

(4) The Selfish Crocodile

In a river deep in the forest, lived a large crocodile. He wanted the river all to himself. Everyday he shouted to all the creatures, “Stay away from my river! If you drink or bathe in MY river, I’ll eat you all.” So there were no fish, no tadpoles, no frogs, no crabs, no crayfish in the river. The forest creatures kept away from the river as well. They walk for miles to drink in other rivers and streams when they were thirsty.

Early one morning, there is a loud groaning sound in the forest. The crocodile was in terrible pain. He was laying on his big back holding his jaw, and his was crying. The forest creatures came closer to look at him. Some of them felt sorry for him, but some of them didn’t.

“What’s the matter with him?” asked a deer.

“I don’t know.” said a squirrel.

“Maybe he is going to die.” chirped a blackbird.

“If that happens, it’ll be safe to go in the river!” said a wild pig with a happy smile.

The animals just stood and watched the great big crocodile in pain. None of them tried to help.

There came a little mouse. He ran along the crocodile’s tail, then onto his tummy. The other creatures stared and said, “Look at that mouse! What is he doing? Has he gone mad?”

“He’s going to be eaten for sure!” some said.

The mouse climbed up the crocodile’s big neck, and into his open mouth. He got hold of something, and pulled and pulled and pulled. Then he pulled out a big rotten tooth and carried it on his shoulder and walked out of the crocodile’s mouth. There was a silence among the crowd at first, then a loud cheer from the creatures. The

crocodile sat up and said, “The pain is gone. It’s all gone! I don’t feel pain anymore!” Then he saw the mouse walking down his tummy with a big sharp but rotten crocodile tooth.

“Your bad tooth was giving you the tooth-ache!” said the mouse. “Please get rid of it, and when you come back, I’ll have a present for you.” said the smiling crocodile

The mouse buried the bad tooth under a tree, and the crocodile had a nice juicy nut waiting for him.

The crocodile said to the little mouse, “You were both very clever and very kind. I am so grateful that you helped getting rid of my tooth-ache. How do you know it’s the bad tooth? And what shall I do if my tooth-ache comes back?”

“Don’t worry, I’ll help you take care of your teeth,” answered the mouse. “We can have tea when I come to the river and I can check your teeth for you.” Soon the crocodile and the mouse became best friends.

One day the crocodile said to all the creatures, “Please come to drink and bathe in the river! I won’t hurt you anymore! The river belongs to us all!” The creatures, on land or in the water, weren’t afraid of the crocodile anymore. They drank the water and played in the forest, and they bathed in the river and chatted when doing so. Soon the river was full of fish and tadpoles and crabs and crayfish, and the forest was full of joy.