

Teacher Notes

Title:	Kidglovz
Author:	Julie Hunt and illustrated by Dale Newman
Publisher:	Allen & Unwin
Price:	A \$24.99 NZ \$27.99
ISBN:	9781742378527
Publication Date:	September 2015
Audience:	8-12

Synopsis:

KidGlovz (Kid) is nine years old, a wunderkind, a child prodigy, a musical genius. He stands no higher than a piano stool. Named after the white gloves he has always worn, he knows nothing about his past except that he was 'discovered' by his manager Dr Spin while playing the Minute Waltz in 13 seconds. Dr Spin, the impresario, ruthlessly exploits KidGlovz. Kid is only allowed out to perform; the rest of the time he must practice under the watchful eye of Grimwade, his minder and bodyguard. The only person who cares about Kid is his mentor and teacher, Lovegrove (who happens to be Dr Spin's sister).

When a young thief breaks into his room one night, KidGlovz makes a friend. The boy's name is Shoestring. He claims to be a street performer and offers to show Kid a different life. But Shoestring is not what he seems. Their friendship is tested as Shoestring leads Kid on a perilous journey ending in a shepherds' hut in the mountains. Lovegrove's dog Hugo manages to track them down. But Kid's journey isn't over yet. He must risk entering the realm of Splitworld Sam. During the dramatic climax the young pianist discovers the true nature of his gift – that his talent is not in his fingers, but in the white gloves themselves.

KidGlovz is a supernatural tale of music, magic and mystery told in words and pictures.

Style:

KidGlovz has the feel of the fabulous—in the literal sense—folktale told around the fire place.

It brings with it a sense of gravitas and history (like any oft-retold story, even if in this case it is an original work), and it can effectively give different messages to different listeners.

Julie Hunt's text brings together humour, drama, adventure and fantasy, qualities that are beautifully matched with Dale Newman's pencil ~~and wash~~ illustrations. As with the best graphic novels, a tension is created between what is written and what is seen. This tension requires the reader to make imaginative leaps between the frames and provides far more scope for he or she to negotiate the story in their own fashion.

In the words of the Author:

'*KidGlovz* is a tale about friendship, betrayal and finding your place in the world. It is also a coming of age story – the young hero changes from being a tiny, frightened child into a courageous boy who literally grows into a new life full of freedom and possibility', said Julie Hunt.

The strength of the story first attracted Dale Newman, 'Firstly, it's a fabulous story with wonderful characters! There are really appealing elements that I found "juicy" - music, magic, psychic dreams... It also holds lots of imagery that I have previously explored in my personal artwork - underground caves, underground rivers, night scenes – it was all very familiar and felt like I could easily bring pictures to this story. I felt that I was the right artist for the story.'

Author Background:

Julie Hunt loves poetry, storytelling and traditional folktales, and her pursuit of stories has taken her from the rugged west coast of Ireland to the ice caves of Romania. Her own stories combine other-worldly elements with down-to-earth humour. Julie's novel *Song for a Scarlet Runner* was the winner of Readings inaugural Children's Book Prize and was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award and the CBCA Awards in 2014. Her other books include a series about a plucky cowgirl called *Little Else* (illustrated by Beth Norling) and the CBCA Picture Book of the Year, *The Coat* (illustrated by Ron Brooks) and *Precious Little* (illustrated by Gaye Chapman).

Dale Newman is an artist and illustrator who originally trained in printmaking. She honed her illustration skills while working as a press artist for five years in the art room of the *Newcastle Herald*, and now exhibits her lithographs, etchings and drawings. Dale has been a freelance artist since 2007. She also works with young people as an artist, musician and arts project manager in the community sector.

Suggestions for classroom discussion and application:

Themes include imagination, creativity, play, children, school, ideas

- Before opening *Kidglovz* consider the title and cover design. Discuss what sort of story students think this might be and the things on the cover that make them think that. Ask questions such as:
 - What sort of mood is set here?
 - Is this likely to be a story set in a real or fantasy world?
 - What do you think the boy is dreaming? What might this tell you about the boy's situation?
 - This image is a pencil drawing. Does this make you expect a particular type of story? Imagine this image was a photograph. How would that influence what you might expect from the story?

- Read the text in the prequel, ‘There is a town in the mountains....’ Does this page confirm the type of story you thought this might be? Research the term ‘folktale’ and see if you can find anything in this prequel that hints *Kidglovz* will be a folktale.
- Now turn to the following four double-page spreads and explain in words the story of the dressmaker and the travelling fabric merchant. Divide students into groups of two and get each group to write and act out a short play of this story.
- Go to <http://libguides.huhs.org/content.php?pid=219026&sid=3073454> and research the term ‘point-of-view’. Apply your findings to the images on pages 4 and 6. What is the effect of placing the reader behind the people talking and looking forward to the stage? Go back to the website and read about ‘perspective’ and how it can change our perceptions. Look at page 7 and describe how perspective is working to make you think Dr Spin is completely in control of the situation. Turn the page and describe how Dale Newman uses both ‘point-of-view’ and ‘perspective’ in this double-page image.
- A graphic novel uses text AND images to tell a story but often the text will be telling one story and the images telling another. Turn to page 56. The text tells us that Lovegrove had an accident which injured her. The images show us that as a girl she would sit at the piano with her brother (Dr Spin) and practice but one day he lost his temper with her and slammed the piano lid on her fingers. Find other examples from the story where the text and illustrations tell two different stories.
- Describe how *Kidglovz* and *Shoestring* change over the course of the story and the major events that cause this change.
- What do you think will happen next to *Kidglovz*, *Shoestring* and *Splitworld Sam*?
- Comprehension questions:
 - What was it about the gloves that made Kid a musical genius?
 - Why did *Shoestring* decide to help *Kidglovz*?
 - Why did *Kidglovz* play differently in Count Arpeggio’s competition?
 - Who is *Splitworld Sam* and why did he want *Kidglovz* to enter the Underworld?
 - What happened to the gloves after *Kidglovz* escaped the Underworld?