

Title: *Cemetery Boys*
Author: Aiden Thomas
Genre: Fantasy

Reviewer Name and Grade: Matthew J., 9th Grade

Date Reviewed: March 22, 2021

Cemetery Boys by Aiden Thomas, is a charming story about Yadriel, a transgender boy, who lives in Los Angeles and takes place in modern times. Yadriel is an introverted teen, who just wants to be treated like the rest of the family. His family is of Latino origins and he lives in a graveyard where his family continues to keep ancient traditions, such as day of the Dead and the Quinces ceremony. His family has the ability of being able to see spirits, and help them off to the afterlife. Yadriel, however, has been denied these abilities by his family because of him being transgender. To prove them wrong, Yadriel does the ceremony with his friend and gains the powers, it's then that they realise his cousin, Miguel is missing, which causes a mass panic within the graveyard. Yadriel and Martzia, Yadriel's best friend head off to search for Miguel's spirit on their own when they find a medal, which happens to be connected to a spirit named Julian. Yadriel summons Julian and when realise he isn't the right spirit, they try to release him to the afterlife, Julian refuses stating that he wants to make sure his friends are ok before he goes to the afterlife. Yadriel and Martzia agree, on the terms that he has to behave and not cause trouble. After school, Julian, Yadriel, and Martzia head out to look for Julian's friends. They find them hiding out under a bridge where they learn about Julian's brother, Rio. As it turns out, a day before Julian died, he ran away from home. Eventually they find out that Yadriel's Tito was behind Julian's death, and used him to summon Bahlam so that he could be the most powerful bruja to ever walk the earth. As Julian's spirit fades in and out of existence, Yadriel sacrifices himself to save Julian, while his Tio's plan backfires, and he is sent to Xibalba, Xibalba is a place between the land of the dead and the land of the living, which spirits must cross through, however, Lady Death provides them safe passage.

Did the plot keep you interested?

The plot of *Cemetery Boys* is very interesting and managed to keep me interested for the whole book.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

It uses a mixture of comic relief and drama at a steady pace to keep the reader hooked. So I would say it's just right in terms of pace.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for? What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would suggest this book to anyone of grades 7+, as it does deal with some mature topics, such as death and LGBTQIA+ acceptance. I would also suggest that anyone reading *Cemetery Boys*, know at least a little bit of Mexican Folk Lore, as it does deal with some Mexican traditions and gods, such as Xibalba and Lady Death.

I would rate this book a 5/5 stars. I rate it a 5/5 because Yadriel's interactions with others carry so much character and are quite enjoyable, and the book has many interesting facts about Mexican Folk Lore. Not to mention, it almost perfectly blends drama with humour. Overall *Cemetery Boys* is a nice book, for those who are interested in Mexican folk lore, and the LGBTQIA+ community.