



Fat Boy vs the Cheerleaders

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It's geeks versus jocks in an epic battle of the beverages!

From "one of the most real, honest, and still funny male voices to come around in a while" (YALSA) comes a brand-new cast of quirky characters, pitting fat boy Gabe against the high school cheerleading team in a battle over control of the school's soda machine.

The war is ON! Never have the stakes been so high. Never have the trenches been so deep. Never has one soda vending machine been so vital. When the high school cheerleading team takes over the machine's funds previously collected by the pep band, Gabe will not stand for it. Something must be done.

Fat Boy vs the Cheerleaders Details

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Author : Geoff Herbach

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From Reader Review Fat Boy vs the Cheerleaders for online ebook

Liviania says

Although *FAT BOY VS. THE CHEERLEADERS* is Geoff Herbach's fourth novel, it is his first that isn't about Felton Reinstein. There are similarities: new narrator Gabe is also a teen boy from a single parent household who finds himself developing new relationships and a new devotion to his interests. There's a similar stream-of-consciousness style. But while *FAT BOY VS. THE CHEERLEADERS* doesn't find Herbach stepping completely outside of its wheelhouse, it isn't a retread of Herbach's debut trilogy.

Gabe drinks lots of sodas from the machine in the cafeteria - they're cheap, delicious, and the money supports the band. Gabe is a band member, and it's probably his favorite thing about school. He and his friends notice a link between the biggest kids in school, the poorest kids in school, and the kids who drink the most soda in school, but they money goes to support the band, so it all works out. At the end of the school year, there's a sudden soda price hike, the announcement of a new dance team, and band camp is cancelled. Gabe can put two and two together.

I was in band in high school, along with probably a fourth to a third of the school. It kind of amazes me that there aren't more band geek stories in YA. Herbach, through Gabe, really expresses what's great about band. That element added a special bit of appeal to me. I think the title and cover are punchy, but wish there had been a way for the band element to be apparent without reading the blurb.

FAT BOY VS. THE CHEERLEADERS is framed as Gabe's confession to the police for stealing \$14 from the infamous soda machine. Thus, from the start readers know things are set to go awry. Gabe's rambling confession is not all that plausible, but it is entertaining. I loved seeing him grow into himself throughout the story and make changes to be a better person. I also liked seeing him receive a kick to the ass whenever he needed one. Gabe may have a good cause, but he's not always in the right.

I know that when it comes to fat characters, people always wonder whether they lose weight and whether weight loss is equated with goodness. Yes, Gabe loses (some) weight. (The story covers a fairly short period of time; I got the impression Gabe was still fat at the end of the story, just slightly less fat.) It worked for me because Gabe's weight came from a combination of unhealthy places: eating crappy food (because his dad never provided anything else), never being physical (except for grudgingly making it through marching band for the glory of concert band), and emotional eating.

FAT BOY VS. THE CHEERLEADERS is a short, snappy read with lots of positive, sly messages. It allows the issues it tackles to be complex, even when they're mined for outsized comedy set pieces. (For instance, despite the title, the book explores why it is wrong to demonize the cheerleaders for profiting from something that adults did.) Herbach continues to be one of my favorite contemporary authors.

Kevin Topolovec says

What is it with contemporary YA and high school student archetypes from the Breakfast Club? Everyone is always either a delinquent, jock, nerd, preppy cheerleader, or emo.

Amy Rae says

All right, I'll say this much up front: While I expected to hate this book through and through, I ended up respecting what Geoff Herbach was trying to do. But it didn't work for me.

He's taking the slobs-vs.-snobs genre of 80s teen movies and trying to up the nuance in a contemporary YA novel. And good for him. I can see where he's trying to go with the various reversals and let's-learn-things-from-this-experience, but there was so much ugly stuff for me to slog through first that it didn't feel worth it. I genuinely started to care about the characters by the end, but it took a *while*.

Part of this is personal bias. I can't remember a single cruel thing a jock said to me in high school, but I can absolutely tell you about times that smart kids and ~alternative~ kids made me feel bad about myself. Go back to middle school, and it's different, but in high school, the cruelest people I knew were high-achiever boys who apparently got their kicks cutting me down to size when they thought I talked too much in class. (If you've ever been in a class with me and wondered why I worry about talking too much? Now you know why. Grats.) Moreover, my school district faced some pretty horrible budget cuts while I was in high school, and our orchestra was in danger of being dissolved. Things proceeded *vastly* differently--and my fellow orchestra students and I *did* stage a silent protest (one of our signs read "this is the sound of strings when they're cut"), which was effective enough to get our picture in the paper. (Our orchestra was saved, too, but I can't point solely to us for that victory, lol.)

I know that some people's schools really do resemble *Mean Girls* on a good day, but mine didn't, in my experience, and that means that the villains of this book seemed cartoonish and shallow to me. The only "good" popular kids are the ones who used to be friends with the main character in the past--our narrator is apparently the measuring stick for quality of character among the socially adept. The other jocks and cheerleaders are nearly all cut from the same mold; there's not much space in this book for cheerleaders who also work as TAs for teachers within the school (as at least one cheerleader I knew in high school did--she helped teach my freshman language arts class) or for athletes who are also dedicated musicians (which was *very* common at my school). Or, for that matter, male cheerleaders.

And while Gabe learns lessons about treating people kindly and not judging books by their covers, you have to go two-thirds of the book listening to him talk about cheerleader bitches first--and even after he figures out that that's not okay, he still refers to the dance team's dancing as "stripper moves."

All issues of capital-I Issues aside, the writing, while fast-paced, left me a little disappointed. Herbach brings up the point that a lot of the kids drinking sodas in this school are on the poorer end, but he never really does anything with that fact. The descriptions were a bit lacking; when I found out Chandra lives in a big old mansion, I was excited, because it feels like such an M.E. Kerr detail (it reminded me of *Kingdom By The Sea* in *Night Kites*), but there was no atmosphere to it. It was just a flat background for the action. The book's narrative conceit is to blame there, but that conceit was more annoying to me than anything, so I'd happily jettison it if I could. It made Gabe sound really smug at first, and I didn't realize until the end that he was supposed to be talking to a lawyer, not a police officer.

If we were going to keep the narrative conceit, I think I would have enjoyed this one more if we got snippets of testimony from RC III, Chandra, and Kailey as well as Gabe. Their perspectives might have lessened the "ugh, are we calling cheerleaders bitches *again*?" stuff and given the popular kids a little more depth.

If teenagers read this and realize they shouldn't be douches to each other, then great. That means it's doing

something good in the world. But it's not a book I enjoyed, and I don't think I would have enjoyed it as a teen, either.

(Not entirely sure on my star rating here. I honestly can't decide how many to give it.)

Rachel Hopkins says

Irritated to find out that this book was originally published under a different title and that I had already purchased it for the library. Light-weight YA.

Katie Shaw says

This book was silly but a quick read & I finished it in three days. Despite the cliche battle between the popular cheerleaders & jocks vs. the band geeks, it was rewarding to watch Gabe figure out his identity and choose to come to terms with himself and his weight. In the past, he had always used humor as a defense, but he makes new friends that accept & take him seriously. I really enjoyed his relationship with his grandpa and their workouts together; I would certainly recommend this book to high school boys and would compare it to *Swim the Fly*.

Memorial & Senior High LMC says

"That's probably just what's happening to me right now. Everybody chattering about the fat boy breaking and entering. Glad I'm locked in here instead of there in the cruel world."

Meet Gabe Johnson: student, trombone player, donut salesman, activist... criminal. Gabe, or "Chunk," tells us his story from an interrogation room. And why? Because he broke into a school soda vending machine--but there's a really good story behind it! Well, a crazy story, including shady school board meetings, riverside brawls, spooky goth houses, body-building grandpas, Facebook GIF wars, and... yeah, more.

Oh, did I forget the cheerleaders? You can't miss them. Just follow the smell of conspiracy. And the fizz of soda.

Check out this book if you are an activist at heart, like Gabe. Or if you are misunderstood, like Gore. The great thing about this book is that no character is who he or she seems, at first. Motives are multi-layered. Outcomes are surprising.

Mehsi says

Short review:

I received this book from Netgalley in exchange of an honest review.

From the blurb I expected something epic, something special, something awesome. Sadly, it was not meant to be. Sure there is a big part that is about the soda stuff, but I felt it was over the top at times. At other times I just got bored because nothing happened. They kept talking about doing something, but didn't do much at first. And later it all escalated into one big thing which included the police and all that.

There is one thing that made this book lose stars. You know it is an interview, but I hated the interruptions. We would get at a part, and suddenly you would read things like: "Yes, Sir, that is how it happened", or "No, Sir, I you said I should tell everything". At first I didn't mind, actually found it interesting, but after a few pages of interruptions I was done with it.

I did like the main character and his struggle with his weight and that is actually doing something about it. That is actually fighting it. I loved that he tried to act all funny about it (like shaking his ass or making duck faces when cheerleaders teased him). I also felt sorry for him. His weight, the fact he was teased/bullied about it, his whole family situation.

I was so proud at the ending when he fitted through that basement window (loved his reaction).

The ending was fun, I loved how the band bonded together and did that concert.

But all in all, it was just boring for a big part and just not what I expected.

Review first posted at <http://twirlingbookprincess.com/>

Emily Ann says

0.5/5 How is this nominated for an award? I read the first 15-30 pages and then skimmed the rest. Don't waste your time on this.

Dorothea says

Geoff Herbach's *Fat Boy vs the Cheerleaders* is a really fun story that I enjoyed more than I had expected I would. It has the cliche "geeks vs the popular kids" plot, but it is a very humorous and light story. It allowed me to just shut my brain off for a bit and escape, and since I listened to the audio version, it made my commute to school and work much more enjoyable. The story focuses on Gabe, (aka Chunk), who is an overweight high school band geek, and follows him, his friends, fellow band mates, and family. The high school he attends has a soda vending machine, and its profits were intended to go towards supporting the school marching band, or so they thought. It turns out that the school decides to give the soda machine money to the cheerleading squad, and chaos ensues.

Since I actually listened to the audio book for this novel rather than reading the physical text, it made this story a unique experience. Nick Podehl's narration is outstanding and really brings the story to life. He uses a different voice for each character which brings the characters to another level and makes the story more vibrant and colorful. He really helps you envision the story in your mind and makes it a lot of fun for the listener. *Fat Boy* has a lot of laugh out loud moments, and listening to the audio definitely enhances the quality of the story tremendously. I would definitely recommend this story, preferably the audio version, if you're looking for a nice, easy to digest, fun escape to pass the time.

Rebecca McNutt says

I'm really not a fan of books like this, they use that *Diary of A Wimpy Kid* style humor that I just don't find funny. If I were younger, say, twelve years old, I might appreciate it more.

Oscar A. says

Fat boy vs the Cheerleaders is an awesome book and I would definitely recommend it to you if you have not read it.

One of the things that I like about it is that by the end of the book he learns that he and other people should not be judged for their appearance. because in the beginning of the book he was being bulled and he went alone with it and tried to laugh at himself but by the end he was standing up for himself and wasn't letting anybody bully him, this made him more of a leader and he was expressing himself. Overall this made him a more confident and happy person. Another thing that I like about the book and what I liked about Gabe (the main character) was he looked at people in the best way possible for example when Mr. Shaver got arrested Gabe didn't judge him because of that he only remember the good times with Mr. Shaver. The final reason why I like the book is because the whole book is revolved around this one small problem but since they all cared so much about it they made the problem in our minds seem big it was almost like you were in the book.

Michael says

Fat Boy vs the Cheerleaders is one of those cases of me picking up a book based solely on its title. I defy you to pass that title in your local bookstore or library and not, at the very least, be curious.

When Gabe discovers that the proceeds from the school's vending machine have been redirected from the band program to a new cheerleader dance squad, he sees red. And not the Mountain Dew Code Red that he'd been purchasing from the machine with his hard earned, part-time job money at a local doughnut store. With passion and zeal, Gabe throws himself into figuring out how this has happened and what he can do about it.

Starting with giving up his beloved soda, Gabe embarks on a campaign to find what happened to the band's funding and what, if anything, he can do to get it back. Over the course of the novel, Gabe alienates school administration, his father and some of his older friends while learning a bit more about how to make his voice heard, gaining new friends (and possibly a girlfriend) and the value of getting to work on time.

From the beginning, we know that Gabe has gone too far since the story is told from Gabe's side of the conversation with his lawyer.

This is my first time reading a novel by Geoff Herbach and I can say it likely won't be my last. Gabe's story is funny and compelling, helped a great deal by Gabe's asides and comments on the events unfolding. Gabe's zeal in getting the band program reinstated, all while trying to make better choices only to be thwarted by himself time and again makes for a poignant portrayal. Sometimes Gabe doesn't realize he's gone to far until it's too late and the book wisely allows us to see that Gabe faces consequences to his actions, even if they

prove to be successful.

While the book is self contained, I can't help but feel like I'd enjoy another book with Gabe, if only to see how things develop from here. Can he maintain the new workout regiment and diet that he and his grandfather are doing? Can he continue to work on his relationship with his dad? And what about the new friends he gains over the course of this book?

IsaacY ? says

Fat Boy VS the Cheerleaders is a book about a fat boy named, Gabriel Johnson. At Minnekota Highschool, he is known as chunk, sausages, fudge balls, butter balls, cake balls, etc. Whenever someone says one of those names to him, he laughs about it on the outside but on the inside, it really hurts his feelings. He barely has any family, one dad because of divorce, and a grandpa who doesn't have enough money to own a house. Gabe has 2 good friends; Justin and Camille. Gabe knew them for awhile. He is in the marching band of the high school and he plays the trombone. His teacher, Mr. Shaver, is a really good band teacher and very nice. So one day, Gabe and others went to his band class, and Mr. Shaver wasn't there. So everybody in the class patiently waited and see if he would come in, but Mr. Shaver didn't come in. Gabe started to think, *Maybe Mr. Shaver is sick. Maybe the marching band is losing its funding for next year.* Gabe kept on thinking about that. Then he lost patience and said to everybody, "I have totally and completely had enough of this! This means war!" Then the bell rang. In the Summer, he figured out that the band is actually losing its funding for next year and Gabe needed to put a stop to it. At that time, Gabe was going on a diet so people can stop making fun of him and also not feel horrible almost all the time. Gabe wasn't friends with Justin anymore. The reason was because Justin grew a lot of muscle and all the girls started to like him, he turned into a jock that is a jerk. He started to figure out why the marching band was losing the funding for next year. He figured out that it was all because of the cheerleaders, the teacher took all of the money so the cheerleaders get more of an experience of cheerleading. By the way, he works at this place called, Dante's Donuts, so he can make a little bit of money. Later in the Summer, he says to everyone that is in the marching band on FaceBook to come over at the school at 2:15 pm and sneak in the school with their instruments. They were close to where the cheerleaders were practicing. All of a sudden, they all start playing the instruments and the cheerleader teacher hears it and gets really mad. A kid actually got it all on video. Some kids in the band had giant water balloons and threw them at the teacher and the cheerleaders. Then the principal comes to it and gets really mad. Gabe said to him, "We need marching band back!!!" Someone in the band throws a giant water balloon at the principal. He fuses. The principal thought about that marching band and its funds and he agreed to put a stop to the cheerleaders hogging all of the money. Justin heard about it so he started acting less like a jerk and was his best friend again. After that action, Gabe and the marching band stood on stage where over 5000 people are watching. The story ends.

What I liked about *Fat Boy VS the Cheerleaders* was that there was a lot of action, and revenge.

What I disliked about *Fat Boy VS the Cheerleaders* was that the story went through too slowly.

The book made me feel mad that the dumb cheerleaders and the teacher hogged all of the money.

I recommend this book to people that like non-cheesy romance, comedy, and people who are above the age 10, because of the language (cussing), and to understand what's happening.

Fat Boy VS the Cheerleaders is a book I cannot compare to another book, it's a *one of a kind*.

Dan says

May 6, 2014
Honestville, Minnesota

The following transcript is a verbatim interview with an educator when he was brought into the Truth Police Headquarters for questioning after sharing a review of Geoff Herbach's *Fat Boy vs the Cheerleaders* with his students thought to be inconsistent with society's view of young people. This transcript is respectfully submitted as further evidence that young people are complex, interesting, brave, and not easily defined.

Here's the truth, Officer Honesty. I can't believe that's your real name, by the way. Honest. I was an athlete and a nerd in high school, and by my senior year I was totally comfortable in that role. Yeah, no thanks on the donut, but yes, my friends and teachers played a huge role in my dual nerd/jock development. It took my freshman English teacher nearly a year to indirectly convince me the two identities could coexist and someday thrive. He said something around the lines of, "In five years no one will care what group you were in, but they will remember whether or not you were kind. Be kind and make lots of friends." I did my best to live this advice out, and now I try to pay it forward to the next generation on a daily basis.

Generalizations about how one defines high school students still dominate the market. In doing so, I often wonder how this impacts a young person's ability to truly see themselves for who they are and not who society expects them to be. Really? Don't always believe everything you watch on TV, sir.

Geoff Herbach's *Fat Boy vs The Cheerleaders*? What about it? Oh, the review I shared with my students. Yeah Officer Honesty, it was that good, and yes, I love that it takes place in my home state of Minnesota. Huh? Are you saying you think the title of the book points to the very generalizations I stand up against, sir? Officer Honesty, are you judging the book by its cool pop can cover, or have you actually read it? If that's the case, please let me continue sir, and I'll explain.

Like I told my students, I like this story on many levels, but most importantly I love that good and evil exist in both the jock|cheerleader camp and well as with the nerd|band kids camp. The cliques and friendships in this book are imperfect. The revenge is both wrongheaded and messy, but individual characters also break expectations and boldly march to their own drum, tuba, cheer, or football scholarship.

I tell my students all the time that each day we craft a personal history and when you add up the days eventually some sort of legacy is born. Life is too short not to look for the good in people, sir.

That's why I love this book. Gabe, the overweight, pop drinking protagonist, is imperfect, but brave enough to exist outside of the societal boundaries placed upon him. That goes for RC III and a few other characters as this humorous tale develops too, sir. In the end this book is about how kids have the power to bravely stand up for themselves and others. To stand tall in the spotlight of their peers and choose stage left instead of stage right. It makes a difference, sir.

Read the book and then you'll see.

Thank you to **Sourcebooks** for providing me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Review also posted on my blog: <http://misterdreads.wordpress.com/201...>

Blessed23 says

Summary- Chunk/ Gabe/ Gabriel is a over weight high school young adult who has the craziest story ever with and happy ending. It all started from raising some money for his band group by collecting soda bottle cans. Then the prices were raised to help out the cheerleader's group which weren't nicest people to him. Gabe then felt as it was time to put his foot down even though they barely left the floor. Gabe got into it all very fast. The cheerleaders jock boyfriends wanting to kill him, falling for a girl that he liked deeply, dealing with his dad anger from pain and stress, going through his granddad's living hell workout, the relation ship with his suppose to be friends and also the hurt from his mom leaving him to be with another man and live a new life.

Critical Evaluation- I liked that the book was funny, scary but funny at the same time. Even as Gabe tells his story good or bad the author still made it possible to write jokes to make me forget the pain he went through. The only dislike I feel towards the book is the ending, it came to a end to short. In the beginning it was long to get to the middle and the middle gave the most exciting points, then the end came finally and just was done. The author could have gave some more events then ended it like she did. The key settings in the book was mainly Gore's house because that's where all the stuff started. Gabe's group unity, Gabe's relationship with Gore and the place that Gabe got in trouble at the most. Also the school all the kids attended. All the commotion went down there. Buying the soda, the cheerleaders meetings, and mainly the fight between Gabe's geek squad vs Seth (one of the cheerleader's boyfriends). The main characters are Gabe(main character), Gore(Gabe's girlfriend), Camille(Gabe's female friend), Justin(Gabe's ex friend who trades on him) , Mr.R(the officer Gabe tells his story to), Gabe's dad, Gabe's granddad and the cheerleaders(they started the war). The main problem is Gabe is picked on a lot by the popular kids and the thing he enjoys the most(soda and band) are about to be taken away to help the people that are mean to him. The resolution is all the kids admit their wrongs and come together after their punishment. The writing style was like the main character telling his story to another character and you picture the things that he's telling.

Conclusion- I would recommend this book to someone who likes something new every page. Also funny, realistic fiction that catches your eye very quickly. This book would be good for some one who likes to picture what they read. This book is just like a different it gives you the expecting, I advise all to give this a chance.
