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Emu

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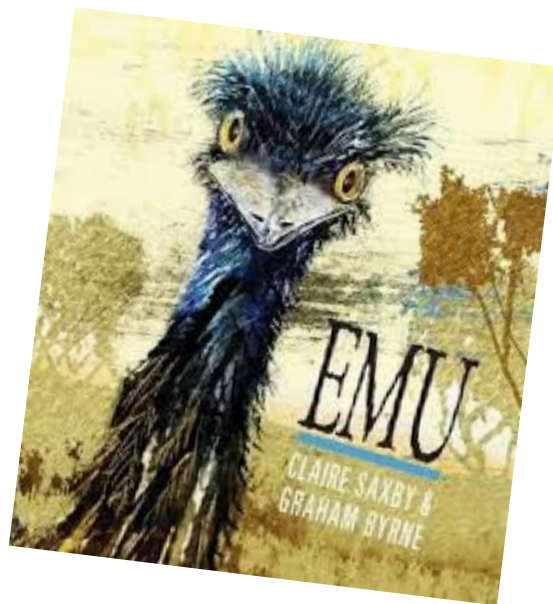
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Book Review

Title: Emu
Author: Claire Saxby
Illustrator: Graham Byrne
Reviewer: Julia Mulligan
Publisher: Candlewick Press
Publication Year: 2015
ISBN: 9780763674793
Number of Pages: 30
Interest Level: Preschool, Primary
Rating: Dependable



Review

In an Australian eucalyptus forest, a male emu must hatch and protect his clutch of eggs completely on his own. From the moment the last egg is laid and the mother emu disappears from her family's life, this gigantic flightless bird devotes himself entirely to their survival. He rarely eats or drinks in order to protect his eggs from hungry predators, and once they hatch he must closely supervise his foraging chicks for six months in order to guard them from goannas, dingoes, and eagles. Alongside the story of the emu family are relevant facts about emu biology and behavior.

The author weaves a great deal of factual information and intelligent vocabulary into this child-friendly narrative about a fictional single father emu. The story itself is very descriptive and does not read as encyclopedic even though it is mainly concerned with specific emu behaviors. The factual inserts fit in well with the portion of the story they are each paired alongside and do not detract from the flow of the narrative. The illustrations are realistic but also have a whimsical feel to them, possibly due to the strangeness of the giant bird they are depicting. The desaturated earth tones keep the tone of the book serious. This book would be appropriate for elementary-aged children interested in learning about this strange-looking bird and its unusual family structure.