LEVELED BOOK • K

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Multi Level K•N•Q

Written by Gabrielle Fimbres

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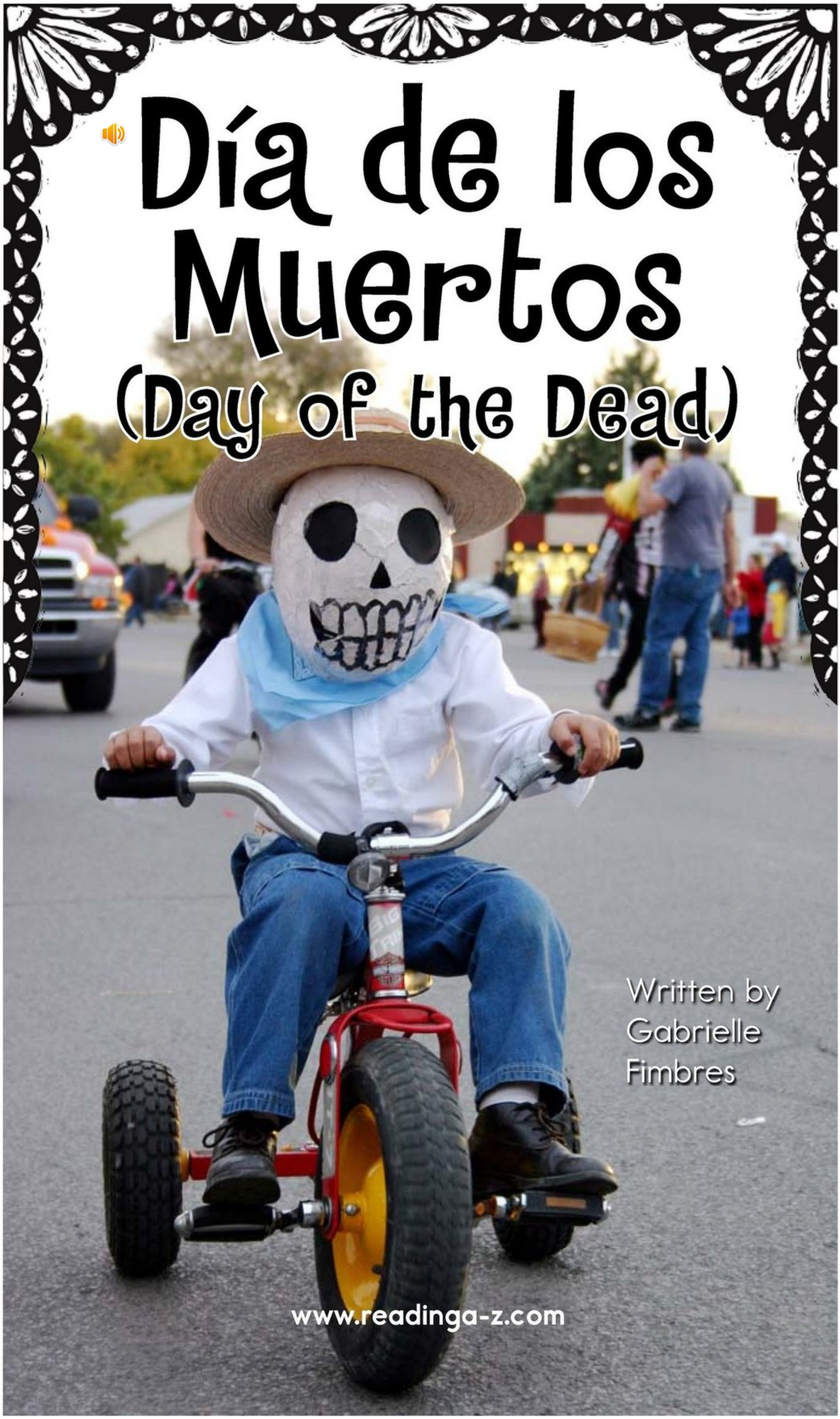
Día de los Muertos

(Day of the Dead)



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A boy performs a traditional "scissors dance" for Día de los Muertos in Lima, Peru.

When and Where?

People all over the world **celebrate** *Día de los Muertos*, or "Day of the Dead." People in Mexico have celebrated holidays like this one for thousands of years. All over the United States, people hold parades and celebrations. These usually take place around November 1 and 2.

Is It Halloween?

Día de los Muertos might seem like Halloween. The two holidays are different, though. Halloween is often about scaring people. Día de los Muertos is a time of joy. People **remember** and celebrate loved ones who have died.

A family visits and decorates the grave of a loved one in Mexico.

A family in Mexico brings flowers and food to celebrate Día de los Muertos in a cemetery.

Lidia's Día de los Muertos

Lidia Terán-Cooper grew up in Mexico. Lidia and her family spent every Día de los Muertos at the **cemetery**. The family brought flowers and a picnic.

They told stories about those who had died. Bands played special songs. Lidia and the other children danced and played all day. Día de los Muertos was always a happy day for Lidia.

A band plays in a cemetery in Mexico.

One of the many puppets in the Tucson, Arizona, parade stands above the crowd.

Lidia lives in the United States now. Lidia and her family walk in the parade in Tucson (TOO-sawn), Arizona, every year.

Before the parade, Lidia makes masks. Children and adults paint the masks and wear them in the parade.

These dancers show off their painted skull masks at the Day of the Dead parade in San Antonio, Texas.

Children wear different costumes as they walk in their special parade in Tucson, Arizona.

Day of the Dead for Children

Some places have a parade for children. Children **decorate** cardboard wings to wear. They paint their faces and put on costumes.

Altars

Día de los Muertos has many other **traditions**. Some people build **altars** in their homes. The altars are covered with cloth. The family puts up photos of the person who has died. They might add a favorite item or piece of clothing of the loved one.

An altar decorated for a loved one in a family member's home

An altar decorated with special bread and other foods

The family lights candles around the altars. They also make special bread. They might even leave a favorite drink. Flowers, skeleton toys, and dolls also decorate the altars.

Sugar Skulls

Some people make sugar skulls. People decorate the sugar skulls with colorful frosting. Children love eating the sweet skulls.

Handmade sugar skulls are displayed at a market in Mexico.

The art for Día de los Muertos often shows skeletons and uses bright colors.

Art

Some artists make paintings for the holiday. The paintings show skeletons dancing and playing music. The art is a way to celebrate friends and family members who have died.

Full of Life

Día de los Muertos helps people to feel better after losing someone they love. Marching in a parade or decorating altars can help them celebrate that special person. No other holiday is so full of life, costumes, masks, joy, memories, and love.

Children perform at a special Day of the Dead festival in Los Angeles, California.

Glossary

altars *(n.)* tables or other raised surfaces that are used for religious or spiritual purposes (p. 11)

celebrate *(v.)* to do something special to honor an event (p. 4)

cemetery *(n.)* a place where dead people are buried (p. 6)

decorate *(v.)* to make something more attractive by adding color or an ornament to it (p. 10)

remember *(v.)* to think of something again; to not forget (p. 5)

traditions *(n.)* beliefs or customs that are passed down (p. 11)

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