

**Title:** *Lakelore*  
**Author:** Anna-Marie McLemore  
**Genre:** Magical Realism, Fantasy Fiction

Reviewer Name and Grade: Avani H., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: 3/1/24

The novel *Lakelore* written by Anna-Marie McLemore mainly takes place in a mystical world located under a lake which was believed to only exist in old folklore and fairytale stories. Our two protagonists, Bastián Silvano and Lore Garcia, two teens said to be in highschool, can be described as Mexican-American teens who are nonbinary with ADHD, dyslexia, and a type of learning disability. Bastián has lived by and has been going to this whimsical lake almost his entire life since he was introduced to it whereas Lore recently moved into the area and only went to the lake once. Both instances have been shown to be life changing for the pair. As said, these two characters have both seen this magical world located beneath a lake, but they also contain certain ties towards it. Bastián and Lore essentially “drown” their bundled up feelings into the lake when needed for comfort considering they both were in very hard situations containing disgusting situations such as bullying, homophobia, racism and more. Due to the lake only being able to hold so much, eventually these thoughts spill out of the lake and are exposed to the land above water. In order to prevent more from being spilled both characters have to face their fears, traumas, and cruel remarks made by others. Despite this, their trauma from their situations also played a huge part in the novel. Throughout the book, both main characters are shown to slowly overcome their past problems especially because of the magical lake leaking all of their enclosed “thoughts and bottled up emotions” towards the hate they were receiving. As said before, homophobia due to their gender identities and racism was received because they were latino but trauma from past experiences was overall involved in it as well. Overall, a great sense of adventure and acceptance was created throughout the novel.

*Did the plot keep you interested?*

Overall, the plot of the story mainly revolved around the lake leaking and the two protagonists trusting each other and working together in order to keep any more of their secrets from being revealed and to overcome their trauma among other sorts of fears. This plotline is shown to be very complex but was overall very intriguing due to the views of the characters switching in brisk amounts of time and new information about the characters or the novel in general being added constantly.

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

The pace of the book seemed to somewhat vary at times due to new information being added and many chapters having extremely different sizes as any novel does, but overall the speed was just right with all of these components combined.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

Due to the many adult-like points being brought up like racism, bullying, and even forms of abuse shown during a scene in the story, and a high sense of maturity is needed so ages 14 and older should suffice.

*What type of reader would you recommend this to?*

I believe readers who enjoy representation of the LGBTQ+ community along with a mystical journey and relatable characters to an extent would completely enjoy the story. Also, readers who enjoy a complex plot with many “layers” would most certainly enjoy the plotline and the different characters involved in it.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?* Overall, the book contains much standard Mexican representation so knowing a little about the culture will definitely help with understanding some of the things that are described throughout the storyline. Also, knowing a little about ADHD and dyslexia can help understand what the two protagonists are going through on a deeper level.

All in all I will rate this story a four out of five stars. The lake is shown metaphorically to be a sort of “safe space” for the two very unaccepted teens but eventually shows that things will be better and eventually accepted if you attempt to face the fears you have. It is conveyed that being latino and having brains that do not work the same as everyone else's is shown to be very hard to adjust and live with, but past the hardships there is light at the end of the tunnel. For example, in Lore's case they are mainly described to be struggling with his identity and figuring what to essentially do with himself. A line they say proves this, “He hates me because, for a second, I made him see me as a boy.” This line shows that Lore is struggling with their identity and hating himself for treating Bastián any differently than they should have due to their insecurities. But, at the end of the story Lore is shown to have grown tremendously and accepted who they are especially when Lore says “*sometimes you can't separate the hard things from the good things.*” This being said shows major character growth and translates to Lore accepting that they have enough courage and bravery to face their problems rather than making the mistake of hiding them away. Just like Lore, Bastián has grown as well, though Bastián was shown at the beginning of the story to be very rejective of himself especially by the line “Adults kept calling me *daydreamy* and *lost in thought* like they always had, but now they also called me *fidgety*, *a nervous kid*, or they used euphemisms. And I knew what every one of them meant.” This line clearly shows Bastián had been taunted by grown adults his entire life and was starting to believe the horrible words they say themselves, but just like Lore, towards the end of the book Bastián states “Once you get past the fear of being seen, you can get to the part where you know you're not alone.” Again, this quote shows extreme character growth from Bastián considering they were once described to be a nervous kid but now has grown to see that what only matters is who really cares about you. Therefore, I rate the book a four out of five for representation, the showing of real life struggles of a disability and for a young adult in general along with the perks of facing your fears and stepping out into the world despite the words and thoughts of other people and your insecurities altogether.