

PORCUPINE'S PICNIC: WHO EATS WHAT?

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PreS-Gr 1—Porcupine is excited to find the perfect spot for a picnic. As he begins to munch his clover, along comes Koala, who asks to join him. Porcupine is delighted and offers Koala some clover, but Koala wants eucalyptus leaves instead. Next comes Squirrel, who joins the picnic but would rather eat acorns; then Giraffe, who prefers tree leaves; Goat, who fancies alfalfa; and a host of other animals, all with their own choices of nourishment. In the end, the last guest to arrive at the picnic makes an unsettling food choice that totally disrupts the party. Colorful, amusing, and informative, with a surprising, slightly jarring ending, this is great as a read-aloud or read-alone. There are 20 different animals named in the story, and the accurate food preference for each is given. In an author's note, Rosenthal explains that the animals mentioned would never all be found together in the wild, as they are from different regions. She also sheds light on what herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores are and which animals in the narrative belong in each category. The large font and full-page illustrations are appealing, and the animals are warm and friendly. The pictures contribute to the festive and happy feel of the tale; even the endpapers are part of the fun! The conclusion may frighten some readers, but nothing grisly or sad happens. **VERDICT** An entertaining and educational animal selection, with an edge, for the youngest readers.—Amy Shepherd, St. Anne's Episcopal School, Middleton, DE