

Ben and Ink

Benjamin Sketcher's life was normal for the first 9 years. Then, on his 9th birthday, the un-normal stuff started. It began with a present from his Aunt Edna. Aunt Edna wore huge purple earrings and ate jello with fruit floating in it. She didn't give the best presents.

Last year Aunt Edna gave Ben light-up earmuffs. The year before that he got a yodeling alarm clock. This year she sent a tiny bottle of black ink with a strange looking pen.

After dinner, Ben tried out his gift. He dipped the tip of the pen into the ink and made a few lines in his notebook. Once he got the feel of it, he liked how the ink flowed out. He began to think that maybe this time Aunt Edna had actually given him something good.

The dark black ink reminded Ben of a pig he had seen on a school trip to a farm last fall. So he started drawing a pig with a curly tail and two pointy ears.

Ben turned around to check on his fish in its bowl near his bed. When he turned back again, he saw a black blob sitting on his rug. The page in his notebook was empty.

"Hello," said the blob. "I am Ink."

“Hi, Ink. I’m Ben. It’s nice to meet you. But what *are* you?” asked Ben. He rubbed his eyes and wondered if his new glasses weren’t working right.

“I’m not exactly sure,” said Ink. “Maybe a dog? That’s what you were going for, isn’t it?”

“Well, I was drawing a pig, actually,” said Ben. “But they’re not my best subject. I’m much better at dragons.”

“Ah, that explains this snout then.” Ink tried to scratch behind her ear with her hind leg, but it didn’t quite reach. “Next time draw my legs longer,” she said.

Ben sat on his bed and stared while Ink limped around the room, sniffing at the rug. “What’s wrong with your leg?” asked Ben.

“This one’s shorter than the others,” replied Ink. “You can fix that next time too.”

Ben was starting to realize that he had created Ink. A living pig. With Aunt Edna’s pen.

“I’m sorry I ever doubted you, Aunt Edna,” Ben said to himself. This pen was the best gift he had ever received. “I’ll have to write a really nice thank you letter,” he said to Ink.

“Indeed,” said Ink. “And then get to work – we need some more friends in here!”



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Which of the following is NOT something that Aunt Edna gave Ben?
 - a. A yodeling alarm clock
 - b. Huge purple earrings
 - c. A tiny bottle of ink
 - d. Light-up earmuffs

2. What does Ben draw best?
 - a. Pigs
 - b. Dogs
 - c. Dragons
 - d. Fruit

3. What does Ink want Ben to draw?
 - a. Even legs
 - b. Longer legs
 - c. Friends
 - d. All of the above

4. Why did Ben think Aunt Edna's gift wouldn't be good?
 - a. Because she had given him strange gifts in the past
 - b. Because she ate jello
 - c. Because he was turning 9
 - d. Because he didn't like to draw

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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