



Inkling

Kenneth Oppel , Sydney Smith (Illustrations)

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Ethan's dad is a comic artist whose greatest creation, the mutant superhero Kren, brought him fame and glory. But after his dad's string of successful books, a tragedy strikes the family and now his dad is completely stuck.

If only artistic talent were hereditary. Ethan is stuck on a graphic-novel project of his own at school and won't own up to the fact that he can't draw. When one night an ink-blot creation emerges from his father's sketchbook, the family's whole world begins to change.

Featuring artwork by the beloved, award-winning illustrator Sydney Smith, Inkling is a timeless story that speaks to the creator in us all.

Inkling Details

Date : Published September 11th 2018 by HarperCollins Canada

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Author : Kenneth Oppel , Sydney Smith (Illustrations)

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Genre : Childrens, Middle Grade, Fantasy, Art, Fiction, Magical Realism

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From Reader Review Inkling for online ebook

Stephanie - Adventures Thru Wonderland says

I received an ARC from the publisher for the official blog tour. This does not affect my review.

I read this, and at first I wasn't sure what to think. The idea sounded interesting, though the author was new to me, and I hadn't heard much about him or this book. Now I'll admit, I kind of wish I had read the print copy instead since I seem to have missed out on the illustrations, since I ended up reading the digital ARC instead (O.O) I'll have to fix that soon, hopefully. Anyway, I ended up loving this book! While it would get 4/5 stars from me, I really enjoyed how the story was written, and the characters were all well written and fun to read about! I loved Inkling! (I really want there to be a sequel!)

Barbara says

Ethan is struggling with the artwork for a collaborative graphic novel project he's completing for class. Although he tries hard, he's nowhere near as talented as his father, who is famous for a popular graphic novel series with a superhero. But he gets some unexpected help from an ink blot that slips off his father's sketchbook one night. The little blot becomes friends with Ethan, and he calls him Inkling. To Ethan's dismay, Inkling draws in a similar style to his father, and fixes Ethan's artwork so it looks quite professional. Inkling lives on print and is able to learn from whatever material he is eating--newspaper, comic papers, and even books. Ethan's father is struggling with even getting a new project off the ground since he's mired in depression over his wife's death, and although he is doubtful that Ethan is really seeing an inkblot come to life, he decides to enlist Inkling's help too. But Ethan's nemesis, Vika, is on the trail and is suspicious about Ethan's newfound artistic ability. Her relentless determination to get to the end of this mystery causes some problems for Ethan and Inkling who splits into two parts. The other part of Inkling is nothing like him, and greedily gobbles up colorful comics filled with violent scenes, and this new creature is not very nice. This book, accompanied by lively black and white scenes, is engaging, and will keep readers moving through the pages quickly. Ethan seems very real, often conflicted about doing the right thing, and yet, he also doesn't want his own artistic inadequacies to be revealed. Middle graders will enjoy this one. I also enjoyed Rickman, the elderly cat, and Sarah, Ethan's special needs little sister, and that horrible birthday cake their father fashions out of bread.

Niki says

Note: I received an ARC via a book sharing group in exchange for my honest review. (Although the book is now available to purchase.)

Kenneth Oppel has penned another charming, fantastical novel for middle grade students. When an ink splotch begins to act like a living creature, needing food, expressing its personality, befriending people and so on, life changes for the Rylance family. Ethan needs to make some tough decisions along the way and work at uniting his family instead of dividing it more.

While my personal rating for would be slightly lower, I'm confident young readers are going to enjoy this

novel. I look forward to adding this to my school libraries. I recommend it for school and classroom libraries serving grades 3-7.

Jenna (Falling Letters) says

Review originally published 27 October 2018 at Falling Letters.

Oppel has delivered us another middle grade novel (to my delight, as I wasn't much of a fan of his previous book, *Every Hidden Thing* [young adult historical fiction]). *Inkling* offers a compelling story that plays to Oppel's strengths as a writer.

Inkling himself is a delightful character. My cynicism tensely awaited the moment when Inkling would become the villain, but this does not happen. Although Inkling develops autonomy, he cares deeply for Ethan and his family. It's pretty adorable. Inkling emotes just as much as the human characters. The way Inkling develops his voice through 'reading' was also an entertaining process. I read Inkling just about in one sitting – I was quite curious to find out how that little blob was going to turn out!

Inkling explores some thoughtful questions such as the ethics around creativity and where ideas come from, but the conversation never gets too heavy. The plot essentially centers on whether it's okay for someone to claim Inkling's work as their own. Some moments, particularly surrounding how Inkling wants to help Ethan's dad, were unexpectedly poignant.

The Bottom Line: In *Inkling*, Oppel has once again demonstrated his ability to craft fun and compelling narratives for middle grade readers.

Cee says

Ken Oppel does it again with *Inkling*; a great novel with lots of kid appeal. The illustrations by Sydney Smith bring Inkling to life. The novel deals with hard issues, depression, death of a parent in a way that children can understand. Inkling's love of books is heartwarming to a book nerd like myself although graphic novels seem to have a bad rap (then again, you have to have a bad guy). Ethan is a sweet boy, always trying to do the right thing, who nurtures not only Inkling but his little sister Sarah who has Down's Syndrome. As more and more people learn of Inkling's existence, Ethan's control of the situation spins out of control. A dramatic ending with a tiny open end (dare we wish for a sequel?) leaves readers fully satisfied. Recommended for all middle grade readers.

Holly says

Inkling is a wonderful middle grade novel—imaginative, funny, and full of heart. There are delightful illustrations by Sydney Smith that are perfect at capturing the best moments in the novel, starting with the very first page and the nighttime prowling adventure of Rickman the cat. Ethan and his little sister Sarah are adorable, and written with emotion and sensitivity. Ethan has had to grow up faster than he should have, and he is an amazing big brother to Sarah, who has Down Syndrome. Ethan's dad, a comic book author and illustrator, is struggling big time, with both work and life. Into this mix comes the magical little ink blot,

whom Ethan names Inkling. He seems like the answer to each of their prayers—helping the creatively-challenged Ethan with a school project, being the puppy Sarah so desperately wants, and even serving to get Mr. Rylance “unstuck” from his writer’s block. Each of them can use Inkling for what they need, but is it the **right** thing to do?

This is a great story about overcoming challenges in life (be they small or large), about wrestling with ethical questions, and about recognizing the importance of family. Inkling does end up teaching each character something very important, even if it’s not the lesson they originally anticipated. I love this book, and the ending is so powerful. This is a great story with just enough magic to enchant and delight kids of all ages!

Rating: 5 stars!

***Disclosure: I received a copy of this book from the publisher for purposes of this blog tour. This review is voluntary on my part, and reflects my honest rating and review of the book.*

Scarlett Readz and Runz....Through Novel Time & Distance says

Uplifting, heartfelt and very immersive to read.

Inkling is such a great character to stand by his family in the storm of need. We could all use an Inkling every once in a while. ?

Ethan is working on a group project for school. Their assignment is to create a graphic novel. Among the students in his group, Ethan is the one picked to make the drawings after the plot has been created. Easy peasy, right?

Since Ethan’s dad is an artist and has produced the amazing ‘Kren’ comic series, it only makes sense that he should have inherited the same artistic tendencies as his father. Vikra however, his classmate and archenemy, thinks differently. She is very artistic and almost knows for sure that she has this in the bag...until Inkling comes along!

Inkling is a color-blob, born from the creations of Ethan’s dad. One night, he simply became. He slowly rolled of one of the sketchbooks in the home office and made his way around the house in the dark.

The group project is going slow...Ethan is overwhelmed and under gifted in his drawing skills. His dad is having a difficult time as of late as well. Creatively, he has hit a blank since the death of his wife. His publisher has been knocking on his door for the past 2 years, waiting for the next big hit. Ethan is trying to help out his dad with his little sister with special needs as much as he can to ease his father’s burden, but the family is hurting and mourning still.

Inkling makes his appearance at the right time of their lives. They have so much to learn from each other and gain from their deeply developing friendship. For a while things start looking back up for them. When Ethan’s drawing skills improve with tutoring lessons from Inkling, the unimaginable happens. Inkling gets kidnapped. The event sends Ethan’s dad into a deep spiral of depression and together as a family they have to make it through a tough time and rescue Inkling.

What are the chances of getting him back? How will they fare? Someone is out to doing some really bad

things to Inkling and Ethan is challenged to rescue him.
Fingers crossed...

This book was deeply moving as well as entertaining. A truly sweet and heart rendering story to read as the plot follows the families healing and at the same time the adventures of Inkling. (I actually teared up at some moments...that never happens!)

Inkling is a bookworm and the best of influences on Ethan and his family. His hunger to read and learn is infatuating. There are definitely many lessons to be learned and positive messages to be heard from this novel to give hope and encouragement to students of all walks of life.

I really like Oppel's writing. This is not the first book of his I have read and in my experience his books simply read well and immersive. I was blown away by his series 'The Apprenticeship of Victor Frankenstein' and ever since he is high on my list of 'Want to read authors'.

I highly recommend this lovely book with a great message for children as well as adults.

Enjoy :)
(...and keep a tissue box near by!)

I received a digital copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange of an honest review. All opinions are my own. Thank you!

Find my review here as well:
[https://scarlettreadzandrunz.com/middle...](https://scarlettreadzandrunz.com/middle-grade-book-review-of-inkling-by-karen-marie-oppel/)

Basyirah says

"No one was awake to see it happen..."

Ethan was in a big trouble. He'd been chosen to draw for his group's comic book project. While his dad was a known and talented comic book artist, Peter Rylance, Ethan couldn't draw a stick figure to save a life. One night, an ink blot magically and mysteriously appeared, born from his dad's drawings in a sketchbook. Inkling, he named it. His appearance had given Ethan an opportunity to finish his drawings for the comic book project, as his dad had been "stuck" and struggling ever since his mum died.

"Sometimes people die. That's just the way it is."

As they worked together to finish the project, he started to draw attention to himself as the drawings were good. Though no one knew of Ethan's lack of talent, his mortal enemy, Vika, had her suspicions. Vika's the daughter of his dad's publisher, Karl Worthington.

"Lose something?"

Vika thought Ethan had his dad to draw the comic for him but one day, she discovered Inkling. The plot thickened as her dad came up with his own evil plan to use Inkling for their own benefits.

"But if he's a person, how can he belong to anyone?"

I really love how the story flowed. Mostly the povs were of Ethan and Inkling. It's a heartwarming kid's story even though it dealt with issues such as lost, grief and sadness. I think it's nicely written, with good character development and also a nice twist on the villain's part. Inkling was such a charming character; he's such an adorable thing, and it's amusing because he's just an ink blot! That thing even had a mind of his own. I love how Ethan looked out for his sister, Sarah, who was born with Down's syndrome, even though he sulked about it because it's supposed to be his dad's job. I especially love Soren, Ethan's friend, as he was always around for Ethan and he trusted him, and that's a pretty great take on friendship. I'm still not sure what to feel about Vika. She started off as a bad character, but turned out not the real villain of the story. I'm still pretty annoyed, though, because if it wasn't for her, things wouldn't be so intense. Well, that's just how the story should be, I suppose. Ethan was just trying to save himself from embarrassment, but in the end, with Inkling's help, they managed to save a lot more than that. The ending was pretty bittersweet, and emotional, but I could deal with that.

Disclaimer: I would like to thank Pansing for this review copy in exchange for honest review! This book is available at all good bookstores.

Michelle (In Libris Veritas) says

Inkling is a middle-grade novel with a ton of heart and imagination! It centers around a young boy named Ethan, his family, and a little ink blob that changes their life. It's an engaging and fun story that tackles some heavy themes without ever becoming too overwhelming.

Inkling is a little ink-blot that comes to life in the middle of the night and finds himself at the center of a family as it struggles to heal and move forward. Ethan is stuck working on a graphic novel for school, but he can't draw despite what his friends think. Ethan's father is a comic book artist who hasn't completed a single story since his wife's death and finds himself stuck in a rut both creatively and in life. Sarah, Ethan's little sister, wants a puppy and even though she doesn't know it needs more time with her father. The death of the mother has created a cloud over their family, and Ethan is trying his hardest to push forward. Inkling's entrance into his life brings joy and re-connection with his father, and the process in which they both heal, reconcile, and move forward is one that is truly heartfelt and emotional. The connection that Ethan has with his sister Sarah, who has Down's Syndrome, is truly wonderful. It's so rare to see big/little sibling relationships that are not fraught with jealousy and teasing, so it's lovely to see Ethan taking his role as a big brother so seriously. He cares for her, takes time out of each day to spend time playing pretend, and even though he does get annoyed he doesn't let that affect his time with her.

I think where this book excels is in the pure emotion on the page. It's such a fun book to read, but it has a lot of moments where you get a bit choked up over what's happening. It deals with death in a way that it can start a gentle understanding of the pain left behind, but also focuses on the healing that can come from being with family. As an adult, I could see Ethan's father's grief in a way that I understood and felt truly worried about, but it is written in such a subtle and gentle way that kids will also understand the distance between

him and his children. It also tackles moral dilemmas involving Inkling's ability to draw. Is it okay to use Inkling to help with school work? Is it okay to have it draw pages for your career?

To add to the charm it also has illustrations to accompany the story. It has cute little ink splotches on each page, and some equally wonderful drawings scattered throughout.

This is my first Oppel book but I don't think it will be my last. He has such a light yet immersive style, and he really excels at putting emotions on the page in a way that you can't help but feel them. I think this is an excellent age-appropriate book that will engage kids (and adults) and keep them reading.

I received this in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

Lilly Charysma says

This was such a surprise. Some books come at the right time and I am proof of that. The message this story has is powerful. It's inspiring, breathtaking and very intense.

Ethan lives in his father's shadow somehow. His classmates expect him to inherit his dad's talent at creating amazing characters and drawing them, with this school project. Little do they know the struggle his family has had ever since his mom passed away. Hope emerges in the form of a drop of ink.

Inkling becomes a character that drives the family back to being one entity? It's hope, determination and strength combined in one small element. Sometimes all we need is a bit of guidance, or at least a push in the right direction. While Ethan and his family learn to be together again, Inkling goes missing. If they will be able to find him again and what will happen to the fantastic drop, you'll find out by reading the book.

This is one emotional book. I loved it and I loved the feelings it gave me. I cried and laugh with the characters and learned to hope and to work on my skills, if I want to improve them. A beautiful book that can be ready by all the family. 5 stars

Janssen says

This was a fun, quirky story and our whole family loved listening to this one.

Laura Thomas says

Books that encourage me to use my imagination, to stretch it, are always a delight. And Inkling was quite a stretch. Imagine an inkblot coming to life. All the things it could become.

Ethan Rylance got himself in a big pickle. He volunteered to do the illustrations for his school's project. What was he thinking? He can't draw. Mr. Rylance is in a bigger pickle. It's been two years since his last graphic novel and he's got writer's block in a big way. One night, while everyone is sleeping, the ink from his sketchbook comes together and escapes the page. Inkling is about to create.

While this story touches on dealing with the loss of a loved one, it's not the main focus and most of it's good plain fun. Some extra thrills are added when the Rylance family's little secret is discovered by someone not so nice. This part I could go on and on about, but I'll not spoil it for you. I was equal parts angry at the bad guys, worried about Inkling and hopeful for this family that needs something magical in their lives.

Inkling is such a fun book. I gobbled this up as fast as Inkling slurped up ink.

I received a complimentary copy. My review is voluntarily given.

Danielle says

"It's no easy thing, creating a story." (p.128)

Kaethe says

Moral conundrums rarely appear in middle grade novels. Or really any novels. It's much easier to write good and bad guys who only do good or bad things respectively and leave it at that. But I love complexity and ambiguity and myriad greys. So this is my jam. There's a blob of ink spontaneously turning into a sentient being once it escapes from the sketch book of a graphic novelist. Like every fictional new sentience it soaks up English and USian culture pretty quickly and without wasting too much in-story time, because a montage of years passing while a new being slowly observes and learns the complexity of human behavior, the way a human does, really stretches out the timeline.

Anyway, new life, new friendship, moral confusion about what is the right thing to do as for Inkling's well being, as well as to what extent a human should take advantage of Inkling's abilities. So that's good.

There's a family grieving the loss of the mother, the overwhelmed father and son struggling to maintain a semblance of the life before, and the dad is not quite making it. But again, ambiguity: he's failing his children, Ethan and Sarah, somewhat, but he's trying, and his grief is almost palpable, as is theirs.

There is also, surprisingly, quite a bit of intense skullduggery and a tremendous scene that leaves the reader a little breathless. That was unexpected too.

Also, there's a lot about art, and the creation thereof, and the emphasis on Talent that can impede the acquiring of Skill.

So really, there's just a tremendous amount of great stuff here that makes it a compelling novel for any reader, of any age. It is a standout book and I really hope a broad range of readers will give it a go.

Library copy.

Clare Lund says

What started as a fun, quirky read had me in tears by the end. Inkling shows up in Ethan's life after his mom dies and his dad is struggling with survivor's guilt and writer's block. Funny and sweet story with a beautifully heartfelt ending. Ages 9 and up.
