

Help from an unexpected quarter

I'll Stay If I May

FRANÇOISE BECK & HERMAN VAN DE WIJDEVEN

Crocodile Maurice ends up in a wood by accident. All the animals quickly become fond of his cheerful company. But when a storm comes, he's left behind, alone: ducks and birds fly off through a whirlwind to their nests, frogs dash away to a pond. Maurice looks in vain for shelter, but he doesn't fit anywhere. What's more, all the animals soon forget their new friend. Dozing off or gathered around the table, they seem to care only about themselves. Fortunately there's Mole. Deep under the ground, he isn't troubled by the wind, but he can hear Maurice's weeping and his pounding footsteps. He thinks up a plan and digs to enlarge his tunnel. As well as a new home to shelter in, Maurice finds a friend for life.

A delightful book to read aloud on cold, wet days.

DE STANDAARD

Françoise Beck has opted for a harmonious, sober palette and her illustrations are designed to be light and airy. The dynamic pictures, inspired by the wind, beautifully bring out the contrast between Maurice's agitation and the cosy places to shelter. They are cleverly composed, too; above ground you can watch the crocodile become increasingly lonely and desperate, and at the same time see that the mole is following him underground and looking for a solution. Friendship and sociability, fleeing and finding refuge, and the beauty of caring for each other are central in this colourful picture book.

It is fun to spot the little details that make the story.

MAPPALIBRI ON 'SEVEN LITTLE PENGUINS'



AUTHORS



Françoise Beck (b. 1984) is a designer, illustrator and art teacher. In paintings, drawings and photographs, she always looks for a certain simplicity and calm, without any redundant details. She believes a drawing does not have to be complicated or multilayered to convey meaning. She loves to create a framework with her illustrations, one that leaves plenty of room for the viewer's own fantasy and interpretation. Photo © Hans Van den Keybus
Herman van de Wijdeven (b. 1961) is a Dutch author living in Flanders. He started his writing career as a playwright and wrote his first children's book in 2013. His style has been compared to the work of internationally lauded authors such as Bart Moeyaert, Aidan Chambers and Niccolò Ammaniti. Photo © Claudia Kamergorodski

ORIGINAL TITLE Ik blijf als het mag (2022, Querido, 40 pp.)

FORMAT 210 x 275

AGE 3+

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