

It was late evening now and the sun was setting, turning the sky bright red and yellow, with a few glimmering stars visible.

'Corky,' Ruskin said, 'are the actors in that film still alive?'

'Some of them are,' Corky replied, 'and some of them aren't.'

'I want to live for always,' Ruskin said.

'No one lives for always,' Corky said. 'We just live for little whiles at a time.'

Corky stopped outside his front door and watched Ruskin walk the rest of the way home. Ruskin stood on the metal drain in front of his house.

Ka-clunk! went the drain.

Ruskin turned to wave at Corky.

A breeze blew down Lizard Street.

Eeeek! went the pub sign.

Corky waved back.
Ka-clunk! went the drain.
Ruskin went indoors.
His mum and dad were eating toast and watching television.
'Kiss,' said Wendy.
Ruskin kissed her cheek.
'Tea?' asked Wendy.
'Yes please,' replied Ruskin.
'Poached egg on toast?'
'Yes please.'

Later, after Wendy and Ruskin had gone to bed, Winston sat up drinking cans of lager. He was still sitting up and staring at the television set when all the programmes had gone off and there was nothing on the screen but a grey fuzz.

Upstairs in his room, Ruskin – who had been reading – could hear the telly buzzing and fuzzing. He knew that his dad had got drunk (as this happened quite often) so he went downstairs.

'Come on, Dad,' said Ruskin, shaking Winston. 'Time for bed.'

Usually, this is all Ruskin had to do – shake his dad, take the lager from his hand and say, 'Time for bed' – and Winston would obediently stand up, mutter, 'It's not my fault' a few times, and go up to his room.

But tonight was different. Because, as Ruskin took the lager from his dad's hand, Winston said, 'The crocodile!'

Ruskin stared at his dad.

Again Winston said, 'The crocodile!'

Ruskin shook him.

'What crocodile, Dad?' asked Ruskin.

'The one I took,' mumbled Winston.

'Took from where, Dad?'

'From the zoo.'

Winston continued to talk in his drunken sleep.

And so it was that Ruskin learned why his dad had been sacked from his job as zookeeper and how the baby crocodile that bit Corky's knee and grew to become Krindlekrax got into the sewer in the first place . . .

