

**Cemetery Boys**  
Aiden Thomas  
Swoon Reads, 2020

## Reviews

- [Kirkus](#) (Sept. 1, 2020): “[J]oyful, ground-breaking representation for gay, transgender boys. Heart-pounding.”
- [Booklist](#) (Sept. 6, 2020): “Aiden Thomas’ debut novel can’t help but charm and captivate readers of all ages, though teen readers will invariably identify with and appreciate the high jinks and emotional vulnerability that make each character and scenario deliciously enchanting.” Starred review.
- [Publishers Weekly](#) (June 25, 2020): “Thomas marries concept and execution in a romantic mystery as poignant as it is spellbinding, weaved in a mosaic of culture, acceptance, and identity, where intricately crafted characters are the pieces and love—platonic, romantic, familial, and communal—is the glue. Though the puzzles that Yadriel unravels can be guessed, the emotional journey is worth every step” Starred review.
- [School Library Journal](#) (Apr. 17, 2020): “[T]he characters and their struggles are authentic, showcasing their need for acceptance from their loved ones but also their refreshing certainty about who they are and what they stand for. **VERDICT** A whodunit with a tender and forbidden love story that will draw readers in as it gradually unfolds to a gratifying conclusion.”
- [The Horn Book](#) (Jan. 26, 2021): “Packed with eerie adventure, tingly romance, and family drama, the novel lays bare the tension between upholding tradition and reaching full self-acceptance. Cheeky, relatable characters bring humor and lightness into Thomas’s debut, which also takes on themes of death, loss, abandonment, and rejection. The natural integration of phrases in Spanish, Día de los Muertos traditions, and varied community structures showcases the broad range of experiences that make up Latinidad.”

## Awards

- [Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Book Awards](#), 2021
- [Lodestar Award Finalist](#), 2021
- [Barnes & Noble Children & YA Book Awards Finalist](#), 2021

## Lists

- [National Book Awards for Young People’s Literature Longlist](#), 2020

## Response to Challenges

- “A fearless portrayal of a trans protagonist, there simply aren’t enough books like this.” ([DoSomething](#))
- Richland, SC librarian Matthew C., spotlighting *Cemetery Boys* in a series on banned and challenged books: “The reader is led through the multi-faceted community of LGBTQ+ family dynamics and social struggle which proves to be bumpy, but ultimately a positive experience. [...] The unavoidable conclusion is this was challenged because it features a homosexual trans boy and a gay boy, and they share a ghost-kiss.” ([Richland Library](#))
- Mosaic Community Library in Austin, TX, spotlighting *Cemetery Boys* in a series on books under investigation by Texas State Representative Matt Krause: “But none of [the subject matter in *Cemetery Boys* is] out of the ordinary for this age category. In fact, any triggering material is written with care and consideration for the young readers. Thomas knows his audience, and cares deeply for them, and it shows in every word on the page. The ‘uncomfortable’ reality is that there aren’t enough books like *Cemetery Boys* written for the trans kids who desperately need them.” ([Mosaic Community Library](#))

## References

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