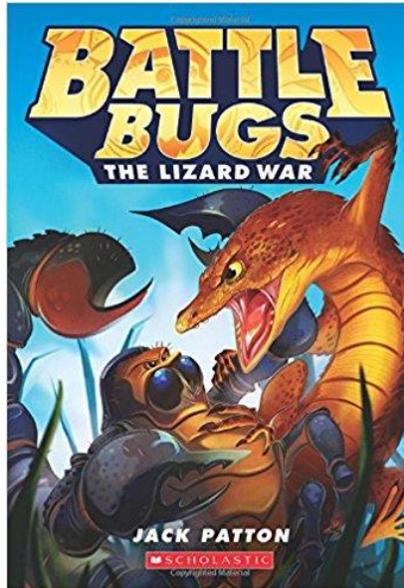


Jeff Coco

Book Discussion Guide



Battle Bugs

Book series by: Jack Patton

About the series and Author

Battle Bugs is a 10-book series by author Jack Patton and illustrated by Brett Bean. The entire series is devoted to several battles between insects and reptiles that are at war. The bugs have an ally though, and he is a little boy named Max Darwin. The author, Jack Patton, lives in England and is recognized as an insect enthusiast.

Summary

A young boy named Max Darwin is a backyard adventurer. He loves the arthropods in his backyard and keeps three walking sticks as pets in his room. His mom works at an auction house and brings home random and unique items for Max. Nothing excites Max more than his latest

item, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Arthropods*. This is an old book with a magnifying glass tucked into a pocket on the inside cover. Discovering a map inside, he uses the magnifying glass to read the tiny names printed on it. Bug Island is the name of one place he read, and he wishes he could be there. The book transports him to Bug Island, but he is the size of an insect! From there he befriends a scorpion named Spike who brings him to the camp to meet Barton, a titan beetle, and the leader of the bug army. He meets other friends such as Webster, a trapdoor spider, and Buzz, a giant hornet and leader of the flying squadron. They accept Max into their ranks because of his 'big brain' and believe he can help them fend off General Komodo and the lizard army. Max helps them escape the first wave and discovers that the magnifying glass is the key to getting home. He uses the magnifying glass to travel back and forth throughout the series. At the end of each book is some information on the featured insects in the book.

Discussion guide

1. The main character, Max, loves insects and exploring his backyard. Can you relate to that feeling when you were a child or when you go outside to explore? Does he make you want to explore more about the world around you?
2. The magnifying glass that is inside the *Encyclopedia of Arthropods* has a symbolic quality. Its use in the series is for Max to travel to and from Bug Island. What symbolism does it represent? What do you think of when you hear about or see a magnifying glass?
3. There are a small number of pictures in each of the books. All the insects are drawn in cartoon style. The cartoonish drawings and the arthropod personalities all help to develop the story. Do the individual character personalities hint at the demeanor of the actual

arthropods? For example, Webster, the trapdoor spider, is very timid and shy. Is his character an accurate assessment into how a trapdoor spider behaves? What about some of the other characters?

4. Most of the information about the insects and spiders in these stories are accurate in behavior and description. They highlight the important skills each arthropod supplies to the war effort. Do you think these descriptions highlight how interesting and diverse insects are? Does it make you more interested in learning more about arthropods?
5. Battle bugs stages a war between lizards and arthropods. Various arthropods and various lizards and reptiles are depicted within the ranks. Lizards and reptiles eat insects which emphasizes the *why* of this war. In reality, lizards are eating for food and insects try and defend against being eaten. Is this valid, in context to the lifecycle of these creatures? Have you ever seen a lizard eat an insect? Observe a lizard (if applicable) or watch a video. Would you agree that insects and lizard are in a struggle for survival? Why or why not?
6. If you were Max, would you be willing to fight alongside the arthropods? Would you fight for the lizards? Depending upon which side you would choose, why would you aid them?
7. Do you feel that this is a good book series to introduce a young child to world of insects? Why or why not?