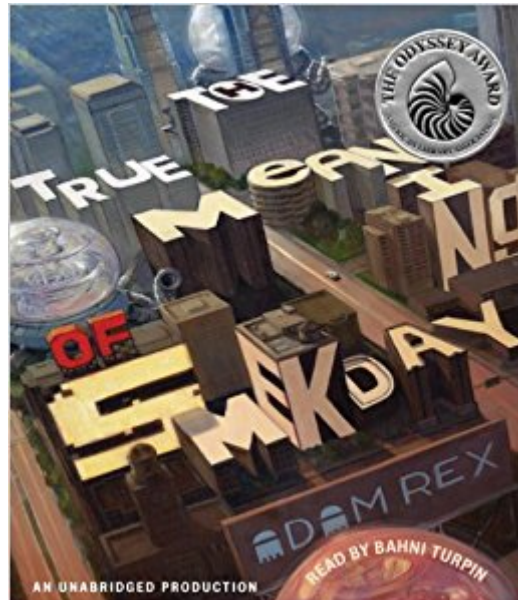




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# The True Meaning Of Smekday



## Synopsis

It all starts with a school essay. When twelve-year-old Gratuity ("Tip") Tucci is assigned to write five pages on "The True Meaning of Smekday" for the National Time Capsule contest, she's not sure where to begin. When her mom started telling everyone about the messages aliens were sending through a mole on the back of her neck? Maybe on Christmas Eve, when huge, bizarre spaceships descended on the Earth and the aliens - called Boov - abducted her mother? Or when the Boov declared Earth a colony, renamed it "Smekland" (in honor of glorious Captain Smek), and forced all Americans to relocate to Florida via rocketpod? In any case, Gratuity's story is much, much bigger than the assignment. It involves her unlikely friendship with a renegade Boov mechanic named J.Lo.; a futile journey south to find Gratuity's mother at the Happy Mouse Kingdom; a cross-country road trip in a hovercar called Slushious; and an outrageous plan to save the Earth from yet another alien invasion.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Who knew the end of the world could be so hilarious? With a misfit cast of characters led by a precocious 11-year-old narrator named Gratuity "Tip" Tucci and a bumbling alien named J.Lo who has an appetite for dental floss and air fresheners, Rex's high-octane fantasy could fairly be called an apocalyptic comedy. After the Boov (technologically advanced aliens) conquer Earth (or

Smekland, as they call it, after its discoverer), they decide that humans must live on preserves; all Americans must move to Florida. Tip, driving her mother's car with her cat Pig for a passenger, meets the unexpectedly helpful Boov J.Lo, who, she later discovers, has bungled a mission and is on the lam. Parallels between the Boov and European settlers and their treatment of Native Americans deepen the impact of the story, but the author goes well beyond delivering a single political message. Incorporating dozens of his weird and wonderful illustrations and fruitfully manipulating the narrative structure, Rex skewers any number of subjects, from Disney World to various fleeting fads. Some of the best jokes come from throwaways and from J.Lo's and Tip's attempts to understand each other (when Tip asks if his society has boys and girls, he says, "Of course. Do not to be ridicumulous," and calmly lists the "seven magnificent genders" of the Boov). Picture book aficionados will already know Rex from *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich* and *Pssst!* (reviewed Sept. 10); now another audience can savor his wit. Ages 8-up. (Oct.) PW" --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Adam Rex is the New York Times best-selling author and illustrator of *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich*. His other books include *The True Meaning of Smekday*, which was made into the animated hit movie *Home*; *Moonday*; *Fat Vampire*; and *Cold Cereal*. He also illustrated the Brixton Brothers series, *Billy Twitters* and his *Blue Whale Problem*, and *Chloe and the Lion*, all by Mac Barnett, and *Chu's Day* by Neil Gaiman. He lives in Tucson, Arizona. Visit him at [adamrex.com](http://adamrex.com) or follow him on Twitter @MrAdamRex. Adam Rex is the New York Times best-selling author and illustrator of *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich*. His other books include *The True Meaning of Smekday*, which was made into the animated hit movie *Home*; *Moonday*; *Fat Vampire*; and *Cold Cereal*. He also illustrated the Brixton Brothers series, *Billy Twitters* and his *Blue Whale Problem*, and *Chloe and the Lion*, all by Mac Barnett, and *Chu's Day* by Neil Gaiman. He lives in Tucson, Arizona. Visit him at [adamrex.com](http://adamrex.com) or follow him on Twitter @MrAdamRex. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

On the surface, this is a story of an 11 year old hero's quest to find her Mom after the earth has been invaded by Boov aliens. The first alien invasion is followed by yet another Gorg alien invasion which threatens to destroy the earth. Gratuity makes friend with a Boov, and together they hatch a plan to find Gratuity's mom and to liberate the earth. Underlying this story is a wry commentary on the displacement of civilizations by other civilizations and the ridiculous impositions of the dominant culture on the resources, cultural identity and rights of the subjugated culture. In particular there are

some allusions to the displacement of Native Americans by the English and the Europeans. Further there is an interesting exploration of minority groups and individuals who don't seem fit in anywhere, who are "outcasts" in their own culture. Overall, it's a funny and entertaining book to read.

I can't say that I love every Adam Rex novel, but *The True Meaning of Smekday* has some staying quality to it. The story is pretty basic in some ways but deals with a complex set of emotions as Tip and J-Lo learn how coexist in a diverse world. There are times when the plot and/or characters get a bit silly or seem off track, but in the end it's as much about acceptance of other ways of thinking as it about what 'family' really means. Great for a variety of ages as well as a family readaloud. Highly recommended.

Wonderful elementary and middle-school level book. Highly recommended. The protagonist is an eighth grader who has lost her mother to an alien invasion. The book takes the form of an essay being written by the girl to explain what Smekday really means to her... The winner will have their essay included in a time capsule to be opened 100 years in the future. So Gracuity ("Tip") Tucci begins her story. She's funny, witty, and mature, while still having the light-heartedness and hopefulness of a, well, a middle-schooler. She first goes into the "what happened"... then the "what next" when her teacher urges her to include more personal reflection. Tip, her alien (Boov) compadre, "J-Lo" and her cat all set out to first save themselves and then to save the world. It's light, fun, quick, and cute. It's original, thoughtful, and funny. Well-populated by a wide variety of characters with their own personalities, this book is a gem that I'm glad I've discovered! Definitely recommend for elementary (high level) and middle school readers looking for something new...FOUR of five stars.

Other than similar characters and initial plot, this story quick veers away from what was in the movie with an entirely different kind of villain and resolution. Lots of amusing stuff in the adventure where Tip both finds her Mom and saves the world. The Boov are not nearly so silly and inept and the Gorg have quite a lot more (bad) interaction with people, Tip in particular. If you like slightly offbeat light sci-fi it's a fun read. Wished the story kept going when it was over.

I read Adam Rex's *"The True Meaning of Smekday"* with my two children (ages 11 and 13), and we could not wait to get back to the story every evening. This is a clever mixture of alien invasion fantasy and pre-teen adventure story, told from the point of view of a courageous, resourceful

11-year-old girl whose mother is kidnapped by aliens. The plot-line is original, the characters (both human and alien) are well-developed and memorable, and the author even manages to squeeze in the occasional moral paradox. But the feature that kept us coming back for more was Rex's unique sense of humor. Wise-cracks, crazy situations, unexpected alien irony, a refreshing take on contemporary American culture (how would an alien understand Disney World?), and quirky little alien history comics all combine to create a hilarious reading experience. One of the most entertaining books we've read in a long time. I'm not a big fan of sequels, but if Rex writes one, we'll be waiting in line to pick up a copy!

My eight year old had to read this for school, and she loved it. My wife ended up reading it with her in the evenings, and all I would hear from them is a constant giggle, so I figured I would take a read, and soon realized what all the fun was about. This is a great book for a family read, it is funny, it is very intelligent and it is easy enough to read that my eight year old went back to reading it on her own when she was done reading it with Mom. I personally found some of the humor to echo Doug Adams' "Hitchhiker" series, very similar outlandish humor. One final note is that my three cats think this is the best book ever written. (Read the book and you will know why they believe this).

After I saw that Dreamworks was making a new movie about this book, I almost fainted. This book is adorable. It's not something that completely changes my life, or a book that I hold really, REALLY close to my heart, but I love it. It's a fun read, and the little comic strips are hysterical. It's not something to be taken seriously, which is what makes it great. Plus, it is a little heartwarming, which is always an added bonus. Really cute and fun book!

I didn't at all like Adam Rex's "Fat Vampire". It was supposed to be a sendup of high school vampire romances, but it was a mess that didn't send up anything but itself. Before that was this book, a sendup of alien invasions, pop culture, teen angst, and just for good measure, Disney World. Well, this one works, and in spades. Tip is a marvelous heroine. J.Lo., the renegade invading Boov mechanic who joins her quest, is a truly funny wise/idiot companion. It's a bit over plotted and it goes on a little longer than it needs to, but this story really is insightful, affectionate, pointed, and genuinely funny. It's sort of along the lines of what you could have had if E.T. had had a sense of humor. So, if you have a teen reader who likes sharp dialogue, and is a patient while jokes and situations are being set up, this is a worthwhile choice.

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