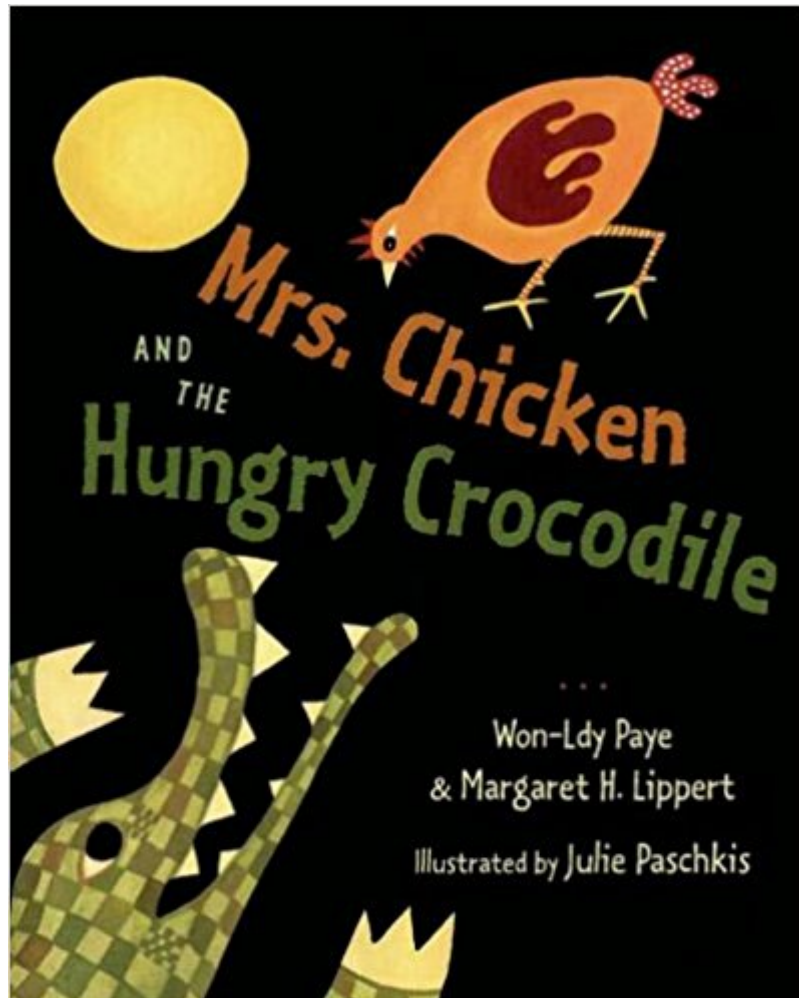




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# Mrs. Chicken And The Hungry Crocodile



## Synopsis

Mrs. Chicken has to think fast to outwit hungry Crocodile, who wants to eat her for dinner. One morning Mrs. Chicken took her bath in a puddle. "Cluck, cluck," she said proudly. "What a pretty chicken I am!" Mrs. Chicken can't see her wings in the puddle, so she walks down to the river where she can admire all of herself. She doesn't know that Crocodile is there, waiting for dinner—and a tasty chicken would do nicely! To save herself, Mrs. Chicken tells Crocodile that they are sisters. But how can a speckled chicken and a green-skinned crocodile be related? Mrs. Chicken had better prove that they are, and fast, because Crocodile is getting hungrier . . . The authors and illustrator of Head, Body, Legs join together to create another lively retelling of a popular African folktale. Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile is a 2004 Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year.

## Book Information

Paperback: 32 pages

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Shipping Weight: 2.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #289,510 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Alligators & Crocodiles #137 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa #308 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Multicultural

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 2

## Customer Reviews

PreSchool-Grade 3-Narcissistic Mrs. Chicken, not satisfied with the small reflection she can see in a puddle, makes her way to the river where a hungry predator lies in wait. Seeing Crocodile instead of herself in the water, she is amazed by what she thinks is her new appearance and turns this way and that while the wily reptile mirrors her movements. When Mrs. Chicken steps into the river for a closer look, Crocodile quickly catches her and takes her home to eat. But the fowl turns out to be clever enough to concoct an egg-switching scheme that convinces Crocodile that they are sisters,

and Mrs. Chicken eventually wins freedom for herself and her offspring. Told in straightforward language, this trickster tale is smart and funny. The story, which comes from the Dan people of Liberia, previously appeared in the retellers' *Why Leopard Has Spots* (Fulcrum, 1998), and this newly illustrated version is perfect for a younger audience. The stylized, gouache artwork is strong and streamlined, and not bogged down with detail. Curving lines depict the river, white backgrounds represent the outdoors, and glossy black delineates Crocodile's lair, which is decorated with geometric borders. The layout is effective, with parts of the reptile's body often extending off the page to insinuate size. The flat paintings recall folk art, and Crocodile's checkerboard skin reflects the patterns found in her home. This delectable offering will be a hit in storytime. Susan Oliver, Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System, FL Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• Readers young and old will cluck with delight. • Publishers Weekly, starred review  
This delectable offering will be a hit at storytime. • School Library Journal, starred review

My child had fun reading this book.

This is a wonderful wacky folktale. The children will enjoy listening to this story and the adults will love reading it to them. In this story, a chicken finds a most unusual way of outwitting a rather gullible crocodile. I have read this book to many kindergarten classes and I have given it, as a gift, to many young children. The response is always a happy one. The kindergarten kids will ask me to please read it again.

I have known and admired one of the authors, storyteller and writer Meg Lippert, for many years. So I was delighted to learn of her several collaborations with Liberian storyteller Won-Ldy Paye and illustrator Julie Paschkis. This Liberian folktale tells how a chicken mistakes the shape of a crocodile submersed in the water for her own reflection; when she gets closer to investigate, the crocodile grabs her and takes her to the crocodile's house to eat her. But the chicken reverses the deception with a trick of her own - and has the last laugh. This story is a perfect choice for a picture book. The double-trickster tale could feel cold and unsatisfying in the wrong hands. But the bold, cheery and dramatic illustrations do a skillful job of lifting the mood while conveying the sense of an African esthetic. *Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile* is a tale with a non-European flavor. As such, it can take some (probably small) adjustment of expectations for a mainstream North American or

European audience. But that is also part of its value. This book gives us in the dominant society a small glimpse into a culture different from our own. It does so with wit and artistry. And the under-hen wins!

"Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile" combines a text by Won-Ldy Paye and Margaret H. Lippert with illustrations by Julie Paschkis. The book jacket notes that this is a retelling of a Liberian story, and that coauthor Paye is from Liberia and was trained as a storyteller by his grandmother. The story tells how Mrs. Chicken, while trying to see her reflection in the river, encounters the toothy croc of the title. Mrs. C tries to outwit the croc in order to avoid becoming a chicken dinner. This is a great story: it's funny, features a high stakes conflict between two strong female characters, and has suspenseful plot twists. There is a delicious irony throughout. Paschkis' colorful drawings perfectly complement the story. The artwork has a whimsical quality and clever visual touches; the main characters are particularly well realized.

We just got this book last week. When my kids take turns choosing books to read, this one comes first, regardless of whose turn it is. On the first reading my easily scared 4-year-old sank deeper and deeper into the couch as Mrs. Chicken got closer and closer to being eaten by Crocodile. When she actually SNAPPED on her leg, he couldn't watch. But as Mrs. Chicken's clever plan unfolded he started smiling and by the end he was laughing at what he called the coolest trick ever. He loves it.

The storyteller's voice is delightful and compelling and makes this tale perfect for oral telling or read-alouds. The illustrations are a perfect complement to the text and the full effect is even better than the sum of its stellar parts.

When I read this book to my daughter she laughed at the twist in the story. Suitable for 3-5 year old kids.

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