

**AN ANALYSIS OF PROTECTION, CHANGE, HOPE, IN THE
SYMBOLISM OF CAVE, FIRE, AND SUN
IN CHRIS SANDERS & KIRK DEMICCO
ANIMATED MOVIE
*THE CROODS***

A THESIS

BY:

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Bismillaahirrahmaanirrahiim.

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Medan, june 2025

The Researcher,

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APPENDICES

THE AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Chris Sanders

Christopher Michael Sanders. Born March 12, 1962 in Colorado Springs, Chris Sanders was the middle of three children. From a young age, he showed an interest in comic strips and filmmaking. Among his three siblings, he was the only one who used his father's Super 8 film camera, creating his own comics with his father's encouragement. He became fascinated with animation after discovering the single-frame function of the camera.

Born into an artistic household in Colorado, Chris Sanders grew up drawing and penning short stories. Although Chris drew throughout school and served as the cartoonist for the Arvada High School newspaper, he hadn't considered art as something he could do for a living. But when his grandmother found a random article about the California Institute of the Arts (or CalArts) in the Denver Post, everything changed. Chris applied for and was accepted to CalArts' Animation Program, and went on to work for Marvel Productions, and then Disney Studios.

Chris Sanders is an American filmmaker, animator, and voice actor. His credits include *Lilo & Stitch* 2002 and its live action adaptation and *How to Train Your Dragon* 2010, both of which he co-wrote and directed with Dean DeBlois; *The Croods* 2013 with Kirk DeMicco and *The Wild Robot* 2024, receiving nominations for the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature for all of them. In 2020, he made his live-action directorial debut with the adventure-drama *The Call of the Wild*. He created the character Stitch in 1985, wrote the film's story, and voiced Stitch in almost all his media appearances.

Sanders began his career as a character designer on Jim Henson's *Muppet Babies*. He then worked at Walt Disney Feature Animation in various creative roles, including storyboard artist, artistic director, and character designer for major films *like* *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, and *Mulan*.

In 1985, Sanders developed the character Stitch for a children's book pitch that was never published. Later, when Disney aimed to produce a lower-budget animated film, Sanders reused the character in a new story set in Kaua'i. This concept became the 2002 film *Lilo & Stitch*, which

he co-wrote and co-directed with Dean DeBlois. Sanders also voiced Stitch and continued to do so in subsequent sequels and series, except for some international productions.

In the late 1980s, Sanders created a satirical picture book titled *The Big Bear Aircraft Company* for a Disney offsite event. The book criticized the studio's tendency to favor repetitive, formulaic ideas over creative risks. This critique later inspired him to develop *Lilo & Stitch*, a story centered on transformation and redemption. In 2006, Sanders was removed from directing *American Dog*, which was later retitled *Bolt*. Though disappointed, he held no resentment and appreciated that the final version of the film was distinct from his own vision.

By early 2007, Sanders left Disney and joined DreamWorks Animation, where he took over the project originally titled *Crood Awakening*, eventually released as *The Croods* in 2013. In 2008, it was announced that he and DeBlois would also co-direct *How to Train Your Dragon*, released in 2010. The film was a major success and received several accolades, including Academy Award nominations and ten Annie Awards.

After completing *How to Train Your Dragon*, Sanders returned to work on *The Croods*, collaborating again with DeMicco. Although they initially worked on its sequel, the project was canceled in 2016 and later revived in 2017 under a different director. Sanders and DeMicco retained story credit and Sanders reprised his voice role as Belt. In 2017, it was announced that Sanders would direct a live-action adaptation of Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*, which was released in 2020. Although it marked his live-action directorial debut, the film received mixed reviews and did not perform well at the box office.

Despite earlier uncertainty, it was confirmed in 2023 that Sanders would once again voice Stitch in the live-action remake of *Lilo & Stitch*, which was released in 2025. He completed five voice recording sessions for the film, which included a mix of new and archival audio. On September 28, 2023, Sanders returned to DreamWorks Animation to write and direct an animated adaptation of Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot*. The film, released in September 2024, received widespread acclaim, and Sanders later confirmed that he would direct its sequel as well.

Kirk DeMicco

Kirk DeMicco, born on May 15, 1969, in New York City, is a filmmaker primarily known for directing and writing animated feature films. His early industry experience included working as an uncredited production assistant on *The Nightmare Before Christmas* 1993 and as an assistant

production coordinator on *Radio Inside* 1994. He sold his first script, *A Day in November*, to Warner Bros. in 1995, although the film was never produced.

His first credited screenwriting project was *Quest for Camelot* 1998, an animated musical fantasy. Although it performed poorly at the box office, it marked the beginning of his work in feature animation. He later co-wrote and co-produced *Racing Stripes* 2005, a family sports comedy that was financially successful. That same year, he co-wrote the animated feature *Here Comes Peter Cottontail: The Movie*.

DeMicco made his directorial debut with *Space Chimps* 2008, a sci-fi animated comedy inspired by the story of Ham, the first chimpanzee in space. The film was moderately successful and featured a prominent voice cast. His breakthrough came with *The Croods* 2013, a major hit for DreamWorks Animation. Co-directed with Chris Sanders and based on a story initially developed with John Cleese, the film grossed over \$582 million worldwide and received both Oscar and Golden Globe nominations. Though he contributed to the story of its sequel, *The Croods: A New Age* 2020, he did not return as director.

DeMicco returned as writer and director with *Vivo* 2021, a musical animated film produced by Sony Pictures Animation. The film featured songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda and was co-written with Quiara Alegría Hudes. Though initially developed for theatrical release, *Vivo* was eventually acquired and released globally by Netflix excluding China. In 2023, DreamWorks Animation selected DeMicco to direct *Ruby Gillman, Teenage Kraken*, replacing the film's original director. The animated teen comedy was released on June 30, 2023.

Beyond directing, DeMicco has worked extensively as a screenwriter and script doctor across major studios such as Disney, Warner Bros., DreamWorks, and Spyglass. He also co-wrote *The Twits*, an adaptation of Roald Dahl's book, and developed various other projects including adaptations of *New Gods* and an Elmore Leonard novel. In television, he created and executive produced the Discovery Channel documentary *HALO: Freefall Warriors*. Raised in Wyckoff, New Jersey, and a graduate of Ramapo High School, DeMicco earned degrees in economics and political science from the University of Southern California. He also spent several years in Italy as a journalist interviewing film industry professionals.

SINOPSIS

In prehistoric times, a cave family known as The Croods lives a cautious life in a wild and dangerous world. Grug, the patriarch, firmly believes that adherence to ancient rules is the key to survival. Together with his wife Ugga, their children Eep, Thunk, and Sandy, and mother-in-law Gran, they live in a dark cave that they consider to be the only safe place. They only leave the cave to hunt for food, and then return before nightfall, because for Grug, darkness means danger and death.

However, Grug's curious and brave daughter Eep begins to feel constrained by her father's rules. She longs for freedom and a world outside the cave. One night, Eep breaks the rules and sneaks out to follow a mysterious light. Outside, she meets a teenage boy named Guy, who comes with fire and new ideas. Guy warns that their world is about to end because of an impending disaster. Eep is fascinated by Guy's knowledge and outlook on life that is different from her family.

The next day, when the Croods family realizes that the world is starting to change. They see cracks in the ground and strange phenomena in the surrounding environment. After returning, they find that their cave has been destroyed by a massive earthquake and landslide, leaving them without shelter. They have no choice but to travel to find a new place to survive.

During their journey, they face various challenges and natural dangers, including wild animals and ongoing geological changes. Grug, who is used to leading with old rules, begins to feel left out by Guy, who brings a more creative and risk-taking approach to life. On the other hand, Eep begins to see the world from a new perspective, and her relationship with Guy grows closer.

Grug, who is used to leading and making all the decisions, feels threatened by Guy's innovations. But over time, he begins to realize that fear of the new does not always save them. When his family is in great danger, Grug is willing to sacrifice himself to save them, Grug finally realizes that in order to protect his family, he must change. He learns to let go of his fear of the new and begins to believe that courage, creativity, and cooperation are the keys to survival in an ever-changing world.

Eventually, the Croods managed to cross the ruins of the old world and find a new place full of light, life, and hope. They no longer just hide from danger, but begin to live in the true sense of the word, with a spirit of adventure and togetherness.

Characters In The Movie

Grug Crood

Grug is the father of the Crood family. He is highly protective and follows strict rules to keep his family safe from the dangers of the outside world. He believes that sticking to tradition and avoiding anything new is the best way to survive. Although stubborn, Grug deeply loves his family and is willing to sacrifice for their well-being.

Eep Crood

Eep is Grug's eldest daughter. She is brave, curious, and eager to explore the world beyond the cave. Often frustrated by her father's strict rules, Eep seeks freedom and new experiences. Her relationship with Grug is marked by conflict, but it also shows mutual love and care.

Guy

Guy is a young man from outside the Crood family. He is intelligent, inventive, and has survival skills that are new to the Croods, such as making fire and creating tools. Guy brings fresh ideas that help the family navigate their changing environment. He also develops a close bond with Eep.

Ugga Crood

Ugga is Grug's wife and the mother of the children. She is calm, practical, and caring, often acting as the mediator between Grug and Eep. Ugga supports her family with patience and strength, especially during times of crisis. Her presence brings balance to the group.

Think Crood

Think is Grug's teenage son. He is kind-hearted, somewhat naïve, and usually follows his father's instructions without question. Think often provides comic relief in the story but gradually begins to learn and grow through the family's journey.

Gran

Gran is Uggla's mother and the grandmother of the Crood children. She is very old but still energetic, opinionated, and tough. Despite her frequent teasing of Grug, she proves to be resilient and helpful during the family's adventures.

Sandy Crood

Sandy is the youngest member of the Crood family. Although small, she is fierce, active, and full of energy. She rarely speaks but shows great courage and loyalty. Sandy behaves more like a wild animal than a child, adding humor and unpredictability to the family dynamic

The Symbols in the Movie

Cave



00:01:18



00:02:05



00:02:38



00:12:33

Fire



00:16:52



00:19:34



00:32:31



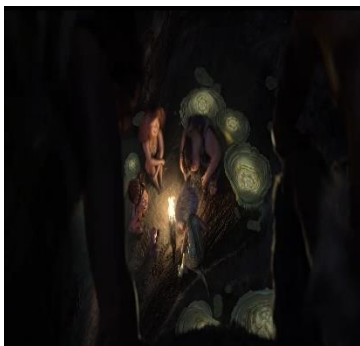
00:34:06



00:35:02



00:44:22



01:01:48



01:24:14

Sun



00:00:53



00:03:10



00:09:07



00:10:02



00:59:32



01:13:17