

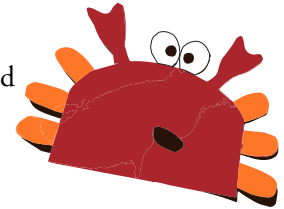
The Noble Maritime Collection



The Crab who Cried Shark

Harold the crab lived in the ocean, not far from a beach with pink sand. There were lots of red and blue crabs in Harold's part of the sea, and they set up an underwater factory. They used their claws to make jewelry with the pearls and shells of oysters. Harold had lots of brothers, sisters, and cousins, but they were all older and very busy at the jewelry factory. It was summertime and he wanted to play, but the other crabs weren't paying much attention to him.

One day Harold decided to play a joke on the other crabs. "Shark!" Harold cried. "A shark is coming!" The crabs dropped the pearls off the strings and ran and swam away. They hid behind reefs, and red algae to camouflage themselves. The crabs were frightened. Sharks like to eat crabs.



Harold laughed. "Just kidding," he said. All of the crabs became even crabbiest and scolded Harold. "Look at this mess," they said. "It took us hours to string those pearls, and now they are scattered all over the ocean floor. You are a very naughty crab." Harold felt sad over the trouble he caused, but soon he got bored. A few days later, he did it again.

"Shark!" Harold cried. "A shark is coming!" The crabs went running, claws waving in the air, eyes wide with fright, little legs bounding through the water. Harold chuckled. "Just kidding again," he said. A beautiful purple figure emerged from behind a patch of dark seaweed. It was Cleo the octopus. She was waving two of her eight arms as she approached the little crab, and shook her head. "You must stop this, Harold. No one will believe anything you say if you keep doing this." Everyone was upset. Harold felt terrible this time, and decided to take Cleo's advice.

As salty tears fell from his eyes, Harold felt a sudden chill. Something big was blocking the light and warmth from the sun, and there was a dark shadow moving on the ocean floor. "Sssshark! A shark is coming for real this time!" Harold yelled, but none of the crabs and other sea creatures believed him. The shark was headed their way, and Harold knew what he had to do.

"Here shark! Over here!" he yelled. The shark turned and swam upwards to chase Harold. The little crab was scared, but swam as fast as he could to the surface of the water so that he could escape in the pink sand. The other crabs, fish, and Cleo saw what was happening, and they headed for safety too. The shark wouldn't survive on land, so he stopped chasing Harold. Just as Harold approached the surface, a big wave carried him towards the beach. But instead of the usual feeling of warm, grainy sand under his feet, Harold felt something web-like and his claws were caught in it. He was stuck in a fishnet! Harold felt heartbroken, and regretted lying to his family and friends. Look at all the trouble his jokes caused. He escaped the shark, but was worried about the other crabs and didn't know how to escape this net that surrounded him.

"Don't cry little crab, I'll set you free." It was the voice of a sailor. The fishnet was his, but he wasn't using it to catch fish, crabs, or the turtles walking by. He was using it to clean up the beach. "I'm trapping things that people throw on the sand and in the water like bottles and cans, but I don't want you little crab. Be free." Just as Harold landed on the sand, he heard a sweet and familiar voice. It was his mother the blue crab. "I'm so sorry mom for all the trouble I caused." Mama Crab said that all the sea creatures forgave him because he was so brave when the real shark showed up. "You were a hero today Harold, and all of the crabs trust you again."

This made Harold happy, and he promised to never play a joke like that again. He and his mom went back home, holding each other's claws through the ocean's blue and green waves.

