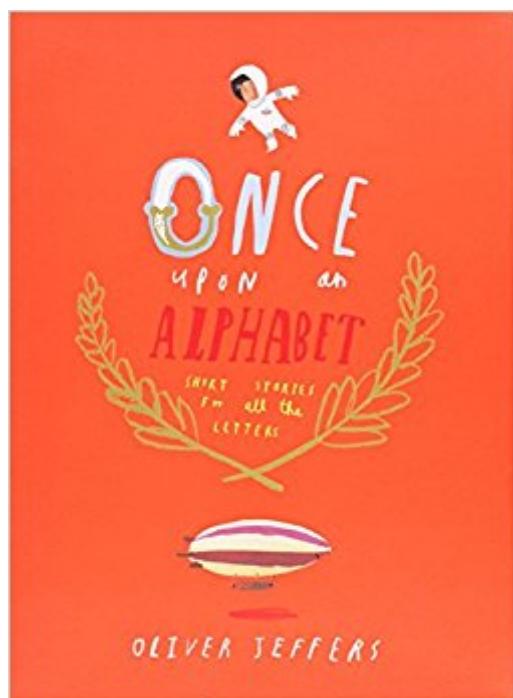


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# Once Upon An Alphabet: Short Stories For All The Letters



## Synopsis

Perfect for gift-giving, here is THE alphabet book to top all others, an over-sized work of brilliance from the illustrator of the #1 New York Times bestselling *The Day the Crayons Quit*. If words make up the stories and letters make up the words, then stories are made up of letters. In this menagerie we have stories made of words, made FOR all the letters. The most inventive and irresistible book of the year spans a mere 26 letters (don't they all!) and 112 pages. From an Astronaut who's afraid of heights, to a Bridge that ends up burned between friends, to a Cup stuck in a cupboard and longing for freedom, Once Upon an Alphabet is a creative tour de force from A through Z. Slyly funny in a way kids can't resist, and gorgeously illustrated in a way readers of all ages will pour over, this series of interconnected stories and characters explores the alphabet in a way that will forever raise the bar. In Once Upon an Alphabet, #1 New York Times bestseller Oliver Jeffers has created a stunning collection of words and artwork that is a story book, alphabet book, and gorgeously designed art book all in one. Praise for ONCE UPON AN ALPHABET: An *Best Book of 2014!* A Publishers Weekly *Best Book of the Year!* A School Library Journal *Best Book of the Year!* A New York Times Bestseller! \* "The silly, spare, slightly surreal text occasionally rhymes and endlessly surprises. An utterly delightful alphabet book." Kirkus Review, starred review \* "With wry humor, equally droll ink illustrations, and a solid dose of alliteration, Jeffers creates delightful mini-narratives for each letter of the alphabet." Publishers Weekly, starred review \* "An altogether stimulating, surprising, and satisfying reading experience." School Library Journal, starred review \* "Whimsical, funny, occasionally tragic, and highly entertaining, this collection of (sometimes) interlocking tales is brilliantly inventive." Horn Book, starred review "Jeffers knows how to catch the attention of his young audience while challenging their imagination, intellect and vocabulary. This whimsical exploration of letters and language begs to be read over and over again." BookPage "Handsome, humorous and clad in bright tomato-red, [this] is the sort of book you may want to rush into the arms of imaginative, good-natured children between 4 and 10 years old. [T]his is no traditional abecedarian exercise. The stories are wonderfully varied, sometimes philosophical and often end surprisingly; the drawings are just as quirky and unpredictable." The Wall Street Journal "[W]itty from A to Z . . . no one would blame you for having a copy even if there are no kids in the house. Think of it as Edward Gorey for the preschool set • and their hip parents." The Washington Post

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD630L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 112 pages

Publisher: Philomel Books; First Edition edition (October 14, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0399167919

ISBN-13: 978-0399167911

Product Dimensions: 9.2 x 0.7 x 12.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 182 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #31,277 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in Books > Children's Books > Early Learning > Basic Concepts > Alphabet #64 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Short Story Collections #1477 in Books > Children's Books > Humor

Age Range: 3 - 5 years

Grade Level: Preschool - Kindergarten

## Customer Reviews

Gr 1-4 Jeffers's empathic nature, evident from his sympathetic renderings of Drew Daywalt's beleaguered crayons in *The Day the Crayons Quit* (Philomel, 2013), here extends to the hardworking letters. This eccentric and entertaining anthology is introduced by an eloquent syllogism about the relationship of letters, words, and stories. While each four-page tale showcases a (seemingly) hand-drawn capital and lowercase letter, and many of the words and unnamed objects begin with the corresponding letter, this is not your mother's abecedarium. It is a framework for Jeffers's intriguing worldview, combining ludicrous juxtapositions and situations and a great capacity for gentleness. Some passages are scientific: "Mary is made of matter/she got sucked through a microscope and became the size of a molecule." The facing page shows Mary floating under the lens. The blackboard-style background is filled with "molecular" diagrams (mattresses, a moose, mums). Other sections are a mite macabre: "Jack Stack the Lumberjack has been struck by lightning one hundred and eleven times." The lightning illuminates a skeleton, but after the page turn, the man appears in his jammies, normal, except that he can provide his own electricity. There is humor in the alliteration and mixed-media scenes: a puzzled parsnip, Victor the vanquished "plotting his vengeance," and an enigma featuring elephants and envelopes. The author respects his readers' intelligence, inserting expansive vocabulary, cameos from characters in previous books, people and plot threads that cross stories,

and quiet details to discover in subsequent readings. An altogether stimulating, surprising, and satisfying reading experience. •Wendy Lukehart, District of Columbia Public Library

Praise for ONCE UPON AN ALPHABET: An A Best Book of 2014! A Publishers Weekly A Best Book of the Year! A School Library Journal A Best Book of the Year! \* "The silly, spare, slightly surreal text occasionally rhymes and endlessly surprises. A An utterly delightful alphabet book." A Kirkus Review, starred review \* "With wry humor, equally droll ink illustrations, and a solid dose of alliteration, Jeffers creates delightful mini-narratives for each letter of the alphabet." A Publishers Weekly, starred review A A \*A "An altogether stimulating, surprising, and satisfying reading experience." A School Library Journal, starred review \* "Whimsical, funny, occasionally tragic, and highly entertaining, this collection of (sometimes) interlocking tales is brilliantly inventive." A Horn Book, starred review "Jeffers knows how to catch the attention of his young audience while challenging their imagination, intellect and vocabulary. This whimsical exploration of letters and language begs to be read over and over again." A BookPage "Handsome, humorous and clad in bright tomato-red, [this] A is the sort of book you may want to rush into the arms of imaginative, good-natured children between 4 and 10 years old. [T]his is no traditional abecedarian exercise. The stories are wonderfully varied, sometimes philosophical and often end surprisingly; the drawings are just as quirky and unpredictable." A The Wall Street Journal "[W]itty from A to Z . . . no one would blame you for having a copy even if there are no kids in the house. A Think of it as Edward Gorey A for the preschool set A • and their hip parents." A The Washington Post A "Jeffers knows how to catch the attention of his young audience while challenging their imagination, intellect and vocabulary. This whimsical exploration of letters and language begs to be read over and over again." --Book Page

I'd like to start by saying I love this book. It has wonderful "Oliver Jeffers" type illustrations, and, if your kids read any of his other stuff, the penguin and the boy from "Lost and Found" make an appearance, as does the bear from "The Great Paper Caper." I love that this book doesn't dumb things down. Yes, the book uses the word "molecule". There is no reason why you can't expose a preschooler to the word "molecule". The stories are strange, but good. There are a lot of metaphors that can be explained literally or in their metaphorical sense, if you have time to sit with your child and enjoy explaining things to them. Every page has a lot going on, and you can spend forever with your child looking for things that start with that letter, or talking about the pictures, or finishing the

letters' story. You might think each letter gets a full story- they don't. Some are just one page blurbs, and I didn't really care for that, which is why I gave it four stars instead of five. Also, it's petty, but the dust jacket for this book was so insanely bright that I had to take it off. So beware. This book is strangely aged. You are not buying an "A is for Apple" board book. However, my nieces and nephews range from 2 to 11, and they all loved this book for different reasons. My two year old niece liked looking for the letters and the different pictures that start with those letters. My 8 year old nephew liked that Vincent has an attitude problem and sits in the closet. My 11 year old niece liked the cucumber that falls into the sea, and the owl and the whale that are detectives. I absolutely do not understand why people are calling this book "dark" or "morbid". No child on earth is going to be traumatized because a cup fell from a cupboard, because a lumberjack gets electrocuted and uses his new powers to run his night light, or because a lazy girl refuses to finish her house and rolls into the ocean. If your children watch Disney movies they've seen and experienced far more than these supposed traumas. And do not try and pretend your 3 year old hasn't seen Bambi, Up, or Finding Nemo. I did ask my nieces and nephews what they thought, or if they felt scared or sad or uncertain, and my 6 year old niece said, "well that girl shoulda been smart and finished her house like her mom prob'ly said to." And that was good enough for me. If you're really concerned, check it out at the library first, or read it WITH your child. Ask them how they feel. Be amazed that kids aren't fragile flowers waiting to fall apart. Also, people who comment "I really loved "The Day the Crayons Quit" and I don't understand why this wasn't written like that!" make me think they're not actually reading these books. I'd like to remind people that "The Day the Crayons Quit" was not written by Oliver Jeffers- he was the illustrator. Drew Daywalt wrote that book, and it's not going to be the same as this one.

My son is 5 and reads at 2nd grade level, so he had no issues reading the book. He was quite puzzled at the stories though and none of them made him laugh even though he has a good sense of humor, sometimes I hear him reading by himself WTP stories and laughing out loud. Maybe it's made for kids that learn to read later because the reading level and the level of the jokes does not fit. Or maybe I misunderstood and it's made for adults. He found it actually sad that the cup kept on breaking apart, being glued and looking ugly. I personally enjoyed it but my son and his mom did not find it funny at all. De gustibus.

I was worried after reading the reviews, but this book is not that dark! Calm down everyone, kids see so much worse on tv, it doesn't register to them as dark. For example c is a cup that longs to be

free, so he jumps out of the cupboard. He breaks on the counter. Only adults would think "sound the alarm, c jumped to his death!!!!" Kids just think "oh man, c didn't use self control, or plan it through" these little stories are perfect for kinder aged kids.

I am an Oliver Jeffers fan and if you are as well, this is a must have. I actually bought this for my almost 4 year old, which kinda freaked him out at first, but I think he will grow into the dark humor. In the meantime, I enjoy the book. LOL. I remember seeing his eyes getting wider and wider as I read the mini-story about "half of her house falling into the ocean, including herself" hahahaha

I love the concept and the graphics but not sure the content is the best for a 3 year old. E.g., the Letter "D" is about a death, disaster etc. some of the other content is pretty dark. I like variation in what I read to my toddler and am OK that it isn't all fairies and butterflies but this one seems dark for no apparent reason (kind of random)

This book is surprisingly for me, due to the fact that I'm a college student. The continuity between some chapters and characters is really smart and keeps the audience interested. I read it all the way through the first time and never actually put it down. I think this could be a children's book, mostly because as a young child they won't absorb all of the dark humor in it. They'll just see that something is happening between characters. They haven't gone through enough experience to realize what people older realize. It's kind of like watching shows like Spongebob compared to then and now. Back then I had no idea about the dirty jokes, but now I realize that there are much more than I could imagine.

It wasn't exactly what I expected from Jeffers. We LOVED the book STUCK and decided to purchase this one because my son love ABC books. We also didn't expect this book to be so bulky. It almost looks like a textbook. My 6 year old who LOVES alphabets and owns every alphabet books in the universe (almost and not exaggerated) didn't want to read this ABC book. I was really surprise. However, we still LOVE Jeffers, and will purchase his next book. We hope to be alot more hillarious than this one.

This book is awesome and worth every penny.

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Once Upon an Alphabet: Short Stories for All the Letters Bedtime Stories for Kids: Short Bedtime

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