



# Gwen the Rescue Hen

*Leslie Crawford , Sonja Stangl (Illustrations)*

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Gwen has spent her whole life in a big egg-laying hen house, so she knows very little about what chickens can do (besides lay eggs, of course). A fateful tornado turns her world upside-down and sideways, landing her in a strange new place that's nothing like the hen house.

Using her wits and chicken superpowers, Gwen dodges danger at every turn until she finds safety and friendship with a boy named Mateo. Together they discover how extraordinary an ordinary chicken really is.

The book includes a bonus section called "More About Chickens," where curious readers can learn that chickens have extraordinary eyesight, a complex language of 24 sounds, and are descended from dinosaurs, among other fun facts.

*Gwen the Rescue Hen* is the second children's book in Stone Pier Press's Farm Animal Rescue Series, perfect for ages 4 to 7. The first book, *Sprig the Rescue Pig*, was released in the Spring of 2018.

## Gwen the Rescue Hen Details

Date : Published November 6th 2018 by Stone Pier Press

ISBN : 9780998862323

Author : Leslie Crawford , Sonja Stangl (Illustrations)

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# From Reader Review *Gwen the Rescue Hen* for online ebook

## Kelly says

### Enjoy with a plate of scrambled tofu!

(Full disclosure: I received a free e-ARC for review through NetGalley.)

“Come on, Gwen,” says Mateo, as he helps settle her onto the handlebars. *Let’s hit it!* she thinks. *Let’s fly.*

Hen is suffering a pretty miserable existence when a natural disaster proves her salvation. Imprisoned in a battery cage and exploited as a laying hen, Hen shares a tiny cage with half a dozen or so of her sisters. Everywhere Hen looks, she sees rows upon rows and stacks upon stacks of hens. Hen's only freedom - her only escape from the chaos and filth of her prison - is in her dreams.

That is, until the day a tornado lifts Hen's cage from the giant, industrial shed in which it's housed and deposits Hen and her companions in a beautiful green field. The girls scatter, but not before a boy and his friends spot Hen. After a tense stand-off and a few close calls, Hen learns to trust the human boy called Mateo. Newly christened Gwen, Hen and the Boy become best friends, enjoying swims in the river (or, in Hen's case, dust baths on the shore), roosting/reading marathons, and social calls.

Based on the destruction of an egg farm in Croton, Ohio, *Gwen the Rescue Hen* is a sweet and beautiful tale of friendship - and compassion. Gentle enough for young readers (Hen's time as a cog in the machine of animal ag is indeed morose - as emphasized by the black and white palette - but handled with care, and with the more horrifying details omitted), the story is also educational, with plenty of facts about chickens sprinkled throughout. By giving a name to a bird - one of five billion such animals living in American battery cages at any given time - the authors affirm Gwen's personhood: she is a *someone*, not a *something*. This shouldn't be a novelty, and yet.

*Gwen the Rescue Hen* is a wonderful choice for vegan families, or for any parent or guardian wishing to instill a sense of compassion in their young children. And the artwork is super-adorable too!

<http://www.easyvegan.info/2018/12/14/...>

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## Jane says

*Gwen the Rescue Hen* was just okay. The cover and blurb looked promising, but the execution didn't quite work for me.

In the story, we follow Gwen, a hen who is displaced after a tornado rips through her home in a massive chicken farm. Gwen slowly learns about the outside world and eventually befriends a young boy who takes her home with him. At the end of the book are some interesting facts about chickens (this is probably my

favourite part of the book).

I'm sure that this will be a hit with some kids, especially those who love to absorb new facts, but I found the book lacks a bit of focus. Some parts are super silly, while others are actually pretty dark. Some pages are overloaded with text, while others have just a few words. Unfortunately, because of those pages with so much text, the font size is necessarily on the small side, which made this more difficult to read.

In the end, I didn't come away with any clear message -- was this about making friends? Maybe about the cruelty of poultry farms? Possibly how humans and chickens are similar? I really don't know. So my final verdict is a middle of the road rating of 3 stars.

*Thank you to NetGalley and Stone Pier Press for providing me with a DRC of this book.*

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### **Tammy H says**

My opinion of Gwen mirrors my daughters: This book is a home run! My little one was engaged with this book more than any other on her bookshelf. We both adored the vignette style and followed along smoothly. She enjoyed the different elements and contrasts throughout the book, like the Wizard of Oz- type dark to color change. The "break pages" of onomatopoeias plus beautifully illustrated concepts like the tornado page, made her face light up. We'll be reading this many nights to come!

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### **Eric Veitch says**

This book is a wonderful way to introduce kids to the idea of animal welfare, without getting overly political or preachy. It follows an engaging story between a child and a chicken, and in the end, we learn that chickens are creatures with hilarious personalities worthy of a great life. The message is subtle, but powerful, and is an excellent way to get youngsters more conscious about meat choices in our society. There are very few children's books addressing the reality factory farmed meat and animal welfare, and I'm glad this one packs a moral message in such an endearing and well-illustrated package. An excellent purchase, and an easy recommendation.

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### **Susan Freinkel says**

I liked this book a lot. Like the earlier book in the series, Sprig the Pig, author Leslie Crawford takes us another another journey into the complex lives of the animals that wind up on our dinner plates. We follow the adventures of Gwen from a factory farm to freedom and friendship --and join her in discovering how extraordinary an ordinary chicken can be. The story is honest, without being preachy, and the illustrations charming. I also enjoyed the bonus section describing chickens' incredible abilities. Who knew chickens have great eyesight or a language of 24 different sounds? I think this would be a fun book to read a loud to a child, and would spark some pretty interesting conversations.

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## La Coccinelle says

This is a really cute book. While it does begin in a kind of depressing tone, with Hen (as she's called at the beginning of the story) living in a small cage on a factory farm, things soon start looking up for this plucky chicken. After a tornado destroys her barn and lands her cage on the seemingly untouched Ma's Chick'n Lick'n Diner (you do have to suspend disbelief a little bit), she and a few of her friends are suddenly free. She meets a boy named Mateo and goes home with him, where she learns to be a chicken and do what chickens naturally do.

When I started reading, the illustrations were all in black and white and looked like sketches; I was kind of afraid someone had forgotten to put the final illustrations in the book! But things soon brightened up; the drab pictures in the beginning are merely a reflection of Gwen's drab life. The drawings are simple, but very cute. The illustrator even managed to make all the chickens look different, so you could tell where Gwen was when she was with the others.

There are a couple of pages at the end with facts about chickens, and that may have been my favourite part. I knew they were intelligent, but chickens are really fascinating birds.

Overall, this is a really strong children's book. Despite being about a hen who escapes a factory farm, it doesn't really hit the reader over the head with any sort of animal rights message; instead, it's a gentle story about kindness and friendship and... well, just letting chickens be chickens.

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## Sophie Nau says

Gwen the Rescue Hen is a delightful picture book, with beautiful illustrations and a thoughtful story (and a black and white to color transformation not unlike *The Wizard of Oz* - very clever!). Kids will connect with Gwen's journey, and will have an opportunity to start thinking about how some farm animals are raised. The chicken facts at the end are interesting tidbits and conversation pieces. Recommend!

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## Kyra Leseberg (Roots & Reads) says

Hen is a dreamer. The only thing she's known is the dark room full of other hens, all of them barely able to stand and turn around, and yet she dreams of flying.

Little does Hen know her dream will come true when a tornado takes the roof off the factory she lives in and her cage is sent on an amazing adventure - and a chance for a better life! When the cage lands, Hen and her friends find themselves outside for the very first time and experiencing the breeze and warmth of the sun ...and a dog chasing them!

A boy named Mateo introduces himself to Hen (who he names Gwen) and invites her and her flock to come to his house, which is the start of a sweet friendship told in simple sentences with fun and bright illustrations sure to capture the attention of young readers.

Inspired by the true story of hens who survived a tornado at a Croton, Ohio egg-laying factory farm, **Gwen the Rescue Hen** will charm readers with its story of new beginnings and friendship.

I think this children's book also has a wonderful message about treating all animals - whether in the food

production cycle or a pet - humanely, and includes a page of interesting facts to educate all readers. I was excited to learn this book is part of a series for children called Farm Animal Rescue and look forward to reading more with my four year old.

Thanks to Stone Pier Press and NetGalley for providing an ARC for review purposes. **Gwen the Rescue Hen** is scheduled for publication on October 12, 2018.

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### **Monique says**

This book displays what great pets chickens can be, something I know from first hand experience. I've had chickens most of my life and not only do they give back with fresh eggs that are healthier than those bought in the store, chickens are inexpensive and easy to care for, and have the ability to show love and entertain. My family has had chickens that love to be held and pet. In this book a boy finds and adopts a chicken that has been misplaced by a storm, and the two become great friends. Like the story, the illustrations in this book are sweet and simple. I highly recommend reading this to young children.

*I received this book from NetGalley and the book's publisher in exchange for my honest review, for which I am very grateful.*

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### **Book Snuggery says**

A delightful read for children and chicken lovers alike!

Gwen the Hen goes from factory farm living to wing flapping freedom in this adventure and it's sure to put a smile on little faces.

The book doesn't get too dark and scary with the realities that face Gwen in her caged living, just touches on her life as a hen in the dark confines her warehouse. Then thankfully, as though Oz sent, a tornado appears and liberates Gwen and her cell mates from their captivity and gives them a chance at a real life full of true chicken activities.

I loved the book and can't wait to send a copy to my friends 4 year old, I'm sure it's going to become a bedtime classic.

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### **Laura says**

Full disclosure, I have had chickens for the past seven years, so I am a little picky about what I like and don't like in books about chickens.

So, when I say that this is a delightful picture book, with a very accurately described chicken, It comes from the heart.

The book is based on a real life incident of a chicken farm that got struck by a tornado and the chickens escaped and survived.

Chickens are amazing creatures, and this book plays on that. Just look at these pictures.

And in the end, the chickens find a new home, with light and colors, something they didn't have in the factory farm.

Excellent choice for lovers of chickens, old and young.

Thanks to Netgalley for making this book available for an honest review.

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### **Sally Wilsey says**

This is the story of Gwen the Hen. She has lived in a cage all her life and one day a tornado hits. You guessed it she gets free. Even though she is free she is scared in the bright world. She is befriended by Mateo a young boy and the story continues from there. I liked the illustrations as with the exception of a few pages they were very cheerful and well detailed. The Mateo character was very cute. My favorite part was Gwen trying to talk to the big chicken at the restaurant. This added some humor to the book which I feel all children books need. It is a good story for 4-6 yr olds as with the tornado little ones may get scared. Also a good beginner reader book. The last pages also include information on chickens that I learned new things too. The book was inspired by a series of tornados that hit an egg laying farm in Croton Ohio. I hope to see more books on the adventures of Gwen and Mateo.

I received this book in exchange for my honest opinion.

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### **Jaime Kessel says**

Another great children's book with adorable illustrations and an important message by Leslie Crawford. A heartwarming story of a Hen named Gwen discovering friendship and life outside of her cage. The chicken facts at the end were a cute and informative addition. Definitely something worth buying your little ones for the upcoming holidays.

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### **Monica Stanton says**

Like the previous book in this series, Gwen the Rescue Hen is a lovable, whimsical exploration of the amazing abilities of chickens. I really appreciate that the series deals with the tough—and often ignored—issue of factory farming from an uplifting and hopeful angle by teaching kids how amazing farm animals are. You can tell that the author has real expertise in farm animals (I loved the bonus fact section at the end of the book) and I found the book to be a cute, funny celebration of a realistically quirky chicken personality.

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## **Theresa Thao says**

Gwen is delightfully whimsy and poignant. There are beautiful illustrations and lots of fun facts about chickens on the last page. Who knew that a chicken can count?? The book has a way of creating empathy for an animal we don't normally give much thought of other than it being food. Most importantly, the book is entertaining so it's a buy you will not regret. Also, check out Gwen's companion book, "Sprig," which was written and illustrated by the same people who created Gwen. Both books are perfect reading material for kids and artists, who want inspiration for creating stories revolving around animals interacting and navigating their way through the human world.

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