

The Rabbit and the Crocodiles

One fine morning Rabbit walked out of his home, stretched his arms, and stared at the fields that lay before him. “Look at these dry, brown blades of grass,” he complained. “I have eaten all the good food here. A fine rabbit such as myself needs to have young juicy blades of grass at mealtime. Today I shall set out in search of a fresher field.”

Rabbit did not have to travel far before he spotted thousands of tender grass shoots. The field that lay before him was as green as the brilliant scales of a relaxing chameleon. Rabbit stopped in his tracks, elated with his discovery. There was only one problem and it seemed to be insurmountable – a wide rushing river separated Rabbit from his field of dreams.

“I need to think about the solution to this problem. I’m a clever fellow, and I should be able to find a way to bridge these troubling waters.” Rabbit sat down to think about his dilemma. As he pondered the question, he spied the scaly head of a crocodile bobbing in the river. “That is it!” shouted Rabbit. “I will ask the crocodile to carry me on his back across the wide river.”

Rabbit raced to the riverbank and just as he was about to make the request of the crocodile, he stopped in his tracks. “Now, Rabbit,” he scolded himself, “that is not a very wise thing to do. That crocodile

will likely stop halfway across the river and swallow me with one gulp. I will need to be clever about this.”

Just then another crocodile swam into view. His tail moved his scaly body silently through the water. “Ah ha, “ nodded Rabbit. “There is the solution!”

Rabbit strode proudly to the water’s edge. “Why hello, crocodiles,” he said pleasantly. “Did you know I am able to count all the crocodiles in this river?”

The crocodiles looked at each other for a long time. Finally, the larger of the two spoke, “That is not so, Rabbit. You cannot possibly count all the crocodiles in the river.”

Now the Rabbit was very pleased with himself for he could tell his plan was working. “Oh yes, I assure you that I am able to count all of the crocodiles in the river.”

“If you are so sure of yourself, you braggart, then show us. Prove to us you can count all the crocodiles.”

Now that was just what Rabbit wanted to hear. He tried not to show his glee. So as to fool the crocodiles he said rather hesitantly, “Well, I think I can do it. You must call all the crocodiles who are in this river. Tell them to come to this spot and I will count them all.” The two crocodiles swam off, laughing to themselves about the boast of this silly Rabbit.

Soon crocodiles appeared from the east. Crocodiles came from the west. The river was dotted with scaly bodies. “You must make a line so I can count you,” shouted Rabbit to the crocodiles. “You, Big Crocodile, come here and rest your nose on the riverbank. Stretch your tail out into the river. The next crocodile must place his

nose on your tail. Each crocodile must place his nose on the tail of the crocodile before him until the last crocodile touches the bank on the other side of the river.”

Rabbit watched as the crocodiles followed his orders. They were mumbling and complaining amongst themselves about his bragging. Rabbit smiled to himself when he overheard one crocodile say, “That Rabbit thinks he is so intelligent. We will show him that there are too many crocodiles for him to count.”

As soon as there was a line of crocodiles spanning the wide river, Rabbit hopped on the first back. “One,” he shouted. “Two, three, four...” Rabbit continued counting until he stepped on the back of the last crocodile. “Thank you,” he whispered. He hopped onto the delicious grass, took one bite, and shouted with his mouth full, “I am happy that you helped me get across this river. Good-bye!” With that Rabbit ran off into the sweet pastures leaving the crocodiles to look at each other in confusion.

Activities to Extend Your Thinking...

Expressive Language...

Choose one of the following:

- Write a paragraph explaining why the author wrote this sentence, “Now the Rabbit was very pleased with himself for he could tell his plan was working.”

- Find the metaphor in the second paragraph. Write five metaphors of your own to vividly describe other situations in this folktale.

Creature Characteristics...

Choose one of the following activities to complete.

- Act out this folktale on the playground or in the gym. Have as many of your classmates pretend to be the crocodiles as possible. Measure how wide the river is in your folktale!
- Find out more about crocodiles. Write a nonfiction article about these animals.

Life Lessons...

Write a journal entry using one of the following ideas.

- Have you ever used a trick to solve a problem as the rabbit did? Describe what you did.
- Do you think the rabbit has good leadership qualities? Tell why or why not.