

The Old Woman Who Named Things



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by Cynthia Rylant

illustrated by Kathryn Brown

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The unlikely protagonist of this quirky and tenderhearted story is a little old lady with cat glasses and a beehive who might have stepped out of *The Far Side*. Lonely, she names inanimate objects—her car is Betsy, her bed is Roxanne. A stray dog wanders into her life but she refuses to name it; after losing many friends "she named only those things she knew she could never outlive." When the dog disappears, however, she realizes that finding him—and subsequently naming him—is worth the risk of outliving him. Brown's (Boris) hilarious, disproportionate depictions of the cowboy-booted woman and her belongings give this tale much of its bounce. Betsy the car has grinning grillwork and huge fins; Fred the chair has buttons for eyes and a rearing, pompadour-like back cushion. This sweet and silly story has solid kid appeal and the Larsonesque visuals will tickle more than a few grown-ups. Ages 4-8.