

## Ink'd Xpressions Publishing

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**Two second-graders share a special friendship and a superpower they use together to make the world a better place—for all kids.**

*A heartfelt new picture book combines delightful storytelling with an important message of diversity, acceptance, and friendship, a perfect offering in today's landscape.*



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Jacob is a second-grader who loves his new family. His biological mom and dad went away when they couldn't take care of him anymore. He's the new kid at school and sometimes mean classmates call him a "stray dog," but his new best friend Andrew tells him it's cool that he's adopted. Author Nneka J. Howell explores the many differences in families, cultures, and friendships in her debut picture book, *The Color of Play*.

Jacob and Andrew may not look alike, but together they share a special superpower: they can camouflage. That means to blend in. They camouflage together a lot. And they have each other's backs. That means they stick up for each other. But when a fifth-grader brings a toy water gun to school and invites Jacob to play with it, Andrew stays away.

When his friend doesn't want to play with him anymore, Jacob is confused. And he worries that they will no longer be able to use their superpowers together to make the world a better place by scaring away fears and all the bad things. Now Jacob will have to do it all by himself, and he's sad.

Andrew explains that playing with toy guns isn't safe for a boy who looks like him. He could get into big trouble. When Jacob's parents find out, he is worried that he has disappointed them and there's no way to camouflage his way out of this one. But instead, they explain to him why his decision was reckless, especially for his friend Andrew.

*“My parents told me that there are some very mean and selfish people in the world. Sometimes people don’t like other people just because they are different. Some people don’t like other people because of their skin color. Some people hate others because they think they are better and more powerful. They also told me that it’s not cool for anyone to hate another person that they don’t even know. My dad tells me all the time that loving people for who they are is important.”*

Nneka J. Howell masterfully weaves an important story for all children and families that acknowledges realistic cultural differences and challenges the concept of color blindness in terms of race, while communicating that love and acceptance wins. She hopes that her storybook provokes healthy conversations in homes, communities, classrooms, and libraries to bridge the divisive gap that exists in today’s landscape regarding racial and cultural awareness. *The Color of Play* is her fourth published book and her debut children’s book in a planned four-book series.

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If you would like more information about author Nneka J. Howell and *The Color of Play* please contact [speaklife@inkdxpressions.com](mailto:speaklife@inkdxpressions.com)