

## Kroko the Crocodile

In a village somewhere between the North Pole and the South Pole, lives Gertrude. She is a typical young girl and she has one desire, to go to the river to swim alone, like a women. And every day, for weeks and weeks, Gertrude begs her mom to let her go alone to the river. But every day, for weeks and weeks her mom refuses,

« You are too young, and it is too dangerous »

Some months passed and finally one day, her mother who was annoyed to hear the same question every day, accepted.

« I agree, you are an old girl now, but you must promise that you're going to be really careful. And especially, remember, to not go too far in the river because there is danger all around you. Do not go more than up to your stomach in the water ! »

Gertrude is very happy and very proud of her. On the path that goes to the river, she sings her happiness,

« I'm an old girl ! I'm an old girl ! I'm going alone to the river, lalalala.... »

She put one foot in the river, and then other, and then her stomach. She was really happy, the river was perfectly warm and she began to dance in the water. But today was hot, too hot thinks Gertrude. The sun was just above her and she sweated a lots.



« A little more, mom will know nothing, and just two minutes... »

And she began to go a little more, and a little more, and finally a little more. But it was too late, she didn't touch the bottom any more.

« Help ! Help ! Somebody ! Help ! »

Nobody was there to hear her, and she drowned like a rock in the bottom of the river.

A crocodile who was hiding in the tall grass immediately plunged, his huge mouth with his uncountable amount of sharp teeth. Then he returned her, unconscious, to the bank.

« Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah » cried Gertrude taking back consciousness.

« Help me ! A monster »

« Calm down, I'm not a monster, I'm only a crocodile... »

« A crocodile ! Ho my god ! You have big teeth ! » cried Gertrude who didn't calm down at all.

« I do not eat children. You are not the Little Red Riding hood and I'm not the big bad wolf ! I'm Kroko the crocodile and I don't eat little girls !

« And the old girl ? » sobbed Gertrude.

« The old girl like you, I save them when they drown, and if they are not happy, I throw them again in the water. Now tell me, what is your name ? »

Gertrude still trembled a little :

« My name is Gertrude and my mom told me that crocodiles love to eat little girls, and the old too... And that they eat them from the head to the foot ! »

« It is truth » says Kroko

« But I'm not a crocodile like the others. I never could eat meat. It gives me pimples and brought down my scales. I eat only grass and flowers. I am vegetarian ! »

« When I was young, I was a shame of my friends and of my family crocodile. Everybody boded me because I was different than the others. My life with them became impossible, then one day I made the decision to leave, like an adult »

« This is the saddest story that I ever heard, » says Gertrude. « But I am glad that you eat only flowers. »

Gertrude and Kroko had the best afternoon of their life. They went swimming in the river. They told all the stories they knew, did every joke, dance, play in the bank.

« It's the time to come back » says Gertrude.

« Comes with me, Kroko, I want to present you to my village. I'm sure that everybody will like you. And my parents will certainly reward you for saved my life »

At the idea to make new friends, Kroko accepted with enthusiasm.

« You are to crunch » says him.

« Watch you language, Kroko, or I will cried »

But as soon as Kroko appeared on the place of the village, the panic seized inhabitants. Everybody ran away shouting.

« Don't be scary ! » Cries Gertrude

« He will not eat you ! »,

But nobody heard her. And an arrow was thrown in Kroko. The unfortunate, touched in the side, collapsed.



« It was my friend, Kroko was not nasty » moaned Gertrude « And you killed him ! »

She melted in tear and told the story of Kroko the vegetarian crocodile who saved her life in the river. Her parents was startled :

« What did we do ? Oh ! What we did ! »

« But look, look, he is still breathing ! He is not dead !... »

With lot of attention, Kroko was moved in the bedroom of Gertrude, where the doctor of the village examined him immediately.

« Bad wound ! » diagnosed him.

Gertrude was really worried and during three days and three nights, she didn't leave the head of her friend.

Finally, one day, Kroko was able to get up. He was saved !

After a long convalescence, all the village celebrated him and organized a big party.

The mom of Gertrude prepared in his honor some doughnuts of flowers of hibiscus.

Since that day, Gertrude, the old girl doesn't go any more to the river without her friend Kroko, the crocodile of soft heart, who only eats grass and flowers.

