

Book Review: Kiss Her Goodbye
By Lisa Gardner

Thanks to NetGalley and Grand Central Publishing for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review. "Kiss Her Goodbye" is scheduled for release on August 12, 2025.

"Kiss Her Goodbye" is the fourth book in author Lisa Gardner's series about Frankie Elkin, a recovering alcoholic who spends her life searching for missing people the world has stopped looking for.

I've read the previous three ("Before She Disappeared", "A Step Too Far", and "Still See you Everywhere"), and I wish I could say this was the best of the batch. Unfortunately, it's just the opposite.

In "Kiss Her Goodbye," Frankie travels to Tucson, Arizona to take up the search for Afghan refugee Sabera Ahmadi who was last seen leaving her place of employment three weeks prior. Initially, the police are unconcerned (which I suppose says a lot about their lack of interest in the city's burgeoning Afghan population). But Sabera's close friend, Aliha, is convinced there's trouble because Sabera would never up and leave her four-year-old daughter, Zahra.

The story becomes convoluted quickly, and there were times I paused and wondered, what the heck is going on? Frankie quickly realizes this is not your run-of-the-mill missing person's cold case, which is her specialty. It also becomes readily apparent that she is out of her league. To catch her (and the reader) up, paragraphs of running dialogue from Aliha and others attempt to explain the Afghan way of life. But these quickly become a tedious read.

There are periodic chapters that read like journal entries made by Sabera years earlier during the turbulent fall of Kabul. But rather than provide important backstory, they seem to be taken out of context and only serve to confuse. I often thought, who are these people? But the answers are not apparent.

Even the side challenge Frankie faces of having to house sit (and feed) a large iguana and a host of snakes lost its potential luster fast. And the ending, while attempting to pull everything together, comes up short.

If there is a book five in the series, I will check it out based on my affection for the first three books. And hope that “Kiss Her Goodbye” is just a small pothole in the series.

Three stars, based mostly on the strength of the previous books.

And you can check out all my reviews at my Raised on Reading (www.raisedonreading.com) book blog.