



# Buddy Breakdown

Nothing can keep these two apart ...  
and nobody knows why.

Illustrations: Trip Park / www.tripparkproductions.com

## Cast of Characters

**Narrators 1, 2, 3**—people who tell the story

**Stan**—the zookeeper

**Nancy**—a student on a field trip

**James**—a student on a field trip

**Frank**—a frog

**Conrad**—a crocodile

**Police officers 1, 2, 3**

**Police chief**

## Scene 1

**Narrator 1:** Frank the frog and Conrad the crocodile live together in the city zoo. They have been entertaining zoogoers for 10 years.

**Narrator 2:** Every morning, Stan the zookeeper brings the first round of students on field trips over to Frank and Conrad's cage.

**Stan:** Good morning, everybody. How's it going today?

**Narrator 3:** The students look bored.

**Stan:** Well, I know it's early, and I see that some of you are yawning, so I'll try to make this quick. I am about to reveal to you two beasts of nature that should be mortal enemies but are not!

**Nancy:** Is it a wolf and a deer?

**James:** A wolf and a deer? No way! I bet it's a lion and a zebra.

**Stan:** Even more amazing! Behold! I give you two best friends—a frog and a crocodile!

**Narrator 1:** Stan points to a corner of the cage. A crocodile emerges from behind a rock and makes his way toward the front.

**James:** Where's the frog? What a rip-off!

**Narrator 2:** The other children mumble to one another.

**Nancy:** That zookeeper must be crazy.

**James:** We should leave. Let's go see the monkeys.

**Narrator 3:** Suddenly, the crocodile opens his mouth wide, and Frank the frog jumps out.

He proceeds to swing from one of Conrad's massive teeth up onto the croc's head.

**Narrator 1:** The students' jaws drop to the ground.

**Frank:** What are you looking at?

**James:** (*looking at the frog*) Why doesn't the crocodile eat him?

**Stan:** No one knows. They're just friends.

**Narrator 2:** Stan leads the kids away from the cage. Conrad and Frank are alone.

**Narrator 3:** Frank is now sitting on a rock with his head between his front flippers. He is moping.

**Conrad:** What's eating you, Frank?

**Frank:** What's eating me? Is that supposed to be some kind of a joke?

**Conrad:** No. I just mean, what's your problem?

**Frank:** I'm just bored with this life. That's all. I want to see what else is out there.

**Conrad:** Frank, you're my best friend, and I'm going to give it to you straight. We've got a good thing here. There's nothing better out there for us.

**Frank:** I wonder.

**Conrad:** Whatever, dude. I'm going to get some sleep before the next show. Wake me up when Stan comes back.

**Narrator 1:** Conrad lies down and closes his eyes. Soon he is snoring.

**Narrator 2:** Frank is hurt that his friend won't listen to him. He thinks about escaping and doing something different with his life.

## Scene 2

**Narrator 3:** Conrad wakes up to see Stan and a new group of students staring at him.

**Conrad:** That's funny. Why didn't my buddy Frank wake me up?

**Narrator 1:** Conrad looks around his cage. No Frank. It looks like he's gone. Conrad begins to go wild. He snaps his jaws and snarls at the kids. He waves his tail violently.

**Conrad:** I have to find him! He's too small! He'll die without me!

**Stan:** Conrad! What's wrong with you? Stop scaring the students!

**Narrator 2:** Stan opens the cage door and steps in to see what's wrong. He trips over Conrad's tail and hits his head on a rock. He passes out.

**Narrator 3:** Conrad scurries out of the cage, and all the students run away screaming.

**Conrad:** Frank! Frankeeee! Where are you?

**Narrator 1:** In the far corner of the cage, a small pile of leaves begins to move. Frank comes out from beneath the leaves.

**Frank:** What's going on? Is it time for another show?

### Scene 3

**Narrator 2:** Conrad makes it all the way out of the zoo and into the city. Everywhere he goes, people scream and run.

**Narrator 3:** A taxicab screeches to a halt. The driver dives out of the car screaming and runs away.

**Conrad:** Frank! Come on, Frank! These people are freaking me out! Come out, come out, wherever you are!

**Narrator 1:** Suddenly a swarm of police cars arrives on the scene. One hundred police officers jump out of the cars and stand around with their hands on their guns.

**Police officer 1:** *(to another officer)* What do you make of it?

**Police officer 2:** I dunno. Looks like one of them alley-gators to me.

**Police officer 3:** That's not an alligator! That's a croc-er-dial! That's what that is!

**Police officer 1:** Crocodile, huh?

**Police officer 2:** That's what it is, all right. Now what should we do about it?

**Narrator 2:** Conrad continues to scare and upset the crowd. The police chief makes his way over.

**Police chief:** What's the problem here, men?

**Police officer 3:** It's a croc, sir.

**Police chief:** A crock of what? Butter? Jelly? Beans?

**Police officer 1:** No, sir; it's a crocodile.

**Police chief:** *(amazed)* A crocodile, eh? What are we going to do?

**Police officer 2:** Well, that's just it, sir. Nobody knows.

**Police officer 3:** Should we shoot it?

**Police chief:** No, don't shoot it! Then it would be dead! No ... this will take more wits than we have to solve.

**Police officer 1:** What're your orders, Chief?

**Police chief:** Call the zookeeper!

### Scene 4

**Narrator 3:** Back in Frank and Conrad's cage, Stan is still out cold. He starts to wake up just as his cell phone rings.

**Narrator 1:** His head is pounding as he answers the call.

**Stan:** H-Hello? ... Yes, this is Stan the zookeeper. ... Yes, I am the zookeeper here at the zoo. ... *(looking around the cage)* Yes, I *am* missing a crocodile! What? Oh, no! He's never acted like that before. He's usually very happy and peaceful! I don't know what's gotten into him!

**Narrator 2:** Stan stands up and checks the cage again. He sees Frank the frog crawling out from under a pile of leaves.

**Stan:** Don't do anything drastic, Officer. I'll be right there. I think I have an idea.

### Scene 5

**Narrator 3:** The police officer hangs up the phone.

**Police chief:** What did he say?

**Police officer 2:** He said he has an idea and he's on his way.

**Narrator 1:** Stan arrives on the scene.

**Stan:** I'm here.

**Police chief:** Excellent! Now, can you get control of this wild beast?

**Narrator 2:** Stan looks down at Conrad. A haze over the crocodile's eyes makes him look insane. When his mouth snaps open, his razor-sharp teeth glitter in the sun.

**Police officer 3:** 'Come on, Frank! These people are freaking me out! Come out, come out, wherever you are!'



**Narrator 3:** Police officers are everywhere. The FBI is on the scene, as well as a SWAT team. News helicopters and police choppers buzz overhead.

**Police officer 3:** *(to Stan)* Well, for Pete's sake—do something!

**Police chief:** Settle down.

**Police officer 1:** I'm sorry, but the suspense is killing me!

**Stan:** Oh, I'll do something. I'll do something even if it kills me!

**Narrator 1:** Stan pulls out Frank from behind his back and holds him in the palm of his hand. He holds the frog out to Conrad.

**Narrator 2:** Conrad looks up at his friend in the zookeeper's hand and smiles. Everyone in the crowd stops screaming. Order is restored.

**Conrad:** Frank! Buddy! You're OK!

**Frank:** Of course I'm OK, Conrad. What's wrong with you? What are you doing out here?

**Conrad:** What am I doing out here? I'm out here going crazy looking for you!

**Frank:** Conrad, I was in the cage the whole time!

**Conrad:** *(shocked)* What!

**Frank:** I never left! Why would I ever leave? You're my best friend!

**Police chief:** What do you think he's saying?

**Police officer 2:** Sounds like *ribbit ribbit gribbit grrrrrib* to me, Chief.

**Conrad:** But you said you wanted to leave—that you were bored with zoo life and wanted to see what was out there!

**Frank:** Yeah, well, you should know by now that I'm all talk. We'll always be a team!

**Conrad:** Oh, Frank! Hop on in, and let's go home!

**Narrator 3:** Conrad opens his mouth wide, and Frank jumps in. Stan leads them back to the zoo. Life in the city goes on.

**Narrator 1:** The police officers all look at one another in amazement.

**Police chief:** What was that all about? Does anyone know what just happened?

**Police officer 3:** Not a clue, sir. Not a clue. ☹

**Discuss it.**  
Do people have to look and act the same way to be friends? How do friends look out for each other?

—Bryon Cahill