**The Sharks Were Hungry – An adventure story in 3 parts**

**Part 1**

Doctor John Perry decided it was time to go home. It had been a perfect day, a day alone, the first such day in many years. He had filled his bag with all sorts of sea-shells - enough to study for months.

He picked up his bag of shells and walked toward the edge of the island. He came to the sand reef that connected the island and the shore of the mainland. He stopped for a moment to enjoy the sunset on the ocean water. Then he began to walk along the sand reef toward the shore.

 The grey colours of evening were beginning to spread across the ocean and the sand. He hurried on. Then, suddenly, he stepped into the water. Before he knew what had happened, he dropped down and down. The water was covering his head. He rose to the top of the water struggling to get back on to the dry sand. He felt the water rushing about him. Somehow, he got on to the sand and sat down, wet and surprised at his sudden drop.

He heard the water still rushing about. Then he saw a long grey shark. He stood up and looked around. He saw the shark swim toward the shore and then he saw other sharks. Five - six - seven of them. But where was the sand reef? What had happened to it?

He began to walk back toward the island. While he had searched for shells on the island the strong ocean waves had washed a large part of the sand reef away. There was nothing between him and the shore but water... and sharks.

He did not know much about sharks, but he was a good swimmer. He looked at the shore which was now almost black against the red sky. He could swim, but what about the sharks? Do they attack at night? He tried to remember what he had read about sharks. Did sharks find their food by smelling it? If they did, it meant they looked for food all the time, even during the night.

**Part 2**

He decided not to swim to shore; it was too dark, and he wanted to see the enemy if he was to fight it. He looked around for his bag of shells and found it a few meters away. He pulled the bag on to some dry sand, then sat down next to it.

The wind was warm. The stars began to show. The moon rose. The water looked peaceful and quiet and yellow in the moonlight.

The gentle noises of night soon made him sleep but not for long. Most of the night he lay down and looked up at the stars, thinking. He thought of wood for a fire, wood to signal for help. But there was no wood. He thought of the sharks. Would they go away during the night? At last, he thought of sleep. It came at last. He slept until the sun rose.

 He felt stiff when he got up. He moved about, then looked at the water before him. It was clear and green. Far off, he could hear the noise of splashing water made by the sharks. He saw red areas on the water. He knew the sharks were killing and eating the fish. The sharks were there because the fish were there. The same waves that had washed the sand reef away had somehow pushed large schools of fish into the area.

He watched the sharks kill. They swam after the schools of fish, played with them - and killed them even though they were not hungry. They would not let the fish swim out into the open sea.

He looked at the sea. If he swam to shore, he would be in the water five... six minutes. A lot could happen in that time.

He looked at the sharks now near the shore. They were still feeding. It was hard to think of himself being attacked by a shark. A man when he is healthy feels good, but the pain - a torn belly, a missing leg, a badly crushed head by those powerful teeth. No, no! He wanted to live.

To swim now might mean sudden death, but the sharks might stay here for days, a week, or more.

He decided to swim. He took off all his clothes. He kept only his belt and his small knife. The sharks were far off. He silently slipped into the water. He went deep down and looked around. He was about to rise to the top and start swimming when he saw a long grey body below him. Small dots of sunlight danced on the shark's body down through the clear water. He kicked himself up to the top and struggled on to the sand. If he had not looked down, he would be halfway across now, with the shark chasing after him. He did not think about the rest.

**Part 3**

He stood up and looked around again. How could he make the sharks move out to sea? If they swam out to sea he could swim to shore before they saw him. He saw the sharks rolling and playing. Their hunger was now gone, they were killing for fun. How could he make them move?

He pulled his knife from his belt. Sharks can smell blood, he thought. He put the knife against his leg and cut deep into the flesh. The blood ran out. He caught it on his white shirt. When the shirt was red and wet, he tied some cloth around his leg to stop the flow of blood. He tied a long piece of cloth to the shirt, then walked to the edge of the sand. He threw the shirt into the water and pulled it with the piece of cloth. The sharks smelled the blood. They came racing toward the shirt. He ran down the sand reef pulling the shirt. The sharks raced after it. He was leading them away from shore.

Suddenly, he dropped the cloth, turned toward shore and ran as fast as he could. He jumped into the water and swam. He was halfway across when he turned to look back. A high bony fin was cutting through the water toward him. He put his face in the water and kicked and pulled himself forward as fast as he could. The shore was nearer now. But he thought of his belly under the water. How defenceless it was!

 He thought of the flat nose of the shark hitting from below. He lifted his head again to breathe. He saw the shore very near.

From behind he felt the water rush toward him, almost pushing him, helping him. He kicked and shouted as loud as he could. Then a great grey body hit him. It almost rolled him over in the water. He touched the shore with his fingers and pulled himself up the stones. The shark, excited by the smell of blood and the chase, went after him. Its great body crashed against the stones. It rolled and turned as it dropped back into the water. The other sharks jumped on it. The end came quickly as the shark's blood turned the water red. The injured shark was eaten alive as it tried to escape.

**THE END**