



Cockroach Cooties (Bug Boy)

By Laurence Yep

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Teddy and his little brother Bobby devise strategies using bugs to defeat the school bully.

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Cockroach Cooties (Bug Boy) By Laurence Yep Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"There are two kinds of people in this world--the bullies and the victims," Teddy tells his younger brother, Bobby; the two have just incurred the wrath of their schoolmate Arnie, better known as Arnie-zilla. "Guess which bunch we belong to?" However, the boys inadvertently discover that the bully is afraid of cockroaches, and the tables turn. Bobby promptly adopts a critter, which he names Hercules, and introduces Teddy to their eccentric neighbor, the Bug Lady, with whom Bobby has long shared a passion for all things creepy-crawly. Brains win out over brawn as Bobby uses cookies with a mystery ingredient to trick Arnie into a peace treaty--and compassion wins out over vengeance, as the brothers discover that Arnie is more to be pitied than feared. Full of the sights and sounds of San Francisco's Chinatown, the tale zips along at a brisk pace, percolating with snappy dialogue. A seasoned craftsman, Yep (*Dragonwings*; *The Imp Who Ate My Homework*) effortlessly shoehorns in fun facts about insects ("Did you know that cockroaches have two brains?" Bobby asks the hapless Arnie as he pursues him with Hercules). An altogether chipper outing. Ages 9-12. (Mar.)

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From School Library Journal

Grade 3-4--Set in the Chinatown section of San Francisco, this modern-day tale is about two brothers, eight and nine, previously featured in *Later, Gator* (Hyperion, 1995). Teddy, the older child, narrates. Bobby feels responsible for getting Teddy involved with a treacherous bully at school, so he devises a plan to scare the fiend with a cockroach that he obtains from "The Bug Lady," a neighbor studying entomology. The plan is effective until the roach meets with an unfortunate end, but Bobby has a new secret plan that brings Arnie to his knees. Eventually, they realize that his tough attitude is a result of uncaring parents and a difficult home life, and a tentative friendship is formed. Pair this funny, action-packed story with Elizabeth Winthrop's *Luke's Bully* (Viking, 1990; o.p.). Readers will either be instantly attracted to *Cockroach Cooties* or completely repelled by it, but those who can stomach the idea of crushed crickets in their chocolate-chip cookies will eat it up.

Elizabeth Maggio, Palos Verdes Library District, Rolling Hills Estates, CA

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From [Booklist](#)

Readers who remember brothers Teddy and Bobby from *Later, Gator* (1997) will welcome their return here. The brothers are still very different and frequently at odds with each other, but this time they grow closer as they combine forces against a common enemy: Arnie, the school bully. In danger of getting pummeled to a pulp, insect-loving Bobby finds Arnie's weak spot--a fear of cockroaches. Through Bobby, Teddy is introduced to the neighborhood entomologist, as well as to Hercules the pet roach. Bobby ultimately defeats Arnie, not with fists, but with imagination and psychology. But, as in so many of Yep's books, the point is not so much getting even as breaking down barriers: the brothers uncover a grim reason for Arnie's fears and fierceness, and initiate a cautious friendship. A few scenes seem unfocused, and this can't compare to Yep's more mature novels, but for readers in lower grades, this puts bugs and mean bullies against an unusual cultural background. Children need not be familiar with the earlier book to enjoy this one, though they will probably seek out the older title to find out about the alligator Teddy mentions several times. *Catherine Andronik*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sheila Foxworth:

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