

# KIRKUS REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### **AN ALPHABET PET PARADE IN TOPSY-TURVY TOWN, POPULATION 26**

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Illus. by Christiane Engel

ASHA Press (36 pp.)

\$21.99 hardcover

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## BOOK REVIEW

A girl chases a stray pet through an animal parade in this zany collection of alphabet animals and their owners.

When brown-haired Zoe notices a sign for the pet parade, she asks her grandfather if she can get a pet. After assuring her grandfather she's ready for the responsibility of being a pet owner, she heads to the parade. There, they see a wacky assortment of town residents and some very strange pets, one for each letter of the alphabet. But when a "critter that strayed, / out of the crowd into the parade," starts causing a ruckus, Zoe zooms after it on her bicycle, chasing it through the alphabet until she finally rescues it and knows exactly which pet she wants for herself. Unlike alphabet books geared toward the youngest readers, this collection of alphabetical creatures and characters features fun and challenging vocabulary words (*intercepted*, *orneriest*, *oscillated*) to go with sometimes lesser-known animals (ibex, quoll). Savvy readers will notice that each character's surname is the opposite of their description, giving the Santa Fe-esque Topsy-Turvy Town a unique cast ("Barbara Boring, the most interesting person you've ever met, brought her bats"). Engel's exquisite illustrations offer a bright display of color and activity. The town's quirky residents range in age, ethnicity, skin tone, and ability—two characters use wheelchairs—as well as described personality. Endnotes offer discussion questions, including about the wisdom of keeping exotic pets.

A charming, challenging, imaginative alphabet book; will induce giggles.

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