



The Crocodile

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Dad found a new job in a different city, and Marta's family instantly moved. Marta didn't even have time to tell her friends goodbye.



First she packed the bigger boxes with her mom, but then Marta had to think where she would have to put everything. She didn't even have time to play! While she unpacked, Marta wondered how she would fit in at her new school. School had started a week ago, and everybody had their friends and groups and lunch tables all figured out.



Mrs. Peters led her into the class and announced:

“We have a new student, she moved from all the way from the West Coast. Go on, sweetie, tell us your name!”

“My name is Marta, we just moved here,” she said quietly.

“Yeah, she lives here nearby, in the blue house with the oak tree,” said a girl in the back. The class had lost interest and was starting to drift off, so Mrs. Peters sat Marta down at her new desk.



During break, all the other kids were playing, talking, and running. Marta was the only girl who didn't know what to do. She was too shy to approach anyone, and nobody noticed her at all. Then, Marta heard someone clear their throat behind her. She spun around to see a very tall boy who leaned down and whispered, "So you're the girl who moved into the blue house?" "Yeah," awkwardly mumbled Marta, "Apartment number 316. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, well, you see, it's funny because I used to live in that same apartment!", he lowered his voice, "But we had to move out.."



The boy's face became tense as he looked around.

Marta began to feel uneasy.

“Why did you move?”

“I don't know if I should tell you..”

“Tell me what?”, she demanded. She could feel goose bumps on her arms.

“The crocodile!”, frantically whispered the boy.

Marta was very confused. “He comes out from the toilet every night! So never go to the bathroom when it's dark!”

Marta thought she saw him chuckle, but a flood of children nearly threw her off her feet. She could hear the sound of the bell ringing in her ears.



And now as she was tucked into her cozy new bed she shivered with fear. It wasn't as though she believed that dumb boy. She actually really liked crocodiles! There was nothing wrong with them. And they were constantly on TV.



But what if he was in the bathroom now? She wondered how many teeth he had..



The next night, Marta was so tired that she didn't even have the energy to worry. She knew that the story was silly. "How can a crocodile fit in a toilet? And what for?" The night after that, Marta had forgotten altogether. But then, at two-thirty in the morning, she woke up. She needed to go to the bathroom! "Oh, I wish, I hadn't drank that glass of milk!", she thought. Marta then crawled out from under her covers to find her mom.



“Mom.. Mom, wake up!”

Marta’s mother blinked and said, “Sweetie, it’s three o’clock in the morning. Did you have a bad dream?”

“No, mom, I need to pee!”

“You know where the bathroom is, honey,” mumbled her mother.

“I can’t!... There’s ... a crocodile!”

Marta’s mother immediately woke up and sat in her bed. She looked at Marta and thought for a moment.

“A crocodile?”, she asked again.

“Yeah..”, muttered Marta, and looked at the boxes in the corner in hope that her old potty could be found there.

“How sweet!”, said her mom. She put on her slippers and went to the kitchen.

“What? What are you talking about, mom?”, —
Marta was hurrying behind her.

“I’ve always liked exotic animals! Crocodile is probably hungry, let’s go get him some food. Do you think it might like some lettuce?”

“I don’t understand, Mom. Aren’t you scared?”

“That’s the key, Marta,” said her mother, “You have to befriend the crocodile and it won’t harm you!”





“Why do you think that the crocodile is bad? You really think that a crocodile who can fit inside a toilet would have that many teeth?”, asked her mother, “Come on Marta, why don’t you just imagine. What kind of a crocodile could live in our bathroom? Would it have green eyes or blue eyes?”

“Blue!”, Marta cheered.

“There you go! Now you’re getting the hang of it!”



Marta thought long and hard about what sort of a crocodile they would have. Eventually, she imagined the sweetest little crocodile that ever lived.

After that, Marta was never afraid of using the bathroom at night again. The next day she went to school and told that boy about how much she loved crocodiles and a specially that one who lives in their bathroom. And soon she made a friend. Her name was Maya and she had a pet iguana. They fed her fresh lettuce and Marta decided that moving to a new place wasn't so bad after all.

