THE RABBIT WHO CROSSED THE SEA

Once there was a white rabbit who wanted to cross the sea. Across the waves he could see a beautiful island and he wanted to go there. But the rabbit couldn't swim and there were no boats around. Then he had an idea.

He called to a shark in the sea and said, "Oh, Mr. Shark, which one of us has the most friends, you or I?"

"I'm sure I have the most friends," said the shark.

"Well, let's count them to make sure," said the rabbit. "Why don't you have all your friends line up in the sea between here and that island? Then I can count them."

So all the sharks lined up in the sea, and the rabbit went hopping from the back of one shark to the next, counting, "One, two, three, four, five..."   Finally he reached the island.

Then he turned to the sharks and said, "Ha, ha, you dumb sharks! I got you to make a bridge for me, without you knowing about it."

The sharks became very angry. One of them bit off a piece of the rabbit's fur.

"Oh, that hurts!" cried the rabbit and he began weeping.

Just then the king of the island came by. He asked the rabbit what was the matter, and when he had heard the rabbit's story, he said, "You mustn't ever fool others and tell lies again. If you promise to be good, I'll tell you how you can get your fur back."

"Oh, I promise," said the rabbit.

So the king gathered some bulrushes and made a nest with them. "Now you sleep here in this nest of bulrushes all night," said the king, "and your fur will grow back."

The rabbit did as he was told. The next morning he went to the king and said, "Thank you very, very much. My fur grew back and I'm well again. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

He never tried to fool anyone again.

(329 words)