



# Croc and Bird

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BfK Rating:

5

When two eggs hatch next to each other, the newborn creatures assume they are brothers and grow up together sharing and caring for each other. It isn't until the river carries them to a lake populated by crocodiles and a flock of birds that they realise they aren't brothers ? one is a bird and the other a crocodile. Both try to integrate with their own species but find they don't fit in ? 'Be quiet,' shout the crocodiles when Croc greets the rising sun with a song; 'That's disgusting,' say the birds when Bird catches a buffalo for lunch. When croc and bird are reunited after missing each other so much, they agree that they are indeed brothers.

Deacon's expressive pencil line is complemented with a consummate use of watercolour to convey heat and cold, light and darkness and the solidity, texture and movement of the creatures he depicts. Baby Bird's naked pink vulnerability versus baby Croc's angular hardness evoke relief in the reader that Croc sees Bird as his brother, not as dinner. The narrative is beautifully paced with, eg, a sequence of vignettes as Croc and Bird 'grew big together'. Double page spreads convey the beauty of the rising sun (on which the friends comment) and the intense shadows it casts on the landscape contrasted with the lushness of the vegetation surrounding the lake.

This deeply emotional and moving story about love and closeness despite difference is perhaps Deacon's best book yet. Quite superb.

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