

Devils Don't Wear Velvet

Book Summary

A collapsing family in a Madison, Wisconsin shabby neighborhood hurls Jasmine Ramirez, a shrewd and daring 16-year-old with an eyebrow piercing, into living with her ill grandparents. Her enduring love for them builds on childhood banana splits, a cherished artwork, and a rescue from her mother's drunken tantrum.

Now things are different.

In this sequel to *Angels Don't Get Tattoos*, Jasmine's best friend Kennedy is dead, her dad pulls away, grandmother has severe dementia, and both grandparents weaken and fade. Loyal and determined, Jasmine balances caring for them with her high school life, ambitious career goals, and tutoring Spanish. This delicate, clumsy balance is filled with grief and loneliness. Her friends and sort-of boyfriend help, but they face their own prickly challenges.

Nobody knows the whole story. Like her family, Jasmine is an expert at covering up, but things soon unravel in heartbreaking chaos.

Kennedy's raw and recent death is the elephant in the room—everyone tiptoes around it. More alone now, Jasmine faces the spiraling descent of her grandparents' health. Living with them, she sees their anger, paranoia, and frail vulnerability. Things are crashing. Despite desperately reaching out for him, Jasmine's dad does not come. She doesn't learn why until it is nearly too late . . . or is it? Her mother is a recovering alcoholic living fifty miles away. That's another story, but Jasmine wants to believe in its shreds of hope and truth.

Without any drama, Jasmine is super successful in school and wants to own a company someday where all employees are treated fairly, paid well, and excited about their work and learning. She studies to stay connected with her classes, works on an invitation to a first-class Washington DC leadership conference, and upholds her relationship with friends. But things with her boyfriend shatter—Jasmine realizes maybe that was never meant to be.

Through it all, Jasmine melts with embarrassment about her grandparents' health, especially her grandmother's dementia screaming out of control. Covering up everything and withdrawing seem the best way to manage, at least with her friends and high school.

This works for a while, but Jasmine learns that real friends are real friends and strangers can be real friends, too. At the same time, figuring out how to convince her dad to believe her takes this crumbling situation and Jasmine to the brink.