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Inkheart Trilogy

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“Perhaps there’s another, much larger story behind the printed one, a story that changes just as our own world does. And the letters on the page tell us only as much as we’d see peering through a keyhole. Perhaps the story in the book is just the lid on a pan: It always stays the same, but underneath there’s a whole world that goes on – developing and changing like our own world.” – page 147

Funke, Cornelia. *Inkheart*. Trans. Anthea Bell. New York: Scholastic, 2003. Print.

Meggie’s father Mo is a bookbinder, and for this reason, books have always been an important part of twelve-year-old Meggie’s life. But despite the many books surrounding her daily, Meggie has no idea just how intricately her life is bound with one book in particular: *Inkheart*. Nine years ago, while reading aloud, Meggie’s father Mo discovered within himself an incredible gift. Mo can turn ink and paper into flesh and blood using only his voice. Mo realized this when he accidentally read three characters out of *Inkheart*: a fire-eater named Dustfinger, the villainous Capricorn, and Capricorn’s favorite knife-wielding servant, Basta. Mo vowed never to read aloud again and so, when Dustfinger reappears to warn Mo that Capricorn is searching for him, Meggie and Mo must find a way to defeat Capricorn and to prevent the appearance of another, more sinister, inhabitant of the Inkworld in the process.

The first in a trilogy centered on the Inkworld, Cornelia Funke’s imaginative *Inkheart* is essentially a book written about a book. Each of the two worlds within *Inkheart* – the world of Meggie and Mo as well as the Inkworld of Dustfinger, Capricorn, and Basta – is closely entwined with the other and the lives of the characters in each are interwoven, as well. Funke describes both realms in vivid detail and each of the main characters displays a realistic combination of traits, lending credibility to the plot and creating complex emotional responses within the reader. By the end of the book, readers are left with a sense of hope as well as the knowledge that although not every story has a happy ending, each individual has the ability to rewrite their own.

Funke, Cornelia. *Inkspell*. Trans. Anthea Bell. New York: Scholastic, 2005. Print.

Although it has been a year since Meggie escaped Capricorn’s village, she cannot stop thinking about the Inkworld. She is keeping a notebook of stories about the land so very different from her own, and she has begun to write new stories, herself. In fact, Meggie and Mo often quarrel over her new obsession. So, when Farid – the boy plucked from *Tales of the Arabian Nights* – appears claiming that Dustfinger has returned to the Inkworld and requests that Meggie read him there as well, Meggie cannot resist the temptation to accompany him. Meggie soon finds herself between the pages of a realm spiraling out of control. But before Meggie can return home, she learns that her parents are also in the Inkworld, and that a villain far worse than

Capricorn has captured them both. With help from friends of the Inkworld and her own, Meggie searches for the words that will save her family as well as the world she has come to love.

Building on the first book of the trilogy, *Inkspell* expounds upon both characters and setting while remaining logical and consistent within the framework established by *Inkheart*. In *Inkspell*, readers are reunited with dynamic characters such as Dustfinger and Fenoglio, discovering new traits and ultimately understanding old habits of each. At the same time, readers are introduced to new characters such as Roxane and the Adderhead, each of whom influences the story in a new and sometimes unpleasant way. In *Inkspell*, it becomes increasingly clear that the Inkworld and those within it are shaped by the decisions of others, regardless of the intentions with which those decisions are made; Funke uses *Inkspell* to further impress the power and changeability of choice upon the reader.

Funke, Cornelia. *Inkdeath*. Trans. Anthea Bell. New York: Scholastic, 2007. Print.

Life in the Inkworld is not easy. After outwitting the Adderhead, Meggie and her parents are forced to hide in the woods along with a band of robbers. Mo is becoming more like the robbers each day; instead of the role he played in his own story, the role of a bookbinder, Mo is playing a new part – the part of the Bluejay. When the Adderhead, who has been searching for the Bluejay since Mo tricked him, finds Mo and forces him to surrender, Mo makes an arrangement with the Adderhead's daughter who vows to protect him. But before he surrenders, Mo makes another deal; this time Mo makes a deal with Death and it is a deal that will ultimately determine the fate of not only himself, but of Meggie and of Dustfinger, as well. Meggie once again turns to Fenoglio, the author of the book in which she is living, for the words to save her father. But, perhaps Fenoglio is not the only master of words within the world he created.

Inkdeath, the last book in Cornelia Funke's trilogy centered on the Inkworld, neatly ties together each loose thread with which the intricate series is woven. Funke forgets no character, nor does she forget any of the subtle plot twists that have led to the final chapters of her work. By elaborating on the characters, their relationships with each other, and their relationships with the Inkworld over the course of three books, Funke makes the overarching theme of the Inkworld trilogy clear: words – right and wrong, written and spoken aloud – are powerful things. However, with *Inkdeath* readers learn that actions are even greater, for only by acting on one's choice can a new ending truly be written. Funke's readers will be more than pleased at the ending of both *Inkdeath* and the Inkworld series as a whole.