



The Earth Dragon Awakes: The San Francisco Earthquake of 1906

By Laurence Yep

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Over the years the earth has moved many times under San Francisco. But it has been thirty-eight years since the last strong earthquake. People have forgotten how bad it can be. But soon they will remember.

Based on actual events of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and told from the alternating perspectives of two young friends, the earth dragon awakes chronicles the thrilling story of the destruction of a city, and the heroes that emerge in its wake.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 3-7 Yep looks at the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 from two points of view. Chin is a young Chinese immigrant whose father is a houseboy for a prominent banker and his family. He has become friendly with young Henry Travis, the banker's son, through their interest in low-brow but exciting penny dreadfuls. The stories depict heroic people doing heroic things and, while both boys appreciate their fathers, they certainly do not regard them as heroes. Not, that is, until the Earth Dragon roars into consciousness one spring morning, tearing the city asunder and making heroes out of otherwise ordinary men. Yep's research is exhaustive. He covers all the most significant repercussions of the event, its aftershocks, and days of devastating fires, and peppers the story with interesting true-to-life anecdotes. The format is a little tedious one chapter visits Henry's affluent neighborhood, the next ventures to Chin's home in Chinatown, and back again and the ordinary heroes theme is presented a bit heavy-handedly. Throughout the text, the boys compare their fathers to Wyatt Earp. But the story as a whole should appeal to reluctant readers. Its natural disaster subject is both timely and topical, and Yep weaves snippets of information on plate tectonics and more very neatly around his prose. A solid supplemental choice. *Catherine Threadgill, Charleston County Public Library, SC*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 3-5. On the evening of April 17, 1906, neither eight-year-old Henry nor his friend Ching is aware that the earth beneath their San Francisco homes is shifting. Devotees of "penny dreadfuls," both boys long for excitement, not their fathers' ordinary routine lives. When the earthquake shakes the city and a firestorm breaks out, Henry and his parents scramble in the chaos and battle the fire, but must ultimately evacuate their home. Ching and his father survive the collapse of their Chinatown tenement, and flee to the ferry through the debris and turmoil. In the midst of catastrophe, the boys realize that their fathers are real-life heroes. Henry and Ching's stories are told in alternating chapters with a few interruptions for the insertion of earthquake information. Told in the present tense, the narration provides a "you are there" sense of immediacy and will appeal to readers who enjoy action-packed survival stories. *Linda Perkins*
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About the Author

Laurence Yep is the acclaimed author of more than sixty books for young people and a winner of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award. His illustrious list of novels includes the Newbery Honor Books *Dragonwings* and *Dragon's Gate; The Earth Dragon Awakes: The San Francisco Earthquake of 1906*, a Texas Bluebonnet Award nominee; and *The Dragon's Child: A Story of Angel Island*, which he cowrote with his niece, Dr. Kathleen S. Yep, and was named a New York Public Library's "One Hundred Titles for Reading and Sharing" and a Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Book.

Mr. Yep grew up in San Francisco, where he was born. He attended Marquette University, graduated from the University of California at Santa Cruz, and received his PhD from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He lives in Pacific Grove, California, with his wife, the writer Joanne Ryder.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Kennedy:

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