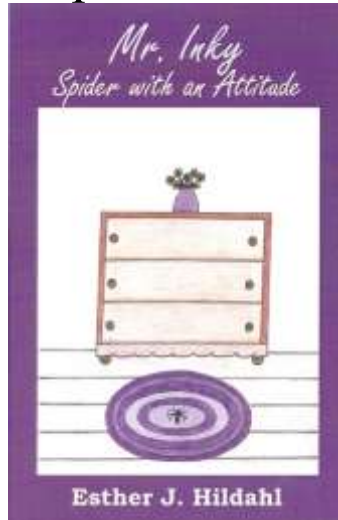


Mr. Inky: Spider with an Attitude



By Esther J. Hildahl

Reviewed by Kate Poitevin

I must admit that I spent most of my life terrified of spiders. I never killed them, I just jumped on a chair and yelled for someone else to come and do the deed. At some point, well into my adult years, I realized their worth and turned to ‘catch and release’: much to the dismay of my grandchildren.

Now that I have read Mr. Inky, I’m so glad that I don’t have the blood of innocent crawly creatures on my hands.

Ms. Hildahl tells a delightful tale about the budding relationship between ten year old Victoria and her unexpected ‘roommate.’ But wait, it’s not just about that! Hidden in the story are lessons about things like not judging others who are different, there just might be a wonderful friend inside. It addresses the topic of bullying, and teachers and parents not really listening to their children and how it makes the child feel. It touches on the angst of the everyday fifth-grader in a touching and respectful way. There is even a stinky brother, (a subject dear to my heart, having one of my own). It is full of great characters, found in every school, and artfully woven into the tale.

It is a perfect read for fifth and sixth graders and this grandma can attest to the fact that it is fun to read to younger ones. I’m sure that the lives of countless creepy-crawlies will be saved as the children learn that all creatures have a place in our world and should be left to do their jobs.

Reviewed by Sue Eller

The last thing 10-year-old Victoria Wyatt wanted to find in her bedroom was a spider. How did Victoria go from wanting to squish it with her flip-flop to wanting to protect it against the classroom bully? Author Esther Hildahl spins a tale of a most unlikely friendship and leaves the reader with a whole new perspective on spiders – especially talking ones. A delightful chapter

book that I highly recommend to children of all ages. *Mr. Inky, Spider with an Attitude* is available at the Hastings Book Stores in Spokane, Washington and at Auntie's Bookstore, also in Spokane.

Reviewed by Joyce Caudel

Vicki Wyatt is a normal ten year old except for the fact she shares her bedroom with a spider. A spider that talks!

Vicki tells her family the spider talks, of course, they do not believe her. She must be imagining things. Vicki's brother, Neal, teases her and tells some of the boys at school about Vicki's 'talking spider'. Vicki gets into a fight on the playground, with the meanest kid in school. They both get sent to the principal.

The real excitement begins when Mr. Inky agrees to go to school, in a glass jar, for Vicki's science project. Since no one believes her, she tells the class her spider is just an ordinary house spider. The meanest kid in school calls Vicki a liar. Mr. Inky can't help himself and with a booming voice lets the class know he is really a talking spider. Mr. Inky escapes and chaos breaks out as the whole school searches for him.

I found *Mr. Inky: Spider with an Attitude* by Esther J. Hildahl to be a delightful story any child will love to read or have read to them. The characters seemed very real to me and brought back memories of my childhood on the playground. I'm going to think twice before squashing another spider.

Reviewed by D. Andrew McChesney

Vicky Wyatt's reaction when she sees a spider in her room is natural. She's going to kill it. However, this spider is unusual and in order to save his live, reveals to Vicky that he can talk. His gamble pays off and he is spared. Mr. Inky, as he is later named develops a sometimes cantankerous relationship with Vicky.

Larger problems result for the fifth grader because no one believes her story about a talking spider. She eventually has to see the school counselor and in an attempt to calm things down says she made the whole thing up. But when she takes Mr. Inky to school for a science project, things get out of hand and Mr. Inky is forced to speak in front of the entire class in order to protect Vicky.

This was a fun read, a book that while written for elementary school age readers, is entertaining for those of any age. Most notable is the way in which the author captures the feel of being in the fifth grade. That brought back a number of memories, and in itself recommends this book for all.

Mr. Inky: Spider with an Attitude is available in several Spokane area bookstores.

Reviewed by *Northern Dawn Awards*

When ten-year-old Vicki Wyatt finds a house spider in her bedroom, her first instinct is to kill it. Perturbed Mr. Inky, the spider, tells Vicki to spare his life. He wants to continue living under the dresser. After all, it's his home, too.

At first Vicky is not happy with this new arrangement. What if Mr. Inky bites her?

However, when Mr. Inky goes missing, she changes her tune. When he comes back, she realizes it's pretty cool having him around, even if he does have bad grammar.

Then disaster strikes when her brother tells the whole school that Vicki thinks she has a talking spider living in her bedroom. As a result, she is excluded, teased, and even sent to the school counselor.

Later, Mr. Inky reluctantly agrees to go to school as part of Vicki's science project. Will he survive Rory Picklebok, the meanest kid in the fifth grade? And what happens when his secret is discovered?

Hildahl's nineteen years of teaching has served her well, as she clearly knows the minds and concerns of the middle-school crowd. Preteens will clamor for Mr. Inky: Spider with an Attitude because it's a whole lot of fun. Parents will also appreciate that it is well-executed and a clean read.



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