

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe

Benjamin Alire Sáenz

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A coming of age story set in El Paso, Texas in the late 1980s. This is a story of two completely different Mexican American teenage boys who meet and develop a very special friendship. Through their relationship both Aristotle and Dante discover more about themselves and the world around them. The novel is written from Ari's point of view as he grows from 15 to 17 years old.

This was a book that was very easy for me to love, which is why it is one of my favorites. It is a simple, but extremely beautiful and unique story. Every page had something special, and I found myself laughing and crying multiple times. From the way it was written, to the different titles, quotes, the characters and their relationships, everything in this story was meaningful to me. Each character has an interesting aspect to them, even Legs. The boys' parents are supportive and understanding, which makes them especially likeable. Dante is a rare individual, he is an open, caring and expressive boy who loves novels, poetry and philosophy. Ari on the other hand, can be quite moody and insecure at times, but he is also an exceptionally protective, loyal and curious person. At the beginning of the story he is a hard person to understand, but as the story progresses over time and Ari learns more about himself the readers also find out the person that he truly is on the inside.

This is a book I would recommend to anyone, but specially teens from the age of 15. Having read this book as a teen myself I was able to relate to a lot of things in it, so I think other teens will be able to connect to it as well. I also believe this to be a story anyone could learn something from, which is why that being able to own it and read it anytime you would like is very nice. There are a few curse words in the book, and it talks about some mature topics like racial and ethnic identity, masculinity, sexuality, and family relationships. Overall, this is a novel about self-discovery and acceptance. It flows flawlessly which makes it a very enjoyable reading experience.

Recommended Titles:

Carry On by Rainbow Rowell

What If It's Us by Adam Silvera

I'll Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson

The Inexplicable Logic of My Life by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue by Mackenzi Lee