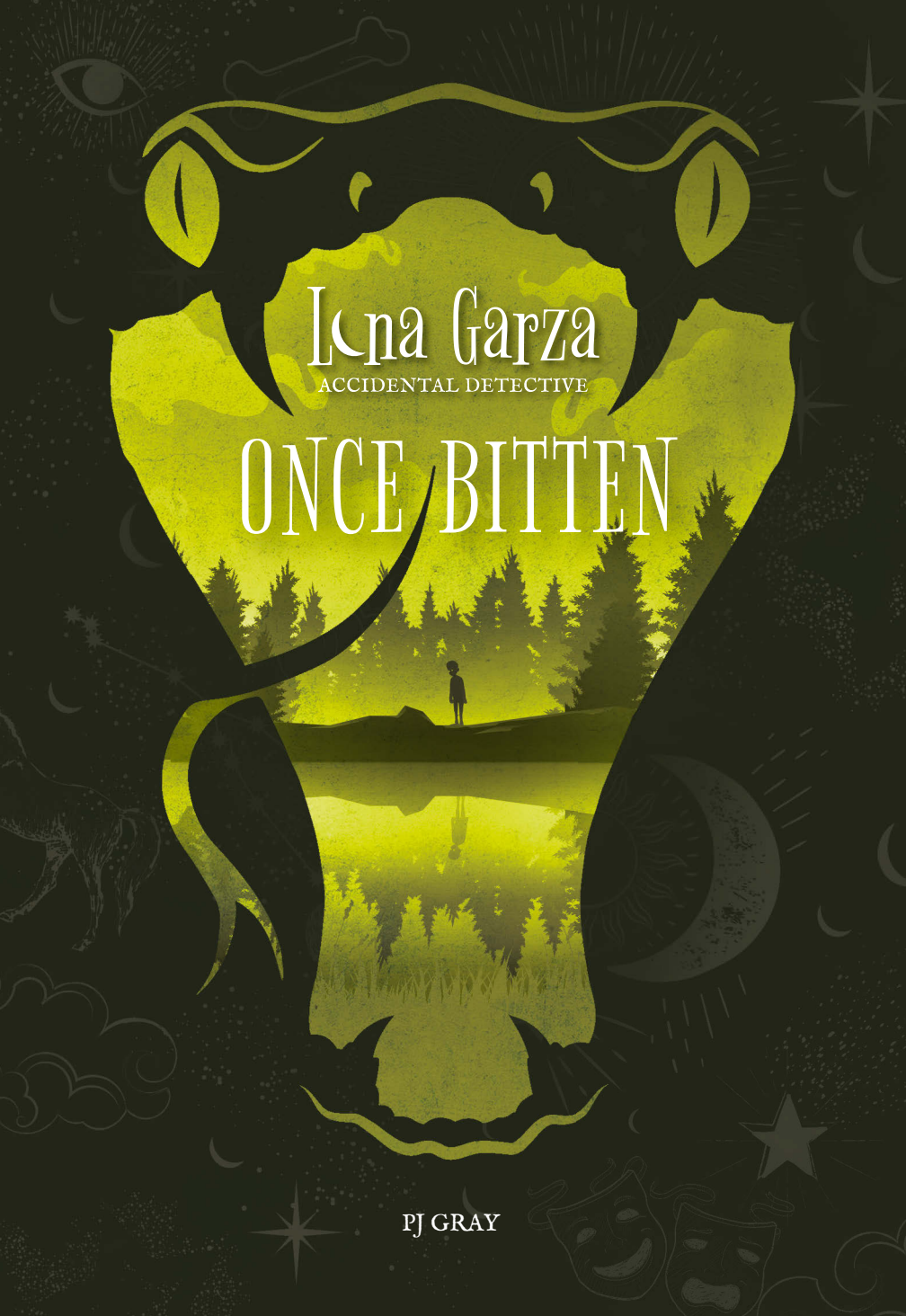
BURIED GAME

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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Lena Garza
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ONCE BITTEN
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CHAPTER 1

SPLIT SECOND

The morning sunlight barely cut through the dense trees. This made the woods dimmer and more private. Yet it offered a perfect view of the teenager. He was kneeling on a boulder near a large pond. The black pencil in his hand moved swiftly across the page of a sketchbook. He was often praised for his drawings. Beside him was an empty mason jar. Tiny holes were poked in the jar's lid.

Birds sang in the distance. *I bet those are lark sparrows*, the teen thought with a smile.

Behind him, a figure stirred in a patch

of bushes. A wide smile spread across the person's lips.

With quick, confident movements, the teen captured a big spider in the jar. Raising the container, he observed his catch. Then he set down the jar and began to write in his notepad.

As the sunlight strengthened, it started to make the area brighter.

Now is the time to act, the figure thought. Carefully, the person crept toward the teen. The smile on their face had disappeared.

About 50 feet away, the teen set down his notepad. He reached for the jar and began untwisting its lid. "Time to go, Mr. Spider."

He lay the container sideways on the rock. Then he tapped the bottom of the jar. Seeming to obey him, the spider began its escape.

Noticing a shadow, the teen turned around. Gripping a large rock, the figure

towered above him. The teen's mouth opened in surprise just as the rock came crashing down on him. It was over in a split second. After exiting the jar, the spider scurried away. Birds continued singing in the distance.

Yes, those are lark sparrows, the teen thought. Then he closed his eyes for the last time.

CHAPTER 2

THE PRIZE

Mrs. Garza rarely took an afternoon to relax. But this Saturday was different. She was enjoying the company of her neighbor Ann Watson. They had gone to the art fair. Now the two women were drinking coffee at Mrs. Garza's kitchen table. Ann had brought a dozen freshly baked chocolate chip cookies.

"More coffee?" Mrs. Garza asked.

"Yes, please," Anne replied.

Mrs. Garza refilled her neighbor's mug. "My husband claims I make it too strong."

Anne smiled. "I disagree. It's a perfect cup."

Mrs. Garza nodded. “When he returns from his business trip, I’ll make sure to tell him I have your vote.”

“Please do,” Anne said. Then she changed the subject. “I just love the way you’ve restored this kitchen.” She pointed to one corner of the room. “Are those the original cabinets?”

Mrs. Garza blushed a little. “They are.”

“Wow!” Ann smiled. “They’re beautiful.”

Suddenly, the front door slammed shut. Mrs. Garza steadied her hand to avoid spilling hot coffee on her neighbor. Then she smiled at Ann. “Luna’s home.”

Moments later, Luna Garza and her best friend, Amber Robbins, entered the kitchen laughing.

“Hi, girls,” Mrs. Garza said. “How was Science Saturday?”

Amber’s eyes lit up. “It was amazing, Mrs. Garza! The community center was packed with people.”

Each girl pulled out a chair and sat at the table. Luna reached for the plate of cookies. “We’re learning about drones. It’s so cool what people are doing with that technology.”

Ann took a sip of her coffee. “Oh, really? Like what?”

“Well, drones are being used to restore mangrove forests in Panama,” Amber said. “They fly over land plots and release balls of mangrove seeds. This saves money and labor time. It’s happening here in the U.S. too!”

Luna wiped a cookie crumb from the corner of her mouth. “We’re going to build one next week. A drone, not a forest.”

Ann and Mrs. Garza chuckled.

“That’s very impressive,” Mrs. Garza said. “It sounds like you are both learning so much.”

Luna nodded. “How was the art fair?”

"We had a wonderful time," Ann said. "Your mom won a raffle prize."

Luna looked at her mom. "Really?"

Mrs. Garza smiled. "It's upstairs in your room."

Amber and Luna stared at each other for a moment. Luna raised an eyebrow. Her friend nodded. The girls thanked Ann for the cookies. Then they raced upstairs to Luna's room.

A full-length mirror stood in the corner. The frame was made from pieces of twisted metal. Luna and Amber stepped closer. They carefully touched the frame.

Mrs. Garza leaned against the doorway. "What do you think?"

Luna admired how the metal pieces curved and coiled like vines. "I've never seen anything like it. It's amazing."

Amber pointed to the top of the frame. "What's that?"

It was an oval-shaped emblem with a cross in the middle. Something was engraved on the cross.

Luna looked closer. They were letters. "A-G-H. What does that mean?"

Amber shrugged.

Mrs. Garza squinted at the letters. "I met the artist at the fair. Maybe she would know."

Amber folded her arms across her chest. "Aliens grow hazelnuts? Ants go home?"

Confused, Luna tilted her head to one side.

Amber shrugged. "I'm just thinking about what AGH could stand for."

Luna rolled her eyes. Then she laughed. No wonder Amber was her best friend.

Luna Garza

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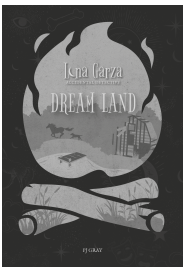
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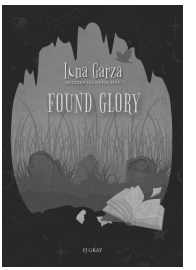
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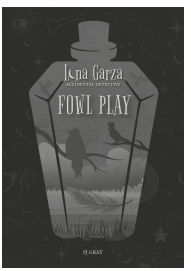
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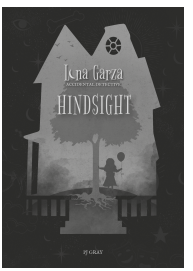
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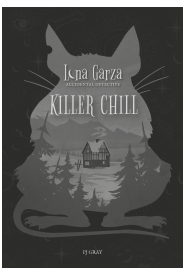
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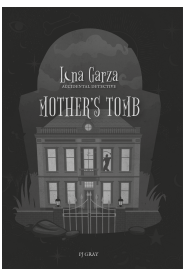
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ONCE BITTEN

When Luna is given a beautiful handcrafted mirror, she cannot hide her excitement. But the gift is causing Luna to ask questions. For example, who is the boy staring back at her in the night? Can she piece together the answers, or will Luna's hope of solving this case completely shatter?

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