

Her Red Ball is a story of a young girl who loses her most precious possession, and stops at nothing to get it back.

Her Red Ball
By Gaetano A. Cresci

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Written by **Gaetano A. Cresci**

Illustrated by Vajihe Golmazari

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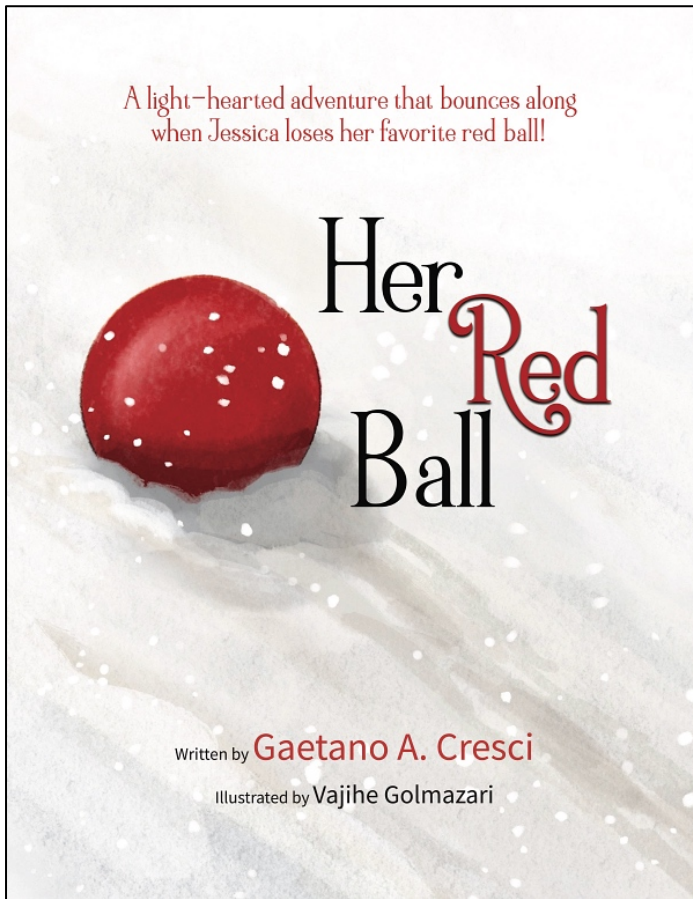


IT WASN'T EXTRAVAGANT. It wasn't extraordinary. It wasn't rare. You wouldn't say you don't see that everyday. It wasn't the brightest in the world. It wasn't the biggest or the best. If it was in a container with other similar ones, I'm not sure how much or if it would stick out at all. But it also wasn't a token, for anything. It wasn't any invitation for any of the other children in her class or elsewhere to form a system of false, selfish, subjective, and minimal beliefs that are only meant to destroy this world. It wasn't extraordinary; it wasn't the Malibu Barbie Playhouse, but it also wasn't diminished yet from the claws of life's treacherous and fleeting demands. It was just a red ball. But it was hers, and it meant more to her than anything in this world.

It had been two years since the accident, and since Jessica's aunt and uncle had taken custody of her. Her aunt was nice. She was a tolerant woman. She cared about Jessica; she fed her and clothed her and raised her alongside her own, but she was busy. Between her own little ones, the house, and trying to stay in trend with her own life, which was a heavily marijuana and wine induced state of bliss between socially mandated carpools to soccer practice, rinsing out ash trays and scrubbing couch stains, as well as the occasional morning after dancing all night at a sloppy amateurish ecstasy-fueled rave just outside of town. Jessica's aunt wasn't unpleasant. People mostly enjoyed being around her. Maybe she was simply too busy, but Jessica was always just an add-on to her life, something else that had to be piled on, instead of any real part of it.

Everyone typically enjoyed the company of Jessica's uncle as well. He was a cool guy that could keep up with the rest of the other guys in the neighborhood. And he loved Jessica; he did, he loved his niece. In the end though, I wouldn't even call him an ordinary guy. He was a typical guy, a typical person, and that's really all I can say about him. That was all there truly was to say about him.

One late winter morning Jessica was up early prior to the sun being up. Everyone was talking the night before about a snow storm coming in, and she wanted to see the first blanket of sunlight stretch and wrap itself over the freshly fallen snow. She was only six years old... She couldn't understand why or be able to articulate about it, but the sight of the ground—and the street—the roofs, the cars, fire hydrants, window sills, bushes, trees, and the play structure the neighbors a couple houses down had in front—the day before, had all been barren. And now were covered in pure infinite white reflecting the bright and powerful opening light of day. It made her feel happy, and excited, if for no other reason than just because it was beautiful.



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