

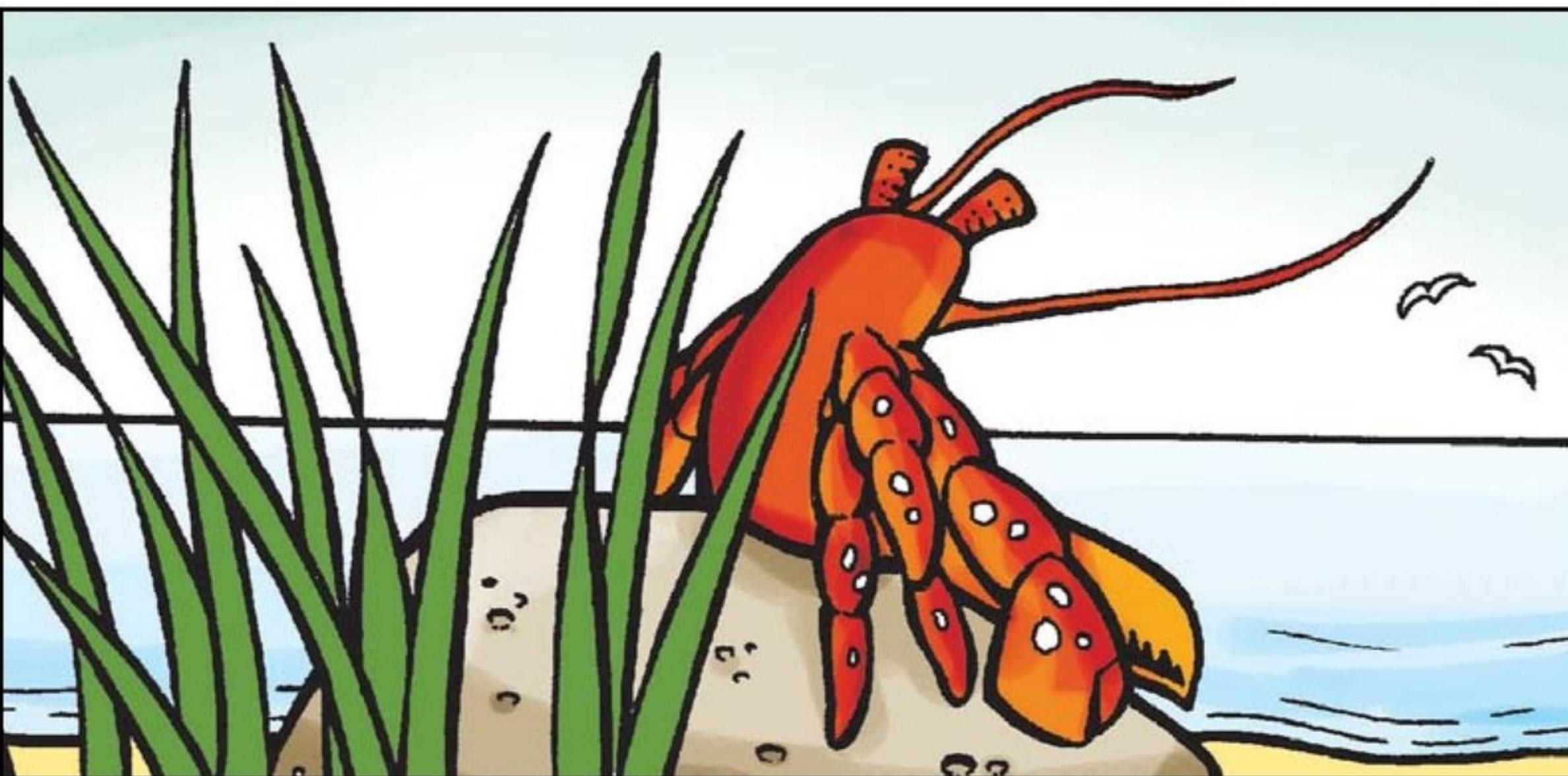
LEVELED BOOK • M

Keb Needs a Home



Written by Simone Taupo • Illustrated by Terry Herman

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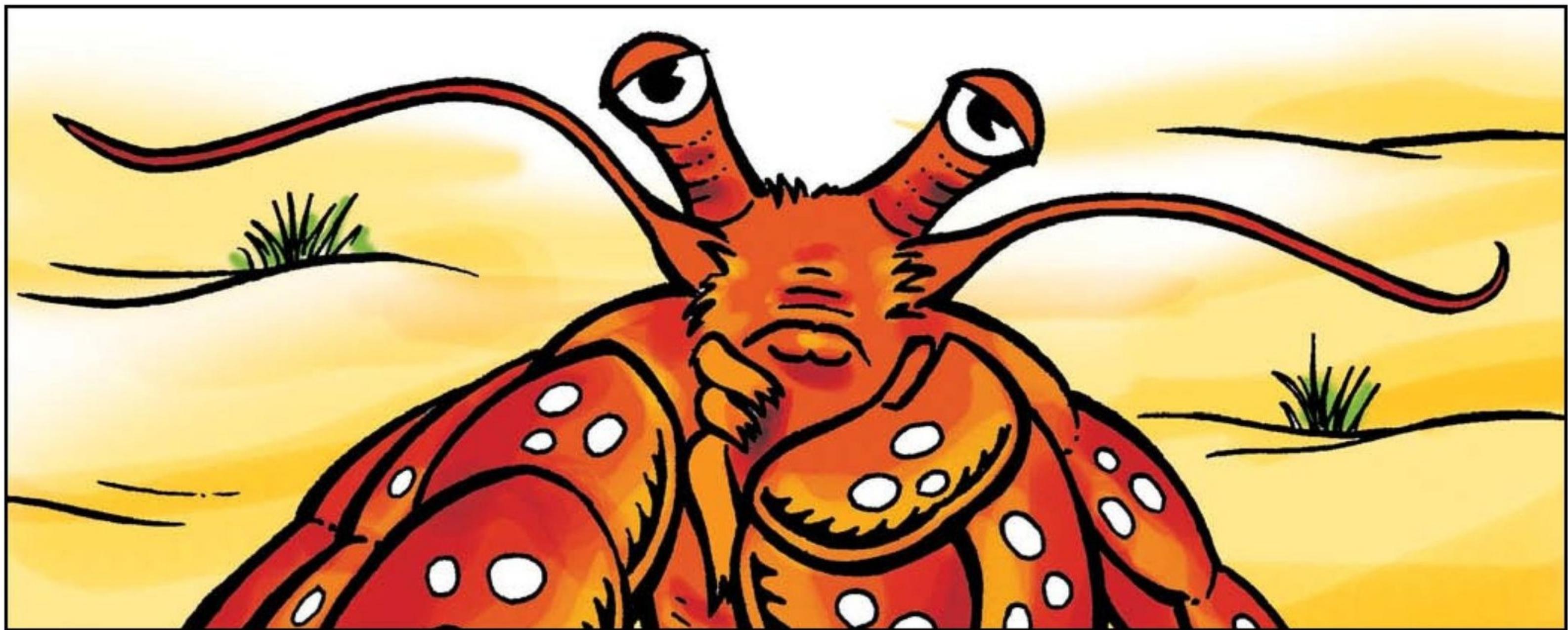
The life of a hermit crab isn't so bad. They live near
the seashore, and they bask in the warm sun.
They bathe in the salty sea, and they play in the surf.



The views are great, too. Sunrises and sunsets can be pretty spectacular. And you can't beat the night sky with all its twinkling stars.



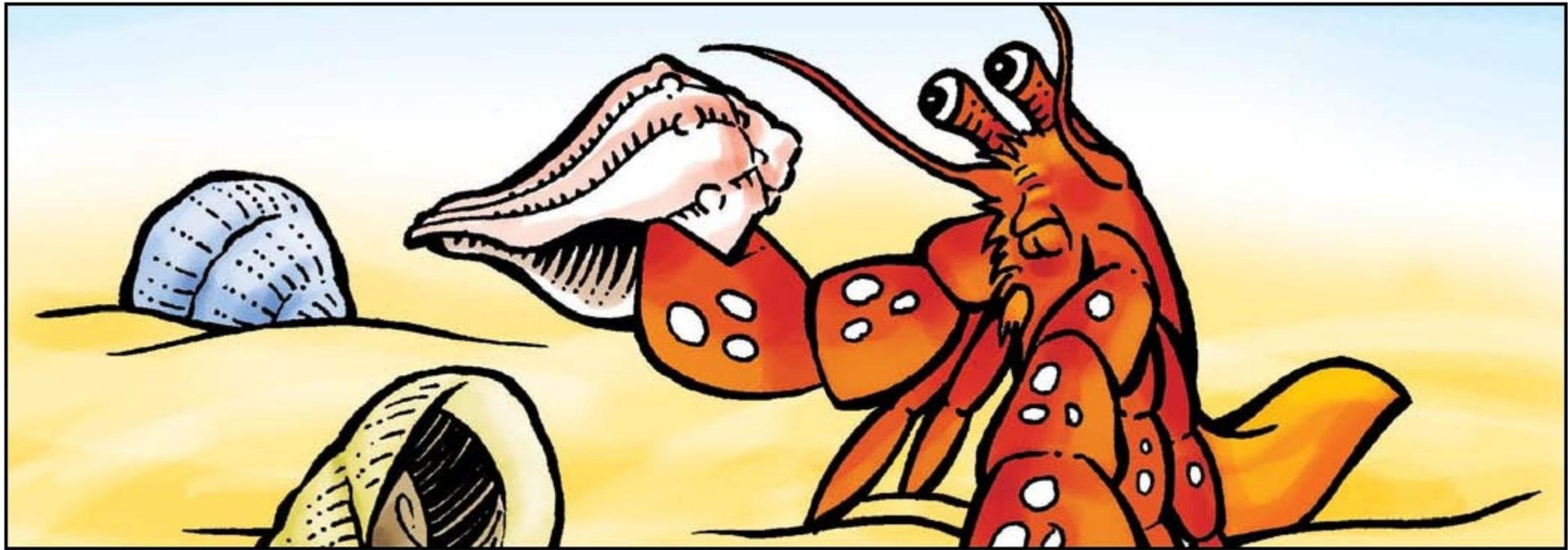
But for one hermit crab, life was not so great.
You see, Keb was a hermit crab of spectacular proportions.



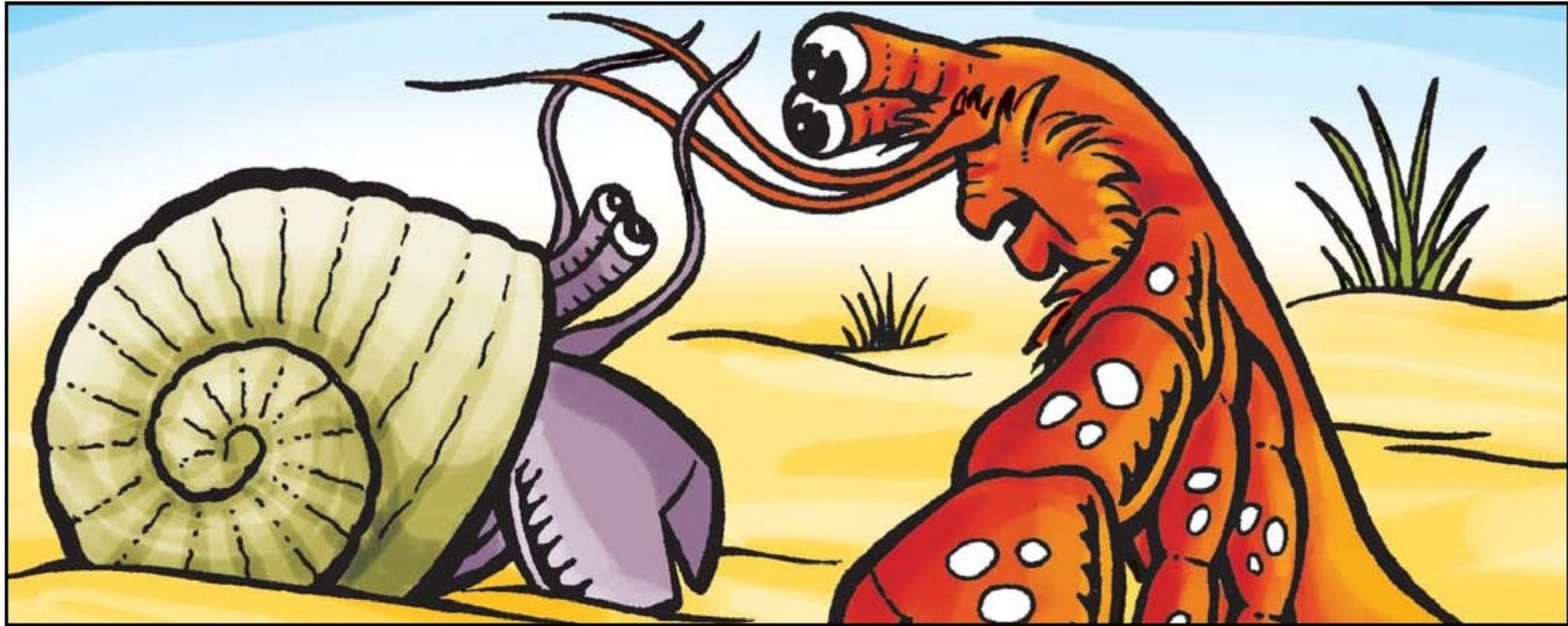
You might think that being the biggest crab on the seashore had its advantages. However, for Keb, the advantages were few and far between.



One of the biggest problems with being big was just that—being big. Being big made it easy for hungry gulls to spot Keb as they hung like kites in the stiff sea breeze.



But there was a bigger problem.
Keb could not find a home that was big enough for him.
Hermit crabs live in the discarded shells of snails. As a crab grows, it moves out of one shell and into a bigger one.



The trouble is that most snails are not very big.

Now, that is not a huge problem for most normal-sized crabs, but for Keb it was a problem of great enormity.

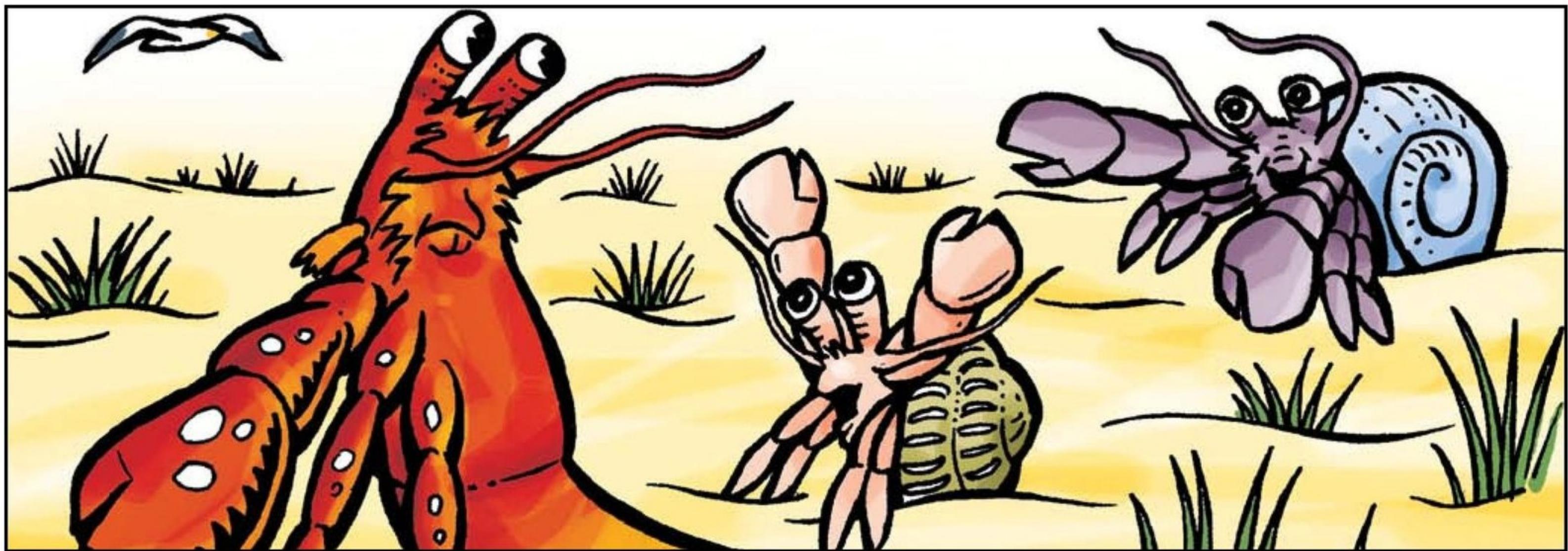


Keb walked sideways up and down the shore. He searched and searched for a shell big enough to use as his home.



He waited and waited, hoping that soon one day
a large shell would wash up on shore.

While he waited to find a proper home, Keb lived in a large
hole in a rock. Now, the hole was a fine home for most
animals, but it was not a proper home for a hermit crab.
Whenever Keb wanted to go out, he felt naked.

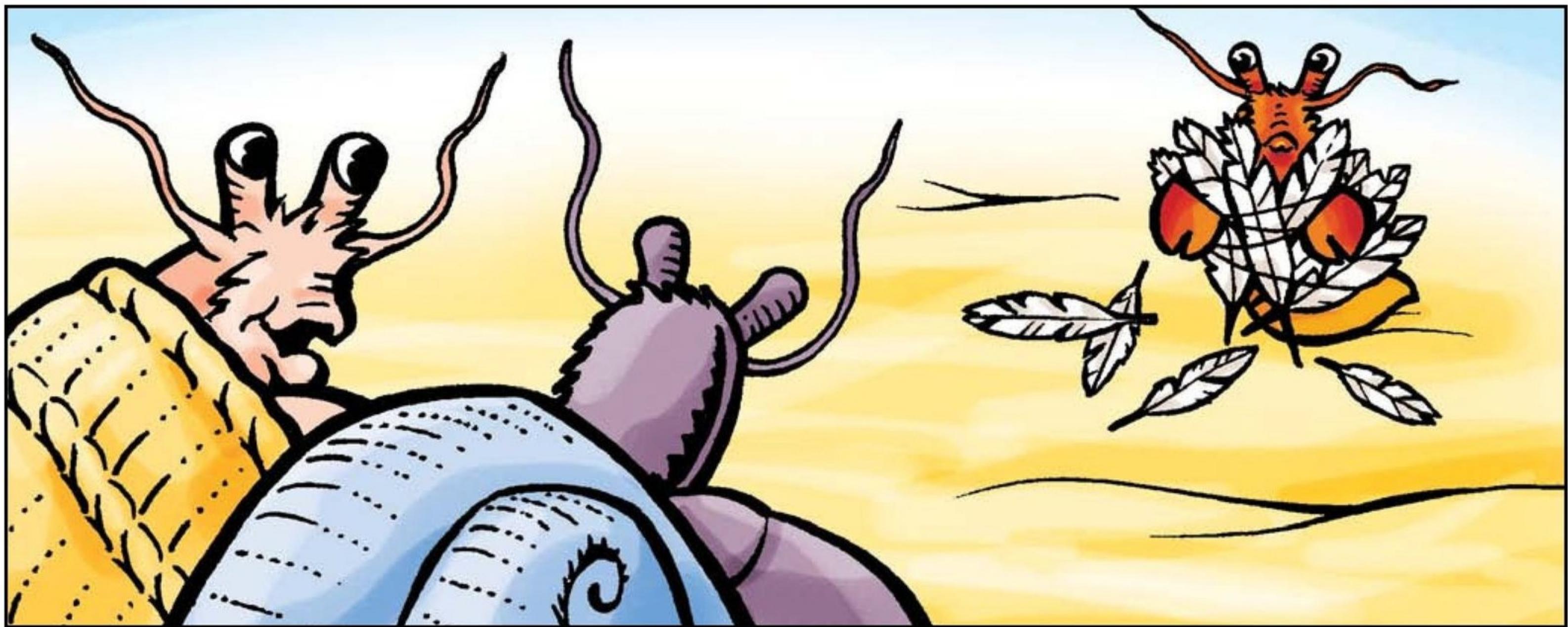


The other hermit crabs made fun of him, and the gulls swooped down to try to make him their dinner.

Keb always managed to escape the gulls, but the teasing from other crabs hurt to the core of his feelings.



To hide his nakedness, Keb tried everything.
First he gathered feathers he found along the shore
and strung them together with old fishing line.
Then he wrapped them around his soft shell.

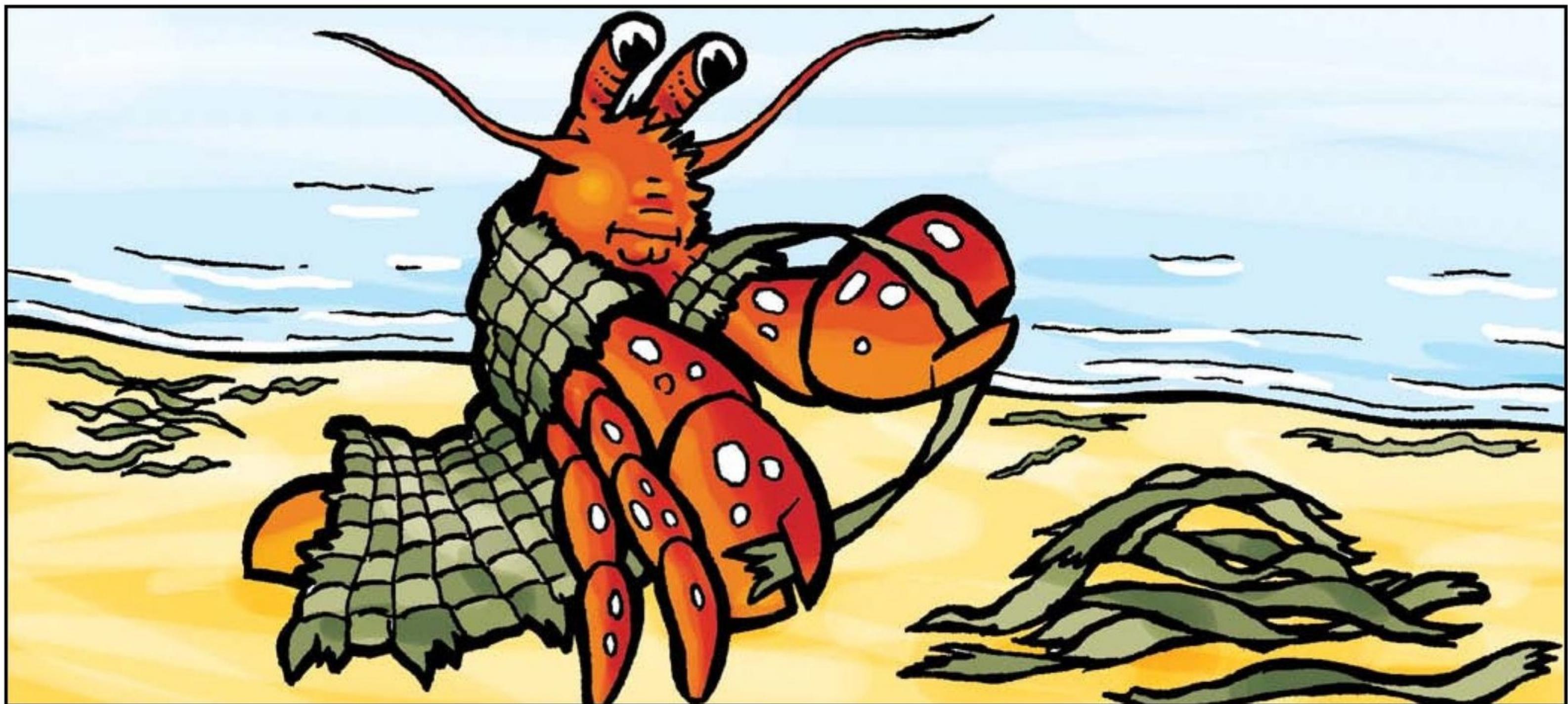


But the other crabs thought he looked silly.

“Look at Keb now,” they said. “He thinks he’s a bird.
The next thing you know, he will try to fly.”



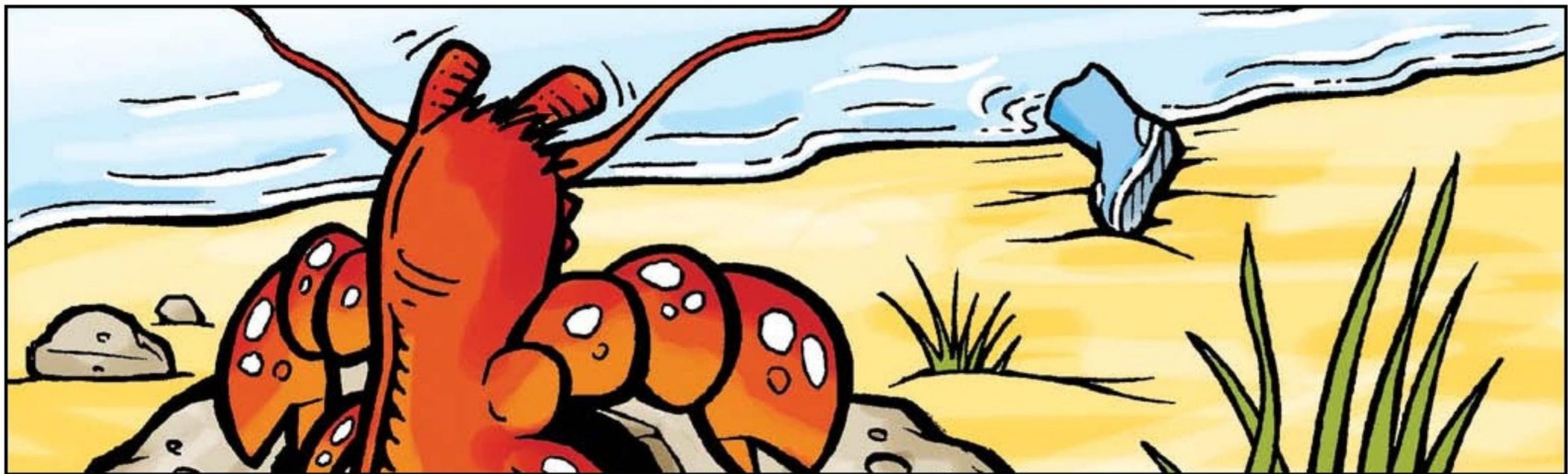
Keb's feelings were hurt even more. He threw off the feathers and returned to his hole in the rock.



Next he gathered seaweed and wove it together
to make a fine-looking suit.



But soon the seaweed began to rot and smell. The smell was so bad that not even Keb could stand it. So he threw away his seaweed suit and returned to his hole in the rock.



Peering out of his hole one morning,
Keb noticed something strange had washed ashore.
He crawled out of the hole to take a closer look.
As he got closer he could see it was a boot.
And a very fine boot it was.



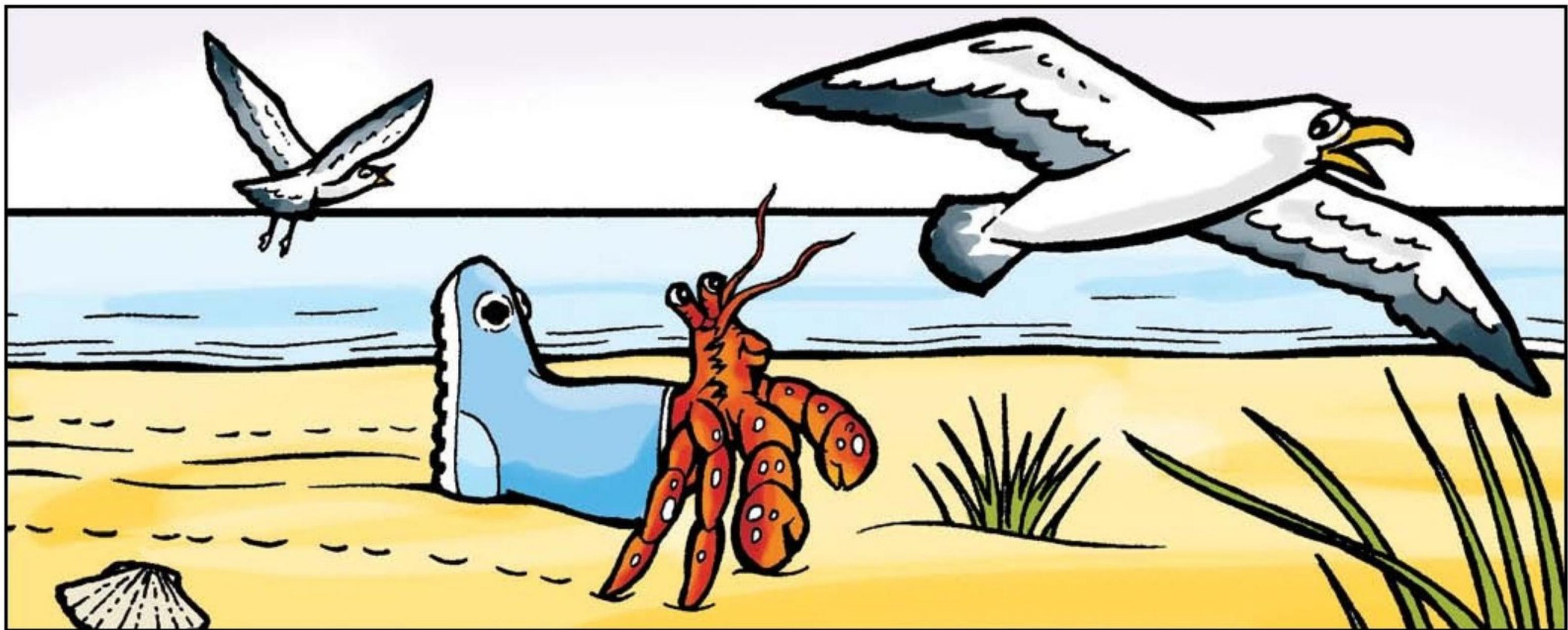
The boot was bright blue, which was Keb's favorite color in the world. He had always admired the blue starfish in the tide pools and he thought that blue crabs were the most handsome of all crabs. He had looked for a blue snail shell for a home when he was a smaller crab, but he had never found one.



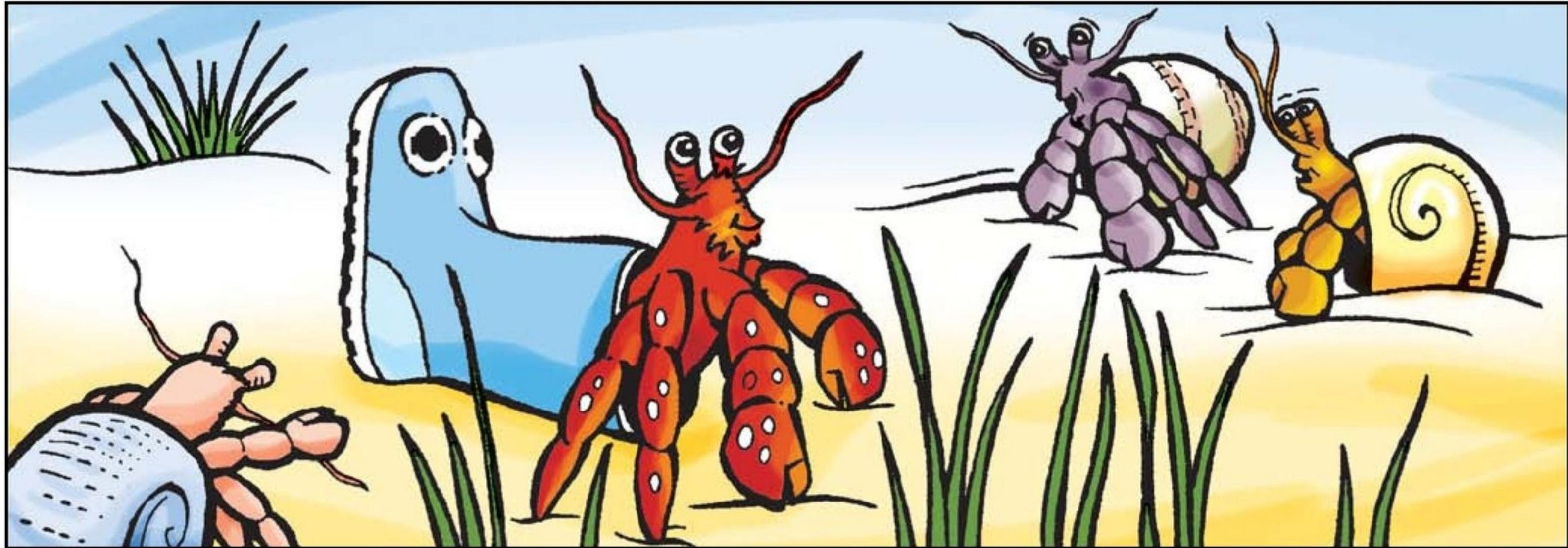
Keb examined the boot more closely. It was made of rubber and would be perfect for stormy days when the cold wind and rain blew off the sea. And on the toe of the boot were two large eyes. Ah-ha, thought Keb.
These eyes will surely scare off the swooping gulls.



And best of all, the boot was large. Keb looked inside and sized it up. The boot was most definitely big enough for Keb's enormous body. He crawled into the boot. It was a perfect fit.



Keb strutted down the shore wearing his new home.
The gulls were frightened by the
two large eyes looking up at them.



All the other crabs *ooooed* and *aaaahed* as Keb walked by.
They were envious of Keb's beautiful new home.
Keb was not only the biggest crab on the shore,
he was also the most handsome.



The next week, Keb had an open house. All the other crabs came to see Keb's home, and they all brought him gifts. Keb was no longer the laughingstock of all the crabs. He was the envy of the seashore.

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