

④

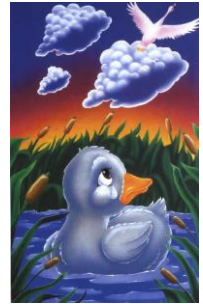
The Ugly Duckling

Once upon a time, nine ducklings hatched. Eight were cute and yellow.

But the ninth duckling did not look like the others.

"You are not like the rest," said his mother.

"Ugly duckling!" said the other ducklings. "Go away!"



The ugly duckling stayed away from his brothers and sisters. The mother duck took the ugly duckling to visit another duck family. They teased him.

"You are not a duck!"

"I am a duck! I am!" cried the ugly duckling. And then he ran away.

The ugly duckling hid in some grass by a lake. He stayed there all winter. It was very cold. Over time, he grew, and grew, and grew! In the spring, the ugly duckling flapped his wings. They were big and strong.

"I can fly!" he said. He flew to a river.

"Come and live with us," said some swans.

"Me?" asked the ugly duckling. "You don't want me. I'm just an ugly duckling."

"A duckling?" they said. "No, you are a swan...a beautiful swan, just like us!"

"Yes, I am!" cried the ugly duckling. And he was finally happy.

(183 words)