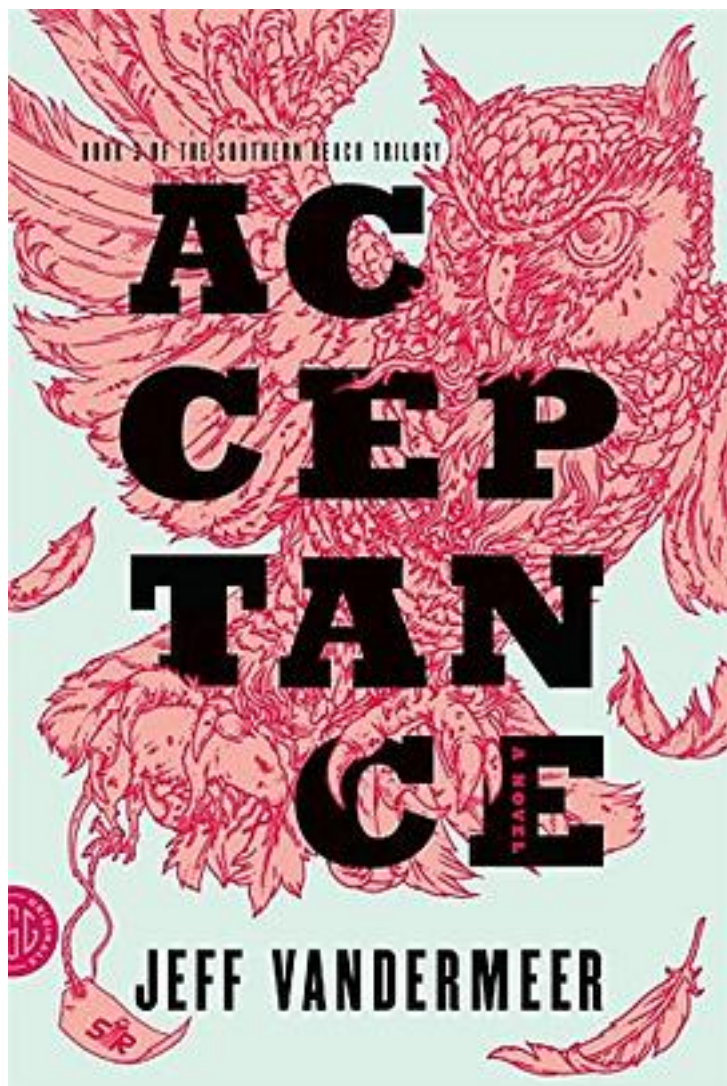


# Acceptance



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Gwyeth Smith, known as Smitty, has made a national reputation by flouting the conventions of the college application ritual. He often steers kids from the SAT to the ACT, which he considers a more straightforward test that produces higher scores. He urges parents to home in on hidden bargains, scour the country for scholarships, and challenge financial aid offices rather than take out large loans. He will sometimes talk a seeming shoo-in candidate out of setting her sights on the prestigious Ivy League while goading another long-shot student into aiming for that same Ivy League school. His unorthodox approach is grounded on the principle that getting into college shouldn't just be about getting in; it should be a kid's first great moment of self-discovery.

David L. Marcus, a Pulitzer Prize-winning former education writer for U.S. News & World Report, follows Smitty and "his" kids around Oyster Bay High, a diverse public school in Long Island, New York, as he works his unique magic on their applications and their lives. Smitty's kids run the gamut from the sweet but pathologically disorganized boy next door to the valedictorian who applies to twenty-eight schools. As the year unfolds, Smitty deals in his own ingenious way with almost every complication that can bedevil the applications process. What about the kid who doesn't test well? The kid who plunges into depression after being rejected by Columbia? The overachieving Korean American boy worried about reverse discrimination? Smitty has answers for all of them.

While Smitty excels at easing the pressure of the college hunt, his success comes from imposing a different—and deeper—challenge. He makes kids articulate (orally and in writing) their profoundest fears, their drawbacks, their secret hopes. In short, he makes them figure out who they are. Along the way, he uses his savant's knowledge of America's thirty-six hundred colleges and universities to pair each student with the right one. He sidesteps the applications industrial complex, with its slick Web sites, private essay coaches, and obsessive focus on metrics. He brings to the college search counterintuitive insight and even wisdom—attributes that thousands of students and their parents, frustrated with the excesses of the process, will find useful and inspiring.

作者介绍:

David L. Marcus is the author of *What It Takes to Pull Me Through*, a look at the secret lives of teenagers. He has been an education writer and foreign correspondent at U.S. News & World Report, The Boston Globe, the Miami Herald, and The Dallas Morning News, where he was the cowinner of a Pulitzer Prize. After a stint as a high school teacher, he returned to journalism as a writer for Newsday.

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