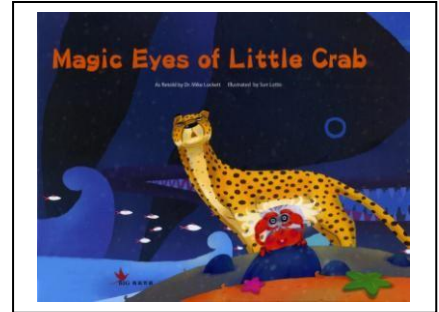




**5 Stars** *Review of Magic Eyes of Little Crab* by Dr. Mike Lockett; illustrated by Sun Lotto; published by Brilliant International Group (Taiwan) and Heritage Schoolhouse Press, Normal, IL; 2010



With a magic chant and a “Pop! Pop!” Crab can send his eyeballs into the sea to discover beautiful colors and an array of creatures. Jaguar is jealous of Crab’s vision and wants crab to help him see below the sea. Even after Crab advises him of the dangers, Jaguar demands that crab “Pop! Pop!” his eyeballs. Uhoh! Crab’s warning is realized! How will Jaguar get his eyes back? And what price will Jaguar and Crab pay for their mistakes?

I joyously admit that I read this to myself then listened to the accompanying CD. Then I listened again and again. On its own, Dr. Lockett’s retelling of this folk tale is entertaining and makes a good read aloud for parents, teachers or librarians who do justice to stories by using voices and sound effects. But, in my experience, those with storytelling talents are few and far between. For me, the brilliance of this book is the inclusion of a recording of Dr. Lockett telling the tale. His vocal skills paired with perfect music and sound effects elevate this book to the sublime.

However, Dr. Lockett’s storytelling isn’t the only factor that elevates this book. Sun Lotto’s rich illustrations (mostly computer generated) express emotions. Watch the eyes of the Jaguar, the Crab and even the sea creatures. And be sure to linger over the underwater visions; children will want to identify all of the creatures spoken of in the story. Lotto has added a new dimension to the story.

Another bonus of this book is that it is created in two languages. Flip the book over and you have a Chinese version. The CD includes a Chinese storyteller as well an English version. So I believe that this book will appeal to older children (even teens and adults) who speak English or Chinese and are learning the other language. I imagine this book in the collections of high schools that offer Chinese language courses. Of course it belongs in the libraries of ESL teachers as well.

In the case of *Magic Eyes of Little Crab*, the components are each well done and could stand on their own. In this case, story, pictures and audio combine to create a memorable tale that will be cherished.

Aside from being a great book/audiobook for gifting, I think librarians could use the companion book and audio CD to teach volunteer readers how to read aloud. During my years in an elementary school library, I tried to teach parent volunteers to read slowly and with exaggerated emotion. Never worked. Maybe they didn’t consider me and “expert.” However, since Dr. Lockett *is* a professional storyteller, his example on the CD is ideal for training parents, grandparents, or any volunteers, how to read a book out loud to children.

Also, librarians may choose to use the book with the CD during story times so they can introduce gestures to the story and lead the children in participating in the story. Imagine children’s “claws” imitating Crab and then Pop! Pop! go the eyes. Ah, my imagination is running away with me! What a terrific way to participate in story time without having to hold the book or read along!

More information about Dr. Lockett, visit his website at <http://www.mikelockett.com/>. (Note: A free copy of this book was provided by the publisher for me to review for *Stories for Children’s Magazine*. I include the review here, with some additional thoughts. Please note that all books I review for *Stories for Children Magazine* are donated to a local tutoring program for homeless and marginalized families.) **Children’s Librarian, Nancy Messmore. (December 24, 2010)**