

Something Special

Terri Cohlene

Doug Keith, Illustrator

Illumination Arts (May 2005)

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When Little Frog finds a present wrapped up with a big bow just for him, what a surprise it is! His imagination runs wild as he wonders about all the wonderful things “something special” might be. A special something could be “sugary ones from Grandma ... And sticky ones from baby brother ... It can be small and silent ... OR BIG AND LOUD.” This picture book tells a riddle within the story, keeping curious minds engaged from the first page to the last.

With few words and all-encompassing illustrations reminiscent of David Wiesner's *Tuesday*, this book will entertain children and grownups alike as they try to figure out the mystery while enjoying the creativity of the artwork. Little Frog plays out the questions for an enchanted audience, as he reads in bed, goes to a birthday party, dresses up like Robin Hood, and throws snowballs with his friends. Readers will surely be captivated by this volume, whether it's read as a bedtime story or just for fun.

Cohlene is most well known for her children's books, but she also writes poems and plays. In addition to her great affection for writing about hopping creatures, Cohlene loves to write about Native American cultures, as she has done with her books *Clamshell Boy*, *Little Firefly*, and *The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story*.

The illustrator has provided art for more than forty books, including *The Unhappy Troll*, *Keep Your Head Up*, and *What If*. In addition to illustrating children's books, he has had his graphic art employed in commercial projects, and commissions have been made for his fine art. In this volume, Keith's gentle color scheme of predominantly green and lavender shades complements the characters in Little Frog's imagination.

Because of Cohlene's sparseness of vocabulary, this story can be fun to look at without reading the words. Even pre-readers will discover how silly Little Frog is as he pretends. With inspiration from this protagonist, little ones can have fun making up their own “something specials.”

For readers who have grown beyond childhood, logic could set in and force them to notice that Little Frog *can't* be Grandma and Little Frog at the same time, as the illustrations depict them side by side. The surprise certainly can't *really* fit in his wrapped-up present. But readers shouldn't let being a grownup take the fun out of pretending. Many people would benefit from believing that *Something Special* might indeed be waiting to be discovered.

A portion of the proceeds from this book will go to the Children's Global Foundation, which helps homeless children around the world.

KATIE KLEIN (August 18, 2009)

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