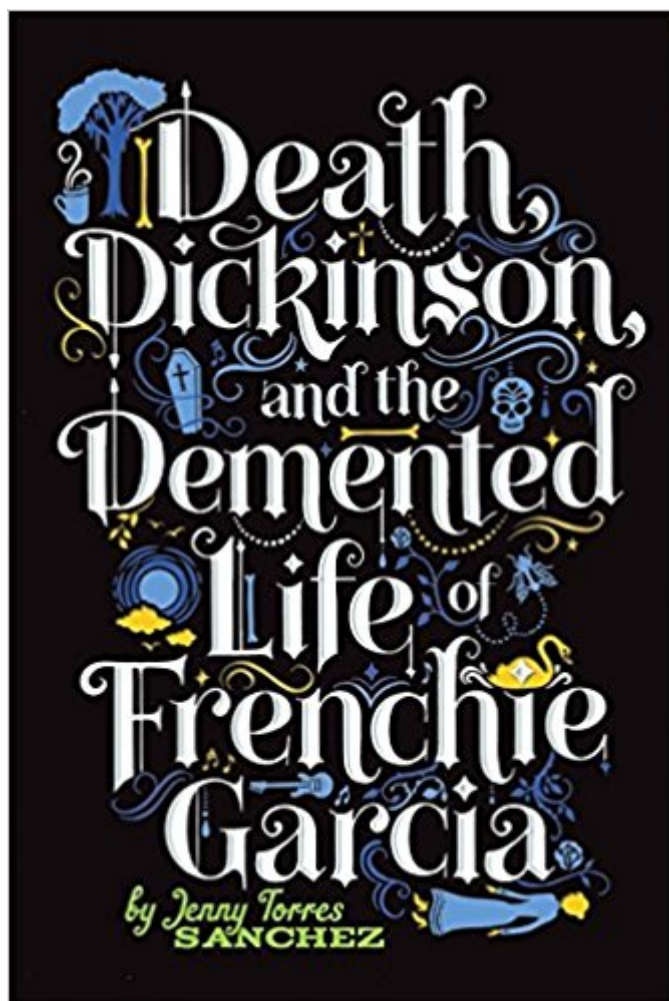


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Death, Dickinson, And The Demented Life Of Frenchie Garcia



Synopsis

TAYSHAS 2014 Reading list Kirkus Reviews Best Teen Books of 2013 It is the summer after Frenchie Garcia's senior year, and she can't come to grips with the death of Andy Cooper. Her friends don't know that she had a secret crush on her classmate, and they especially don't know that she was with Andy right before he committed suicide. The only person who does know is Frenchie's imaginary pal Em (a.k.a. Emily Dickinson), who she hangs out with at the cemetery down the street. When Frenchie's guilt and confusion come to a head, she decides there is only one way to truly figure out why Andy chose to be with her during his last hours. While exploring the emotional depth of loss and transition to adulthood, Sanchez's sharp humor and clever observations bring forth a richly developed voice.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Running Press (May 28, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0762446803

ISBN-13: 978-0762446803

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #526,454 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #131 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Suicide](#) #297 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Depression & Mental Illness](#) #725 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Death & Dying](#)

Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-Seventeen-year-old Frenchie is surprised when Andy Cooper asks her out-she has had a crush on him for years, but he barely acknowledges her. On top of that, it is a strange date as they trek to various places that seem to be important to him. When Frenchie finds out the next morning that he has committed suicide, she wonders why he chose to spend his last night alive with her. A bit of a loner, Frenchie discovers the grave of Emily Dickinson and pretends that the woman is the famous poet and makes her her best friend and confidante. After all, the grave is just down the street from where Frenchie lives in Orlando, Florida, convenient for get-togethers and gab fests. Grieving over Andy's death, Frenchie must discover why he thought he had to kill himself. She

enlists Colin, a boy she met at a club, to help her retrace their steps on Andy's last night. Despite its dark topic and the depths of Frenchie's sorrow, there is an undercurrent of humor in her observations and her conversations with Em, which keeps the novel from becoming overwhelmingly a book about death and grief. There are also the realistic aspects of teen angst as Frenchie wonders why Joel, her best friend for almost forever, has a new girlfriend, someone Frenchie does not like at all. This is a fast, well-written read with a satisfactory though not necessarily happy ending and a protagonist to remember—a survivor and person of action. A solid choice that is accessible even for reluctant readers.—Janet Hilbun, Texas Women's University, Denton, TX

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Francesca —“Frenchie—• Garcia lives on a block that dead-ends into a cemetery, which makes bearing witness to funeral processions a neighborhood pastime. Although she patterns her thoughts after Emily Dickinson's poetry, Frenchie's daily paradox balances between the blinding light and heat of an Orlando summer and the paralyzing doom and gloom of a death obsession. Frenchie is trying to make sense of the suicide of her high-school crush, Andy, who chose to spend his last night with her. In addition, her passion for art is derailed after rejection from the art school of her dreams, and her childhood friends are following the postgraduation natural order of growing up and out. With well-paced revelations, Sanchez gradually strengthens Frenchie's resolve to heal and move forward, ultimately letting her friend Colin tenderly help her retrace the events leading up to Andy's death. Frenchie genuinely wants the funeral in her brain to stop, and the author wittingly ensures that the reader wants nothing less for her. Grades 9-12. --Gail Bush

I was drawn to this book because, well, I'm a sucker for long and elaborate titles. Fortunately, my love for long titles did not lead me astray. Frenchie Garcia's obsession with death is a very real one — she lives on the down the street from a cemetery. But, as the book progresses, it becomes clear that her preoccupation with death is not only caused by her locale. The death of her classmate Andy Cooper occupies her thoughts and takes a toll on her relationship with her closest friends. *Death, Dickinson, and the Demented Life of Frenchie Garcia* reads more like a mystery than anything else. The story of Andy Cooper's death and Frenchie's role in it is slowly revealed as Frenchie's life unravels. Bits and pieces of Emily Dickinson's

poetry help take *Death, Dickinson, and the Demented Life of Frenchie Garcia* to the next level. Frenchie loves Dickinson's poems and finds comfort in her one-sided conversations with Dickinson. Each poem in the book gives meaning to Frenchie's experiences. It's also a great crash course in Dickinson's poetry if you're not familiar with it. The book's strongest point is the portrayal of Frenchie's relationships with her close friends and parents. Even though the book is from Frenchie's perspective, you can really get a sense of what her friends think of her and how they treat her. Frenchie's emotional turmoil leads her to sabotage her own friendships, but they hold strong. Unfortunately, the issue of depression is not mentioned or addressed. Still, *Death, Dickinson, and the Demented Life of Frenchie Garcia* is an interesting reflection on death and those it affects, as well as the strength of friendship. Recommendation: Get it soon, especially if you're a fan of Emily Dickinson! Review crossposted from Rich in Color: [richincolor \[.\] com](http://richincolor.com)

A crazy beautiful, sad, deep and hopeful book. Taking place in two nights, it shows how far we go to understand those we love. You need this book.

Frenchie is obsessed with death. And she's depressed. And who wouldn't be? Her long time crush took his life after spending his last night visiting weird places with her. Does she take it personally? Did he choose to spend his last night with her because she was special? Or did she just happen to be there and had a car? What was that night all about? And how does she get past it? And why don't any of her friends see that something is wrong with her? Why are they so self involved that they can't see she's suffering? And why can't she tell them what happened? Lots of questions, some answers. This isn't exactly an uplifting novel, but it isn't depressing. It's just a novel about life. Sometimes, shit happens. And sometimes, you just have to figure out how to get past it and go on. Sometimes, you don't get the answers you need, but you find understanding anyway. Andy and Frenchie spent an incredible night together. They talked and laughed and she thought "Finally, he sees me. We're gonna be together." So when she wakes up the next morning, she's expecting a day full of "happy, happy, happy!" Instead, she wakes up to the news that Andy was found dead that morning. Frenchie goes from 60 to 0 in 6 seconds flat. She hits a brick wall and just can't get back up again. We follow Frenchie through her attempt to swim through her feelings of depression and confusion. She makes several huge blunders, not that everyone else smells like a rose, but Frenchie is prickly to the point of being mean and rude. The question is, did I like Frenchie? And the

answer is yes. How can I not feel for her? She's gotten the ultimate rejection whatever Andy meant it to be, for Frenchie, it feels like rejection. She thought the night with Andy meant something good was happening in her life. And Andy ended his life. And changed Frenchie's forever. She is stuck. Her application to art school was rejected. Her best friend has dumped her for a girl. She's got nothing. Except a gravestone in the cemetery down the street that bears the name "Emily Dickinson" (not THE Emily Dickinson) and music. I loved Frenchie's brutal and I do mean brutal honesty at times. I'm sure she was lashing out, but she did feel what she was saying. I like a character that doesn't mince words. She had a mother and father that were present if a little clueless. They worried about her. And I liked Colin, the bouncer at the music club that eventually helps Frenchie get through it all. I thought he was kind of creepy and lecherous at first, but he turns out to be one of the good ones. I loved the journey, loved the characters, and I loved Jenny Sanchez's writing style. The dialogue was sharp and smart with a bit of humor, a bit of bite, and a bit of philosophical thought. Frenchie wasn't warm and fuzzy but a very believable character. The various friends are also richly developed and give even more depth to the story. The setting feels like the author lived there, is describing her old neighborhood. And the story is about growing up and moving on. Stuff happens. That's what *Death, Dickinson and the Demented Life of Frenchie Garcia* is all about. I received a copy of this novel from the publisher for review. This did not affect my opinion of the novel.

My immediate reaction to this book was "I am in love!" *Death, Dickinson, and the Demented Life of Frenchie Garcia* is a beautifully written young adult novel. Filled with philosophical questions and deep emotion, this novel was a stunner. I had anticipated that I would enjoy the book and would recommend it to my students- I didn't anticipate charging through all 272 pages in one evening. Jenny Torres Sanchez did a marvelous job creating deep characters with rushing emotions. Frenchie is a character that I think a lot of teens can relate to - especially those who lean towards the macabre. I certainly saw a bit of my (teenage) self in her.. that teenage angst that always rears its ugly (but necessary) head. The set up for the story is all there too- a good amount of build up to the story of Andy and his death, as well as Frenchie exposing herself to the reader. Sanchez also weaved the beautiful and desperate Emily Dickinson into this story, giving it yet another layer. Love, loss, life, death, growing up... it is all packed into this novel- and it gives a mighty punch. The philosophical questioning that arises throughout is incredible. I felt myself nodding in agreement and praising Frenchie's wisdom as I read the story. This young adult novel is a transitional tale - one that will help teens who are struggling to find their footing in this mad mad world. It will help kids dealing

with death and loss. The cast of characters can help kids navigate through those muddy times of change within their lives. As Frenchie shares her story of that fateful night with Andy, it can shed light for those struggling with their own depression or that of a loved one. This novel is incredible. I loved every minute of it and have already sung its praises to my colleagues and students. I would highly recommend this novel. Seriously- stop reading this post and get yourself a copy.

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