



Kid vs. Squid

Greg Van Eekhout

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Thatcher Hill is bored stiff of his summer job dusting the fake mermaids and shrunken heads at his uncle's seaside Museum of Curiosities. But when a mysterious girl steals an artifact from the museum, Thatcher's summer becomes an adventure that takes him from the top of the ferris wheel to the depths of the sea. Following the thief, he learns that she is a princess of the lost Atlantis. Her people have been cursed by an evil witch to drift at sea all winter and wash up on shore each summer to an even more terrible fate—working the midway games and food stands on the boardwalk. Can Thatcher help save them before he, too, succumbs to the witch's curse?

With sharp, witty writing that reads like a middle-grade Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Greg van Eekhout's first book for young readers is a wild ride packed with as many laughs as it has thrills.

Kid vs. Squid Details

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Author : Greg Van Eekhout

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From Reader Review Kid vs. Squid for online ebook

Nathaniel says

Great Book! Kid vs. Squid is a book about how the story of Atlantis and its unfortunate endings may have been because of an evil witch, Skalla. The problem is, Skalla may not stop there, drowning the entire California could just be her plans. An amazing book with tons of exciting adventures and discoveries, there is always something new for Thatcher, and his friends Shoal and Trudy.

Heather says

The title is fabulous, but I just couldn't get into the story. I could probably find some kids to recommend it to, but for most, it wouldn't be a must-read. Still, since we all have different tastes, there may be some who find this to be their favorite book ever. I did like the eccentric and bizarre Uncle Griswold - he was my favorite character of the bunch.

Kevin says

Wacky summer adventure with lots of ocean-themed mayhem. It's fast-paced and has moments of good humor, but it was also a little hard to follow, and perhaps the most unforgivable, false advertising: no squid until page 169.

I read it aloud to my kids and they enjoyed it, though were also disappointed at the lack of squid.

Anke says

Kid vs. Squid by Greg van Eekhout is a fast-paced book about a boy named Thatcher who has to spend his summer with his crazy uncle Griswold on a California beach town called Las Huesas. His uncle owns The Museum of the Strange and Curious and this is where Thatcher is expected to spend his summer days. The story is told through Thatcher's voice, which is so real the reader wants to join him on his crazy adventure. He's clever, funny and a great story-teller. The descriptions are witty and imaginative, especially when describing his uncles' oddities in the museum, which opens up the book at the first few pages. He writes... "He even kept a mummy in a glass-lidded sarcophagus, resting on a pair of sawhorses. It was the color of beef jerky, with dark black squiggles down its arms that looked like sea horses. Griswold said the squiggles were tattoos. I thought they were done in magic marker."

In no time the story picks up its pace when the What-Is-It (an old box that contains a shriveled up head of someone or something important)....is stolen by a young girl, Shoal, who turns out to be the princess of Atlantis. She and her people are cursed and she needs to end it. Thatcher and his new friend Trudy end up helping Shoal reverse the curse and along the way they encounter some grizzly characters of the sea.

This book has a grade equivalent of 4.6 and lexile of 750L. For those students who are not crazy about

reading, but enjoy fantasy with a quick-pace, this one might get them reading during their free time. It's also a good read for the students who want to (but are not quite ready for) the Percy Jackson books.

Beth Cato says

Sometimes you just need a gentle, whimsical book that makes you feel like a kid again. That's what I needed this week, and that's why I picked up Greg Van Eekhout's book. I bought it at Phoenix Comicon and had it signed to my son.

I would have enjoyed this as a kid, too, even if it gets a little creepy at times. I love how it uses the California coast as a setting (it even mentions Pismo later on, a familiar place for me), with a boy abandoned in his weird uncle's museum of strange things for his summer vacation. The town's tourism season mysteriously starts overnight, and Thatcher discovers things only get weirder from there. Thatcher has a great voice. He babbles, he's not perfect, but he makes a great team with the two strong girls in the book, Shoal and Trudy; I really loved Trudy! It's a solid middle grade book for boys or girls.

Monica says

Middle schooler Thatcher Hill goes to live with his uncle in a small seaside town in California for the summer. His job is to take care of odd objects at the Museum of Curiosities, which includes a mysterious shrunken head in a box. A young girl steals this mysterious object from the museum and things soon turn bizarre as Thatcher, in his pursuit of this thief, gets caught up in a ages-old battle between an evil witch and the people of the lost city of Atlantis. He gets chased by jelly-fish boys on bikes, huge lobster-men, and yes a giant squid all with good humor and aplomb. Fun, quick moving story.

Lisa Chaddock says

This is a rather wild story about a boy and his growing up adventure. However, it's got bits of seaside interest (which Van Eekhout is amazingly good at) and beautiful prose that make this book a great read for YA fans. I don't want to put in spoilers - so go read this one. It's an afternoon read, so put it on your list.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Kira M for TeensReadToo.com

Thatcher is spending the summer with his eccentric uncle, Griswald, on the boardwalk at his museum of curiosities. Amongst the museum is a box that his uncle refers to as the What-Is-It.

When a mysterious girl steals the What-Is-It, Thatcher catches up with her and confronts her about her theft. When she tells him that she is the princess of Atlantis and is cursed to stay in the water all winter and run the stands along the boardwalk during the summer, Thatcher decides to help her, but ends up wrapped up in the

curse himself!

Can Thatcher and the princess save themselves and Atlantis before it's too late? What really is the What-Is-It?

This is a fast-paced, humorous adventure. The characters are well-developed, and the story is unique and entertaining. Reluctant and avid readers alike who enjoy adventure, fantasy, and fast-moving stories will all enjoy reading KID VS. SQUID.

Cathy Green says

Greg Van Eekhout, author of Norse Code, an excellent fantasy novel for adults, has written a really fun "what I did on my summer vacation" fantasy novel for tweens. In Kid Vs. Squid, Thatcher Hill is not at all happy about how crummy his summer vacation is turning out. He was supposed to go to various Asian countries such as Singapore with his parents as part of their business trip to visit various plastics factories, but one of his classmates caught Hanta virus or some similar rodent born illness and since he was exposed, none of the countries to which his parents are traveling will admit him. So while they're engaged in exotic travel, he's stuck with his great-uncle Griswald in Los Huesos, CA, a shabby seaside town with a very drab boardwalk and without a proper beach, just a rocky shore.

Thatcher is not thrilled about spending his days dusting the shrunken heads and other objects in his uncle's museum of curiosities and eating spray cheese and crackers. Soon, however, things get more exciting as he meets Trudy McGee, a local girl who wants to be an FBI agent when she grows up, and another girl breaks into the museum one night and steals the "what-is-it? (do not open)".

Thatcher and Trudy track the girl, Shoal, to a cave. In the struggle for the "what is it", it accidentally opens and Thatcher and Trudy fall under the curse of the Sea Witch. They learn that Shoal is a Princess of the lost city of Atlantis and that all the Atlantians are cursed by Skalla the Sea Witch, doomed to sleep as flotsam in the sea from the end of summer until the next summer and doomed to work the boardwalk during the summer season. There are some funny bits where Thatcher and Trudy are trying desperately to avoid the pull of the curse but cannot help developing an unhealthy interest in running a taffy stand. There are also some very tragic elements to the story, such as the fate of Shoal's mother.

In order to avoid becoming flotsam doomed to spending the majority of the year asleep and drifting at sea and summers working crappy jobs on the boardwalk, Thatcher and Trudy must fight the Skalla and her minions and figure out how to break the curse. This is complicated by their discovery that the Skalla's minions were all once regular townsfolk turned unwillingly into sea creatures, which seriously hampers Thatcher and Trudy's ability to fight back. There is a large scale battle between the Atlantians and Skalla's minions which includes the kid vs. squid showdown that the book's title promises.

Van Eekhout has created a fun, snarky hero in Thatcher Hill. Both boys and girls should enjoy the book. While the target audience is middle school age kids, Thatcher and his smart mouth will also appeal to teens and adults. There is nothing in book that would make it inappropriate to be read to children younger than the target audience, although some very young children might find what happened to Shoal's mother to be upsetting.

Theo says

This book is really really really wonderful because it is fun to read and hilarious. The plot was probably the most creative plot that you will read this year. For example, that everybody turns out to be happy, instead of one victory. It's not just good guys versus bad guys.

Books usually have two characters, but this one has three main characters, Thatcher is the main-main character, Trudy is important, and Shoal is quite important, too. Trudy is a bit of a hero; she's the one saying what Skalla the witch wants. All the characters are hilarious, and Thatcher is funny because he uses his talking as a weapon and also it's hilarious that he thinks that the kelp-farming implement is a "sword." I loved that part.

I loved a lot more things about this book which I can't even name right now. I would recommend this book to kids who like funny fantasy adventures. It's my favorite book of the year so far.

Angie says

Really make that like three point five. It was a lot of fun and a length that many of my students will actually be able to FINISH. (Can you tell I get frustrated when they don't finish? Once or twice, it's all good. But some of them? Almost never. :) The timing seemed a little off ... was great until the ending sort of seemed to come out of nowhere and then there were a couple pages of "and this is what happened to our main characters after" and then it was done. So, you know ... maybe a few more pages would have been a good thing.

Lots of cool sea creatures. Actually almost to the point where I got a little tired of them. This would make a super cool graphic novel.

I have another of the author's books on my Nook. Will have to move that up the TBR list!

PS Small thing ... I get the title ... rhymes and all that. But the squid? Not actually a big part of the story.

Catherine Schaff-Stump says

I haven't had this much fun with a book in a long, long time.

Van Eekhout's *Kid Vs Squid* manages to return kids of any age to that sweet spot in their imagination that their childhood favorite reads take them to. *KvS* is all out adventure and humor. Three kids--Thatcher, Shoal and Trudy--bond in ways that only 3 Musketeers on a life-threatening adventure can.

And then there's the weirdness. Uncle Griswold runs a museum for oddities of the sea. Cursed carnies return to the board walk every year. A witch's head calls all the shots of evil. It's a tough life for a kid who's been separated from his parents (squirt gun magnates) and abandoned in Strangeville.

Both touching and quirky, KvS delivers. Kids will be delighted by the bizarre backdrop and story, and the strong main characters. It will become a book they remember fondly, and they leave laying around for their own kids.

Fantasy Literature says

Kid vs. Squid, by Greg van Eekhout, is definitely a children's fantasy. It comes in at a slim sub-200 pages (with pretty good-sized print) and doesn't take much time with detailed description, rich character development, or intricate plotting. That isn't a complaint; it's just to say that Kid vs. Squid knows who its audience is, and while it won't dumb things down or talk down to its readers, it also won't stretch them. Keeping to relatively humble standards of that sort, it succeeds pretty solidly.

Middle-school age Thatcher has been sent to his Uncle Griswald's in Las Huesas, California for the summer. The beach town is oddly empty of beach-goers and Uncle Griswald lives in a tiny "museum" filled with shrunken heads, ships in bottles, strangely shaped bodies, and a "What-is-it" box he isn't supposed to ...

Read More:

<http://www.fantasyliterature.com/reviews/kid-vs-squid>...

Irasema says

I am having a hard time deciding how I really feel about this book. Before reading the book, I read some reviews stating this was a very funny book but I didn't find it to be that amazing. I think it was quite creative and I'm pretty sure my students will like it but I'm not sure I would think of it as being very funny. Maybe it was the state of mind I was in while reading it :)

Kater Cheek says

This middle-grade novel was fresh and delightful, and more charming than I expected. It's a little like Percy Jackson, except that it's more creative and doesn't take itself so seriously.

Eekhout sets the story in Los Huesos, a rather grim and macabre seaside town in California. Thatcher is sent to live with his great uncle Griswald, and his job is to help maintain Griswald's museum of curiosities. When one of the curiosities gets stolen, Thatcher and his new friend Trudy become involved in an ancient curse, a fearful witch, and a host of freaky oceanic enemies. Despite the darkness of the mood, it had an unexpectedly happy ending.

Many elements of this novel are typical of the genre. Thatcher is a well-adjusted, middle-class white boy who nonetheless feels unlucky. His friend Trudy, despite being braver and smarter, is his side-kick. Thatcher and his friends usually run from bullies instead of fighting them. The novel does have an epic conflict that may threaten the rest of the country, etc, etc, but it's mostly about Thatcher wanting to help his friends; his reasons for getting involved are plausible. My only real complaint is that the descriptions during the epic battle scene at the end got so convoluted that I stopped being able to picture it.

My 11-year-old daughter started reading this when she saw me reading it, and she seems to like it quite a bit.

There's no sex, no swearing, and the violence is toned down. I recommend it for middle-grade kids and those who like MG novels.
