




WOLFIE & FLY



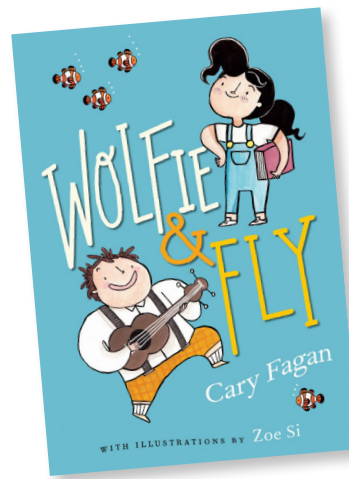
Cary Fagan




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**READING
GUIDE**

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY Zoe Si

WOLFIE & FLY



ABOUT THE BOOK

A classic story of imagination, friendship, adventure and speeding through the ocean in a cardboard box.

Our heroine, Renata Wolfman (Wolfie), does everything by herself. Friends just get in the way, and she only has time for facts and reading. But friendship finds her in the form of Livingston Flott (Fly), the slightly weird and wordy boy from next door. Before she knows it, Wolfie is motoring through deep water with Fly as her second-in-command in a submarine made from a cardboard box.

Out on a solo swim to retrieve a baseball vital to the mission, Wolfie is finally by herself again, but for the first time, she finds it a little lonely. Maybe there is something to this friend thing...

This early chapter book can be used in the classroom in a number of ways including:

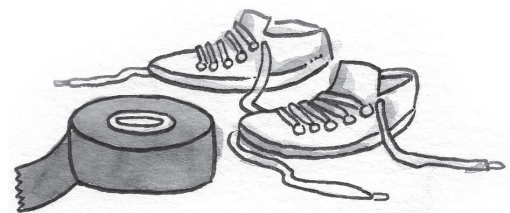
- To explore themes and concepts such as friendship, adventure, social skills, family, compromise, cooperation and imagination
- To explore the features of chapter books with students who are new to the genre
- To discuss feelings such as loneliness, sadness, excitement, kindness and relief, and strategies for coping with difficult feelings
- As a fun and exciting book for a read-aloud or independent reading session

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CARY FAGAN is an award-winning author for children and adults. His kids' books include the popular Kaspar Snit novels, the two-volume *Master Melville's Medicine Show* and the picture book *Mr. Zinger's Hat*, winner of the Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award and the IODE Jean Throop Award. He has also won the Jewish Book Award and been shortlisted for the Silver Birch Award (five times), the Rocky Mountain Book Award (twice), the Hackmatack Award (twice), the Norma Fleck Award, the Shining Willow Award and others. Cary lives in Toronto with his family.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

ZOE SI is a cartoonist, freelance illustrator and lawyer. She believes in the power of words, but also that wherever words fail, a mildly disparaging cartoon can usually succeed. *Wolfie and Fly* is Zoe's first book for kids. She lives and works in beautiful British Columbia.

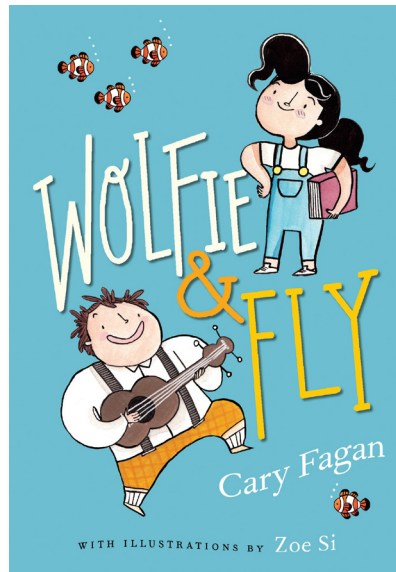


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Written by Cary Fagan • Illustrated by Zoe Si

PRE-READING DISCUSSION

Wolfie and Fly is a chapter book. How are chapter books organized differently from picture books?

Look at the cover and read the title of the book. Who and what is shown on the cover? How do you think this relates to the title of the book?



Skimming is a reading strategy that involves the reader quickly looking through a text to get an overall impression of what the text will be about. Use this reading strategy to look at the chapter titles and illustrations in particular to make a prediction about what this story might be about.

What are some qualities that make a good friend?

What is a nickname? Do you or anybody you know have a nickname?



AFTER-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



CHAPTER 1 **Thanks, but No Thanks**

What kind of clothes does Renata like to wear? Why?

What are seven reasons Renata gives for not wanting any friends?

What excuse does Renata give for not wanting to spend time with her neighbor, Livingston Flott?

How much time passes in the first chapter? How do you know?

Why do you think Renata's parents so strongly encourage Renata to socialize with other kids?

Is this story told in first-person or third-person narrative? How do you know?

CHAPTER 2 **Bigger**

At the beginning of the chapter, the narrator explains that Renata doesn't like to "co-operate" with others, "compromise" or "respect other people's opinions." Give an example of what each of these concepts means. These terms are written in quotation marks. In what way does this help the reader understand how Renata feels about these ideas?

There are descriptions of three of Renata's inventions at the beginning of the chapter. What do these inventions tell the reader about Renata as a character?

What are two things Renata does that she believes helps her to think? Is there anything you do to help when you are thinking about something?

Renata *almost* thinks for a brief moment that it would be nice to have somebody else around.

What makes her think this . . . almost . . . for a brief moment?

CHAPTER 3 **The Right Thing**

What causes Livingston Flott to come pounding on Renata's door? Why does she let him in?

Renata learns the nickname that the kids at school call her. What is it and how did she get the name?

How and why does Livingston change the name? What does this tell the reader about Livingston as a character?

What is the nickname the kids at school have given Livingston? Why do the kids call him that?

What does Livingston do as a thank you for Renata's help in escaping his brother? How does she react?

Livingston says, "I've got lots of friends. It's just that they're really busy. And they never answer their phones. So I don't see them too much. Actually, never." What does this tell us about Livingston?

Do you think he wants to have friends? How is this the same or different to Renata's attitude about having friends?

How does Livingston help Renata improve her submarine?

Whatever food Renata added to her emergency kit, Livingston would double it. What does this tell you about Livingston's intentions?



AFTER-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 4 Do You See What I See?

“I don’t pretend, *Fly* . . . This is for *educational* purposes, not make-believe.” Even though Renata is hesitant to go along on the imaginary adventure Livingston is proposing, she decides to try it. Why do you think she does this?

What is the name of the submarine? How does it come to be named this?

Does Renata’s living room really transform into an ocean? Explain your thinking.

There were a couple of hints earlier in the book that suggested that Renata is actually imaginative, even if she doesn’t think so. What have we learned about Renata so far that has hinted at this imaginative side?

CHAPTER 5 Something Out There

Renata loves to read and just that day had been reading about sea creatures. How does her knowledge of the sea contribute to their imaginative adventure in this chapter?

What happens at the end of this chapter that connects Livingston’s real-life experience to the imaginative submarine adventure?

CHAPTER 6 Taking a Swim

Explain the different parts of Livingston’s plan for Renata to get Livingston’s baseball.

How do you think Renata is feeling as she swims?

What does it mean to feel lonely? What leads Renata to acknowledge that she feels lonely for the first time in her life? Think of a time when you have felt lonely. How did it make you feel?

Why does Renata feel relieved when she floats away and looks back to see Livingston still in the submarine?

CHAPTER 7 Flying Breakfast

Why does Livingston assume that the other submarine was friendly?

What is so special about the baseball that Livingston does not want to give it up to the pirate?

At the beginning of the story, Renata expresses her displeasure with the idea of having to “compromise” and “cooperate” with others. How does Renata do both of these things in this chapter?

How does the title of this chapter relate to the plot?



AFTER-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 8 Floating Furniture

“Renata and Livingston continued at top speed, eager to get away from the maniacal pirate with his deadly toast.” The author chooses to use adjectives to help describe the pirate and his toast. What adjectives does the author use? How does the use of adjectives make the sentence more interesting, as opposed to just writing, “... from the pirate with his toast?”

“Every so often she had to maneuver around pieces of junk that thoughtless humans had dumped into the ocean — an old DVD player, a sofa and even a toilet.

‘People are such slobs,’ she said. ‘We make the ocean our garbage can’.”

How might what Renata had learned about the ocean in real-life have contributed to this observation during this part of the adventure?

Renata and Livingston begin to conclude their adventure in this chapter. What problem do they encounter as they start to head to the surface of the water? How does Livingston problem-solve?

CHAPTER 9 Lucky

Renata and Livingston come back to reality as Renata’s parents arrive home. What real-life event contributed to their imaginary adventure?

Livingston finds his brother’s baseball under a damp cushion. Renata’s response is, “You’ve got to be kidding.” Why does she say this?

Renata still claims at the end of the book that she does not need or want friends. Do you think she means this? Why or why not?



SUGGESTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Write an instruction manual

In Chapter 2, Renata builds a submarine out of a refrigerator box. Reread the chapter and write an instruction manual that explains the steps to building the submarine. Use your own words and include diagrams and illustrations that would help the reader understand each step.

Nicknames

In Chapter 3, Livingston explains that Renata's nickname at school is "the Lone Wolf." Renata has a theory about why she had never had a nickname before. What is her theory?

Nicknames can be used in positive or negative ways, depending on why the names are given and how they are used. Do you think the other children were using "the Lone Wolf" as a positive or negative way of referring to Renata? Explain your thinking.

Livingston's nickname, "the Fly," was given to him as a play on his last name (Flott) and because he was seen to buzz around and annoy people. How does Livingston put a positive spin on his nickname?

What do you think would be a positive nickname for yourself? Explain your thinking. Draw a picture of yourself that represents yourself as this nickname.

What do emotions feel like?

In Chapter 6, Renata experiences what it feels like to be lonely for the first time:

"Still holding the ball, she let herself drift. After all, Renata loved to be alone and this was about as alone as a person could get. And it felt good, at least for a while.

And then it didn't feel as good. In fact, it felt kind of sad. The ocean, Renata thought, is really, really big. Could she actually be feeling . . . lonely?"

What is your definition of what it means to feel lonely? Do you ever feel lonely?

How are the emotions of loneliness and sadness connected?

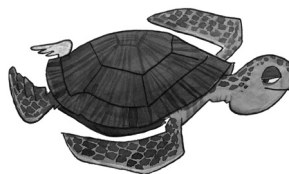
Emotions can often affect the way our bodies feel. When we are excited, sometimes we can feel it in our stomachs, or our heart beats a little bit faster. What does your body feel like when you feel lonely?

What are some strategies that can be used if you are feeling lonely? Create a poster with the question heading, "Are you feeling lonely?" On the poster list three strategies, with illustrations, that people can use if they are feeling lonely.

Imagination

Often when we imagine something, we take something that we know to be true and start changing the small or big details. How do Renata and Livingston use facts and true-life details in imagining:

- The name of the submarine
- Floating baseball
- The toaster submarine
- Renata's Uncle Bob



Write an extra chapter in Wolfie and Fly's underwater adventure based on the following fact: sea turtles eat squid.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Livingston's songwriting style

Livingston tends to break out in song at particularly meaningful moments in the story. Go back and reread the lyrics to the songs he wrote in Chapters 3, 5 and 8. He uses rhyming words in his songs at the end of each line of lyrics. Choose one of the songs and, using the rhyming pattern Livingston uses, write two more lines to the song. Try to make the meaning of the lyrics connect to the rest of the song.

Compromise, cooperation, and respect other's opinions

Write a definition of the word “compromise” in your own words. Do the same for “cooperation” and the phrase, “respect other's opinions.”

Renata begins to learn about how to be a friend in this story. Find one example each within the story where Renata compromises, cooperates and respects other's opinions.

The willingness to compromise, cooperate and respect other's opinions is an important part of being a good friend. If you had to choose one, which of these would you think to be the most important in terms of being a good friend? Answer this question and explain your thinking in a journal-style entry. Try to use examples from your own experiences in your explanation.



READ THE NEXT ADVENTURE OF
THESE TWO UNIQUE CHARACTERS,
WOLFIE AND FLY!