

Gibbs, Edward. *I Spy with My Little Eye*. Somerville, Mass: Templar Books/Candlewick Press, 2011. Print.

I Spy is a superbly illustrated book that helps young readers learn about animals and colours using the popular game. Each animal is introduced through a cutout that reveals a small section of the creature, along with a clue. For example: "I spy with my little eye...something that is blue...I am the biggest animal in the whole world," to which the answer is a whale. Turning the page reveals a striking two-page image of the animal. Each animal is drawn from a monochromatic colour palette: the polar bear is mostly white with some grey and cool blue tones while the fox is fiery red and orange. Each of these watercolour images is accentuated with wild black slashes and curlicues to define the animal's features. The last page features the silhouettes of the seven featured animals and a cutout right through the back of the book with the caption: "What can you spy with your little eye?"

The large font and images coupled with the "I spy" formula is sure to entice children. Additionally, clever design elements and the overall aesthetic value of the book will encourage parents and teachers to add it to their collections. For example, the back and front cover open to form the face of a frog. When the book is closed, the cutout through the back rests against the page featuring the seven animal silhouettes. The black silhouette of the whale's tale in front of a yellow moon is framed within the circular cutout thus creating the frog's eye on the back cover. According to the Candlewick Press website, Edward Gibb has worked in the creative design business for over 25 years, and this is his first effort as a children's author/illustrator. This book is recommended for children aged 2-5yrs, and I am eagerly awaiting Gibbs' next publication.

Highly recommended: 4 out of 4 stars
Reviewer: Kim Frail