

Juli needs a friend. Juli needs to live in the real world. Juli needs to figure out if her super power theory is true. But most importantly, Juli needs to find a way to keep Abuela's memory alive. Abuela & Juli were inseparable. Juli showed her all of her favorite comics and favorite superhero shows and in-return, Abuela listened and learned everything. Now Abuela is gone and Juli feels incomplete. She lost her Abuela and her best friend, one of two people who Juli really felt understood by. But there's a new student in her class, Jenny. With Jenny by her side and a super magical bracelet left to her from Abuela, Juli learns what it means to love someone even when they're no longer around.

At the start of our story, we see Juli Rosario, a 9-year old Dominican from Inwood, trying to come to terms with the death of her Abuela. Even though Juli is surrounded by supportive parents and family, nothing they say feels right. She's not sure how to move on and all she wants to do is read her comics and watch her cartoons. But it's more complicated than that. This story explores the weeks and months after losing a loved one & the long-term grief that we often hide or suppress.

## **Chapter 8**

Juli loved riding the train. The idea of traveling underground to get somewhere made her feel like a superhero. For Juli the train was a different world; an interdimensional portal that New Yorker's used to get around the city. Every hero needed a way to get around: Some heroes could fly and others had fast cars, Valor Girl had a jet and Juli had the train.

Juli loved how the train protected her from the outside world. If it was raining outside, the train kept her dry; if it was cold, the train kept her hot; and if it was the summer, maybe, just maybe, the train had AC to keep her cool.

But there was something else to it. Juli loved being around different people while doing her own thing. She was surrounded by strangers all riding the same train and doing more or less the same thing. Yet they were all in their own world, the way she always was.

“Juli, don't forget, we have four stops left,” said Mercedes when Juli pulled out her comics.

“I have enough time to read, don’t worry Mami,” Juli responded quickly. She didn’t want anything to get between her and her comics.

“I have to tell you a few things before we get to Abuelo Fidel’s house.” Mercedes spoke in a soft voice; the way she always did to avoid getting Juli upset. She didn’t want to push Juli away. But Juli was already staring at her.

“That’s Abuela Flor’s house too,” cried Juli, tears forming in her eyes. “How could you forget her? How could you leave her out? She lives there. That’s her house!” Juli bursted out into tears.

Mercedes embraced Juli and held her tightly. “Juli, I’m sorry. I know things are hard, I know how tough everything is. Things seem to be moving so fast, but remember you have people who love you.”

Mercedes pleaded with her daughter to open up. Juli was looking down and didn’t see that her Mom was trying her hardest to hold her tears in.

“We all lost somebody we loved deeply. You can talk to me. I want to listen.”