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Picture Books

Think Big!
Nancy Carlson
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Vinney the frog is frustrated with his size. “While walking to school, George called me dwarf,” he complains. “In the library, I couldn’t reach the books with chapters.” Given the smallest role in the school play, ignored on the basketball court, he says that “being little is no fun.” This little frog experiences the stresses of being short and then learns that every downside has an upside. It is all about perspective for Vinney. He had been looking at things all wrong. He had not yet realized the special talents that would turn things around until he grew.

After his mom encourages him to “think big,” Vinney approaches school the following day with a fresh attitude. When George stops him to tease him, Vinney asks, “How is the weather up there?” In the library, to reach the higher books, he simply hops up to them. He sings so “big” in the school play that the teacher changes her mind and gives Vinney the role of the prince! When playing basketball, the young frog decides to think “little” as he runs between the legs of the tallest player on the opposing team, but then he thinks “big” as he shoots the ball and scores three points. *¡Piensa en Grande! / Think Big!* teaches children the value of recognizing their talents and capitalizing on them.

The author has realized her kindergarten dream of “making pictures and telling stories.” A graduate of Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Carlson has displayed her art in many exhibitions, and has written and illustrated more than fifty children’s books. Her previous books have been selected for *Reading Rainbow* and won the Children’s Choice Award from the International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council.

With comic-book flair, Carlson uses bright colors in the illustrations for *¡Piensa en Grande! / Think Big!*. In the school play, when Vinney reluctantly kisses the princess, bold purple stage curtains perfectly frame the princess in her bright pink outfit as she puckers her lips to face Vinney’s lips, which are curled in revulsion. His body language is evident as he sulks his shoulders and does the deed in his blue shirt, purple cape, and blue striped pants as his bright

green webbed feet hold him back some.

Targeting ages four to eight, contains the subtle self-esteem-building message that children should focus on their positives and turn their challenges into successes. Well written in simple Spanish sentences, *¡Piensa en Grande! / Think Big!* is the perfect book to share with a child who needs an uplifting message.

Becky Rankens