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Zita The Spacegirl



Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Zita's life took a cosmic left turn in the blink of an eye. When her best friend is abducted by an alien doomsday cult, Zita leaps to the rescue and finds herself a stranger on a strange planet. Humanoid chickens and neurotic robots are shocking enough as new experiences go, but Zita is even more surprised to find herself taking on the role of intergalactic hero. Before long, aliens in all shapes and sizes don't even phase her. Neither do ancient prophecies, doomed planets, or even a friendly con man who takes a mysterious interest in Zita's quest. Zita the Spacegirl is a fun, captivating tale of friendship and redemption from Flight veteran Ben Hatke. It also has more whimsical, eye-catching, Miyazaki-esque monsters than you can shake a stick at.

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Grade 2-5 • While exploring a meteoroid crater, young explorers Zita and Joseph discover an unusual device featuring a conspicuous red button. Zita's curiosity compels her to press it, only to discover that it summons an alien creature that instantly abducts Joseph. The fearless heroine follows him to a planet inhabited by Scriptorians, who intend to use him as a ritual sacrifice

to prevent the destruction of their planet. In her quest to save her friend, Zita assembles a cadre of unusual cohorts: a giant mouse that she rides; an oversize bloblike creature named Strong Strong; a Heavily Armored Mobile Battle Orb known as One; and Robot Randy. Together they head off to the Scriptorians' castle to rescue Joseph. Along the way, she meets Piper, a fellow earthling traveling through space who becomes an important player in the story. Aptly named, he is part Pied Piper and part inventor but always a smooth talker who alternately assists and sabotages the mission. In order to save her friend, Zita must ultimately risk her own chance to return to Earth. With echoes of *The Wizard of Oz*, this charming, well-told story has a timeless "read to me" quality that makes it perfect for one-on-one sharing. Adults will enjoy the subtle humor and inside jokes, and children will love intrepid Zita and her adventures. The art is simply delightful: a realistic heroine surrounded by a world of bizarre creatures. Fans of the *Flight* anthologies (Villard) will cheer for the return of Zita.

—Barbara M. Moon, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Bellport, NY (c)
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For no reason at all, a little red button crashes to earth while Zita and her pal Joseph are out cavorting around. Of course, no one could resist pushing a mystery button, which pops open an interdimensional portal that whisks Joseph away. Zita follows and lands on a delightfully bizarre alien planet, where she sees Joseph being captured by a tentacled, scuba-headed creature. She makes some allies, takes off after him, and zany mishaps and dashing adventures ensue. Any story in which one can escape prison with a tube of "doorpaste" (just like toothpaste, except that it makes magic doors appear when smeared on a wall) obviously puts more stock in wowing imaginations than satisfying logic, and it needs solid cartooning chops to back it up. Fortunately, Hatke got them, and he doles out an increasingly loony and charming array of aliens, robots, and unclassifiable blobs and hairy things for Zita (herself a cross between Ramona Quimby and a Matt Phelan waif) to encounter. It's fun, plenty funny, and more than a little random. Kids will love it. Grades 3-6.

--Ian Chipman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Originally written for the Comic Book and Graphic Novel Review Column at the Fantasy Literature Review Site.

Zita the Spacegirl by Ben Hatke

Zita the Spacegirl is one of those perfect YA science fiction stories that you wish had been written years ago so you could have read it as a kid

— which means that you're gonna want to get this book in the

hands of a child in your life. Just make sure you get a chance to read it first. The story begins when Zita and her friend find a strange object that has fallen from space. It's a square, hand-held device with a big, red button on it. Just imagine what you'd do: Would you press that button? Guess what the young child Zita does? That's right she presses the button. Instantly, a door of light opens before her and the arms of tentacles of a strange creature reach into our world and grab Zita's friend. Zita runs away in terror to think about what she's just seen and what she should do. As you'd expect, she goes to talk to her parents and spends the rest of the book waiting for her parents to figure out some way to save her friend. She is then reunited with her friend at the end of the comic. They live happily ever after. You don't really believe a word of that, do you? Like many great adventures written for children, we never see the main character's parents or any other adults on earth, and the young child must take on adult responsibilities. Zita decides she is to blame for her friend's kidnapping, and therefore she must fix everything. And why not since she's got the mysterious device? So she presses the red button once again, and steps into her adventure. In this review, I can't begin to do justice to Hatke's vivid imagination in coming up with such a wide variety of creatures and machines and inhabitants of the world Zita enters. Some seem kind but are dangerous, some are boisterous but benign, and still others threaten her before becoming her closest allies. In this world we finally see adults, but they are strange and unpredictable and difficult to judge. The story's tension is created by several factors other than the unpredictability of those she encounters: First, she soon realizes getting back to earth is not going to be easy. Secondly, to make her being stranded even more frightening, Zita realizes that everyone is abandoning the planet because it's about to be destroyed by an approaching asteroid. And she can't find her friend or get off the planet herself. Finally, she finds out that the rescuing her friend will require a major mission dependent upon her finding new friends and building a team on a strange planet. Zita the Spacegirl is a delight. As you can tell, I highly recommend it. The dialogue is funny, the art is stunning, and the plot is compelling. Your kids will love it. Both my children, 8 and 11, enjoyed it and the second volume. The third volume comes out in less than two months. Even though it's a continuing story and you'll want to find out what happens next, unlike some comics and novels in a series, it has enough closure to give a sense of satisfaction as you come to the final page. Do not pass this book up.

Zita the Spacegirl is about a girl who gets sucked through a portal to another planet. Hatke gives us a classic hero's journey in an imaginative, sci-fi setting. Our protagonist, Zita is a compassionate and feisty girl, who meets a bunch of lovable, flawed new companions and scary aliens on her quest to find her friend who was kidnapped by a deep sea helmet with mechanical tentacles. My favorite things about Zita:~It's about a female hero. She's so realistically a young girl I was not at all surprised to read the Hatke has three daughters. She's frightened, idealistic, so sweet, and brave. It's always nice to have female protagonists, but often girls have girl problems (like boys, social problems, family). Instead we get a classic damsel in distress, with the roles reversed, the boy needs rescuing, and the girl gets to be the Hero.~She rides a giant, sentient mouse.~None of the characters were perfect. Our group of heroes were broken and flawed, and it made them relateable and compelling. (A broken robot, a gun happy prototype, a con man, and a little girl walk into a bar...)~The story is self contained. While there is a sequel to Zita, the first novel is a whole story beginning to end. I remember being particularly frustrated as a child (while stealing my brother's comics) about cliffhangers and to be continued's. There's nothing worse than an unfinished story. (I'm looking at you Peter Jackson.)~Hatke has a great color sense. The palette is soft and consistent. I love a man who knows his colors.~DID I MENTION THE MOUSE THAT SHE RIDES?~Threat of apocalypse = automatic +5 bonus points! All around excellent book (especially if you're looking for something to get your kid interested in graphic novels or science fiction!), 183 pages of pure, epic fun! With laser guns! Pew pew!

The whole family loved Zita! My 11 year old son, 6 year old daughter and I just devoured this graphic novel. My son asked me to download the sequel immediately and he is off reading it as of this writing. As a Mom, I appreciated the great art, fast moving plot and the age appropriate humor. There was just the right amount of peril, a bit of outrageous and then a happily ever after. I highly recommend it.

I read this to my 3 year old daughter who fell in love with Zita. She wakes in the night, sneaks over and turns on her light, and spends hours flipping through her Zita books. I would rather she sleep, but it's hard to fault her love of books. She carries it everywhere and asks people she meets to read it to her. She loves Ben's other books, especially Goblin, Julia, and Robot.

Zita is such a simple and amazing graphic novel with lots of action and awesome humor. I couldn't put it down (adult) and I would recommend it to any reader of any age. Zita is dragged into a new world and a creative adventure. She makes friends with all sorts of creatures that help her on her quest to save her friend and return home. The character design and the scenes are well constructed and have a great style.

We first checked this book out at our wonderful public library, fell in love with the illustrations and the fast-paced action and the wonderful characters and knew we had to get this book. Finding out there were sequels was like icing on the cake. Completely recommend this story to boys and girls of all ages who love a rollicking good time, happy endings, and great characters! Compassion and friendship, bravery, honesty, and seeing things through to the end even when not comfortable to oneself are all themes in this story. My son (8) LOVES this book and reads it on his own, but especially loves to snuggle with Mom while I read it to him!

i have bought this book about 15 times for birthday party gifts, nieces, friends. simply put, this is a fabulous series, a great way to entice non-readers to start reading. get your kid ages 4+ one now! (the first time through, i read these to my son - he's since read them a few more times on his own)

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