



The Truth About Old People

Books Reviewed:

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[Diana Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This joyful picturebook from Elina Ellis, winner of the **Macmillan Prize for Illustration 2017**, shows older people in a rather different light from their usual portrayal in picture books. Far from being cosy decrepit people in armchairs or on Zimmer frames, these grandparents may have little hair and a lot of wrinkles, but they are active, adventurous and willing to have a go at everything, including roller skating and jumping on a trampoline! While your reviewer has one very old person in the family who is always ordering online from his tablet, and another who wins half marathons in the veteran section, there are rather more of the sedentary type - not everyone will be this lively, just as not every old person has grey hair, but at least this book may help children to realise that, even though when you're young grandparents seem to be really old, they might still be AMAZING (final spread).

The inky illustrations, in a style similar to Quentin Blake and Tim Archbold with heavy black outlines, portray the grandparents, a lanky and balding grandad and a rather plump grandma, and their dog, getting fully involved in anything and everything, along with the child. The endpapers show the said child (probably a boy, but not necessarily) entering a storeroom full of exciting objects that hint at adventurous and sporty lives, e.g. a surf board labelled 1978, and leaving the room at the back of the book - it may be fun to work out where some objects have come from and what that might mean. The grandparents are active, but also computer savvy, and they can be romantic, (shown kissing) but the back cover shows them completely exhausted on a park bench, with the dog sleeping at their feet. This is good fun to read and to look at, and could spark some interesting conversations on the fun or embarrassing things that grandparents do.

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