

"A sweet ghostly adventure with a magical family you won't soon forget."
—ANNA MERIANO, author of the Love Sugar Magic series

Totally Psychic



BRIGID
MARTIN

**TotALLY
PSYCHIC**

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Totally Psychic

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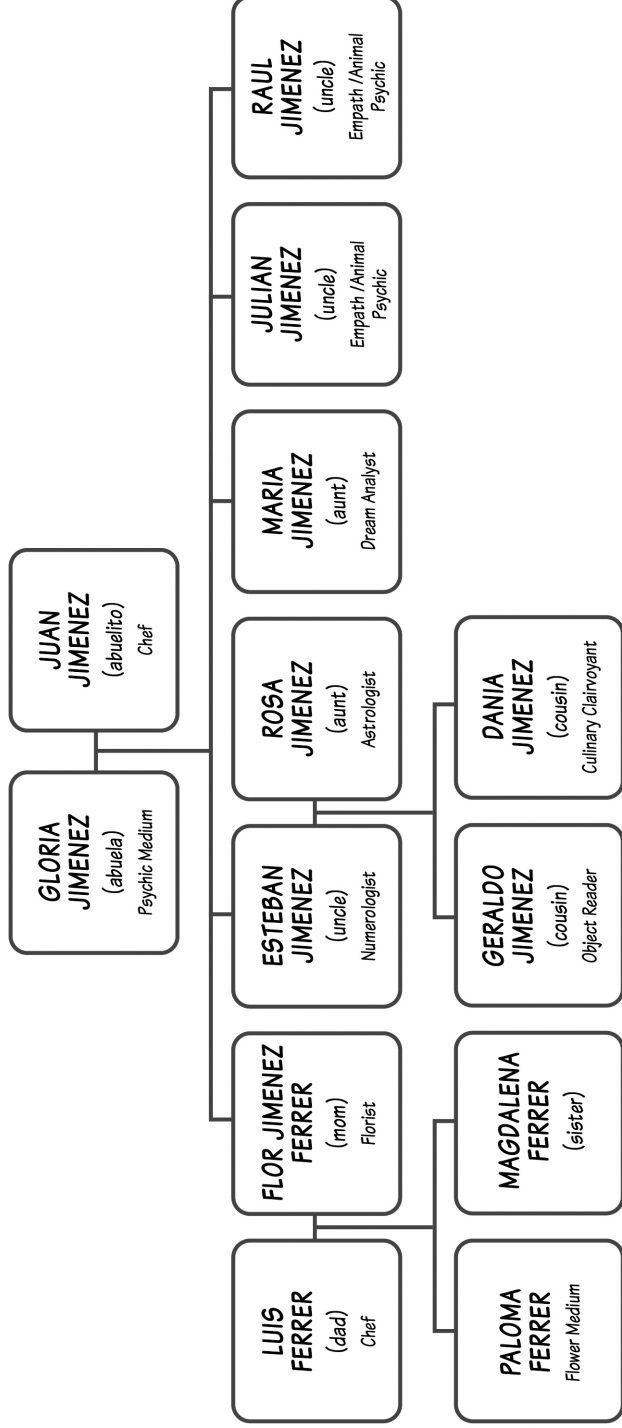
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For my grandma Lupe.

THE FERRER-JIMENEZ FAMILY TREE





Abuela

My abuela, Gloria, had a gift. Not the kind that came wrapped up in a box, but the special kind that a person was born with. And for Abuela, that meant the ability to communicate with the dead. She was even pretty famous for it; in fact she was the most famous psychic in all of the world. Especially in Latin America.

So we always had more ghosts than pastelitos in our house. Which was really saying something considering the number of chefs we had in the family.

“Paloma, are we ready?” Abuela clapped her hands, commanding my attention. After lighting what had to be the hundredth candle in our kitchen, I gave her a nod.

Once a week, Abuela hosted spirit readings at our house for all of her famous friends. And tonight, I was getting to watch her channel the spirits for soap opera's own Suzanne La Luca.

Overall, a pretty normal Thursday. Right?

Abuela's revolving door of famous clientele was something I had been used to for my entire life, and Suzanne was practically family. She and Abuela went way back to when they both had TV shows on the same network in the '80s and have been super close ever since.

They sat down at the table, almost in sync with one another. Now that Abuela was semiretired, she only did at-home readings for her celebrity friends, with the exception of her legendary annual Latin American tour, and all I wanted was to see her in action on that big stage!

The dim glow from the candles embraced everything it touched, from the waxy leaves of the monstera deliciosa to the damask satin chairs that Abuela and Suzanne were currently sitting on. The kitchen looked so much more dramatic in this lighting.

I had to hand it to Abuela for her skills at setting a scene. I watched as the dancing shadows flickered across the photographs of Abuela's extensive career from her leg-

endary and renowned TV program, *Miami Mystic*. The photos reflected a lifetime of meetings with famous people from across the globe. Even though her show had been off the air for over a decade, she still had a cult following of devoted fans, which is why she still went on her yearly tour. Even today, *Miami Mystic* remained one of the most beloved series of its kind and new viewers were constantly discovering her thanks to streaming services.

What could I say? Abuela was popular.

Abuela rolled her head back in a trance-like state as the dark mahogany grandfather clock began to chime. Her beautiful brown hands pressed against the embroidered Otomi tablecloth, a gift from one of her many admirers. I could feel the excitement well up inside me. The reading was about to begin! I studied her every move. There was still so much that I needed to learn especially since I recently discovered that I have the gift too! Talking to ghosts was kind of a family trait. Everyone used to refer to me as Abuela's mini-me because I followed her around all the time, but now that I could talk to ghosts, I was more like her than ever!

Even though I'd seen Abuela speak to spirits since I was a kid, part of me had always doubted the truth of it all,

thanks to Mom. She was never really into the whole talking to ghosts thing. Then I started seeing spirits right around my twelfth birthday. July 23 to be exact. A true Leo-cusper, as Aunt Rosa liked to say. After that, any doubts still haunting me had disappeared. Like *poof!* Pure magic. I loved that I got to share this gift with Abuela. Not only could she communicate with spirits and help people receive final messages from their loved ones, but she was also the most charismatic person I'd ever met. Anyone she came in contact with instantly felt at ease in her company. She had the kind of effect on people that made them feel like they were the only person in the room, even if she was talking to a stadium of ten thousand. That was why I needed to go on tour with her, so that I could watch her connect complete strangers with their loved ones. How could I possibly expect to be like her if I didn't have a chance to study under her?

I wasn't sure how I was going to bring it up, but I was determined to ask Abuela before the end of the night if she would take me on tour with her this year. My stomach was in knots just thinking about it.

"Libranos del Mal," Abuela mumbled in Spanish under her breath. She was in full-blown concentration mode to

make sure no bad spirits came through. That was the risk of doing this kind of work—potentially channeling a spirit that didn't want to leave. No one wanted to have a bad ghost following them around and causing mischief everywhere. I already had enough of that with my younger sister, Magdalena! And I wouldn't wish that on anyone. Thankfully, I'd never seen anything like that happen in the past month that Abuela had officially started letting me watch these readings.

A long pause lingered in the room as we awaited the spirit's arrival. It should be any second now.

The kitchen began to shake violently, which seemed to upset our pet cockatiel, Mango. His squawking dampened the sound of Abuela's portraits rattling against the wall. Within moments, everything was still again and Mango was back to his usual quiet self. The hairs on the back of my neck stood at attention as the hot Miami air was replaced with a chill that made it feel like we had walked into the refrigerated section of a grocery store. I burrowed deeper into my sweater. Abuela and I always wore them for this very reason.

The portal to the spirit world was now open.

We had a ghost in our midst.

A lanky translucent spirit appeared across the table. A lime-green feather collar framed her gaunt face. If I had to guess, I would say she was around the same age as Abuela. The spirit's glamorous hairdo billowed out on the sides and tapered into a neat bun at the top in a way that felt old fashioned. I'd never seen that kind of style before. Even her salmon-colored frilly gown with puffy sleeves mirrored the shape of her hair. Something about her appearance made me think of a flamingo...but not the cute kind.

I wouldn't be caught dead in an outfit like that.

Most people didn't realize that in the afterlife, you get stuck wearing whatever you died in. So unfortunately there would be no costume change for this spirit anytime soon. I couldn't imagine what she could have been doing to end up in *that*.

"Suzanne, a visitor has come through for you," Abuela enunciated in her *Miami Mystic* TV voice that she reserved especially for readings. "She appears to be a tall woman with a wonderful sense of fashion."

I stifled a laugh. She had to be joking.

"That could be any number of people in my family." Suzanne adjusted her long floral nightgown and lovingly

touched the silk turban covering her hair. “We are a well-dressed bunch.”

That was definitely true of Suzanne—she was every bit as fabulous in person as she was on television. Right now, she may have looked like a glamorous pajama queen, but she was the star of my favorite Spanish telenovela, *Everybody’s Cousin*, where the main character finds out she’s related to everyone else on the show. Mom and I used to watch it every week until the series finally ended after thirty-two seasons. Basically, Suzanne was a big deal.

I waited for the spirit to say something, but there was nothing but silence. Crossing over from the spirit world took a lot of energy, and sometimes spirits didn’t have enough left to speak. In those instances, they had to resort to visual cues to get their messages across.

The spirit that came through for Suzanne started dancing for a few moments, then fell to the ground. She did this over and over again with the same shocked expression on her face.

This was going to be a test of Abuela’s charade skills. Mine too. I watched carefully, hoping for a clue that would indicate what she was trying to say, but Abuela concentrated her attention on an object on the table that looked

like a compact mirror. Why would Abuela be looking at that instead of the spirit?

The spirit pressed her hand against her chest as she fell once more in the middle of our kitchen.

"I see that the spirit is touching her neck to indicate that there was a necklace there." Abuela twisted the sizable turquoise beads around her own neck. "Is there a piece of jewelry that holds any important significance to you or any of your relations?"

"Yes! Yes!" Suzanne beamed. "When I was eighteen and about to go on my first audition for *Everybody's Cousin*, my aunt gave me this necklace as a good luck charm. She was an actress at one of the theatres in New York and always said there wasn't a role she didn't get while she was wearing it. This necklace gave me the confidence I needed for the audition that truly catapulted my whole career!"

The candlelight illuminated Suzanne's giant green pendant necklace perfectly. Suzanne mimed the same action as the spirit without realizing it as she touched the stone she was currently wearing. Abuela was also a fan of oversized jewelry, but I could tell that this necklace was extra-special to Suzanne.

"What a lovely story, Suzanne. Your aunt wants you to

know that she is very proud of you and it means so much to her that you are wearing it today." Abuela looked back down at the table.

The spirit nodded.

"I never take it off!" Suzanne dabbed happy tears from her cheeks. "Did she say anything else about my acting career? Any big auditions coming up?"

"I thought you were supposed to be filming a new movie!" I gasped and then immediately covered my mouth. Abuela didn't like to be interrupted.

"That got canned, darling. You can't believe everything the tabloids tell you." Suzanne pretended to brush something off her sleeve. She looked pallid, like she lost all the color in her face.

I had clearly struck a nerve.

Abuela didn't even turn her head to look in my direction. Either she was concentrating superhard on something or she was annoyed.

Suddenly, white and yellow flowers swirled around Suzanne's aunt in an elegant dance of floral choreography. A flower premonition!

My ability to see ghosts wasn't the only thing I was good at. It didn't take long after getting my powers to

realize that flowers were kind of my specialty. As a flower medium, sometimes bursts of blossoms showed up out of nowhere, which could get a little distracting. Abuela said I needed to pay close attention whenever I saw one because every flower has a unique meaning, and those meanings could help me to predict future events. Being part of a family of psychic mediums had a way of proving that being normal was overrated and that sometimes, it was the little things setting us apart that made the biggest impact.

I sat up straight and concentrated on each of the flowers that materialized around Suzanne's aunt. The small white ones were...baby's breath? No! Hemlock! The symbol for death! And that meant the yellow must be rue, the symbol of regret.

"Your aunt's messages are coming in a little fuzzy, sorry to say." Abuela took a sip of her tea. "But one message I can relay is that it wouldn't hurt to exercise a little caution the next time you're on set."

"Oh that aunt of mine, still such a worrywart even in death. The only thing I need to be careful of is the bad coffee on set." Suzanne tucked her used tissue into her sleeve.

There was a long pause as Abuela stared at the spirit.

Suzanne's aunt mimed the action of pulling back a curtain and pushing someone to the ground. I tried connecting the dots between my prediction and the movements the spirit was doing.

Did she push someone? Did she witness someone else getting pushed? Was Suzanne in danger of getting seriously hurt? Whatever it was, she was definitely trying to communicate some sort of...stage accident.

That's what my flower premonitions were trying to tell me! Suzanne was in danger! Why wasn't Abuela telling her that? If Suzanne was at risk of getting injured, she needed to hear it, or else she could get seriously hurt!

The spirit threw her hands in the air, frustrated that we weren't relaying her message. Now was my time to shine and prove to Abuela what I was capable of. Latin American tour here I come!

"There's going to be a stage accident!" I shouted proudly from the corner of the room where I had been hiding amongst the houseplants. I was already giving myself an imaginary pat on the back for getting it right.

Abuela's eyes went wide as she turned to look at me. That got her attention, but I could tell it was *not* in a

good way. Abuela scrunched her face as if to say “cállate la boca.” I wanted to melt into the floor.

An awkward silence stretched between us that felt like an eternity. With each second that passed by, doubt began to creep up from the pit of my stomach. Maybe I could talk my way out of Abuela’s frustration.

“To be honest, it’s really hard to tell what the message is. The stage accident could have even happened in the past,” I said, and a flash of anxiety hit me like a fresh sunburn as I realized Abuela’s expression remained unchanged. All I wanted right now was to disappear. Maybe even turn into a spirit myself.

“Stage accident?” Suzanne La Luca tilted her head. “No darling, my aunt was never in a stage accident, and like I said, I don’t act in the theatre.”

I looked from the spirit to Abuela, hoping for some backup.

“That’s right, Suzanne. There was no accident.” Abuela let out a long breathy sigh and pinched the bridge of her nose. “Paloma only started to see spirits a little over a month ago. She’s got a bright future ahead of her, but she needs to work on interpreting messages. It’s very easy to get things mixed up when you’re first starting out. With

more practice, she will get there!" Abuela flashed her signature veneered smile before blowing out the candles directly in front of her. "Why don't we call this a night, Suzanne? We can pick up again where we left off in our session next week."

As Abuela got up from the table, the room shook violently and the lights flickered back to their full brightness. Suzanne's aunt vanished with a scowl on her face. Major ghost stink eye in my direction.

Within moments, the room's temperature went back to normal, Miami's usual eighty degrees breezing through the open windows. And just like that, the reading was over.

"But..." The word barely slipped out of my mouth.

The look on Abuela's face told me that I shouldn't continue. Turned out Abuela stink eye was even worse than ghost stink eye. Now that Suzanne's aunt was gone, I felt like I lost my chance to prove to Abuela that I could help with her readings. So much for being her psychic sidekick!

"Always a pleasure to see you, my dear friend." Suzanne waved as she walked toward the back door. "And congratulations to you, Paloma, for following in your grandma's footsteps! Must be very exciting for you."

"Uh-huh." I nodded as I slinked deeper into the corner where the parlor palms and the rest of the houseplants lived. At least I felt safe amongst the foliage where I couldn't do any more damage. Abuela escorted her friend to the atrium and out the front gate. I watched her long robe graze the floor behind her as she left. She looked as if she were gliding on air instead of travertine.

After Abuela returned to the kitchen, she pulled the satin chair to the table and gestured for me to come sit beside her. I felt frozen in place with my back pressed up against the pineapple wallpaper, my legs refusing to move. They must have sensed I was in trouble.

Big trouble.



Goodbyes

Abuela was rarely mad at me, but she had a hidden temper that she only reserved for special occasions—or for Mom. But I had a feeling that tonight her anger was going to be pointed in my direction. She seemed pretty upset after I interrupted her reading.

“I think you and I need to have a chat about what just happened.” Abuela’s tone sounded suspiciously nice. Too nice.

She picked up the teapot which had fallen over during the reading and returned it to its upright position.

“Tea?” she asked. Her eyebrows were raised.

This had to be a trick question. I looked at her skepti-

cally, trying to pick up on any visual cue that this might be a trap.

"Are you mad at me for interrupting you?" I wasn't going to move from my protected spot until I got some verbal confirmation that I wasn't in trouble.

"No, not at all," Abuela's tone ascended. "You know I always welcome your input. Mistakes are bound to happen."

Verbal confirmation of my not being in trouble, received! I walked over to sit next to her at the kitchen table.

"But it wasn't a mistake, or at least it wasn't all a mistake," I said. "The spirit mimed the actions of pulling a curtain and pushing someone, which I know you could see! What else could that possibly mean besides an accident?"

There had to be something the spirit was trying to say. Why else would Suzanne's aunt keep repeating the same thing over and over again if it wasn't important?

"Oh, it was a mistake, my dear. But for different reasons than you think." Abuela poured herself another cup of herbal tea, took a sip and shifted her chair closer to mine. "Suzanne's aunt was communicating that *she* had caused a stage accident, injuring another actress in her youth. That angry spirit of the actress she injured is looking to get her revenge on Suzanne. But it's not our job as me-

diums to alter the future. That kind of information might cause Suzanne to be too afraid to live her life if she's constantly worrying that something bad is about to happen."

"So you didn't tell Suzanne the message about the stage accident on purpose, even if something bad is actually about to happen?" Clearly Abuela had gotten messages from the spirit that I missed, but it felt wrong not to say anything. Shouldn't Suzanne have a right to know that she was going to be the victim of a vengeful ghost? Her aunt *wanted* to warn her. I didn't care what the rules were. If we got a message, we should deliver it!

"That is precisely right," Abuela said. "Our job is to help make the grieving process a little easier for those of us left on Earth. You can understand that, can't you, mi nieta?"

I wasn't sure I liked this rule, but I was too afraid to look at the disappointed expression on Abuela's face.

"I'm never going to be as good as you, am I?" I stared at my shoes.

"You are already great, my darling. And thankfully there was no harm done." Abuela put her hand on my knee. She always knew the right thing to say to make me feel better.

"Does this mean I can go on tour with you?" I asked.

Maybe now wasn't the best time to bring it up, but I

didn't know when the next time would be that I would get the chance.

"Darling." Abuela paused. "You know your mother would never allow that. Besides, you still need to practice getting a handle on your powers and you'll have so much going on at your new school that you won't even miss being on tour. I hear the spirits in California are much chattier! You can even start doing your own readings!"

Ugh. Why did she have to bring that up? I'd been trying to ignore the move for weeks and I just blew my last chance for escape. I'd have to come up with another way to prove to Abuela that she should take me with her. I wasn't ready to give up just yet. Her tour wasn't until the first week of December, so there was still plenty of time to show her that I was ready.

"I can't believe Mom is moving us across the country because I started getting spirit messages over the summer!" I slinked deeper into the chair. "It isn't fair. She's literally ruining my life. What am I supposed to do without my friends? What am I supposed to do without you?"

Mom always hated the fact that everyone in our house had psychic abilities, and now that I got my powers, we suddenly ended up moving. What other reason could

there be for us to move other than Mom not wanting me to practice summoning ghosts with Abuela? It's the only explanation that made sense.

"You know I'd never let you move if something bad was going to happen. I am a psychic after all." Abuela put her soft hand on top of mine. Her brown eyes twinkled like a flame. "And remember, I'm only one phone call away if you ever need to talk."

One phone call away?

It felt like I was being dumped by my own grandma.

Not to doubt Abuela's psychic powers or anything, but what if she was wrong? California was pretty far away. Maybe her psychic powers wouldn't reach!

My anxiety thought bubble burst at the sound of knocking on the back door. It was my best friends, Jasmin Lord and Keisha Taylor!

"Abre la puerta," Abuela called out. We had an open door policy in this house.

"Hey, Paloma! Hey, Mrs. Jimenez!" Keisha shouted through the glass.

"Hope we're not bothering you guys!" Jasmin let herself inside. "Just wanted to say goodbye before the big move."

"Very sweet of you girls," Abuela said. "I'll leave you to it."

I walked with them into the atrium where we could be alone. Everything around us glowed from the strings of fairy lights wrapped around each of the palm trees that encircled the space as the fountain gurgled in the background. Lights danced across the trickling water.

"We know it's kinda late and you have that early flight tomorrow." Jasmin's voice cracked. Her purple eyeliner was smudged around her lower lids like she had been crying. "But we couldn't let you go without saying goodbye! We practically had to elbow our way past the paparazzi at your front door to get here."

Paparazzi were always outside on Thursdays for the celebrity readings. That was part of the reason why Mom wasn't a fan of the fame attached to Abuela's work as a medium. She liked her privacy. If Mom had her way, this would be my last reading ever, since we were moving tomorrow. She wasn't exactly happy I was helping Abuela instead of finishing packing.

"I can't believe you came!" I hugged them both. "I hope this is a kidnapping scheme and you have some kind of elaborate plan to rescue me from moving across the country."

"Oh my gosh, why would we stop you?" Keisha pulled

away from the hug, her deep brown skin glistened in the lamplight. "We wish we could come with you!"

"Yeah, Paloma, this is really cool," Jasmin said as she fussed with her electric-blue hair. She was always messing around with box dyes. "You're going to love it out there, trust me! My sister went to LA once with her college friends and told us she wasn't ever coming back. My mom had to threaten to cut off her credit cards until she booked her flight home. Bet you won't want to come back once you're out there either!"

"Totally," Keisha said. "Plus, Jasmin and I were already looking at tickets for winter break. So, you're not getting rid of us that easily."

"You're right. The kidnapping plan would have never worked anyway," I said as I looked up at the sky, wishing that I wasn't about to leave everything I'd ever known behind. There was too much light pollution to see anything more than a few stars. "My mom would have caught on the second I was gone. She has a sixth sense for that sort of thing. Guess I should at least try to give LA a chance."

"That's the spirit! Pun intended!" Jasmin said. "Though we'll miss bailing you out, like that time Mr. Cooper almost sent you to the principal's office for 'making a mockery of

science' with your psychic reading before you even had any powers. Like, what were you thinking?!"

"Yeah, that was pretty rough to watch. You were so lucky Jasmin yelled 'April fools!'" Keisha nudged my arm.

Abuela's atrium was filled with hand-carved marble statues of famous mediums and astrologers throughout history, from Mina Crandon to Miss Cleo. I knew them all by heart.

"Remember the time we were all convinced that we heard something coming from the Fox sisters fountain?" I leaned against a garden statue of Walter Mercado.

"And then it turned out to be Magdalena hiding behind a nearby azalea bush booing us." Keisha laughed. "It was our favorite spot ever since."

"I'm really going to miss you both so much." I could feel my eyes getting mistier by the second.

"We'd be mad if you didn't." Jasmin plucked a leaf off one of the ferns and held it against her upper lip like a mustache in an attempt to lighten the mood. "Promise you'll call as soon as you're unpacked. We want to know everything."

"Promise." I hugged them both goodbye.
I didn't want to let go.



The Book of Flowers

I walked back inside and practically flopped my entire body over my steamy mug of chamomile that Abuela left steeping on the table. I was still in the denial phase about this move.

"I always liked those two," she said as she pulled out an old hat box from the pantry. "It's important to have good friends in your life. And speaking of important things, tengo algo bien especial para ti."

"You have something special for me?" I forced myself out of a ninety-degree angle as she placed the box on the table in front of me.

"I originally intended this to be a Christmas gift, but I

figured you'd need a little cheering up before your trip." She put her hand on top of the lid. "But before you open it, I'd feel a lot better, especially after this evening's incident, if you'd recite the cardinal rules of mediumship."

I should have known there would be a catch.

There were five rules that every medium needed to know. Abuela had been reciting them to me basically since I was born, and yet I still had somehow managed to break them tonight. Oops!

"Number One." I cleared my throat, sitting a little straighter. "Never try to force contact with the spirits."

Abuela always stressed this as the most important rule. Forcing a connection with a spirit could accidentally open a portal for negative energies to come through. This meant no Ouija boards, no ghost tours, and no haunted house visits. Basically, I was no fun to be around during Halloween time.

"Number Two. Never ever talk to evil spirits."

So, if you broke rule number one or if you accidentally summoned an evil spirit, it was important not to talk to them. Otherwise, they'd follow you literally everywhere.

Uncle Esteban accidentally summoned an evil spirit while he was teaching at the University of Miami. Abuela

wouldn't let him come back to the house until he figured out a way to get rid of it. He had to stay in a motel for almost a month until he realized the spirit hated the *Ghostbuster* movies. Turned out, all of those movies had the ability to get rid of any unwanted spirits, specters, or ghosts just by playing them! Luckily for Uncle Esteban, *Ghostbusters* had a way of really living up to its name if you'd let it.

"Number Three. Never ask spirits how they died."

Oddly enough, talk of death was a very sensitive subject for the dead. We couldn't bring up the topic unless they wanted to share. Which they rarely did.

"Number Four. Don't repeat everything a spirit tells you."

Aka the rule I messed up today. Technically, we weren't supposed to repeat messages from the spirits that might be upsetting for the person receiving the reading to hear. But to be totally honest, I still didn't agree with this one.

"Number Five. Readings should be healing, not hurtful."

This one was sort of related to number four. We needed to be sensitive to the fact that most people usually came to us so that they could hear from their loved ones and try

to process their own grief, so it was important to be sure to relay messages that helped with the healing process.

"Asi es, mi vida. I'm glad that you remember all the rules." Abuela applauded.

Of course I knew the rules! She really needed to give me more credit.

"Now it's just a matter of putting them into practice." She placed the box on my lap and opened the lid. The stale perfume of long-forgotten tobacco lingered in the air. "These items will ensure that all of your readings are a success."

Everything inside the box was neatly packed in a folded white cloth with hand-embroidered flowers, similar to the one that was currently on the kitchen table. She gingerly unwrapped each bundle to reveal several candles, a compact mirror, a notebook, and something called *The Book of Flowers*.

"I've given boxes just like this one to each of my children and grandchildren once they received their psychic abilities. They were all right around the same age as you are now, and I imagine I will be giving another box to your sister when the time comes." She plucked the compact mirror off the table and held it between her hands.

"Each of the items in here was chosen specifically for you, and I want to take a moment to go over how you can use them as you begin your psychic journey. Let's start with the spirit mirror, shall we?"

"Spirit mirror?" My eyes widened. She had my full attention.

Abuela held out the gold compact engraved with my initials. The outer edges were embossed with an intricate swirl. She pressed a small button on the outer rim that made a faint clicking sound as it sprang open. I stared at it blankly, unable to figure out what I was looking at. On the outside, it looked like a fancy compact mirror, like the kind you'd see at the cosmetics counter at the mall. But inside, all that stared back at me was a shiny black surface in the place of where my reflection was supposed to be. Something told me this definitely wasn't store-bought. This was special.

"As you can see, this is not an ordinary mirror." Abuela traced her long fingernail gently across the smooth surface. "What you're looking at is obsidian, a special kind of stone. These mirrors are specifically designed to help mediums like us communicate with spirits who don't have enough energy to speak after they cross over from the

spirit world. Like what happened with Suzanne's aunt during the reading today. This device really comes in handy in a pinch."

That explained how Abuela was able to pick up on what Suzanne's aunt was communicating earlier. I was wondering what she had been looking at on the table. It was the spirit mirror!

"I didn't know we got to use accessories!" My eyes were transfixed on the smooth black stone, mesmerized. "How does it work?"

There was nothing about it that seemed magical.

"Think of it like your phone line to the other side. The messages can be sent back and forth from either the spirit or a fellow medium, and their words will become transcribed on the obsidian."

"Abuela, if it's like a phone, you know I can literally just text you, right?" I picked up the mirror again and stared deeply into it. "I mean, the whole magic mirror spirit interpretation part of it seems supercool and useful and all, but I feel like this is way more complicated than texting. There aren't even buttons!"

"It is so much better than text messages, darling!" Abuela pulled out a nearly identical but slightly more tar-

nished silver compact mirror from her pocket. She whispered into it and closed the compact with a snap. The mirror that Abuela had given me began to vibrate and glow in the palm of my hands...kind of like a phone. The obsidian glass inside read: *Hola, Paloma, It's me! Abuela!* The font was curled in a familiar way at the ends like it had been written in her own handwriting.

Okay, fine. This was cooler than texting.

I whispered into my mirror and waited for Abuela's compact to glow. I could see my own messy handwriting come through on her device. It read: *Am I doing this right?*

This was going to be fun. Also, I really needed to work on my penmanship after seeing my chicken scratch scroll across Abuela's mirror.

Abuela reached for another set of items on the table.

"This may not look very exciting, but the most important tool in a medium's arsenal is a set of blessed candles." Abuela laid them flat in her hands. "These are especially important because they keep us protected from unwanted guests. We need to do everything in our power to keep the negative energies and bad spirits at bay. These particular candles I am giving to you were blessed by my friend Father Rick over at Saint Francis de Sales. Even though he

absolutely disagrees with what I do, which is something he has in common with your mother, he does support the idea of me being protected from evil entities, which I appreciate. Plus, if he didn't give me these, it would make our weekly card night in the parish rectory very uncomfortable. Be sure you light them before any readings you end up doing."

I carefully put the candles back into the box. I did not want to come face-to-face with any bad entities.

"And next." Abuela held *The Book of Flowers*. Its golden lettering gleamed against the dark purple leather. "As you know, all mediums have their specialties, and I think it's so wonderful that your psychic gift has manifested as visions of flowers. Especially since you've spent so much time helping out in your mother's flower shop. This book will tell you all you need to know about interpreting the different types of flowers."

Abuela pulled out one last object from the box. A marbled notebook. I wondered what kind of hidden magic was tucked away in the pages.

"This is for you to write down any visions you have so that you don't forget about anything that comes to you. All premonitions are important," she said.

I paused, waiting for her to say more, but nothing came. Huh, I guess she saved the most normal gift for last. Not the order I would have chosen, but who am I to look a hat box in the mouth.

I wasn't sure if I would have enough premonitions to fill up a notebook, but I was excited to start practicing.

"Thank you, Abuela," I wrapped my arms around her. My cheeks still hurt from smiling. I couldn't wait to try these out!