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Inkspell

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This is the second book in the 'Inkheart' trilogy and it comes emblazoned with praise for its critically acclaimed and best-selling predecessor, *Inkheart*. Mo, the Bookbinder, and his daughter Meggie, began the first tale when they released characters from the book 'Inkheart' into the real world by reading the story aloud. The second tale reverses the process and takes Mo and Meggie into the world of the story, a realm which is part fairy tale and part medieval swashbuckler, peopled by strolling players, outlaws, wise women, witches, fire-eaters, and good princes and bad princes. Funke skilfully uses the conventional backdrops of brooding castles, teeming market places, isolated caves and dark woods. She adds quirky new creatures, characters and situations and she writes from a modern sensibility, in which the naive, unreflective heroism of Cosimo the Fair, the golden prince, is almost as disturbing and disastrous as the villainy of his serpentine enemy, The Adderhead. There are plenty of exciting incidents, moments of great pathos, and considerable gaps between them, in which Funke deepens her readers' engagement with the main characters. Even the villains have substance and complexity. The book never falls into parody, and its reflections on the nature of fiction arise naturally from the way the tale unfolds; as Fenogilo, the original author of the 'Inkheart' story, is steadily frustrated and demoralised in his attempts to control the world he has set in motion. Even those annoying quotes from other works at the head of each chapter, sometimes only barely relevant to the chapter's content, could nevertheless lead curious readers in nearly a hundred exciting new directions in pursuit of the power of words. And that, after all, is what the story is about.

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