



Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan
Illustrated by Hadley Hooper

NEAL PORTER BOOKS
HC: 9780823441709 • Ages 7–10

TWO BROTHERS, FOUR HANDS *The Artists Alberto and Diego Giacometti*

by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan
illustrated by Hadley Hooper

FIVE
Starred
Reviews!

- ★ *Booklist*, starred review
- ★ *The Horn Book*, starred review
- ★ *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*, starred review
- ★ *School Library Journal*, starred review

About the Book

The inspiring true story of the Giacometti brothers, one an artist, the other a daredevil, both devoted to their craft . . . but even more devoted to each other.

Everyone who knew them agreed. Alberto was the genius of the family. His younger brother Diego was his opposite—he didn't care much for books or schoolwork, and he had no idea what he would be when he grew up. But despite their differences, the two brothers shared an intense bond.

Alberto Giacometti became one of the iconic artists of the twentieth century, whose tall, spindly sculptures grace the collections of museums around the world. Diego was always at his side, helping and encouraging, and in his spare time creating remarkable pieces of furniture, works of sculpture in their own right.

The poignant story of brothers and sculptors Alberto and Diego Giacometti is skillfully brought to life in the hands of multiple Sibert Honor authors Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan, and the spectacular artwork of Hadley Hooper.



Classroom Discussion

- Discuss the title of the book. What does “four hands” imply? After reading the book, refer to the front and back cover art. What part of the brothers’ lives do the green, blue, and pink panels on the front cover represent? Excellent nonfiction has a theme. What is the theme of the book? How does the artwork on the back-cover symbolize the theme?
- Look at the title page. Describe the Giacometti brothers’ relationship. How does the illustration foreshadow their relationship as they get older? Draw a connection between this illustration and the brothers’ reunion after Alberto moves back to Paris (p. 34). Explain how these illustrations are symbolic of “four hands.”
- The brothers “are as different as brothers can be” (p. 3). How does the illustration on this page reflect their differences? Explain how their differences are revealed as they grow from boys to men. Why does the Giacometti family think that Alberto is the “genius”? Discuss the definition of “shiftless” (p. 14). Why does Diego’s mother think that her younger son is “shiftless”? Explain why she thinks that Alberto can help Diego settle down and gain focus. How does Diego find purpose in Alberto’s studio?
- Alberto Giacometti goes to Paris and is welcomed by the surrealists. What interests him about the surrealist movement? Why does he give up on surrealism? Alberto suffers emotionally as he struggles to develop a style of art that is unique to him. How does Hadley Hooper reveal his despondency through her illustrations? When Alberto is at his lowest points, the illustrations surrounding him are blue. What does the color symbolize?
- Explain how Alberto Giacometti's failures impact his successes as an artist. Discuss why Alberto returns to Switzerland during World War II. What does he learn about himself and his art while away from Paris? How does this period play a role in his journey to discover a new artistic vision? Debate whether artists like Alberto ever quit exploring new art styles. How is failure a part of the creative process?
- The authors write, “People are moved by the truth in Alberto’s sculpture” (p. 41). How does he establish a new artistic movement? Alberto says, “A single human face can give an artist the subject matter to fill a lifetime” (p. 23). How do the illustrations on page 22 reflect this belief?
- Describe Alberto’s studio. Discuss why he insists that “Artists should live in humble surroundings.” (p. 47) Debate whether such humble surroundings promote creativity.
- Some critics, including Diego himself, believed that Diego was more of a craftsman than an artist. What is the difference in an artist and a craftsman? At what point does his craft become art? How did Alberto’s death affect Diego? How do Diego’s hands “decide for him the direction he takes his art” (p. 54)? Explain how his passions as a child influence his art.

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Classroom Discussion—continued

- Read “Looking at Alberto Giacometti’s *Walking Man*” (p. 58). The authors ask, “What is the feeling expressed [by this figure]”? Think about this question and discuss how the illustrator expresses Alberto’s feelings as his art evolves. What about Diego? How does color, size, and shape of the illustrations blend with the text to reveal a true picture of the brothers and their contribution to art?
- Hadley Hooper uses paint and ink—scanned and finished in Photoshop. Take a close look at the illustrations in the book. Point out examples of traditional paint and ink. When is it clear that Hooper makes use of Photoshop? How does Photoshop expand visual possibilities for illustrators?

About the Creators

JAN GREENBERG and **SANDRA JORDAN** have collaborated on many award-winning children’s books about artists, including *Action Jackson* (Sibert Honor Book), *The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr, Eccentric Genius* (Sibert Honor Book), *Ballet for Martha* (Sibert Honor Book and Orbis Pictus Award) *Christo and Jean-Claude: Through the Gates and Beyond*, and *Meet Cindy Sherman*, the recent recipient of five starred reviews. Sandra Jordan lives in New York City. Jan Greenberg lives in St. Louis, Missouri.

HADLEY HOOPER is a fine artist whose illustration work includes art for the Coretta Scott King-winning memoir *How I Discovered Poetry* by Marilyn Nelson. She received considerable attention for her illustrations for Patricia MacLachlan’s *The Iridescence of Birds*. She lives in Denver, Colorado.



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