

Lori R. Lopez



The Color Of Evil

LORI LOPEZ-21

The Color Of Evil

by Lori R. Lopez

Fairy Fly Entertainment

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In *The Color Of Evil* by Lori R. Lopez, a mysterious woman appeals to a Nun at a Convent for help with her strange affliction. Sister Grace believes that Ginger is the subject of an Ancient Prophecy and poses an enormous danger for the world.

The Warrior-Nun summons fellow members of a Color Guard with representatives embedded around the globe in various religions and institutions. They don Armor, brandish swords and daggers, determined to slay this grave threat to all.

Ginger is less convinced she is Evil, or even a bad person. She begs for mercy, but the Sisters of the strict Order are unyielding. She has no choice but to fight for her life. However, she gains a surprising ally, a ghost in the room who can relate to the woman's plight.

Look for the author's upcoming Ghost Collection, *Spooktacular Tales*, which will feature many ghostly goings-on in verse and prose!

Clad in a dingy raincoat, a drab scarf covering most of her hair, a nervous woman slipped through the narrow gate into a private well-tended Garden of flora and benches, a fountain and birdbath. She paused to latch the entrance, then straightened a pair of sunglasses on an overcast day. Quickly the woman approached a Nun kneeling in front of a flowerbed, digging up weeds with a spade. Bright crimson lipstick lent the lady a glamorous demeanor below her shades. Footsteps resounded. The hollow forlorn cadence of a solitary pedestrian, trekking a dismal lane.

From the branch of a tree a bird screeched, making the woman jump a bit. She lingered, indecisively staring at the Nun. A hoarse appeal: "Sister, I need help." The supplicant's volume increased. "Everything's the wrong color! My doctor told me by phone it's Psychosomatic, I'm imagining it. He said to call him in a week. I can't wait that long. I think it's something evil. I think I must be cursed!"

Heaving a sigh, the Sister pushed to her feet, serving a strict order of Nuns in full black and white Habit. She turned, tall and sedate, a cold smile on her lips. Unfriendly eyes glared at the stranger.

Who continued in a rush: "I've racked my brain for answers. It isn't Allergies. I'm not dreaming. It can't be what I ate. The last meal was a bowl of soup, thirteen hours ago. I don't think I have Chromophobia. Colors never bothered me in the past."

Furious, the Nun commanded "Hold your tongue!"

The visitor stopped in surprise, for about fifteen seconds. A faint frigid breeze smelled of funerals, a depressing connection. "I'm sorry to disturb you. I'm not even Catholic. I don't attend Church. I just . . . didn't know where else to go!"

"Yes. People like you only show up seeking favors, wanting assistance, in times of trouble. Where are any of you when you don't need us?" rebuked the Nun — her garments, despite outdoor labors, immaculate.

"Oh! I'm dreadfully sorry. My name is Ginger." The lady's complexion had paled, the color of shock. "Ginger Puck. I would glimpse your Spire while driving . . . the Steeple and Cross. I thought I could come here, for help."

"Do you ever think about this Convent once things are fine, other than the bread and cake we sell in the Market? Of course not. Religion merely matters to you when it's convenient."

Orbs glittered. "Faith isn't a switch to flip on and off. You will pay for your lapses in the end. Just as a nap cannot replenish a night's sleep. The damage is done, and the debt keeps rising."

Ginger felt woozy. Unsteady. Suffering a wave of Nausea, or Déjà Vu. "I see you're offended. I'll go. But could you please, kindly, out of compassion, tell me what's happening?" The dizziness subsided. She slowly removed her sunglasses. "Ordinarily, my eyes are Hazel." At present the irises sparkled a phosphorescent Teal-Blue. She tugged her scarf loose to reveal a curled mane of Lemon-Lime. And the tone of her skin had gleamed Chocolate when she arrived. It now held a ghostly hue. "My normal complexion is Olive-Pink. I woke to find a peculiar version of me in the mirror. My teeth and lips are red, and my hair is green!"

Abruptly the Nun's attitude shifted, a stark reversal. The spade dropped from her grasp, clanging a stone path. The hand rose to her mouth. Regaining composure, she spoke less bitterly, her aspect a touch less severe. "Excuse me. I've been hours in the sun. My name is Sister Grace. We can help. We trained for this. It's the reason we're here."

"Who's we?" asked Ginger, a tad suspicious.

"Don't worry. You're in the right place, but I can't do it by myself. I will need to speak with a few of the Sisters. We've been expecting you." The Nun reached for Ginger's arm.

"Why?"

"It doesn't matter. I doubt you would understand."

Ginger resisted the contact. "Look, Sister, there's a lot about my life lately I don't understand. What I need is answers. I don't need more questions, so start explaining."

"I was told in a dream seven years ago that you would come."

Ginger mulled the statement. Bobbing her head in consent, she put on the sunglasses and scarf, tied a knot beneath her chin.

Silent, the Nun led her from the walled Garden to a plain door. They moved at a brisk pace, traveling a lengthy enclosed passage, and halted at the door of a chamber.

The Nun walked in without knocking. She beckoned Ginger to follow. "Sister Prudence, it is time. Our guest is here. Please bring the Color Guard."

A Nun in identical attire nodded, caramel-completed, wearing a stunned expression. Glancing face to face, she wordlessly departed, the door sealed softly behind her.

Ginger brooded, vacillating between apprehension and mistrust. "I'm not sure I should stay."

"You need to sit down!" Sister Grace had regressed to a much sterner disposition.

Hesitant, the guest perched on a wooden chair, posture anxious, flesh an eerie shimmering white, her breath alternately bated or shallow. "My grandmother took me to several Masses." An attempt at conversation. "She was Lutheran, but she liked the decorations, the beautiful ceremonies and Cathedrals."

No reply. The Nun abided at her side like a statue. Or a guard.

"We quit going. It was sudden. A problem involving the windows."

Ten minutes ticked away, marked by a Cross-shaped clock. The beats echoed. Sister Grace avoided the visitor's gaze, a prim sentinel. Ginger's hands were clenched in a knot of knuckles on her lap. She studied the vivid scenes depicted on panels of Stained Glass, recognizing Joan Of Arc. The iconic feminine Knight raised a shining blade. She prayed in a Garden, spoke at her Trial, was bound to a stake — doomed to be burned as a Heretic and Witch. The

dazzling panes grew tenebrous, their stories and brilliance eclipsed by a shadow obscuring the Sun.

A chill collected in the chamber.

The door swung wide. Four women filed into the room, vested in Custom Armor like Battle Nuns: black-helmed and chest-plated atop scapulars and tunics, the robes of Habits. Sterling Silver Crosses dangled from Rosary Beads and belts.

Ginger sprang to her feet in alarm. "What is this? Am I being arrested? You promised to help!"

"Miss Puck, let me introduce you. Sisters Prudence, Charity, Faith, and Hope."

The Nuns bowed in greeting, except Hope. Inexperienced, a smidge unkempt, she made an awkward duck approximating a curtsey. "Hi!" Her arms were laden with a spare Breastplate and Helmet. She presented these to Sister Grace, who traded her Veil for the Helmet and pulled the headpiece over a pristine Coif. Sister Hope clumsily assisted with donning the Body Armor, after draping the Veil reverently upon a chair.

"Sister Lottie, I mean Hope, is new to the Color Guard," apologized Faith.

"We *hope* she will get the hang of it," punned Charity.

"I can hear you!" reminded Hope.

Gentle teasing contradicted wan veneers. The gravity inside the chapel-like space.

Prudence smothered a laugh, mouth pinched, attractive brown features amused.

The levity lowered Ginger's tension. A frantic giggle escaped. "So, do you have swords to go with those medieval outfits?"

"We do." Unlocking a cabinet with a small key on her Rosary Chain, Faith collected five Daggers and shared them with her Sisters. The knives were tucked in their belts. She distributed five Broadswords next.

"Is there a Renaissance Fair in town?" An uncomfortable query.

"It may appear rather clunky and Old School, but these will do the job," remarked Sister Grace.

The female Knights formed a circle. Ginger and her chair at the center.

"Yeah, it's been fun, but I'm not a Crusade. What job exactly would you need five swords to do?" she challenged.

"Have a seat." Grace firmly pushed the woman down. "We represent a special group, Miss Puck, a Secret Society. Our members occupy Convents, Abbeys, Missions, Monasteries, Synagogues, Temples, Mosques, Academies, Colleges. We belong to Church and Lay Organizations. We're everywhere." She drew a deep breath and continued, creased with age. "Our duty for decades, more than a century, has been to watch for a Prophecy, translated from an ancient Papyrus Scroll, discovered in a cave."

Ginger gaped at the Nuns. "You're serious."

A ring of solemn visages regarded her. She realized she was surrounded.

"We believe you're the subject of the Prophecy," imparted Grace. "It bears your description: She who wields the Colors."

"That could be anyone who paints! And Textile Weavers, Clothing Designers, Toy-makers, Salad Chefs. This is absurd. You're convinced I'm what?" Indignant, she stood. "A Savior? A Saint? Or something unholy? Something wicked."

Grace responded, "Let's remain calm."

“I am well beyond calm. Are you protectors or jailers?” the captive demanded. “Do you think I’m a villain? Is this an Inquisition? A Witch Trial? Who are you guarding, me or everyone else?” She remembered the Stained-Glass Windows. “What are you planning to do, burn me at the Stake?”

“We aren’t the ones who brought up Evil. Out in the Garden, you feared you were cursed.”

“I was scared, upset. I felt like a freak! But for all I know, it could be a Miracle.” Ginger’s countenance warmed. To the others, a blanched mien became rosy.

The Sisters braced for conflict, swords brandished, blades angled aloft.

“Please, strive to suppress your emotions,” Grace advised.

A skeptical snort. “You’re confident, satisfied the Scroll is authentic? Has it been tested?”

“I assure you, it is genuine. A warning about you.”

“What does it say?”

“That you’re capable of vast ruin. That you can destroy us all.”

Ginger sank to the chair, sarcasm dissolving. She lifted glowing white hands in dismay. “How?”

“The Colors signify values, energies drawn from around you. They reflect your sentiments, and will emanate forces that vary from healing and restoring to debilitating. Deadly. A red smile can char if directed as a weapon. It’s far too dangerous.”

“I would think you’re deluded, if not for my situation.” The woman considered, feelings disguised by glasses and scarf, head sagging . . . for the moment subdued.

Grace gestured; the Knights aimed their swords downward, tips resting on a stone floor.

Ginger swallowed. “What will you do? Throw me in a dungeon? Lock me in a dreary cell?”

“No.” Grace sadly shook her head, framed by steel. “You are a curse, an abomination. The Papyrus decreed that these Colors you control are a sign of Evil.”

“And you accept this, without proof. Willing to condemn me, based on some vague words in an old document.”

“It isn’t vague,” argued Grace. “The Scroll distinguishes between Colors Of Light and Colors Of Darkness. It implies what is now known, that the Color Spectrum in Light adds up to Pure White. This is a source of Good. The Papyrus further implies that if every possible earthly tint, every pigment should physically combine, White will not result. It creates the color of Evil.”

Ginger leapt to her feet. “I won’t sit here and listen to an insane Conspiracy Theory found in a cave!”

The Nuns reacted. Five swords immediately pointed toward the woman.

Bristling, Grace retorted in precise seething terms: “This important artifact predates the Dead Sea Scrolls. Its contents were deemed so dire, so controversial and appalling, the Papyrus was never divulged to the Public. A private consortium assembled to hide its existence, detect and eradicate its threat.”

“I am not a threat,” Ginger disputed. “I am innocent of these accusations!”

Unsettled, struggling to maintain an even temper, Grace resumed the lesson. “Many Churches have embraced Black and White as a symbol. Separately, the values are opposites.

Together, they are the opposite of Color. This is no coincidence. We also dress in Black and White to block harmful hues — to shield from their intensity.” A harsh declaration: “This group is tasked with guarding against your powers, whether you are demonic, possessed, or rotten to the core.”

“No! You mentioned healing, restoring. That’s positive!” Ginger protested. Rivulets of purple tears leaked from concealed eyes. “My powers can be used for Good! I am not a bad person.”

“You could be,” chided Grace.

“I begged you to help me,” wept Ginger. “I need an Exorcist, a Blessing, not a pack of Executioners!”

Three Sisters chanted one by one:

“Your Fate has been foretold.”

“Our purpose is not to judge.”

“But to carry out a sacred role.” Prudence waited. “In the Prophecy.”

Ginger studied them for traces of humor. They didn’t seem to be joking. “I guess my purpose will be to prevent that!” Wiping tears, the woman tore off her scarf, the dark glasses — anticipating a dramatic surge. She wasn’t disappointed. Her body contorted, the square of cloth flying, plastic frames sliding from fingers.

Sister Hope murmured a choked “We’re sorry.” The younger Nun’s chin trembled.

Arms stretched at rigid angles; legs jittering. Seized by the grip of an internal compulsion, Ginger mugged and twisted, writhing, suspended a short distance above the floor.

Visibly afraid, a squad of Holy Warriors hemmed her wolf-like, preparing to strike.

The chamber filled with prismatic bolts of light . . . contrasting waves of denser twilight shades: Maroon and Sienna coruscating. Forest Gray, Magenta, Emerald raining shards. Burgundy and Umber flaring; Violet and Amaranth flashing. An impact rippled, popping ears, warping senses.

The Color Guard scattered, flung by fist-like concussions.

Ginger landed and spun about, a vortex of vibrant streams and spirals emitting, sparking, bouncing. Searing or hurtling objects.

The tantrum ebbed. Terror eased to wonder. The woman smiled in amazement, lips and teeth a glossy red, as a scarlet sheen hovered.

Grace picked herself up. Prudence joined her, then Faith and Charity. A forcefield re-ignited. Silver blades deflected arcs of color sizzling, lashing air.

Hope retrieved her sword and took a determined step.

“I don’t want to fight! I don’t wish to kill! Don’t make me!” Ginger cried.

But she knew they would. And according to Sister Grace, they were everywhere. Righteous, brave, unyielding. Ready to sacrifice their lives — or hers. Refusing to abandon a supposedly noble cause. Devoted to her annihilation.

Which side was Good and which side Evil? How could she be certain?

Grace startled her, yelling. The Sisters charged en-masse, a united stampede of religious fervor.

Whose side was she on?

The room shuddered, cloaked in a lugubrious atmosphere. At the heart of a maelstrom, the woman absorbed chromatic values from the Stained-Glass Windows, draining them with grave reluctance.

A sainted angelic martyr offered a gift to a kindred “sister spirit”. Joan D’Arc whistled, an effulgent white, tossing her battle-sword.

Ginger caught a solid weapon, hoisted it gratefully. And confronted the mob of fanatics, betrayed by a figure they admired.

Why did they hate her? *Because I’m different?* “Maybe I’m just special.”

Ginger bent forth, sending a thick muddy beam through the instrument.

The Convent quaked, rocked by an explosion catapulting bricks and mortar, plaster and modest furnishings.

A smudged woman lay flat amid smoldering debris, her attackers obliterated. It was Self-Defense.

Coughing, she revived and pushed to her knees.

Smacking ashes and dust from a raincoat, the survivor balanced shakily, unfolding. Then paused to brush a wood chip clinging to a cheek and inspect what she could of herself on a lead-bordered fragment of clear glass. Hazel eyes blinking, she tidied an auburn hairdo.

Flickering, a luminous silhouette; two twinkling orbs and a smile superimposed. A spectral glimmer, and gone.

The woman ambled out of the wreckage a little dazed. She asked Nuns in white Habits entering a faded unflourishing Garden if they were okay. If they saw what happened. The ladies were as confused as her.

“At least it wasn’t worse,” she consoled. “It’s scary how many disasters occur these days. How many tragedies are in the News.”

Leaving the scene, wandering a street, a choir of sirens keening in the background, she might even have recalled something like this. Dimly. Hazily. *Familiar*. For whatever logic or rationale, whatever reason, she feared it wouldn’t be the last time either. Too many Bombers, Terrorists, Extremists. People nursing grudges, angry or unhappy, suicidal. People who wanted to blow up the world.

Stiff and sore, she trudged a lonely route. Where did she park her car? It wasn’t like her to be so forgetful.

About the author and artist

Lori R. Lopez is fond of writing Ghost Stories, as well as a variety of Horror Tales and Speculative Fables, along with Humorous Fantasies and quite a few other Genres, actually. But she really digs Ghost Stories, sometimes with a shovel and other times with a spade. She also writes Dark Poetry, including — you guessed it — haunting verse. This probably stems from her fascination with Graveyards, which goes way way back to her childhood when she was rather small. She alternated her free time with hanging around Cemeteries and borrowing books from the Public Library. Oh, and she gave funerals for dead things she found in her travels between Cemeteries and Libraries and home. There is nothing odd about it, really, just ask Lori. She will

tell you it is perfectly normal, at least for her. But you probably shouldn't try it at home, just in case it isn't for you.

By the way, Lori would befriend stray bats and cats. Then there were the Banshees. Okay, just an occasional Banshee. Or perhaps not a Banshee at all. She might have imagined the Banshees. Lori has always possessed a vivid imagination, even while not possessed. If you'd like to learn more about Lori, her weird writings and art, you can probably ask a Banshee, but they will probably not know who you're talking about! You could look her up in the Phone Book, but Lori doesn't like phones, so it might not tell you any more than a Banshee would. Good luck if you're serious about learning more about this author. You will need it.



More works by Lori R. Lopez

Look for the author's [ghost collection](#) *Spooktacular Tales*, containing "The Color Of Evil"!

Lori and her talented sons have a creative company at fairyflyentertainment.com.

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