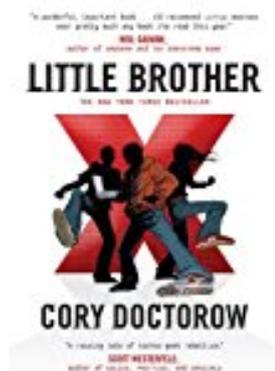


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Description:

From School Library Journal Starred Review. Grade 10 Up—When he ditches school one Friday morning, 17-year-old Marcus is hoping to get a head start on the Harajuku Fun Madness clue. But after a terrorist attack in San Francisco, he and his friends are swept up in the extralegal world of the Department of Homeland Security. After questioning that includes physical torture and psychological stress, Marcus is released, a marked man in a much darker San Francisco: a city of constant surveillance and civil-liberty forfeiture. Encouraging hackers from around the city, Marcus fights against the system while falling for one hacker in particular. Doctorow rapidly confronts issues, from civil liberties to cryptology to social justice. While his political bias is obvious, he does

try to depict opposing viewpoints fairly. Those who have embraced the legislative developments since 9/11 may be horrified by his harsh take on Homeland Security, Guantánamo Bay, and the PATRIOT Act. Politics aside, Marcus is a wonderfully developed character: hyperaware of his surroundings, trying to redress past wrongs, and rebelling against authority. Teen espionage fans will appreciate the numerous gadgets made from everyday materials. One afterword by a noted cryptologist and another from an infamous hacker further reflect Doctorow's principles, and a bibliography has resources for teens interested in intellectual freedom, information access, and technology enhancements. Curious readers will also be able to visit BoingBoing, an eclectic group blog that Doctorow coedits. Raising pertinent questions and fostering discussion, this techno-thriller is an outstanding first purchase.—*Chris Shoemaker, New York Public Library*
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From *Starred Review* Seventeen-year-old techno-geek “w1n5t0n” (aka Marcus) bypasses the school’s gait-recognition system by placing pebbles in his shoes, chats secretly with friends on his IMParanoid messaging program, and routinely evades school security with his laptop, cell, WifFnder, and ingenuity. While skipping school, Markus is caught near the site of a terrorist attack on San Francisco and held by the Department of Homeland Security for six days of intensive interrogation. After his release, he vows to use his skills to fight back against an increasingly frightening system of surveillance. Set in the near future, Doctorow’s novel blurs the lines between current and potential technologies, and readers will delight in the details of how Markus attempts to stage a techno-revolution. Obvious parallels to Orwellian warnings and post-9/11 policies, such as the Patriot Act, will provide opportunity for classroom discussion and raise questions about our enthusiasm for technology, who monitors our school library collections, and how we contribute to our own lack of privacy. An extensive Web and print bibliography will build knowledge and make adults nervous. Buy multiple copies; this book will be h4wt (that’s “hot,” for the nonhackers). Grades 8-12. --Cindy Dobrez

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