DRAWING AMANDA

A novel for middle grade and young adult readers

He draws his crush for an online game and paints her into real danger

More information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLOqSp1qMMM#action=share>

Purchase: https://ganxy.com/i/93908/stephanie-feuer/drawing-amanda

DRAWING AMANDA is set in the under-parented, high-expectation adolescent world of a Manhattan international prep school. Fourteen-year-old budding artist Inky Kahn is still smarting from the death of his father. He thinks he’s found his big break when he bonds with the developer of a new computer game and snags a coveted drawing assignment, for which he uses his secret crush–Amanda–as a model.

But unbeknownst to Inky, the developer has a dangerous criminal past, and is using his computer game to lure and stalk teenage girls. And Inky has inadvertently led Amanda right into his path. Blinded by his own ambition and sulking from his father’s death, Inky hides from the truth. Will Inky, with the help of Rungs, his cybergeek pal, discover the crime in time and save Amanda before the creep ensnares her–or anyone else?

Here’s what people are saying about DRAWING AMANDA

Feuer expertly leads readers into a deep dive through real and raw issues that young adults face: a parent’s death, overcoming grief, friendship issues, and Internet security. Although there are heavy concepts throughout the story, the topics are handled in an age appropriate way…. A debut novelist to watch. - **School Library Journal**

This story had me thinking about several episodes of Law & Order: SVU as I was reading. It has that same feel of a story with a dark underbelly, the same creeping ick factor as the truth begins to bob to the surface. - **The Sunday Review and Backlist Books**

Drawing Amanda is such a creative book! It mixes the wonderful elements of a well written story and fantastic illustrations…A big thumbs up and a yes! to “Do I recommend this book?” - **The Reader and The Chef**

A contemporary tale about fitting in, growing up and facing your demons….l oved how Feuer managed to seamlessly work cultural and religious backgrounds into the story without making it sound contrived. – **The Bookshelf Gargoyle**

Awarded the ***QED Seal for Excellence in eBook Design***

"A debut novelist to watch" – School Library Journal

Discussion Guide

**DRAWING AMANDA Discussion Guide**

## Story Summary:

DRAWING AMANDA is set in the under-parented, high-expectation world of a Manhattan international prep school. Fourteen-year-old Inky Kahn, still smarting from the death of his father, wants his artwork seen and thinks he’s found his outlet by contributing to a computer game in development. Inky bonds with the game’s developer and snares a drawing assignment, for which he uses Amanda, his secret crush, as a model.

Inky and his cybergeek pal, Rungs, discover Amanda’s been beta-testing the game – and has agreed to meet the developer, who, because of the game’s artwork, she mistakenly thinks is Inky. When the guys’ sleuthing uncovers the developer’s past arrest for molesting a teenage girl, they know they have to stop Amanda’s rendezvous.

But first Inky has to let go of his dream of having his artwork used – and admit to Amanda that he spied on her – even while focusing on his school project about the Brazilian Indian tribe his father was to film on his fatal trip. Inky feels like he’s completing his father’s unfinished business. He includes a cryptic message for Amanda when he presents his project at school. She realizes Inky is right about the developer.

Inky, Amanda and Rungs then craft a plan to use Inky’s art to trap the creep before he ensnares anyone else.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Inky wants nothing more than to have his artwork used in the Megaland game. He is so focused on his goal that he is blinded to the clues (the live chat with the developer and the lameness of the game) that all is not right with the game. Have you ever been so focused on your own goals and desires that you misread a situation?

2. Inky and his mother are estranged in part because he can’t accept that she’s moving on from her grief. Principal Harooni and Hawk both urge Inky to do so as well. “Get over it, Artboy,” Hawk says. What keeps Inky from being able to move on?

3. Amanda has lived in several countries, and while she does speak English, she is challenged by English idioms. Can you think of some phrases and expression that would be challenging for a non-native speaker? Have you struggled with idioms when learning another language? Which ones?  
4. Rungs, a Buddhist, is offended when his teacher shows him the soles of his feet. During an assembly, he ticks off some other cultural taboos. Can you think of others? Was Rungs right to play a prank on his teacher to get revenge?

5. Inky and Hawk have both lost parents, but Inky sees little similarity in their experiences – Inky’s father died in a sudden accident; Hawk’s mother died after a prolonged illness. In what ways do you think their circumstances are the same or are different?

6. When Inky tells Woody about his guilt over his father’s death, he shares something he hasn’t been able to share with others. Have you ever shared something with a stranger you hadn’t told friends or family? Why?

7. Amanda’s report focuses on the different cliques in the school. It is human nature to bond over shared interests or experiences, but sometimes cliques can be exclusionary. What is it like in your school? What are the shared traits of the group you identify with?

8. Rungs discovers that Woody has gone to great pains to disguise his identity. We hear more and more stories about people who have been “catfished” by people who create fake online identities. Can you think of ways you might spot someone who is not who they say they are?

9. Both Inky and Amanda are different in Megaland than they are at school. How close to the “real” you are you online? Do you behave differently on Facebook or Snapchat than you do in person? How? Are there things you don’t post because of what others might think? How do you think your friends perceive the online you?

10. What is “safe” in a digital world? How much information about you is “out there”? What could someone know about you from easily accessible information? Could they figure out where you go to school? Who your friends are? What days you are at certain locations? Things to say to you to get you to trust them?

11. Inky’s report was about an Indian tribe that lives in isolation from the modern world. Why should we care about this small group of people? Are there things we can learn from them?

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### **Tips on How to be Cyber Savvy for use in discussion of DRAWING AMANDA**

## 10 Tips to Keep from Getting Played Online

Much of the appeal of the internet, part of its intrinsic value, is making connections outside of your usual sphere, meeting others with shared interests or who are connected through friends. It’s fun to interact with people you don’t see on the daily, to try out your humor or another facet of your personality.

Fun as all that is, we all know that some people are not who they say they are. Despite knowing this, smart people get fooled every day. Here are some tips so you don’t get played online.

1.**Curiosity is good**. Ask a lot of questions, then ask some more. The more you know about the other person, the better you’ll be able to form an opinion about them and how they fit into your life. This has the benefit of being fun, and good practice for other areas of your life.

2. **Pay attention.** Really listen to those answers. Make sure the details in a person’s stories all fit together. If something seems really unbelievable or facts don’t add up, there’s something else going on – probably something that you don’t want to unravel.

3. **Desperation is bad.** It’s fiction and all, but in DRAWING AMANDA, Inky missed the cues that Megaland was bad news because he was so invested in having his artwork seen that it blinded him. If you watch MTV’s “Catfish” you can practically smell the desperation of some of those fooled coming out of your screen. You are better than that. Remember the good stuff, your good stuff. Step back and convince yourself that there will be another opportunity, another person who cares as much, means as much. Because it’s true.

4. **Facts on Facebook**. Check your new friend’s Facebook account. When did they start? If the account was opened less than a year ago, be concerned. Unless it’s someone really young, no one is that late to the party. Another sign of a bogus account is a limited number of friends. “Fake” people create fake friends to support their deception. But then they have to create fake lives for those friends, which takes a lot of effort. Be sure to check their posts, if there are no tags for the other people in the pictures, especially party pictures, that’s another red flag.

5. **Get Social.**  See if your new friend wants to video chat on Skype or Facetime. Even a Vine video will help you tell if they are legit.

6. **Google the name.** You do this automatically, right? Does the information that comes up in your search match what they’ve said about themselves? What about addresses and locations? Don’t forget to click on the images tab to see what comes up.

7. **A Picture is Worth a 1000 Words.**  Get a picture of your new friend or copy one from their Facebook page. You’ve seen the Catfish guys check out the authenticity of an image. Here’s how you can do the same thing:

Save the person’s picture to your computer. Then go to images.google.com in your web browser. You’ll see a camera icon in the search box. Click on that and upload the picture. Then click the “Search by Image” button. See what else comes up. If there is someone else’s name attached to the same image your new friend claimed as their own, you’ve got trouble.

8. **Feedback from Friends**. Don’t keep your new friend secret. Tell your friends and family all about them. Their feedback might help you sort things out.

9. **Never Trouble Trouble**. And Keep it Real. If you have any reason to believe your new friend is not who they say, just walk away. Whatever the reason, you don’t need it. If you’re putting your real self out there, demand the same from others.

10. **Be Cyber-Savvy.**  There are other ways of being played besides being fooled by a creep. What you don’t want is for the stuff you do or share online to get in the way of the rest of the life you want to live. You already know that stuff you post online can come back and haunt you later in life.

## Here are a dozen tips to keep in mind:

1. Snapchat is not gone in an instant. Think screenshot. Think OMG no.

2. This list is the ‘Top Ten Ways to Meet Your Soulmate’. No, it’s not. I tried to deceive you. Things aren’t always what they claim to be, especially online.

3. Uploading a picture is like taking that photo, folding it into a paper airplane, and flinging it out of your window. Even if it was only intended to hit Facebook in the face, anybody in the street (or in the bushes, or behind the bleachers) can look up and watch it float by.

4. Hi there! I’m vixenkitten16@I’m\_being\_dumb\_by\_inviting\_creeps\_to\_talk\_to\_me\_ because\_of\_my\_suggestive\_username.com.

5. Pop Quiz: Would you be okay with an invisible, foul-mouthed sailor following you around and shouting (in your exact voice) every time you open your mouth to speak? If so, feel free to give out your social media passwords, or leave your phone unattended while you are still signed on.

6. S%&t happens: Even if you are super careful about passwords, accounts get hacked. To make sure your Facebook notifications are not going to someone else, check the account settings page. Under your name and username, you’ll see primary and other emails listed. Make sure they are all yours.

7. In mythology, trolls are dull, dim-witted creatures that turn to stone if they go out in the sunlight. Just something to think about when harassed by an Internet troll.

8. Stay with me on this one. Free social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) need money to survive. But they’re free to use, right? So there’s another way they make money. Remember on Thursday night you posted about going skiing at Mount Peak with Katie next Saturday, but you wish you had your own snowboard. Yeah, that’s going to be sold. To advertisers, data-miners, snowboard retailers, and what not. Some company has just put down the Benjamins to know \*where\* you’ll be next Saturday, \*what\* you’ll be doing, and \*what\* you need. That’s some big-brother-is-watching level stuff. Think twice about what you post.

9. Getting together with a stranger you’ve already “met” online is like dressing in all black and going for a midnight jog in the middle of a road you’ve already “checked” for cars. You can’t always see what’s coming.

10. You’d be furious if your parents snoop at what you’re doing online. May have happened. If parental snooping bugs you – and they’re looking out for you in their own way — you should be ballistic when people who don’t give two craps about you get hold of your online information. Make sure you know how to use your privacy settings and keep those firewalls up.

11. You know that skull and crossbones logo on bottles of poison? Assign that warning to every email attachment you get from someone you don’t know. Don’t open it and sniff the fumes out of curiosity. Just toss that bad boy in the trash and move on.

12. Your parents didn’t have the Internet. You’re the digital natives, the true pioneers, the ones drawing up the maps. But true Internet danger comes from real, physical people. And although your parents are hilariously bad texting and clueless about Snapchat, they are still more experienced at dealing with deceitful people than you are. Swallow your pride and ask them for guidance when you get snagged on a rock. You may be the ones sailing the uncharted waters, but that doesn’t mean you can’t ask for help staying afloat.

Have some other tips? Tweet at me [@StephanieFeuer](http://web.archive.org/web/20161104151542/http://stephaniefeuer.com/twitter.com/stephaniefeuer)

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