

Super 8

reviewed by [John Petrakis](#) in the [September 6, 2011](#) issue

Super 8, written and directed by J. J. Abrams of *Lost* and *Alias* fame, is a curious film that gets curiouser and curiouser as it goes along. It's the first time I have ever seen a cinematic homage to a filmmaker who is actually in the film's credits: director Steven Spielberg, whose early work Abrams has in mind here, is one of the producers. The young characters in the film, which is set in 1979, look and act like all those mouthy kids from the early Spielberg era, right down to their banana-seat bikes and single parents.

The film starts out as a wonderfully creepy and beautifully photographed tale about a bunch of latchkey kids making a movie who accidentally film something they are not supposed to see. But it morphs into a hungry-alien smorgasbord that would not exist without a spaceship full of money and special effects. In the process, a movie that promises to be an extremely clever kid's version of *Blow Up*—complete with frustrated artist and sad love interest—turns into *Alien*, right down to the munching and crunching and the screaming of clueless adults as they go down the wrong tunnel or make the wrong decision.