

The Crocodile's Toothache



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In a wide, slow river lived a crocodile named Croc. He had rough green scales, a pale yellow belly, and a small blue scarf around his neck. Croc was gentle and shy, and he liked to float quietly in the warm sun. But one morning, something felt wrong. A deep, thumping ache pulsed in one of his teeth.



Croc tried to ignore the ache. He swam to his favorite mudbank and closed his amber eyes. But the pain grew bigger and bigger, like a drum beating inside his snout. His cheek swelled up on one side, round and sore. He did not want to bother anyone, so he hid under a leafy branch and groaned.



A tiny plover named Pip flew by, light as a feather. She had soft cream and sandy-brown feathers and a little red satchel. Pip landed on a reed and tilted her round head. "Croc, why is your cheek so puffy?" she chirped. Croc sighed. "My tooth hurts terribly, but I am too scared to see the dentist."



Pip hopped closer. "Scared? You? The biggest, strongest swimmer in the river?" Croc nodded slowly. "The dentist has bright lights and shiny tools," he whispered. "What if it hurts? What if I am not brave enough?" Pip fluffed her feathers and said gently, "Croc, asking for help is brave. Let me go with you."



Croc blinked his small amber eyes. "You would come with me?" Pip nodded and patted her red satchel. "I will fly right beside you the whole way," she said. "And I will chatter so you are not alone." Croc took a deep breath. His tooth throbbed again, and he knew he could not wait any longer. "All right," he said. "Let's go."



Croc heaved his heavy body out of the river. His stubby legs plodded along the sandy path, and his thick tail swished behind him. Pip flew in circles above his head, her black wing tips catching the sun. "Not far now," she called. Croc's swollen cheek ached with every step, but Pip's cheerful voice kept him moving.



They reached a little clinic with a bright blue door. Croc stopped. His heart thumped. "Maybe we can come back tomorrow," he mumbled. Pip landed on his snout and looked into his eyes. "You came this far," she said. "One more step. I will be right here." Croc gulped and knocked softly on the door.



The dentist opened the door. He had warm brown skin, short curly hair, and round glasses. He wore a white coat and a kind smile under a small moustache. "Hello there," he said calmly. "A toothache? You came to the right place. I am Dr. Moss, and I help big and small patients feel better." Croc relaxed just a little.



Dr. Moss led Croc to a big chair by the window. He pulled on mint-green gloves and showed Croc a small round mirror on a stick. "I will use this to look at your tooth," he explained. "It is tiny and does not hurt." Pip sat on a stool nearby. "See?" she whispered. "Just a look." Croc opened his long snout wide.



Dr. Moss peered inside. "Ah, I see the problem," he said. "One little tooth has a tiny hole, and that is why it aches. I can fix it with a gentle cleaning and a small patch." Croc's amber eyes grew wide. "Will it hurt?" he asked. "You will feel a little buzz," said Dr. Moss. "But I will go slowly, and you can raise your paw if you need a rest."



Dr. Moss worked carefully. The little mirror twinkled, and the gentle buzz filled the room. Pip chattered about the river and the sunshine to keep Croc calm. Croc closed his eyes and listened to her voice. Before long, Dr. Moss sat back and smiled. "All done!" he said. "Your tooth is clean and patched. The ache will fade soon."



Croc touched his cheek with a stubby claw. The terrible thumping was gone! He felt light and happy, as if a heavy stone had rolled off his snout. "It doesn't hurt anymore!" he said. Dr. Moss nodded. "You were very brave," he said. "It is not easy to ask for help when you are scared." Pip fluttered her wings and cheered.



Croc looked at Pip. "You were right," he said. "Asking for help is brave. I could not have done it without you." Pip perched on his scarf and beamed. "And you were brave too," she said. "You faced your fear, one step at a time." They thanked Dr. Moss and promised to come back for a check-up, just to be safe.



On the way home, Croc did not hide under any branches. He walked tall, his blue scarf flapping in the breeze. Pip flew beside him, and they talked about everything they had learned. "Being brave does not mean having no fear," Croc said slowly. "It means asking for help when you need it." Pip nodded. "Exactly," she chirped.



Back at the river, Croc slipped into the cool water with a happy splash. His tooth felt smooth and strong. He smiled a big crocodile smile, and for the first time in days, his cheek did not ache. Pip landed on a lily pad and opened her red satchel. "I brought a little snack for us," she said. "To celebrate!"



Croc and Pip shared a picnic on the sunny bank. Croc knew that whenever a toothache or a worry came along, he could ask for help. And Pip knew that even the biggest, strongest friends sometimes need a tiny bird to remind them. They sat together in the warm sun, happy and brave, and never afraid to ask for help.