

## Tradition

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# Tradition

by [SorryIWasAsleep](#)

## Summary

Isabela and Dolores come together for their monthly sleep over. It's been a few months since the magic returned and a little over a year since Casita fell.

Tonight it's Isabela's turn to host and she has... a few things distracting her. She loves being imperfect, and her new mindset has opened up the world for her. She's finally ready to share some truths about herself.

Dolores has been distracted too recently, but it's because she's just so much happier than she ever thought she'd get to be.

The girls share and reflect on how they got to where they are now and just how glad they are that the only "tradition" they have to worry about anymore is making sure one of them remembers to bring the snacks.

# Dolores

## Chapter Notes

Happy Holidays to those who celebrate! and happy encanto on disney+ day to us all!!!  
Literally watching it as a type this note rn lol. This is my take on the  
Isabela/Mariano/Dolores dynamic, I hope you enjoy!

DISCLAIMER: I am not Colombian and my only lessons on Spanish were in high school, meaning I do not actually know Spanish. Pretty sure the teacher I had for two years ALSO didn't actually know Spanish. I tried to use it sparingly, but please let me know if I need to correct anything! The same goes for cultural aspects!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tonight was Isabela and Dolores monthly sleepover.

Dolores was looking forward to it.

It was a thing they had started at five years old after both girls got their gifts.

They had missed one another and the nursery they used to share, but Abuela wouldn't let them stay together, insisting their rooms were part of the miracle and that they *must* stay in them—the monthly sleepover was a compromise that only came after Pepa stormed for a week.

They would rotate who hosted and tonight was Isabela's turn.

The cousins ended up in one of the many fields of flowers in Isabela's room. Since the rebuilding, her room also contained other kinds of flora, but she kept a few fields of her favorite flowers.

Isabela was currently growing a new cluster for herself to lean against, turning to see if Dolores wanted one too.

Dolores was still standing with her eyes closed and her head titled upward. She had a soft smile filled with affection on her face, which means she could only be listening to one person. It's warmed Isabela's heart to see Dolores so happy with Mariano.

"You really love him don't you?" Isabela asked with a wide smile breaking out on her face.

Dolores startled and opened her eyes at the question as the noise of the world came back to her.

It was like she had been able to hear *only* Mariano for a few minutes. Even when she uses her gift to focus zero in on certain noises, she can never actually tune out all the rest, no ones hearing is *that* controllable, enhanced by a gift or not.

Being able to hear a pin drop is nice in theory, but the world wasn't just the soft sound of a pin hitting the floor, it was thousands upon thousands of boulders all crashing down at once.

Don't get her wrong, she knows her hearing is apart of their miracle. But holy shit everything is *so* loud *all* the time.

And a person can *never* not be hearing.

Not even in sleep.

The short time before their magic had returned had been so peaceful for Dolores. She didn't flinch at every sound, didn't have to stress over other peoples secrets, actually got a good nights sleep for once, and she could talk louder than her usual whisper.

She missed that.

Dolores wondered—with the weight of her two heaviest burdens, Tío Bruno’s location and her out of reach dream, lifted—if her power was growing the way Isabela’s had. She sure hoped so. Having her sanctuary of a soundproofed bedroom (thank you Casita) was amazing, but it wasn’t always exactly *accessible* when she needed it.

Being able to control her own ears, even if for a short time, would help her greatly. If this newfound discovery was more of a dimmer and less of the silencer she just perceived, than at least she could maybe lower the radius of what she was hearing at any given time.

Mariano had given Dolores a pair of embroidered earmuffs for her birthday that helped to that effect.

Mirabel *claims* she taught him and that he *really* did all the embroidery on his own, but Dolores could hear them practicing and knew it was her prima who had done most of the heavy lifting, but she didn’t even care. Dolores loved Mariano so much for even *trying* to learn for her rather than just asking Mirabel to do it for him.

She loved him even more when the week after her birthday when she found him and Mirabel surrounded by thread in Mira’s room practicing on an old blanket. He may have gotten what he wanted, the help with her gift, but decided he still wanted to actually learn how to embroider and be good at it.

“Dolores? Are you going to sit?” Dolores snapped out of her stupor again and looked at her cousin. When Isabela had sat down, Dolores had no idea.

As she moves to sit down, Dolores softly asks “Wait I didn’t answer your question did I? Not about the sitting, but about Mariano?” Isabela laughs and shakes her head confirming that she never answered.

Dolores made a soft humming noise before shifting away from Isabela. Before Isabela can say anything though, Dolores is laying down next to her, speaking again.

“Yea, I really *do* love him. It’s written all of my face isn’t it? I was listening to his nightly poem.”

Her heart felt like it was too big for her chest and she was sure her face was flushed. If she was her mama, surely there'd be a rainbow over her head.

Dolores would've never dared wear her heart on her sleeve like this before Casita fell. She would've whispered her heartbreak softly in the dead of night to a confused Camilo, who couldn't understand why she didn't trust them enough with the identity of the person destroying her heart as she fell more and more.

Now, she didn't hesitate to gush about her novio when asked. She was even willing to shout it from the rooftops. It would hurt her own ears, but she was young and in love and wanted everyone to know. Dolores looked over and almost looked right away when she saw the level of love and pride on Isabela's face, reflecting her own joy back at her.

They laid in a comfortable silence (*not silence, never silent*, but she's able to keep her focus on this room. She can hear Isa's breathing and heart beat, hearing the soft wind that's always blowing in here, the creaks of casita, the ice melting in a glass on the nightstand.)

After a few minutes, Isabela's heart rate seems to pick up speed, the way it does when she's nervous. Dolores was worried, but knows Isa will talk when she's ready.

For the past year, they were all working on their communication as a family, talking out their feelings before the pressure built up. It's still really hard some days to not fall back into their old patterns, sometimes not sharing was a lot easier, even if it wasn't entirely healthy. Dolores could hear Isa take a deep shuddering breath, likely trying to find courage to push away the mask of perfection she's had on for so long. The silence breaks shortly after.

"Hey Dolores? Can I tell you something?"

"Of course"

"I— I think... I might *like* someone"

## Chapter End Notes

Yes this is going to be a coming out story, sorry this chapter is short, I had no idea how to START this story despite having half of it written for weeks. If this is complete nonsense please let me know. Also with grammar/formatting/spelling mistakes, please tell me! I'd rather know so I can fix it! I hope I did the characters justice, I'm planning on doing some flashbacks to pre-movie for the next few chapters.

Idk how frequent my updates will be but I do plan on having this complete by mid-January so we shall see! Thank you if you read this and please feel free to chat about this fic or just Encanto in general in the comments!

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# Isabela (past)

## Chapter Summary

Isabela's hot girl summer

## Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Isabela really did think she would grow to like, and eventually even love, Mariano the way that she was supposed to.

She didn't know anything different was even an option.

Isabela was sixteen years old when Abuela called her and Dolores to the table after breakfast and brought up dating, without any trace of the usual teasing the other adults used with them.

“Mis perfectas niñas, I married the man that I loved. Both of your mothers did the same. I'm aware your parents like to tease you, but know you are free to start dating young men from town. We all want you to find your person that balances you.”

The girls exchanged a look of confusion and excitement.

They knew of course that this was inevitable, but when they were allowed to start dating had never really been clear and neither one wanted to ask.



“*But*,” Abuela continued, “the Encanto *needs* our family and our gifts. Now more than ever. So please, be,” she paused her eyes scanning their faces looking for the right word, face cold and serious, “*wise* in who you choose to spend your time with.”

With that, Isabella spent a year talking with and observing the guys in town.

The men she had thought she had a crush on in the past all turned out to be nothing like she had imagined.

The ones she thought were interesting now were fine enough, but whenever they started to express feelings for her, she would always get very uncomfortable very quickly and wind up rejecting them. Others would try to move too fast. None of them gave her the spark she was looking for.

But Isabela was *determined*. She was seventeen now and knew what she was supposed to do if she wanted to keep her life on its path. She knew what her life was supposed to be like, and not connecting with someone is certainly not going to cut it for little miss perfect. She knew the life of her dreams was supposedly “promised”.

*Except Tío Bruno doesn't actually know what my dreams are.*

*How I long to be free.*

*To grow whatever I want, whenever I want—the way I used to when my gift was still new, before Abuela decided spikes and thorns were ‘unbecoming’ of a Madrigal. Before Mirabel’s gift ceremony didn’t work, before our gifts were no longer our own, but everyone else’s.*

Isabela sometimes wishes she could be like the girls from Tío Bruno’s old bedtime stories, Santana and Brittany.

Their relationship and them as individuals were *far* from perfect, but they *were* perfect together.

She would give a lot for even a fraction of their love and understanding over the safe “perfect” idyllic “dream” life her Abuela has planned.

Isabela felt a lot like Santana in the first few stories, terrified and hiding it behind anger and snark. It worked out for her in the end...

*But.*

Isabela *cannot* disappoint her grandmother.

She *won't*.

She'd give a lot for love, but she'll give even more of herself to keep her familia happy.

If she fails at this it'll become her prima's job to find the perfect person in the community that will help to strengthen the family.

Dolores has already been having a rough year with Tia Pepa's pregnancy affecting the weather, making the noise of the world too much, and Isabela knows that with her gift, her cousin is going to *need* a partner that loves her and understands perfectly. Otherwise, she won't have anywhere to truly be safe.

But Isabela?

Well ask anyone—she's *perfect*—what couldn't she handle alone?

No she can't let her cousin bear this burden.

So she resolved herself to lowering the bar, looking for someone who was kind, someone she could still build her perfect life with even if her feelings aren't as perfect as she expected.

She knew what qualities her and her family valued. She also knew what most girls said made a man attractive and even though she personally didn't get it, she figured she would be able to get there herself once she'd gotten to know a potential suitor better.

Who cares if she finds herself staring longer and longer at the other girls her age? *Obviously* women are much prettier and easier to love and easier to imagine a life with, but isn't that how everyone feels? It's just the unspoken truth of the world, but that didn't mean Isabela could ever *act* on those thoughts.

Not if she wanted to stay a Madrigal.

Not if she wanted to keep feeling loved.

So instead, she would join in on the conversations with her peers, talking about who the cutest guys in town are, what the perfect date would be, all the while assuming that her thought process and the deep seated dread that weighs on her chest whenever she tries to put a face or name to her dreams was how all teenagers felt.

That other girls were *also* horrified and disgusted by their first kiss, first date, first everything.

As the eldest grandchild, Isabela has a responsibility to her familia to set a good example, to do the right thing like her Abuela always says.

That was where Mariano came in.

Mariano Guzmán had always been... *around*.

He was a year older than Isabela and considered to be the most handsome young man in the Encanto. His family was highly regarded within the community, his madre the first headmistress of the school, and responsible for the education of half the town.

The Guzman's were regarded next to only the Madrigals themselves.

The perfect son and the seemingly perfect daughter.

Isabela thought he was nice enough, and funny at times, even if he *was* a little dull. Abuela was already a fan of him and his family.

After another failed date with a local farmer, Isabela *literally* fell into him in the town square.

In her annoyance, vines had started to creep up between the cracks of the pavement. In her haste to get away, Isabela didn't notice. She accidentally tripped herself and reached out her hands to catch her fall. The impact of the ground never came.

Instead she found herself opening her eyes to Mariano Guzman staring at her like she was the best thing he'd ever seen.

Isabela practically leapt out of his grasp, smoothing down her skirt while saying, "Oh my god, Mariano hi, I'm so sorry." She immediately seemed recomposed, but inside she was tearing herself apart.

*S stupid Isabela, you can't be seen letting your emotions control your powers. You can't be seen falling. Graceful, think graceful. What would Abuela—*

"No it's absolutely no problem at all Señorita Madrigal! It was an honor to catch you!" Mariano spoke up, interrupting her thoughts. She looked back at his face and he looked as

embarrassed as she felt.

“Please, call me Isabela.”

He was...*sort of* cute?

And a chance meeting where he catches her when she falls unexpectedly?

That’s what fairytales are made of, right?

*This is someone abuela would be proud of.*

The thought hits her like a strike of lightning and she feels her back straighten a little further .

“And I’m sorry again, I’m not usually this...clumsy. That’s Mirabel’s job.” Guilt hits her over being mean to her sister, but it quickly passes when Mariano lets out a loud laugh. Isabela smiles too.

“Why don’t you let me make it up to you? You and I should grab dinner this weekend, how’s Friday?”

She was asking, but she already knew he was free Friday, as the Encanto teens had planned a secret party in the woods. His mama was actually dining with her Abuela, making it the ideal time for them to try to connect without prying eyes. Plus, if they attended the party together, maybe some of the men who wouldn't take no for an answer finally would.

His eyes lit up at the thought and somehow his smile got even bigger.

They both agreed on a time and place, before his mama called to him from a balcony.

As Isabela walked herself home, she allowed a small smile to grace her face.

Maybe Mariano would be her match. Maybe Abuela would finally be proud enough of her eldest grandchild that the rest wouldn't have to live in fear the way she does. *Maybe, maybe, maybe...*

## Chapter End Notes

Isabela Madrigal is a lesbian, comp-het is a BITCH. Also I wasn't trying to Abuela bash, but also I'm basing a lot of this on MY experience with comp-het and external family pressures for sure played a role, hope it's still in-character lol. There will be a second chapter of flashing back and then another one flashing back to Dolores during this year. Sorry, i didn't super plan out how long or short this will be. Thank you for reading if you did and feel free to leave me any feedback or comments!

Also yes I made a Glee reference in the year 2021, what about it? The reference and idea that Bruno uses his gift to watch future shows and movies was partially inspired by "You Ain't Never Had An Uncle Like Me" by u/redpanda423. Give their fic a read (linked below)! Bruno would 100% love glee because of all the crazy shit that happens. The thought of him being CAPTIVATED by the Britney/Brittany episode alone has been giving me a laugh all week. And yes I've decided he repurposes the shows and movies he watched as bedtime stories whenever he could. (I've also decided he LOVES riverdale because what is riverdale if not a telenovela pretending to be a serious teen drama)

<https://archiveofourown.org/works/35847175>

# Dolores (past)

## Chapter Notes

Trigger warnings for this chapter: nausea, anxious thoughts and some vomiting (NOT self inflicted and not described in detail)

This chapter starts off in the 'present' (after the movie) and then goes back to the teen years so if you are coming right from chapter 2, please tell me if that is clear or confusing

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Isabela had been quiet for a while, but Dolores didn't want to pry.

She would start talking and get lost in her own head sometimes too. She knew Isa would speak up again.

Dolores let her mind wander, drifting back over her own past. She was finding herself lost in memories from the year Abuela gave them permission to start dating.

Isabela went searching and Dolores was... well *hiding*.

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This past year has been particularly rough on her gift.

Mama was quite literally only rain or shine.

The stormy days Dolores couldn't bring herself to even leave her room, let alone leave casita, much to her Abuela's disappointment.

On the sunny days she would go into town to assist where she could, but things were always a little *too* bright and the temperature a little *too* hot.

It was all anyone would talk about all day and the overlapping repetition often overwhelmed her. She would finish her tasks as quickly as she could until she could once again muffle the noise of the town.

Dolores soon learned these weather patterns coincided with her mama's pregnancy symptoms.

And while she couldn't wait for her new sibling, her excitement didn't and couldn't stop the cacophony that was constantly hammering her brain.

On top of that, she was lonely.

So incredibly *lonely*.

It was hard to hold a conversation when you feel like you're on a battlefield. It was easier to disengage entirely; be an observer, not a participant.

So, when Isabela had reminded her at breakfast that tonight was their monthly sleepover, Dolores could not have been more excited.

It was also her turn to host, so she wouldn't have to worry about the outside noise making her headache from the day worse than it already was.

That night, the two seventeen year olds were comfortably in Dolores room, laying on her bed looking up at the galaxy on the ceiling above them.



The stars have always given her a feeling peace, and while she'd never admit this to her familia, she *loves* that there's no sound in space.

Even in her soundproofed room, Dolores could still hear things, like her tío sneaking around in the walls, the water that runs through the pipes of casita, Camilo and Mirabel as they run past her door.

If she wanted to, she could open her window and let the outside noise filter in, but she rarely did. No sound but her own brain for a bit would be nice, even if she can never actually achieve it. She assumes that's why Casita designed her ceiling this way, letting her have *a literal space of her own*.

She can both hear and feel Isabela growing and regrowing different flower crowns on both of them. She lets herself relax, feeling safe with her cousin. Isabela has been spending more time in town, going on dates, and shadowing Abuela, so they haven't been able to hang out like this since last month's sleepover.

Dolores has missed it.

She hears Isabela take a deep breath and the not-silent silence breaks.

"You wanna be the first to know THE juiciest gossip in all of the Encanto? It's about a certain oldest Madrigal grandchild and where it looks like her love life might be going!" Isabela asked conspiratorially, in a tone like she was giving a sales pitch.

She's sitting up while she says it and Dolores can see a smile on her cousin's face that wouldn't seem forced to anyone other than her.

She gives a small nod urging Isabela to go on, not saying anything because she wasn't really sure if the smile was strained or if her headache was messing with her eyes.

Isa leaned in a little closer and whispered, “I hear that lovely Isabela Madrigal was seen hanging around the handsome and sturdy teenage Guzman boy, Mariano. I hear her abuela and his mama are thrilled with the pairing!” Her tone remains playful and Dolores still can’t be sure what’s her head pain and what’s real but to her, Isabela also sounded a little sad. As if it wasn’t what she really wanted, but thought she should. And then the words she said sunk in.

Dolores lets out a high pitched noise and sits up letting out a quick “I have to go to the bathroom, i’ll be right back” practically launching herself away from her bewildered cousin.

Her bathroom was also soundproofed, but like her bedroom had windows she could open to let down her wall of silence.

Once she gets it open, Dolores quickly closes her eyes and tilts her head to concentrate.

Focusing on one specific person or sound wasn’t normally this taxing, but she didn’t normally feel so weighed down by the noise. Her head was still pounding and the sound of everything rushing in at once was almost too much.

It was still raining.

Babies were crying.

Dogs whimpering at the thunder.

Her knuckles were white where she gripped the sink.

A wave of nausea raced over her.

*Come on, you can do this.*

After a few more minutes her hearing finds Mariano Guzman's loud voice, already gushing to his friends about how beautiful and perfect Isabela seems and how he can't believe he really gets to be with one of the magical Madrigal girls.

One of his friends whose name she can't place mentions her name in a question that she missed the beginning of.

Her chest feels tight, the threat of vomiting worse now. She doesn't think she could handle him outwardly comparing them, but she can't tune out now.

She listens to Mariano respond "I think this year has been particularly loud for her with her mama and the weather. It makes sense she doesn't come to town to just hang out as much right now. I do miss seeing her, though maybe I'll get to see her when I have dinner with Isabela in La Casa Madrigal this weekend!" She lets go of her focus on Mariano, letting the waves of sound drag her under for a moment.

She always knew Tío Bruno's vision would come to pass, but she had never imagined she would have to stand by and watch him be with her family member!

It's as if her heart is made of cement.

She opens her eyes to close the window and is immediately disoriented.

She can't even make it the foot to the toilet.

She throws up in the sink.

Her cousin knocks softly, slowly cracking open the door.

When Isabela sees the open window her eyes widen a bit and she rushes in to close it. She guides Dolores to the floor, her worry obvious. Dolores is still reeling so she doesn't offer explanation.

She knows Isa won't speak first out of concern that she'll vomit again, so after what might've been five seconds or five hours, Dolores slowly opens her eyes, giving Isa a weak smile that she's sure looks more like a grimace. "I wanted to be able to give you some gossip too, but I already had a headache and then the noise..." she trailed off feeling her cousins arms wrap around her.

Isabela pulls back a little so they can make eye contact. "Dolores, I love you, I told you because I wanted to, *not* because I wanted something in return."

The affection in Isabela's voice only fuels Dolores tears.

She wants to feel bitter.

She could never compare to her cousin.

Why would anyone want the girl who can barely leave the house when someone better—someone *perfect*—is right there.

But all she feels is self-loathing.

Isabela had no way of knowing how she felt about Mariano.

Since the prophecy, Dolores had never wanted to talk about crushes or boys, knowing somewhere down the line it'd go wrong. She didn't want her cousin to look at her with any more pity than she already does.

Her cousin avoided the topic too, whether out of pity or personal reasons, Dolores wasn't sure. Guilt stings Dolores chest. Isabela hasn't actually done anything wrong.

Yet the tears keep streaming down her face as Isa holds her.

After a while she feels the other girl shift and opens her eyes back up. "Wait right here."

*You don't have to tell me twice* she thinks closing her eyes back up until she hears Isabela come back in the room about ten minutes later. Dolores can hear her cousin detour toward her bed before coming back to the bathroom. "I brought you a glass of water and one of my moms emergency cookies, I know food is probably the last thing on your mind, but once you can stomach it, it'll help. I left it on your nightstand."

Isa was speaking so quietly with so much concern. Another stab of guilt hit Dolores.

"I think we can postpone this months sleepover for a few days. I shouldn't have pushed you when I knew you had a rough day." She passed the water down and said "Espero que te sientas mejor."

After a thank you from Dolores and a good night from Isabela, her cousin went to leave and Dolores felt even guiltier. And even though it hurts her so badly, she knows a way she can make it up to her cousin, if only a little bit.

"Isa wait," Dolores drew in a breath before continuing, "Mariano was telling his friends about you. He thinks you're beautiful."

Isabela reacts with a soft smile.

Dolores tells herself that she's happy for her cousin. Or at least— she will be someday.

For now though, she'll allow herself these tears.

## Chapter End Notes

If anyone has ever watched the segment where Anderson Cooper listens to an auditory hallucinations simulator (Ive had to watch it for more than one class- it can be extremely overwhelming and triggering so this is in no way a recommendation to watch) and while what Dolores hears is obviously NOT the same, that is what I had in mind when writing the part where she opens the window and is immediately disoriented. Please let me know if you see any mistakes so I can fix them!

Also I fully lied in the notes for the last chapter, but while writing Isabela(past) pt 2 I decided I wanted to put this one first. Thank you for reading if you did!!

# Dolores (past)

## Chapter Summary

Young Dolores and how her crush developed

## Chapter Notes

If this chapter jumps around too much please lmk. I wrote this instead of my assignment that's due at 10am. Lol whoops.

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

At the age of twelve, Dolores and Isabela were deemed old enough to start helping the community with their gifts full time.

It was an honor of course, according to Abuela at least, but it started to isolate the young girls.

They would try to meet up with their friends once they got through their chores. But after full days of having to focus and listen for others, trying to actually have conversations could be taxing for Dolores.

She felt guilty because Isabela would always pick up on her discomfort and they'd both leave.

Isabela never complained and she brushed off any apologies Dolores tried to give, but Dolores started to pull back, letting her cousin thrive like the blossom she is, only occasionally joining her to hang out a few times a month now rather than a few times a week. Dolores missed her friends and she missed her cousin, but the world was too *loud*.

...*Not all* loud sounds were bad though.

Once at school when they were eleven, Mariano Guzman made eye contact with Dolores after she laughed at a joke he made, that no one else found funny, from all the way across the schoolyard.

She was mortified, but noticed that from then on when she wasn't within "normal" earshot he talked a little louder, helping her to separate his voice from the constant din.

She doesn't know if it's intentional.

Whether he actually is that loud and softens his tone for her when she is around? Or if he is soft-spoken but makes sure to project so she can find him? Either way, she's grateful because it gives her something to anchor onto on bad days.

When she started to pull back from their group, preferring to sit alone or in Casita, Mariano never stopped projecting.

It helped her to still feel like she was with her friends, even when she really wasn't. When she would go to hang out, he would use soft tones and he would even sometimes remind the others in the group to tone their voices down if he saw her coming. Even though she wasn't there, and even though she wasn't sure which volume was intentional on his part, Dolores felt that Mariano cared for her and she liked him all the more for it.

By fourteen Dolores had started to subconsciously seek out his voice, the same way she would seek out her family members' sounds to help keep her calm.

People assumed Mariano was too loud for her, but his voice was music to her ears.



He started to write poetry before bed, muttering the lines softly to himself, sometimes getting tripped up on the rhymes. She found out purely on accident since she's normally in her room at that time. She had left her room to get a glass of water when she heard him.

But it wasn't his voice that caught her attention this time, it was his subject matter.

He was drafting *a love poem*.

She spent a week leaving her room at that time every night trying to decide if his poetry was a one off thing for someone specific or just for him.

Once she confirmed he writes poetry at almost the same time every night, she starts opening her bedroom window the tiniest bit.

She knows it's wrong to spy, but the romantic in her was already in too deep once she heard that first poem. He never showed them to anyone or gifted them to any girls, so she knew it was for him. Not all the poems were about love, but most were.

By the age of fifteen her crush had long since taken root.

When Abuela told the girls they could start dating, Dolores was ecstatic and hoped to finally tell him about her crush, but dios mio was she nervous.

She kept trying to walk up to Mariano, but finding him alone was hard, and building up her courage to say anything was even harder.

When he would look in her direction she would lose all her nerve and hide. Her internal monologue was cruel and she was stuck with it.

*What if he thinks I'm weird.*

*Well, I mean, I AM weird, I listen to his private poetry every night and,*

*o h. my. god.*

*He is totally going to think I'm a stalker.*

*He definitely isn't doing the voice thing on purpose, I mean who am I kidding, no one ever sees me, no one ever actually thinks of me if not directly in front of them.*

*Why would I think he was any different.*

*Oh crap he's coming this way.*

*Mierda!*

And then her mami was pregnant and Dolores was going out less and less, the world too loud and too much for her to even *think* about doing anything outside of Casita other than her duties.

If she was out for too long, she would breakdown, and that is *certainly not* the state she would want to confess to her crush in.

And it was rare for the young Madrigals friends to come spend downtime at *their* home when the family went into town everyday.

So she saw Mariano less, and when she did they were never alone.

She had seemingly missed her chance.

*If only she had known how true that really was, maybe she would've built up the nerve at the time.*

Despite their lack of interactions, she could still never truly tune out his voice. But, she didn't really mind because it made her feel less lonely. On good days she could convince herself it was for her benefit.

The brightest parts of her days were always Tío Bruno's telenovelas (that she thinks he's acting out with rats?) and Mariano softly trying to find the right words for his new poems. It was in those moments she felt as though she really could use her gift to her own benefit, shutting out everything but what *she* actually wanted to hear.

Not what *everyone else* wanted to know.

Once Isabela and Mariano became official, Dolores isolated herself even further from her friends. Watching Mariano make heart eyes at her prima was more than she could take. She knew she would eventually need to get accustomed to seeing him and her cousin together, but if he wasn't coming to Casita then she wouldn't try to find him.

Not to actually talk at least.

She couldn't stop herself from hearing him though.

From locking in on the sound of his voice and the soft words of his beautiful poetry.

Poetry she now knew was probably about Isabela (Although Mariano never actually shared his words with Isa, and he never actually specified anything that was really HER, which Dolores of course knew, but it wasn't her place to say and it certainly wasn't her place to *hope*).

She was heartbroken, but like all bad habits, she couldn't get herself to stop.

Dolores would be fine in public, but privately--and maybe selfishly-- she kept his poetry for herself.

## Chapter End Notes

This is not abandoned (lol at my mid January time frame) I just have been battling my own brain and dealing with grad school, but it will get continued! I cannot give a time frame nor an update schedule because if I do I know I will not stick to it, which will make me feel like shit, or I will stick to it and the story will be absolute shit (its probably shit anyway, but please don't tell me that). I will complete this eventually though. Anyway, to now give advice I have never once taken, I hope everyone is taking care of themselves and please go drink some water.

# Dolores (past)

## Chapter Summary

Grandkid roundup sleepover! (sry antonio)

Isabela learns something new!

## Chapter Notes

sorry idek if this is coherent.

DISCLAIMER: I am not Colombian and my only lessons on Spanish were in American high school, meaning I do not actually know Spanish. I tried to use it sparingly, but please let me know if I need to correct anything! The same goes for cultural aspects!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's been three years since the sleepover where Isabela told Dolores about Mariano.

Isabela never brought up Mariano during sleepovers after that and Dolores certainly wasn't going to ask.

It's Dolores' turn to host again and ever since Luisa found out they did this, she'd been begging to come.

Neither prima wanted to open up their monthly sleepovers for good, but her and Isabela figured, ~~after being lectured by their parents~~, that it couldn't hurt to make it a "cousins" sleepover every once and a while.

This was how Dolores found herself in the middle of getting her nails painted by Mirabel while Camilo and Luisa raided her makeup.

Isabela was sitting on Dolores' bed, flipping through a book, looking very bored. Antonio was still too little, a fact that he is *not* thrilled about and did throw a tantrum over.

Dolores re-focused her attention on Mirabel, who had stopped working on her nails to throw pillows at Camilo. He was currently shifting through all the boys their age, trying to guess which one was Mirabel's crush.

"Come ON, just tell me and i'll stop! Have I at least gotten close with my guesses?"

"Not even remotely, you are as cold as ice! But this is definitely fun for me so, *please*, keep going." Mirabel laughed and focused back on Dolores' nails.

Camilo just groaned and flopped onto the pillows that their prima had been throwing, "I went through EVERYONE our age, HOW am I ice cold?" Mirabel continued her painting and responded in a sing-song voice "*Not everyone!*"

Dolores wasn't quite sure what Mirabel meant by that, but Isabela certainly did based on the way she shot up with wide eyes.

Using a scarily serious tone she asked, "Mirabel, what are you talking about? Girls don't-- girls *can't* like other girls that way. *Not here*. Right?!" On that last question she locked eyes with Dolores, but she wasn't sure how to answer. She knew that women *did* love other women that way, even in the Encanto, but she also knew those weren't her stories to tell. Mirabel had no such qualms.

"Sure they do! Señora Diaz and her espousa have been together for longer than we've been alive!" Dolores knew Señora Diaz was the seamstress in town and she knew the truth about her relationship with her "friend" that lived with her. Señora Lawrence would help Señora Diaz in the shop sometimes and *adored* when Mirabel was there for her lessons.

Once, when her gift was still new, she had asked her Mami why it was an unspoken secret truth when her parents had always told her that love was never something to hide.

The irony of that statement now for Dolores.

Pepa had just told her that some people didn't understand them, but that their love was just as beautiful, real, and amazing as that of any couple and that the people who didn't get it were stubborn.

Mirabel's voice cut through her thoughts, "AND, I read a book that had a bunch of different labels for the ways that people can love each other! There's even flags! Plus I mean, I *know* how I feel and I *know* who my own crush is on, Isa!"

Mirabel pointed to her newly embroidered rainbow of blue, purple, and pink on her top, "Look see, this flag represents me! And Señora Diaz's flag is pink, white, and orange. Since I like both boys and girls, it means I'm what's known as bisexual!" She said it like she expected a challenge.

Knowing how her and Isabela have been lately, Dolores wouldn't have been surprised.

Instead, Isabela responded entirely the opposite.

Isabela stood up from her place on the bed and walked over to where the nail station was set up. She put her hand on Mirabel's arm to get her to put down the nail polish in her hand, and, confusingly brought her in for a hug?

Mirabel was confused too, asking Dolores for help with her eyes.

Then Isabela started speaking so softly that Dolores knew for a fact that without her gift she would not have heard.

"Mirabel, te amo mucho, you know that right? I am—I—" she let out a soft sigh before drawing in a deep breath to steel herself, "I'm proud of you." Both relaxed into the hug from the previously tense posture and lingered long enough for Luisa to join in.

Isabela eventually pulled back first and said loud enough for all in the room to hear “Camilo! You heard the girl, you haven’t guessed everyone! Shift on!”

The statement broke whatever tender moment the sisters had been having, and Luisa took Dolores' place in the nail station.

Isabela and Dolores sat on the bed, but before Camilo started to shift to guess again Mirabel sat up suddenly and quickly said “*But maybewe dont tell Abuela*. Please.” She looked around with wide eyes at the rest of the teens. They all started shaking their heads and vocalizing their promises not to. It was not their information to tell, something Dolores was well-versed in.

The rest of the night passed rather mundanely, but Dolores spent it watching Isabela.

Her response to Mira was confusing, and the way she was acting now, just sitting so quietly lost in thought, it was all very unlike her, both her perfect version and the real one. Something about Mirabel’s revelation was important to Isabela. Dolores just wasn’t sure if it was her place to ask.

## Chapter End Notes

Did this instead of my real life things that actually have deadlines. Idk if this makes sense or flows with the rest. I want to finish this story and I know how I want to but like the actual getting there is simply so much. See you next time.

Also I choose to ignore historical accuracy for my own purposes (cause gay people have, ya know, always been here), idc that mirabel would def not have a book with sexuality labels in 1950 in a secluded village, but in my fic she does thanks.



# Isabela (past)

## Chapter Summary

Isabela is Going Through It™

## Chapter Notes

TW: some internalized homophobia, some comp het

I am sorry for how long this took, like Isabela in this chapter i am Going Through It™ and this is a silly little story I write for fun, so if anyone is still reading I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Mariano and Isabela have been unofficially/officially courting for roughly five years at this point.

They're finally old enough for marriage to begin being discussed *seriously*.

There's talk of an upcoming proposal, though the when has yet to be set.

Isabela suggested waiting until after Antonio's ceremony and Abuela *thankfully* agreed.

Isabela felt like she was *suffocating*. Like she was being buried alive.

She thought she could grow to like Mariano.

They had been good friends and she knew he was conventionally attractive.

She allowed other people to write the narrative of her life and let them tell her how good her relationship was.

No one else shared any of her doubts, her concerns, her fears, and she had no idea how to even begin to bring them up. *Not* in the beginning and *certainly not* now *years* in.

How can she possibly admit that she has never seen Mariano that way? Never felt any romantic feelings about him?

How can she possibly admit that she is *nothing* like what they think?

She thought she was like Mirabel, able to like both men and women.

But now, she knows that that's not her truth. She's tried so hard, with the seemingly *perfect* man, but she doesn't love him. Her eyes still drift to other girls.

But what she wants doesn't matter.

She *isn't* Mirabel.

She's the oldest and has a duty to the family and a duty to the Encanto.

Isabela steeled her nerves before exiting her room to join the familia for dinner.

*Senorita Perfecta.*

*At least I can drop this at the sleepover.*

*At least I can count on Lores not to bring up the engagement.*

Dinner was a subdued affair, tensions rising by the day in la casa Madrigal as Antonio's birthday got closer, just a few weeks to go now.

Dolores and Isabela were having their monthly sleepover that night.

They had just gotten set up with chocolate con queso and had been talking about their book of the month, an idea Dolores had proposed, when *exactly* the thing Isabela had been hoping to escape was brought up.

"Hey Isa, can I ask you something? And please be honest?"

Isabela nods.

"Are— do you really want to marry Mariano?"

Dolores set her mug down, leaning forward to grab her prima's hands.

Isabela felt her eyes widen and her heart speed up at the question.

This was unprecedented!

*Sleepovers were sacred time for them!*

*Never boy talk!*

*Never the need for Senorita Perfecta!*

In the span of fifteen seconds Isabela had schooled her features into the mask she wears daily. She hates herself for it.

Isabela let out a laugh that she had perfected during her years of being perfect. It sounded completely sincere with none of the empty hollowness she felt overtaking her. The role of Senorita Perfecta is one she can slip back into easily.

She gave her cousin the same answer she had been giving her mother, “Dolores, I don’t know if you remember me talking to every guy our age in town when we were teens, but Mariano is the one for me.” Isabela gulped, the lies burning in her throat.

“You know, Camilo always jokes that a botanist is going to get lost in the mountains and we’ll bond over the plants” she wiggles her fingers over Dolores on that last part, conjuring flower petals to rain down on her. Instead of the laughter she was expecting, Dolores just sits up and—in a look remarkably resembling Tia Pepa—stares expectantly at Isabela.

Isabela can feel her chest tighten as she sits up too, keeping the forced smile that she hopes still looks real on her face.

The girls both just look at one another, one serious, one smiling but scared.

Her pending nuptials were still fresh enough that no one brought it up to her with anything but excitement. She wasn’t exactly sure what to do, even though...this is *Dolores*.

Her absolute best friend.

She shouldn’t be scared.

She should just tell her prima the truth.

Admit to being a fraud.

*But.*

Things in their house and in the Encanto were progressing.

Moving forward.

And she's supposed to be leading the charge. Setting the good example.

She didn't want to upset the delicate balance of their home, things were on edge enough with concerns about whether Antonio would get a gift. And while she logically knew that her family, excluding Abuela, would have absolutely no problem with her breaking things off, it didn't ease her mind.

For one, there was always the "Abuela" of it all. She really didn't know how she would react. *Accept it? Understand that Mariano is nice, but he's not for her. Or will that be the straw that breaks the camel's back? Put the family at risk?*

Secondly, if she was nervous for Abuela's reaction to her not liking Mariano, she was beyond terrified of Abuela's reaction to her not liking *men*.

She accepted their neighbors and even Mirabel when Mirabel told her at her quince, but Mirabel wasn't the oldest.

She wasn't the "perfect flower", the golden child, the one expected to carry on the family name, to start the next generation and *soon*.

And Mirabel still actually liked men, even though Isabela knows that's not how it works and not a fair way to rationalize, since Mirabel won't actually choose who she loves, but Isabela also knows that *is* the thought process Abuela has.

Abuela was already not the best to Mirabel, so her treatment didn't change. Isabela didn't know if she could handle damaging her relationship with her grandmother all because she can't get over herself.

Everyone can see how great Mariano is, so why can't she get herself to feel it?

Why can't she get herself to love him?

Thirdly, she knew Tio Bruno saw her get the life of her dreams, but what a dream life looks like in a vision rarely reflects reality.

She had resigned herself to the idea that the vision showed the “dream life” expected of her.

She's long assumed that the perfect act she could put on was what made her Tio think the vision was positive. That the things her Abuela wanted for her would be Isabela's dream too because she perfected her fake smile.

A thought clicks in her head.

“Do you— Do you think that when Tio Bruno said that the life of my dreams would be mine he really meant *my* dreams? The life that *I* want?”

The question comes out a lot softer than she had intended, but Dolores hears her just fine. Her features soften from her expecting stare to a look of concern and a little bit of sadness.

For the first time ever, Isabela lets herself consider a different interpretation of the vision.

Before he left, Tío Bruno very rarely let anyone see the visions they asked for, relaying the message and slate instead, and when she asked him to look at hers it was no different. No amount of pouting changed his mind.

So when he said the life of her dreams was promised, she assumed her future and chance at a perfect life was in the hands of the promisor. Isabela thought that promisor would be some kind of fate, or maybe just Abuela, which is why she tried so hard with Mariano.

It was only now, more than a decade later, that Isabela is realizing her future might be a lot more in her hands than she thought.

A hopeful voice finds its way to the front of her thoughts, *maybe you really can have it all, maybe you—*, she feels hands grabbing hers, pulling her up into a hug.

“He absolutely meant the life *you* want. Your dreams *will* come true.” Tears spring to her eyes. She hugs her prima back and can’t help but feel ridiculous. Dolores doesn’t even know what the problem is and she still knows exactly what to say.

## Chapter End Notes

I am also sorry for how short this was. Anyway I have no idea when the next chapter will be coming. I'm more consistent with The Rats in the Walls I think. Sorry. It will be finished though!

Please come scream with me on tumblr about anything and everything:  
<https://www.tumblr.com/blog/sorryiwassleep>

Completely unrelated to the fic and Encanto but everyone (if you like musical theater) should listen to The Great Moon Hoax by Pulp Musicals cause it is an album that slaps so hard and not enough people know about it

# Isabela (post-fall)

## Chapter Summary

Isabela and Mirabel have a much needed conversation, and it leads Isabela to reveal and realize some things.

## Chapter Notes

BACK FROM THE DEAD! This fic has arisen!

This chapter is actually before the last one and I will be leaving it up this way for a week for updating purposes and then fixing that, so this is technically chapter 7! So timeline wise, this is post-fall, WAY pre the sleepover where Isabela tells Dolores about her crush (obv)

I am currently going back and editing for formatting because holy FUCK was this fic formatted terrible, so if you want to re-read, it's probably nicer this time around, although the story is exactly the same!

Proceed!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's been a few days since Casita fell.

Isabela hasn't been able to feel anything but a weight on her chest.

She almost *lost* her little sister.

Almost watched her *die*.

*For a candle.*



Because *she* couldn't stand up for herself to Abuela.

Because *she* let Mirabel be blamed and screamed at, all because she was afraid.

Afraid of the truth.

Isabela was sorting through the clothing that'd been loaned to them, putting them in piles according to size when the very sister she'd been thinking of comes up next to her.

Isabela feels a hand on her shoulder.

She turns and sees a face *filled* with concern.

“Can we talk?”

Isabela nods and puts down the shirt in her hands, letting herself be led to a chair.

*I don't deserve your concern Mirabel. I was terrible to you for so long because I was jealous. I'm so sorry. You're so brave and interesting and I wish I could be more like you.*

Isabela doesn't say any of that out loud though.

“What's up?”

Mirabel adjusts her glasses in a mimicry of their father and fixes her with a serious face.

“You haven’t broken it off with Mariano.”

Isabela feels her eyebrows turn in.

She hesitantly nods, unsure what Mirabel is getting at.

It’s Mirabel’s turn to look confused, not understanding Isabela’s own confusion.

“You— you don’t love him. You told me yourself.” Mirabel gesticulates as she speaks, her hands flying wildly. “So... *why not?*”

Old habits die hard and Isabela’s walls are up.

She scoffs.

“You think I could do that *now*? Of all times? After *everything* fell apart?” Mirabel flinches back and Isabela feels guilt stab at her.

Isabela just sadly shakes her head and looks away. “The family needs this now more than ever.”

“Isa, look at me.” She keeps her gaze locked on the ground.

“*Please.*”

Isabela tilts her head fractionally and looks at Mirabel out of the corner of her eyes.

Mirabel reaches out and grasps Isabela's hands.

“The family doesn't need you to be anyone but yourself. *No one* would want you to marry a man you don't love. Especially not Abuela. Don't do this for her.”

Tears spring to Isabela's eyes.

*I just can't.*

*How would I even start.*

*It's not even just Mariano either, but men and how could I say that.*

Without realizing, she'd said those things out loud based on the sharp inhale Mirabel takes in response.

Isabela finds herself wrapped in a hug before she knows what's happening.

“Oh Isa. Thank you for telling me.”

Isabela blinks and the tears start to go down her face.

She hadn't meant to tell her sister that, the same way she'd never meant to tell her that she didn't want to marry Mariano in the first place.

But holy crap does she feel great now that she has.

Mirabel just seemed to drag the truth out of her these days.

“I love you. I’m proud of you. And you don’t have to tell anyone anything you don’t want.”  
Mirabel draws back and cups Isabela’s cheeks just like Mamá does and wipes away the tears.

“But you *do* owe Mariano the truth that you don’t love him.”

Isabela closes her eyes at that, letting more tears out, even as she nods.

She knows she does.

She’s known for years that she was being unfair to him.

Trapping him in a loveless marriage as much as she was being trapped herself.

“Also... it might not be the best time to mention but I think Dolores might like him.” Mirabel let’s out the words in a rush and Isabela’s eyes open in surprise.

Mirabel has a shocked look of her own as if she can’t believe she said the words out loud.

“*Wh—what?*” Isabela whispers.

Mirabel cringes but nods.

*No.*

*Dolores doesn’t—*

*No.*

Isabela claps a hand over her mouth as she cries out, a lot of things being to make sense to her.

*I was ruining her life too.*

*Oh my god.*

*I was the girl in the vision.*

*Betrothed to another.*

*Fuck.*

Isabela cries out again, a mix between a sob and a manic laugh.

She has to go find Mariano.

She has to find her prima.

And she has to start being more honest.

Chapter End Notes

Is anyone alive out there? Prob not because this fic was DEAD, but I had inspo and here we are!

There'll prob only be one or two more chapters to this story anyway, and I didn't want to leave it unfinished. I also updated the summary a little, but like the editing I'm doing, the story is exactly the same.

Hope you liked!

Scream with me on tumblr: [@sorryiwasasleep](#)

# Isabela

## Chapter Summary

Isabela's crush is revealed!

## Chapter Notes

Sorry it's been so long. My brain rot hasn't left but my ability to write anything but angst went away. I will not let this go unfinished tho!!!

This one's a short boy.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"I— I think... I might *like* someone."

Isabela held her breath, waiting for her prima to respond.

She was nervous.

More nervous than she had ever been.

She could feel the cacti springing up from anxiety around the perimeter of her room.

Her heart felt like it was about to pound out of her chest and Isabela felt like if she didn't spill her guts now, then she never would. That she'd put back up her mask of Señorita Perfecta.

Things have changed within Casita, with the Madrigals, as a group and as individuals.

One look at Isabela would tell anyone that. Her hair was currently choppy and short, with blue streaks running through it. She had on pajamas at the moment, but her wardrobe had completely shifted from ruffled dresses. She even owned a pair of pants!

*But...*

With change always comes pushback.

And fear.

And Isabela is afraid that what she's about to say will be the change that pushes them too far. The thing that snaps them all back to 'normal', back to before, back to when she hated herself.

She took a deep breath reminding herself that she was safe, that she was with Dolores. *Mirabel already knows and she doesn't think any different of you, Dolores won't either.*

"Oh yea, someone I know?" Dolores spoke up.

Isabela could feel her entire body pounding in time with her chest as she took in a deep inhale. *Dolores can probably hear my heart.* That thought made it speed up even more. She let out the breath she was holding.

"Um, maybe? *She* came in with the group of refugees two months ago." Isabela sucked in another breath and held it. *Moment of truth.*

Dolores reacted in a way that was both totally expected but still threw Isabela for a loop. She acted... like it was normal.

"Ohhhh is it the Mendez girl? She's had her eye on you since the first time she saw you swing on a vine." Isabela felt taken aback.



For one thing, it was *not* Sofia Mendez though Isabela is now going to rethink every single interaction they've ever had. Isabela *knows* logically that this is probably not news for Dolores, and is definitely not the world shattering news it feels like it is for herself. She *knows* that Dolores is more than aware of the couples *like her* that live in town. And she expected her prima to be supportive.

Still, the adrenaline pumping in her veins and the fight or flight instinct was becoming too much. Isabela almost wanted to backtrack wishing she could take the words back, despite them being the truth.

But she soldiered on, forcing out the next sentence, it coming out in a rush of one high pitched breath. "It's Manuela Fernandez we met when she did the mural and she's just so cool and gave her some paint and—" Dolores sat up and grabbed Isabela's hands from where they had started to pick at a patch of grass.

"Whoa, whoa, I might have super hearing but even I didn't catch that. Start again prima and BREATHE. It's *okay*. Te amo." Dolores started taking exaggerated inhales and exhales, Isabela eventually getting the hint and starting to follow along.

"You're right. Lo siento. Y te amo." Isabela took another breath, scrunching up her face before starting again.

"It's Manuela Fernandez. The painter." She braced herself for... something but was met with a soft embrace from Dolores.

"Thank you for telling me. Do you want to talk about her?" She heard her cousin whisper. Isabela let out a laugh at that.

"*God yes*, I've been dying to." The cousins pulled back from their hug and settled back into their spots laying down.

“We met when she was touching up the mural and she’s just... so *cool*. I gave her some of the paints I’ve been working on and she keeps asking for more, so that’s a good sign right? That she keeps coming back? I, I’ve never actually felt like this about someone before. Is this how Mariano made you feel?”

Dolores smiled softly. “Everyday. And, well, you didn’t hear it from me, but I *think* she doesn’t go through paint as quick as she’d have you believe.”

Isabela sat up as gardenias bloomed in her hair.

She could feel her cheeks heating up as her lips curled up into a smile. She could see Dolores softly laughing at her, but couldn’t find it in her to care much about the teasing.

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry it’s so short. Please comment if you enjoyed or hated or simply just read because it will make me want to actually update this fic and will also make me feel like I’m a real person and not just a being floating through existence without meaning or purpose or even visibility half the time.

Isabela’s crush is revealed! There’s more to this story i just don’t know when it’ll come. It will eventually! I swear!

I also have to re-read this to see if it’s coherent so I’m sorry if the flow is awful.

Now go eat a snack or drink something or get some sunlight or some sleep! Whatever you need in this moment for self care GO do it!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!