

Old Fellow

AUTHOR

CHRISTOPHER CHENG

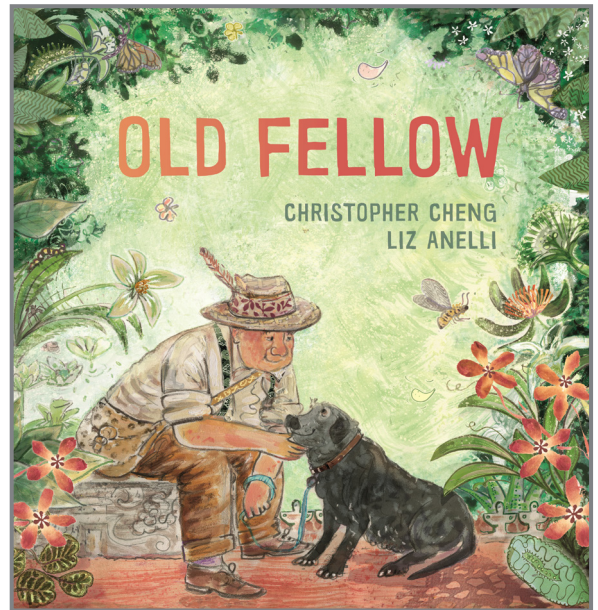
ILLUSTRATOR

LIZ ANELLI

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

An old man and an old dog look after each other on their daily trip to the local park. Along the way they meet friends new and old who brighten their day in different ways. A beautiful, heartwarming book that celebrates community and connection.

A touching and tender picture book about the joy that can be found in companionship and community.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Within the old (and new) walls of an inner-city Sydney terrace dwells Christopher Cheng. He is the author of many children's books including his previous Nature storybook title *Python* which was shortlisted for the 2013 Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year awards. Passionate about animals, particularly those native to Australia, it's fitting that he established the Zoomobile and taught at Taronga Zoo in Sydney for many years, celebrating his background in education.

He has always loved to write (he mostly always carries his notebook and pens) but he never thought he would be a full-time children's author.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Illustrator Liz Anelli previously lived and worked in England but now resides in Newcastle, NSW. She has a huge passion for drawing and keeps rows of sketchbooks in her studio. In 2017, her book *Desert Lake: The Story of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre* was a CBCA Notable Book and was short-listed for the NSW Premier's Literary Award, NSW Premier's History Awards, the Environment Award for Children's Literature and the Educational Publishing Awards.

BEFORE READING

- Before reading *Old Fellow*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:
 - The title of the book
 - The author and illustrator
 - The publisher
 - The blurb.

- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?
- Discuss parks and the role they play in the community. What are some different types of parks? Who do you think manages or controls parks? What are they used for and why are they important?
- How might parks be different in the city compared to the suburbs or the country? Identify some possible similarities and differences.
- What features do you think make a 'good' park and why? Are there ways you think your local park could be improved?

End Papers

- Examine the end papers and then answer the following questions:
 - Identify and list all the items on this page, labelling them according to whether you think they relate to an Old Man or an Old Dog.
 - Based on the items, estimate the age of the Old Man / Old Dog. What helped you decide on your estimation?
 - What type of dwelling do you think these Old Fellows live in? Provide reason(s).
 - What can you tell about the Old Man / Old Dog from this illustration?
 - What illustration techniques has the illustrator, Liz Anelli, used?
 - Many books have blank or patterned end papers. Why do you think Liz has illustrated these end papers? How do they enhance the book? What additional story do these illustrations tell you?
 - Look at the dominant colours that the illustrator has used. What could they signify?

Title Page

- Discuss the room(s) that are suggested by this illustration. What are they used for?
- What type of person could live here? What gives you that idea?
- Identify and list all the items on this page.
- What is the red symbol next to the author's name? Why do you think this has been included? What could this suggest about the author?

COMPREHENSION

- What are the two Old Fellows doing? (pp 2–3)
- What do you notice about the Old Dog? About the Old Man? (pp 2–3)
- Compare your breakfast to that of the Old Fellows. Create a list of words to describe the eating process.
- Describe the Old Man's clothes. (pp 4–5)
- What room is suggested by the illustrations? (pp 4–5)
- What does the phrase 'these old bones...' refer to?
- What season of the year do you think this story is set in?
- What is meant by the phrase 'I'm glad we were near like that'? Why would the old fellow say that?
- Why would the chickens' owner let them into the park? What would the chickens be eating?
- What suggests to the old fellow that Peta would like to play chess?
- What does 'take your breath away' mean? Create a list of things that take your breath away. Compare it to the list of your classmates.
- Create a map of the park, either drawn or using building blocks, based on this story.

AFTER READING

- After reading the story and examining the pictures discuss the narrative voice—who is the narrator of this story?
- Create a list of all the animals that are in *Old Fellow*—don't forget the insects!
- What reasons might there be that there are no children interacting with the old fellows?
- Interview an Old Fellow you know maybe a grandparent, or someone from an old people's home, and find out what they do in a typical day. Then write and illustrate your own *Old Fellow* story based on the interview.

- Do you think this was a good park? Why or why not?
- Examine the dog breeds in the story. List all the different dogs that appear in *Old Fellow*.
 - What dogs make good companions?
 - What dogs make good pets?
- Create a table of the dog breeds and/or pets in your class.