

Inkling

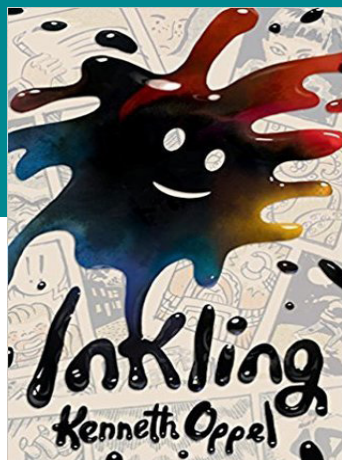
Braxton Church

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Book Review

Inkling

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Braxton Church

Rating

Excellent

Level

Intermediate

Pages

272

Year

2018

Publisher

HarperCollins Canada

ISBN

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It was the cat who first saw Inkling crawl out of the sketchbook. The sentient blob of Ink befriends Ethan, assisting him with a comic project for school, then helping Ethan's widowed father, a graphic novelist, with his latest projects. Inkling knows he's meant to find something hidden from Ethan and his family. But when Inkling discovers what he's supposed to find, he is kidnapped. While captured, part of Inkling is cut off, which then grows into a gluttonous, angry version of Inkling called Blotter. Ethan rescues Inkling, but Blotter is driven by the desire to consume Inkling. Sacrificing himself, Inkling seals himself and Blotter back in a sketchbook, saving Ethan's family. But Inkling has revealed a note left by Ethan's deceased mother, which finally lets the family heal after her death.

A major theme of the book is being able to heal and move forward after the loss of a loved one. Ethan lost his mother from cancer, and after that Ethan's father cannot write or draw and can barely take care of his children. Inkling is the catalyst for his recovery, as Inkling found the note left by Ethan's mother, asking her husband to take care of their children for her, which lets him be a father and artist again. But this theme is further explored with Inkling himself. At the end of the novel, he sacrifices himself to save Ethan's family. Both Ethan and his father have been using Inkling to help them with their own work, and so obviously must find a way to work without Inkling. After Inkling, they both become better artists. Ultimately, the book is about how one can still improve and grow, even when the ones a person loves the most are gone.