

"I didn't want to die, and I especially didn't want to be killed by a crocodile. But there was no escape."

A robber has kidnapped Sam Fox and his little cousin Nissa during a tropical cyclone. When the getaway car crashes into the raging Crocodile River, Sam and Nissa must face one ordeal after another to survive against incredible odds. Sam fights to keep his head above water and Nissa out of the jaws of certain death. As the waters rise and the crocodiles close in, Sam must push himself to the limits of his endurance.

An action-packed rollercoaster ride, **Crocodile Attack** is the first book in a thrilling new series!

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EXTREME ADVENTURES

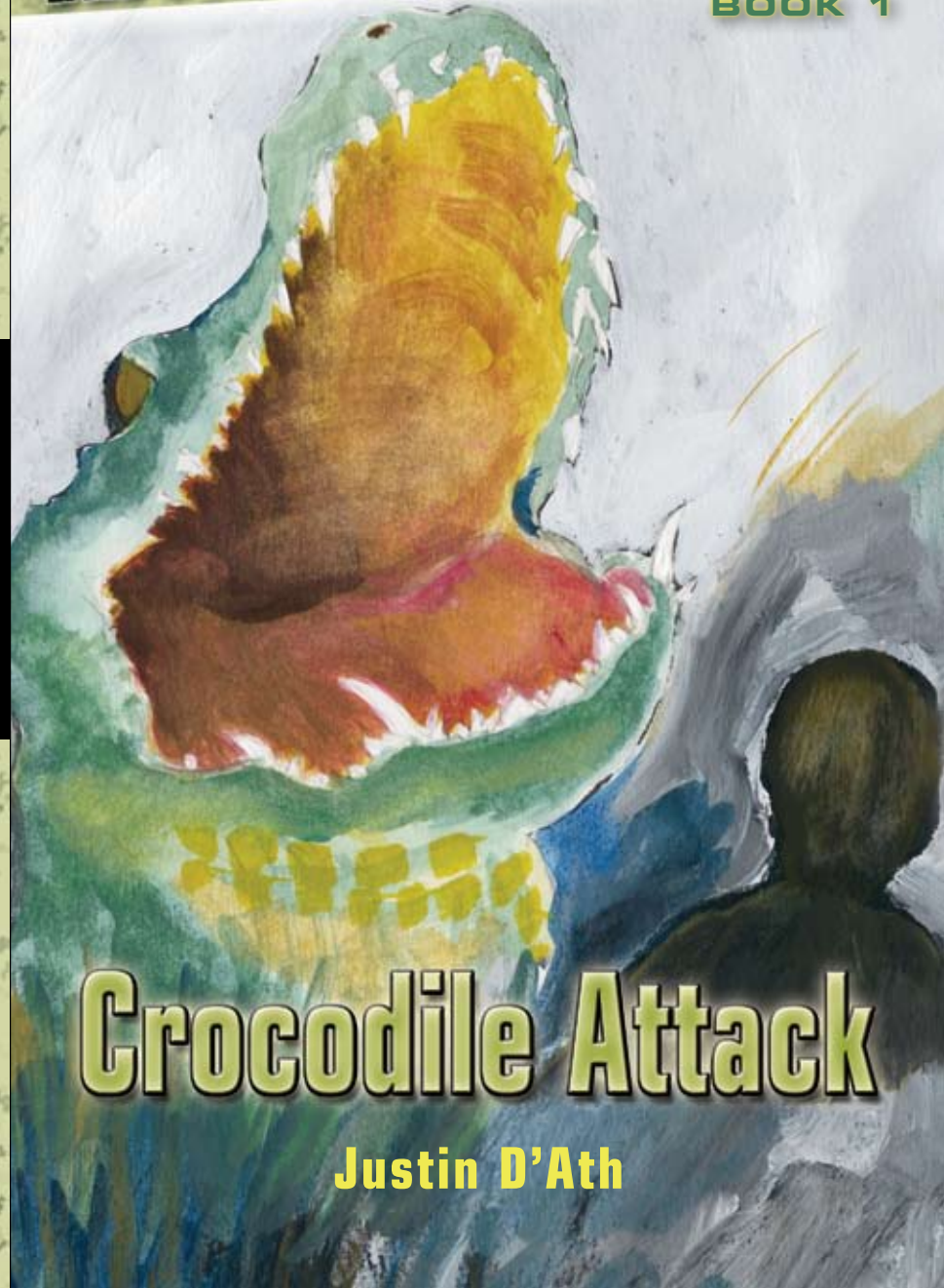
Crocodile Attack

Justin D'Ath

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BOOK 1

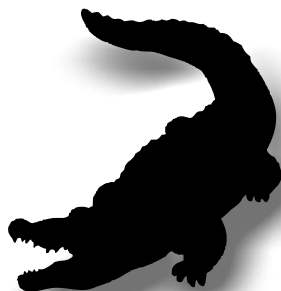


Crocodile Attack

Justin D'Ath

EXTREME ADVENTURES

BOOK 1



Crocodile Attack

This can't be happening! my slow-motion mind started saying to me, but I told it to shut up. This *was* happening. We *weren't* in a movie. That thirteen-foot crocodile swimming towards us *wasn't* a computer-generated special effect. It was real.

Extreme Adventures

Book 1 – Crocodile Attack

Book 2 – Bushfire Rescue

EXTREME ADVENTURES

BOOK 1



Crocodile Attack

JUSTIN D'ATH

Kane Miller
A DIVISION OF EDC PUBLISHING

For Deacon

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For information contact:

Kane Miller, A Division of EDC Publishing

P.O. Box 470663

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BANG BANG, YOU'RE DEAD

Black ski cap, dark blue raincoat, wet leather boots. *A truck driver*, I thought, as we passed each other near the meat and vegetables freezer. Nobody else would be out on a day like this. Nine inches of rain had fallen since lunchtime yesterday, according to Aunt Erin behind the counter. The wind was so strong I'd had to get off my bike at the intersection and push it all the way up Main Street.

Nissa, my two-year-old cousin, was playing with some Space Rangers figures in the kiddy corner at the front of the general store. Sometimes Aunt Erin brought her to work if Mum couldn't watch her, or if the daycare was closed. Mum had the flu that

day and didn't want Nissa exposed to it. I'd fought my way to the general store to buy her some cough drops. Apart from Aunt Erin's store, everything was closed on account of Tropical Cyclone Kandy, less than a hundred miles offshore and headed down the coast.

I paused near the door to look at the latest issue of *Outback Survival* magazine. Nissa said something, but it was difficult to hear above the noise of the rain, hammering on the porch's iron roof.

"What was that, Niss?"

"Bang!" she said, pointing a stubby finger like a Space Ranger's ray gun towards the rear of the building.

I raised a pretend ray gun of my own and turned to see where the aliens were.

At first I didn't understand what my eyes were telling me. The man in the blue raincoat was leaning over the counter. He seemed to be deep in conversation with Aunt Erin. The safe where she kept the bank records stood open. While the man talked softly to her, Aunt Erin was busy filling a brown paper bag.

With money!

The man noticed me gawking. "Hey, kid," he called. "Come here."

He was holding something. It looked like two connected pipes, with holes in the ends roughly the size of a ten-cent coin. I lowered my hand, all thoughts of Space Rangers forgotten. My mind was working in slow motion. *That can't be a shotgun!* it told me.

"Are you deaf?" snarled the man. "I said come here."

My legs moved. Like a person in a dream, I walked towards the man with the shotgun.

This isn't real, my mind was saying. *Armed holdups only happen other places. In big cities. Not in friendly little towns like Crocodile Bridge.*

"I've only got some change," I stammered, reaching inside my jacket.

The man shook his head. He was about as old as my big brother Nathan. He had a row of silver rings in each earlobe and a red goatee. "Keep your hands where I can see them," he said, "and get down on the floor. You too," he told Aunt Erin, taking the bag of money and stuffing it inside his dripping raincoat.

Aunt Erin and I lay facedown on the floor. It still

didn't seem real. I felt like an actor in a Hollywood movie as the man with the shotgun stepped over us. He grabbed the wall phone and ripped out the cord.

"Don't even think of calling the cops," he warned.

I listened to his boots creaking across the tile towards the front of the store. I could no longer see him. Aunt Erin was blocking my line of vision.

"Man got bang-bang!" piped up Nissa.

"Bang, bang, you're dead," said the robber.

Aunt Erin lifted her head. "Don't point that thing at my daughter!"

"I wasn't pointing it at her, lady. Now lie down like I –"

A siren interrupted him. For a few moments, we listened to the eerie wail in the distance.

"I *said* don't call the cops!" the robber shouted.

I heard scuffling from the front of the store. Then Nissa squealed. Beside me, Aunt Erin scrambled to her feet.

"Leave her alone!" she cried.

Now that Aunt Erin was standing up, I could see what was happening. The robber held Nissa in the crook of his left arm. He was edging backwards towards the door, the shotgun pointing at Aunt Erin.

"I said don't call the cops," he repeated.

"How could I have called the police?" Aunt Erin pleaded. "You disconnected the phone. That's a cyclone warning. Please put down my daughter."

He shook his head. His eyes narrowed. "Don't come any closer!" he warned.

"Please!" Aunt Erin begged. "*Please don't hurt her!*"

The robber nearly dropped Nissa as he wrenched open the door. A flurry of wind and misty raindrops swirled into the shop. "If you want your kid back," he yelled over his shoulder, "tell the cops not to follow me!"

The door slammed shut, and they were gone.

Aunt Erin let out a strange, low moan. She staggered sideways. A sunglasses display crashed to the floor. The glasses scattered around me. I jumped up and grabbed my aunt before she fell. She leaned heavily against me. A pair of sunglasses crunched under one of my sneakers as I helped Aunt Erin to a chair beside the counter. She buried her face in her hands.

"No, no, no, no!" she sobbed. "He's taken her. He's taken my baby!"

I don't know what came over me. I am not the kind of person who acts without thinking something through. But before my mind registered what I was doing, I dashed out into the howling wind and rain.



HOSTAGE

The street was deserted. No people, no cars. Everyone was indoors, sitting out the cyclone watch in the comfort of their warm, dry homes. Only now it was a cyclone warning, if Aunt Erin was right about the siren. I should be inside, too. What did I think I was doing?

I ran to the corner of Arafura Street. Nothing there. A gust of wind blew back my jacket's hood. The raindrops felt like bullets. They stung my face and ears. They nearly blinded me. I turned my back, and the wind pushed me as I ran the other way. Back past the general store, with its "Community Bank Agency" sign lying on the sidewalk beside my fallen-over