

The Puppets of Spelhorst: A Norendy Tale

AUTHOR

KATE DICAMILLO

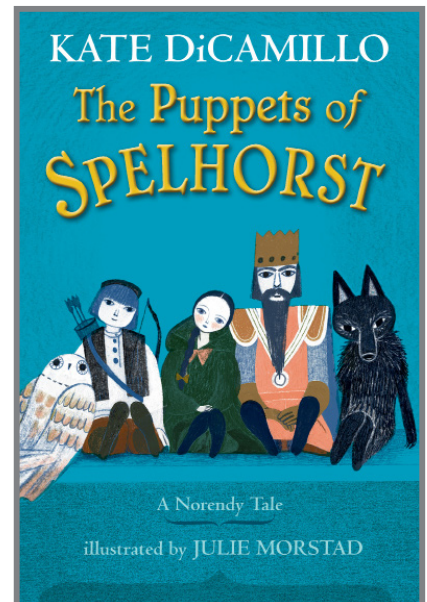
ILLUSTRATOR

JULIE MORSTAD

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Once, there was a king. And a wolf. And a girl with a shepherd's crook. And a boy with a bow and arrow. And also, there was an owl . . . They were puppets, and they were waiting for a story to begin.

In this new work of short fiction by twice winner of the Newbery Medal Kate DiCamillo, exquisitely illustrated in black and white by Governor General Literary Award Finalist Julie Morstad, five puppets who find themselves together in an abandoned trunk are carried off into the adventure of a lifetime.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate DiCamillo is one of America's most beloved storytellers, author of *The Tale of Despereaux* and *Flora and Ulysses*, both of which have been awarded the prestigious Newbery Medal; *Because of Winn-Dixie*, which received a Newbery Honor; *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, which won a Boston Globe-Horn Book Award; and the bestselling Mercy Watson series. Born in Philadelphia, she grew up in Florida and now lives in Minneapolis, USA, where she faithfully writes two pages a day, five days a week.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Julie Morstad is the author and illustrator of *Today* and *How To*. She has illustrated many books for children, including *Swan*, *The Dress and the Girl*, *This Is Sadie* and *Bloom: A Story of Fashion Designer Elsa Schiaparelli*. Julie makes her home in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she lives with her family.

You can find her at www.juliemorstad.com.

STUDY NOTES

BEFORE READING

- Before reading, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:
 - The title of the book
 - The author
 - The publisher
 - The blurb.
- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.

- Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them some idea of what the book is about.

WHILE READING

Orientation

- The orientation sets the scene, mood and introduces the characters. Answer the following questions after reading the opening scene of the novel:
 - Which character/s are we introduced to?
 - What mood is the author setting?
- Write what you think could happen in the story based on how the writer has set the story up.

Complications

- It is the author's job to make it difficult for the characters to achieve their goals. What trouble (complications) does the author create to make it difficult for the main character to achieve their goal/s?
- Can you identify the climax of the story, the moment of highest tension?

Characterisation

- Characterisation is how the characters in a novel are described physically, their point of view, their personalities, their private thoughts and their actions. Draw a picture of a character from the book and then describe their personality in five words.
 - Compare your ideas of that character with other people in your class. Did you imagine the same person?

Setting and World-building

- Consider the world the author has created in this novel and then answer the following questions:
 - Can you describe it?
 - How is it different to the world you live in?
 - Which elements of the world seem realistic, and which seems fantastical?

Resolution

- How does the story conclude (resolution)?
- Compare the ending of the story with how you imagined it ending at the end of the first chapter. Were you surprised by where the story went?

AFTER READING

- Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.
- Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. Focus particularly on the character's attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events. How might another character see and experience events differently to the character in the novel?
- Imagine that a movie was being made of the novel. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have.
 - Once you have chosen your soundtrack, think about your ideal cast and setting. Then create a movie poster advertising the adaptation.