

Neewa the Wonder Dog and the Ghost Hunters!

Volume One: The Indian Medicine Woman's Mystery is Revealed!

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Published by John Cerutti at Smashwords

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ISBN-10 0615408540

ISBN-13 9780615408545

Version 12 29 12

Prologue

Adventure and mystery in the uncanny spirit world captivate the young lives of fourteen-year-old Christina and her sister Jackie, eleven. When the family moves 1500 miles from their home in New Jersey to the desert of the American Southwest, they encounter many spirits—some good, some evil.

Out West the family seeks out the paranormal, hunting ghosts with the latest, most sophisticated devices. Their searches take them to several eerie places, including a remote forest, a ghost town and a sacred burial ground. They also explore an isolated Native American stream and investigate an Indian Pow Wow.

Not long after settling into their new home, Christina adopts Neewa, a half coyote female puppy with a mysterious secret. But when the puppy becomes deathly ill, the girl

is determined to find a doctor to save her pet. When a shaman vet miraculously turns up, he supplies a charm, a potion and an incantation for Neewa to save her spirit.

Danger lurks around every corner but the sisters surprisingly find protection in most unusual ways through a medicine woman, mythological animals, herbs and other mystical means.

Throughout their extraordinary experiences the young sisters face various dimensions of fear and joy.

Chapter 1 – Neewa’s New Family

Still can’t believe I moved 1500 miles away from our home and all my friends, this is a big mistake. If it weren’t for Dad I would be home right now. I’d be hanging with my friends and living in my house instead of this old broken down place.

I can’t understand why Mom moved to Canada either. It’s not fair that we are all so far apart. I miss her so much. Grandma and Grandpa didn’t want us to leave either. Everyone back home wanted us to stay.

Dad got this job with the government, that’s why we came out West. Monday through Friday he works calculating all kinds of stuff with very fancy instruments, electromagnetic field (EMF) meters, temperature sensors, static electricity & ionization detectors, motion detectors, listening devices, radio frequency detectors, even radiation monitors.

But on the weekends we take, or rather we borrow, this same equipment and use it. It’s a good thing the government doesn’t know what we do with their stuff. We

certainly can't tell Dad's boss that we hunt ghosts. That's right! We hunt ghosts, not imaginary ones, but ghosts and spirits that give off real natural energy, paranormal phenomena.

Dad says, "As long as I'm testing the equipment, the boss says it's okay to take the stuff home."

When we go on a ghost hunt, we also bring night vision goggles, a special infrared camera and a digital camera with sound recording capability to capture everything that happens in an investigation. Dad says, "If it gives off energy, it can be hunted."

The equipment is the same kind of high-tech gear used to hunt tornadoes, thunderstorms, or even criminals. I'm not exactly sure what Dad does during the day at work. He doesn't talk about it much. It's kind of funny cause when we have all of the equipment with us, Dad worries that someone might think we stole the stuff because of the labels that say, "*Property of US Government.*" He says we have to keep a low profile.

My goal is to be the world's most famous ghost hunter that ever lived. I'm talking about having my own TV show and everything, that's what I want.

My name is Christina, I'm fourteen years old and I hunt ghosts. Jacqueline, my sister, we call her Jackie, is eleven years old and she hunts ghosts too.

Jackie and I kind of look alike but we are so different. She has wavy auburn hair while mine is black and curly. Dad says I look really great with my hair up. That's how I hide all the curls that annoy the heck out of me. I get so mad cause my hair frizzes out all over the place. I spend so much time straightening it, I could scream.

And just about everything Dad says to me makes me freak out. If he says something I don't like, forget it. I fire right back at him. Then he says, "Stop it" or he'll punish or ground me. When he says that, I blast him, call him a name or tell him to shut up. By the time I think about what I've said, it's too late.

If he keeps his cool and says stuff like, "That's no way to talk to your father," he makes me feel guilty so I apologize.

But if he yells or says I'm mean, then I say more mean stuff and really get him mad. We won't make up till the next day. Usually I feel bad all night and that sucks, but that's what happens.

Jackie is more of a trickster type. Oh yeah, she'll start trouble all right and mostly for me. If she doesn't get her way, she goes into a major screaming tantrum until the roof is shaking and all Dad and I want to do is run away. But we can't because she just keeps coming at us until she gets what she wants. Then she blames me, saying I did it! Or, "What did I do?" Claiming her innocence.

What I hate most is when she blames me for something, saying stuff like, "It's your fault I'm late. I was supposed to be there a half hour ago! You're making me late!"

I tell her, "Go jump in the lake," or something.

Our fight goes back and forth and gets pretty ugly, if you know what I mean. It ruins the rest of the night unless someone apologizes, which only happens if the one who gets hurt stays calm and says things to make the other one feel guilty, but how often does that happen?

Jackie and I never dress alike although I borrow her stuff and she takes clothes from me when I'm not looking. It makes me so mad. I tell her not to take my clothes but

she ignores me. Acts as if I'm imagining it. Then she returns them when I'm not around. She thinks I don't know what she does.

Give me jeans and a Hoodie with a tight top and I'm happy.

Jackie and her friend Amanda are into designer clothes, chic tops, and name brands. She's wearing pink today with her favorite sandals. She even paints her fingernails different colors from one day to the next. My nails are always natural, never painted.

I'm taller than Jackie by about five inches, but she can put me in a headlock and make me say uncle, but I won't. Dad is like a foot taller than me. I'm going to be as tall as him someday.

Some day I'm going to be a writer. When I'm writing, I can make up stories and be sarcastic without anybody catching on.

Jackie wants to be an actor. She likes to take lots of dance and singing classes.

I tell her, "You already are an actress." She gets really mad.

My green eyes and long lashes are gorgeous, that's what everyone says.

Whenever someone hears my last name they say, "*Is your Dad John?*"

"Yes," I always say smiling, then they say, "*I know your Dad.*" I just grin.

One thing though, I hate my nose. It has a bump on the bridge from a couple of falls I took when I was little. One time I was walking up the slide and my feet slipped right out from under me, and BAM! I landed face first right on it.

Jackie's nose is perfect but she still has her braces. I had mine off last month, now I just wear a retainer every night.

I'm so excited I finally got my puppy, the one I've been waiting for forever. Dad has promised me I could adopt a puppy for the last seven years. Now I finally have one, but she has no name and I have to pick a really great name for her. I've been looking on the Internet, and everywhere for the perfect name, but I can't decide. Jackie thinks she is going to name her but that is out of the question.

Everyone is sitting in the TV room as I go through a box of stuff not yet unpacked from our move. Boxes are still in closets, bedrooms, and everywhere. At the bottom of this one box is a book I've never seen before.

"Hey, look at this Native American Language Book." I thumb through the pages to a section on names. They're in columns with the English word next to the Indian word. I read through name after name.

"Wow! I had no idea there were so many Indian names, page after page of them," I mumble spellbound reading one after another.

Suddenly one name jumps out at me. "Neewa is the word for snowberry, pronounced Knee-wa. Snowberry would be a great name for my new puppy. She's all white like a snowberry. That's it! I'm going to call her Neewa."

There is silence in the room. I think everyone likes the name.

Grinning, I look around. "So that's that, I've picked her name, it'll be Neewa."

"Wait a minute, wait a minute, I have some names for her," Jackie complains. "How come you get to pick her name anyway? What about Snowball, Ghost, or Snowflake?"

She stares at me, then Dad.

“Jackie you can’t name my puppy. I’ve waited years to get her. You can walk her, feed her, pet her, and love her. But she is my puppy, and I’m going to name her.” I stomp out of the room determined.

“What are we having to eat? I’m hungry,” I yell to Dad shutting myself behind the door of my room.

Dad is now darting around the kitchen answers, “Grandma’s Florida chicken, mashed potatoes and string beans. And Christina it’s your turn to set the table.”

I act like I didn’t hear him.

“Christina, NOW!” Dad adds.

“In a minute, stop bugging me, I will,” I shout knowing he’ll do it if I wait long enough.

Through the paper-thin walls, I listen to Jackie give a speech on why she should pick my puppy’s name. She makes me so mad as she continues her appeal to Dad.

“It’s Christina’s puppy so I should get to name her. This isn’t fair, she gets a puppy and I get nothing. I can’t even name it. I want my own puppy,” she complains.

After a good amount of silence, we all sit down to eat. The conversation continues about naming my puppy. Dad doesn’t really want to answer Jackie so he tells her the puppy is for all of us to enjoy. Christina has always wanted one and this is the way it turned out, blah, blah, blah, he goes on and on.

I’m really getting mad, “She’s my puppy Jackie! I’m naming her so get over it!”

Hum, let’s see, what can I say to send her over the edge, make her lose her temper and blow up? Hum, so many choices, let me pick one. “So Jackie, what song are you rehearsing for the talent show?”

Dad jumps in immediately, “Christina stop it right now! I know where you’re going with this. Jackie don’t listen to her, she is just trying to get you going.”

I glare at her from across the table. By this time my stomach is in knots, I can hear rumbling, gurgling, and I’m about ready to throw up.

“My mind is made up and that’s that. Why can’t you get it through your head?” I burst out.

Jackie continues to taunt me by suggesting silly names like Spot and White Fang. I ignore her. Those names don’t have anything to do with my puppy. Jackie always has to get her way, but not this time. She’s my puppy and I’m naming her, no one is going to change that.

Neewa is playing around the table trying to get my attention. Frolicking and jumping around, she spins and then leaps up. Quickly she circles me, bumping into my shin to make sure I reach down to pet her as she loses her balance and stumbles over her oversized paws.

Neewa’s nose starts sniffing the air. She smells dinner and sits perfectly straight at my side. Her tail is curled around her legs, occasionally thumping the floor. Her head is pointing at the food on my plate, eyes and nose focused, not even blinking.

“We can’t feed you at the table. You have your own bowls for food and water.” It’s Dad’s rule for now, we all agreed to it before picking her up at the pound. But I’ll have that rule changed in no time.

“You made me wait seven years to get my puppy,” I blurt out.

Dad answers in a serious tone, “Christina, you were not ready for a puppy seven years ago. I’m not sure you’re ready now.”

After dinner I fake a kitchen clean up so Dad will jump in and get it over with. I just want to slip into the living room and watch my TV shows. Never mind anyone else.

Jackie is looking for the book with the names but I hid it way in the back of the shelf where she will never find it. I'm not telling her where it is. I know what she's up to. Oh crap, that's it, she found it. She's looking through the pages for another name for my Neewa. I pretend to pay no attention to her.

Turning to Dad she says, "Here's the section on names."

She pauses, studying and turning the pages. "What about the name White Cloud or White Star? They are perfect names."

"Those are not Indian words you widget." She makes me so mad.

Jackie ignores me. When I call her a name, she usually goes ballistic, kicking, and screaming at me.

She snickers, "Hey look at this, they have a word for ghost. It's —*ha*, and more than one ghost is —*nee*."

Jackie reads a passage from the book, "Indians believe the Spirit lives forever. When the body dies, the spirit is called a spirit being and may take the body of another living creature such as a butterfly, a wolf, or even a bear. Or a spirit being may live in the wind or earth not taking any form at all."

Silence fills the room, even Neewa is motionless listening as Jackie continues reading, "The spirit being is seeking a resting place in the sacred burial ground, among all the others who have died. This sacred ground is the doorway to the spirit world, the final resting place where all the spirit beings gather and celebrate eternal peace and happiness."

“That’s creepy!” Smiling, I look at Dad and Jackie.

“Yeah, that’s really creepy,” Jackie adds, “Gives me the chills.”

“Do you believe that, Dad?” I look at him.

Dad walks back into the kitchen to finish putting stuff away, “I’m not sure I believe it, I wish it were true though. Most of the guys at work believe it.”

Jackie is so spoiled. Before Mom moved she would ask her, “Can my friend sleep over, Mom?”

At first Mom would say, “No, no, and no.”

Guess what? Later she always got her way and had her friend sleeping over. Most of her friends are odd, they love to sit around singing Broadway tunes and choreograph dance routines to the music of online karaoke websites.

I hate it when she sings off key. “You’re off key,” I yell from my room.

She gets so mad, really crazy, and even throws stuff at me. Except for maybe Dad, she’s got the worst temper of all of us.

At night I shut my door to get away from everyone. I need time to myself to read books and do things. My favorite authors are Stephenie Meyer and Dan Brown. But most of the time I’m online talking or texting to my friends back home. One of my friends, I met on line at FanFiction. It’s a web site where we write reviews of TV shows and movies. We all write stuff and then comment and critique each other’s stuff. I call my friend “Ohio,” because she lives in Ohio. She’s home schooled.

Jackie loves to read, mostly mysteries, and action-adventure like Harry Potter books and lots of other ones too.

“Good night Dad, love you,” Jackie says as she glides into her room.

Sleep, I need sleep. “Good night Dad, love you.”

“Goodnight Christina, night Jackie, love you.”

I stare at the ceiling in this ugly place. My new home is beat, it's an old one-story ranch in a neighborhood laid out in a perfect grid. Of all the houses in this part of town, ours is the oldest and the smallest. It's the worst looking too, never been updated like the other ones around us. I'll tell you one thing, I'm not planning on staying here long. I'm getting out of here as soon as I can.

The inside is just three small bedrooms and a tiny kitchen and living room. The front door and several old windows have plastic stapled over it to keep out the cold.

The outside is a mess. The driveway in front is full of potholes. We have to use a bumpy dirt path around back in the alleyway. The only good thing about it is the back pathway ends just a few feet from the side door, the only door we use to get in and out of the place. But watch out when you turn off the alley, there's a big tree right there. Dad almost hit it a few times.

Beige stucco covers the cinder block structure we call home. And burgundy red paint outlines the windows, doors and roof. The color of the house was white, but after years of harsh sun and wind, it's got a layer of encrusted dirt over the top. It's not white anymore.

An old wood fence around the front yard is falling apart. It has double rails made of 2 x 4's that run along the border between the neighbor's yard and ours. Oh my God, the railing colors alternate between burgundy and off-white, with dirt caked on to match the house, Yuck!

The painter must have run out of the burgundy and added white paint to make it go further to finish the job. You can see where the shade of burgundy gets lighter, turning into pink and fuchsia at the corner. His painting ladder, splattered with paint drips, still rests against the house where he stopped.

Flowerbeds on either side of the walkway haven't been cared for in years. They still have beautiful flowers blooming, attracting a tiny green and yellow hummingbird at dusk. The Iridescent tiny green bird hovers, while using its long beak to slurp the nectar from the flowers. I've tried to take pictures of him but he gets scared off so easily and flies away in a flash.

The landlord said we could rent the house for a few hundred dollars a month. That's if we take care of it until he gets out of the nursing home. Dad says he'll never get out.

My house back home was twice the size of this one and brand new. Bedrooms, living room, every room was bigger and it had lots more closets and big wide windows with windowsills to stack my stuff on. The kitchen had cherry wood cabinets, and bathrooms with satin nickel faucets and fake marble counter tops on matching vanities. The place was so cozy and the apartment downstairs was perfect for Grandma and Grandpa, with gorgeous southwestern motifs in the ceramic tile that covered the floor. Everyone was so mad when Dad said we were selling the house and Grandma and Grandpa would have to move.

It was on a dead-end street, the last house, and there were lots of kids. We played games, went fishing in the pond and had lots of fun. Jackie's friend, Debbie, who lived on our block had a swimming pool and we had a trampoline for everyone to jump on.

Grandma and Grandpa were always there on holidays and weekends and giving us presents, even when it wasn't our birthday. I miss my family and friends so much.

Sometimes at night I look at their pictures and cry myself to sleep.

Here, our new neighbors won't even talk to us. Worse than that one night when I was coming home, I saw one neighbor turn away from me as I went in my door.

One exception, the banker and his wife made an effort to be hospitable and welcoming. Hank and Jane Burns are very nice people. From time to time they come over to the house, talk to us, and even brought brownies. Meanwhile, they try to find out everything they can about us. Dad says Mr. Burns wants us to take out a loan or invest in cable TV or something.

Jackie started babysitting for their daughter, Brice. That gives Hank and Jane time to go out for dinner and a movie without having to worry. They trust Jackie and she is paid pretty well for her time.

Besides Brice, there are no other kids around here, it's like they rounded them all up and sent them away. Or maybe zombies came and took them. Whatever happened to them? I don't know. But the streets are deserted, no skateboards, scooters, or jump rope. This place sucks.

Chapter 2 – Yesterday Was the Happiest Day of My Life

It was early morning when Dad woke us up. Usually, when he tries to get me up on a weekend morning I tell him, "Leave me alone, go away, don't bother me!"

Yesterday morning was different. Getting up and dressed and being ready was easy. Finally we were going to the animal shelter to get the puppy I've been waiting for my entire life.

Jackie on the other hand was moving as slow as a snail. I stood at the door, tapping my shoe on the floor. Annoyed, I waited while Jackie had to have her morning bowl of cereal.

"Jackie let's go, we're late," I plead with her to hurry.

"Christina shut up! I can't hear the TV," she replied.

"Dad, Dad, Jackie is having cereal, tell her to leave it, I wanna go now," I begged Dad.

Finally after a lot of yelling, we got in the van and left.

After we drove a while into the desert from town I saw the sign, "County Animal Shelter." The arrow pointed up a long dirt road. At the end of the bumpy road was a dull gray building.

Around back was the kennel area. At this distance, the compound looked neat and tidy, with animal pens in rows. I could see some of where the dogs were kept. In the front were a few parked cars and a big front door with one window.

Loud sounds of barking dogs came from behind the building. No wonder they put this place way out in the middle of nowhere. But as we got closer, the noise got so loud it sounded like a fox hunt was going on in the back. And the building seemed to turn even grayer.

I was very nervous as I led everyone across the stone parking lot. Jackie and Dad followed close behind me.

After knocking on the steel door, a man in black coveralls, hair slicked back and parted down the middle, slowly opened the door. The barking got even louder and I was hit with a wave of the pungent smell of a dog pound. The old man with a kindhearted smile greeted us. My guess is he's the dog catcher. His appearance and pale face made him look like Dracula, lacking only the makeup and cape.

"Looking for a pet?" He grinned.

"Yes," I answer back.

"Right this way, you folks just look around," Dracula said.

"Follow me," I ordered.

I whispered to Jackie, "That guy looks like Dracula, look at his hair."

We laughed as we walked through the hallway into the inner chamber.

Dad reminds me, "Christina remember we want a nice, friendly, housebroken and fully grown dog."

"Poppy, Poppy, (I call Dad Poppy sometimes) I heard what you said, now stop with the pressure okay?" Hoping he will back off and leave me alone.

I wandered from side to side on the walkway between the large and small cages with big and small cats and dogs of all colors inside. Creeping through the maze, I looked left then right, checking each animal, yet passing one after another. Occasionally I hesitated for a moment to take a closer look, but continued my journey down the endless corridor of forlorn and cast-off pets. I was heartbroken looking at all the cats and dogs with no homes. Surplus animals, once loyal and loving pets, now no longer needed, discarded members of society wanting to be taken care of.

Dad whispered in my ear as if the animals were listening to him, “After sixteen weeks in the pound they will be put to sleep.”

“Put to sleep? What does that mean?” I blurt out loud. Is he saying that they are to be killed, murdered?

“They have to be euthanized, destroyed,” he finished his thinking.

Instantly I became flushed, face red-hot. Each one of them needed a home, to be loved, before it's too late. Gasping for air, I was horrified at the thought that any one of these animals would be destroyed.

Now my morning at the pound was no longer joyous and full of promise. It was more like a slow motion death walk in a horror movie. Frame after frame passing before me with animals being led to the gas chamber where they were to be “taken care of” all right.

The morning was slipping away, there seemed to be more and more animals, and choosing just one became more complicated. I wanted to save them all. Maybe even lead a jailbreak and set them all free.

Jackie followed me through the aisles of animals while Dad was left behind somewhere.

Nearing the end of death row, I became full of fear and anxiety. The animals jumped toward me as I passed their cages, wanting to be saved from their ultimate fate.

If I reached out to one, it lunged to the side of the cage, crashing into the wire wall, trying to kiss my fingers, as if I were Pope John Paul. And had the power to save them. It was as if they knew their fate and that I was their savior. But nothing could save all of these animals.

Unexpectedly, I spied a little white puppy curled up in a ball with its littermates. It looked up at me with pointed ears too big for its head and a shining black nose. It was the cutest puppy I had ever seen. It jumped up on the side of the cage letting out a yelp, calling me.

This puppy was so pretty, a German shepherd looking girl. She had the deepest steel gray eyes and a long snout on its big head. Her tail curled up over her hind legs like a Husky as she stood on her back legs up against the cage, nibbling on my fingers with her pointed white teeth. She was so beautiful, and had such soft ivory fur. And those big floppy paws were too big for her body, just like her ears. I hope she doesn't grow into those paws.

Jackie," I shrieked, "here's the one, here's the one!" Feeling joy that I have not felt for a long, long time.

Just then Dad caught up to us. I petted her through the cage as she ran around my hand like it was a toy to tease and chew on.

"Can we take her home Dad?" I looked at him.

"Hey," Dad moaned, "I thought we agreed on a grown dog, one that's already trained and house broken."

Jackie stooped down next to me and the puppy licked both our faces through the metal mesh. It was love at first sight for her too.

"Jackie you want this one right? Say yes," I pleaded with her.

"Dad let's get this one," she agreed.

"Dad, I want this puppy, she will be a good watch dog and protect Jackie and me. Grown up or not, please Dad," sounding like a beggar but not caring.

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