

Shell Game

Written by

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Based on Science and The Housing Market

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1 EXT. BEACH - DAY 1

LOUIE, a small hermit crab with a small shell crawls along a sandy path lined with beautiful shells glistening in the sunlight.

Louie looks longingly at the elegant shells.

A larger hermit crab pokes his head out from one of the more ornate shells, eyes Louie suspiciously, then sucks his head back under his fancy shell as if slamming the door in Louie's face.

Louie SIGHS, continues down the trail.

2 EXT. BEACH - DAY - CONTINUOUS 2

Louie continues beyond the lavish shells, passes a glass bottle.

Louie sees his reflection in the glass bottle, it's tiny and insignificant compared to the grand shells he just passed.

As he crawls past the bottle, his reflection distorts from insignificant into a much larger and more opulent shell. Upon seeing this, Louie grows excited.

3 INT. LOUIE'S SHELL - DAY 3

Surrounded by the opaque hollowed out walls of his smaller shell, LOUIE sits at a drafting table with blueprints and a diagram before him. He draws with intense passion.

SMALL HERMIT CRAB (O.S.)  
There's a battle!

Louie looks up from his work.

4 EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS 4

A crowd of SIX HERMIT CRABS of varying sizes gather around Louie's shell. They CHEER like at a schoolyard brawl.

INT. LOUIE'S SHELL - CONTINUOUS

Louie's shell jostles nearly knocking him off of his drafting stool. He quickly rolls up his plans and tucks them into his belt.

5 EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

5

NICK, a medium sized hermit crab with a smaller shell, has climbed on top of Louie.

Nick clamps his claws onto Louie's shell, holds on with all his strength.

Louie's eyes emerge from inside his shell, then his whole head.

LOUIE

Get off!

NICK

Your shell is mine!

Louie jostles his shell to shake Nick off.

Nick clamps down harder with his claws.

NICK (CONT'D)

It's mine! I want it!

LOUIE

No!

The crowd CHEERS excitedly, they flick each other's heads with their antennae to assess each of their sizes.

HERMIT CRAB 1, a larger crab than the other spectators pushes his way to the front of the group.

HERMIT CRAB 1

I think he's gonna get it!

HERMIT CRAB 2, slightly smaller than 1, tries to get in front as well.

HERMIT CRAB 2

If he gets it, I call his!

HERMIT CRAB 1

No way! I'm next in line.

HERMIT CRAB 2

We'll see about that!

Louie jostles more, but Nick doesn't budge.

Louie jostles so hard he falls on his side.

The crowd GASPS.

Nick climbs onto Louie's head, clamps onto him, begins to pull him out of his shell.

LOUIE

Argh! No!

The crowd, ROARS. They all form a line in procession, behind Hermit Crab 1, in size order.

Hermit Crab 2 tries to cut in front of Hermit Crab 1.

HERMIT CRAB 1

Get the heck outta here will ya? I'm biggest, I'm next!

Hermit Crab 1 pushes Hermit Crab 2 out of the line. HERMIT CRAB 3, slightly smaller than 2, quickly fills the space leaving no room for Hermit Crab 2.

HERMIT CRAB 2

Hey!

Hermit Crab 2 looks down the line in a panic. There's no space for him anymore.

HERMIT CRAB 2 (CONT'D)

Oh no.

HERMIT CRAB 1

Sorry dude. I told ya.

Hermit Crab 2 tries to get in line between two MEDIUM SIZED CRABS. They close the space.

Hermit Crab 2 tries to get in another space between two SMALLER CRABS, they close that space too.

Hermit Crab 2, defeated, slinks down to the end of the line behind the SMALLEST CRAB.

ALL CRABS (IN UNISON)

Prepare!

ALL CRABS link their claws together in the line.

Nick has almost pulled Louie completely out of his shell.

LOUIE

Dude! Stop!

NICK

Your shell is mine!

With one last heave, Nick pulls Louie completely out shell and quickly slips his own body inside.

In a flash, Hermit Crab 1 moves into Nick's old shell and the procession of crabs each move out of their homes and into the next shell larger than their own.

The end of the line is reached. Hermit Crab 2 stares tiny empty shell. He definitely can't fit into it.

HERMIT CRAB 2

Ah man!

Hermit Crab 2 flicks the tiny shell, sulks off still in his own medium sized shell.

Louie sits on the ground before the crowd, no shell, unprotected and pathetic.

Louie tries to fit into the abandoned tiny shell, but can't.

LOUIE

What am I supposed to do now?!

The crowd SNICKERS.

NICK

Sorry bro. Life's a shell game.  
Better get movin' before the birds  
get ya!

The crowd LAUGHS and disperses in their new shells, leaving Louie all alone.

Louie spots an empty can of beans on the sand, SIGHS, walks to the can and claims his new home.

LOUIE

Stupid shell game.

Louie sulks as he pulls the can of beans over his head.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

Stupid can o' beans.

The can topples on top of him, covers him completely.

LOUIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
 (LOUIE (CONT'D)  
 (echo-y voice from  
 under the can)

Ah! Hmph.

Louie lifts the can up, readjusts it, keeps walking.

6 EXT. BEACH - LATER 6

Louie settles his can next to a piece of drift wood, looks in both directions, retreats inside.

7 EXT. BEACH - DAY 7

Louie pokes his head out from under his can, looks longingly at the line of fancy shells in the distance, SIGHS.

A FANCY CRAB in a beautiful shell passes his can, stares at him with disgust.

FANCY CRAB  
 Pitiful.

Louie, embarrassed, retreats back under his can.

8 INT. CAN - CONTINUOUS 8

Louie pulls out his rolled up plans, UNFURLS them onto the wall of the can, gets back to work.

He works for a long time.

TIME CUT:

9 INT. CAN - DAY 9

Louie stares at his plans on the wall of his can. They are complete. He stretches and YAWNS.

10 EXT. BEACH - DUSK 10

Louie tows his can on top of his body as he leaves a trail along the sand.

The line of fancy shells are very far in the distance now.

Louie stops to catch his breath. He wipes beads of sweat from his head.

Louie scans the shore in front of him.

He sees a SOLO CUP.

He sees an abandoned PAIL & SHOVEL.

He sees one lone SANDAL.

And then. He sees a large glowing SHELL.

Excitement gives Louie a new spurt of energy.

He drags his can to the shell, it's unoccupied.

Louie sticks his head under it, inspects the inside of the shell.

11 INT. SHELL - CONTINUOUS 11

The interior of the shell is thick with glowing swirls of white and coral colors.

12 EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS 12

Louie pulls his eyes out of the shell.

LOUIE  
Here goes nothin!

Louie makes sure the coast is clear, pulls out his plans.

Louie flattens the blueprint out on the sand, secures each corner with pieces of sea glass and rocks. The heading on the blueprint reads:

HOW TO REMODEL A SHELL

Louie enters only his head and claws into shell, gets to work.

DISSOLVE TO:

13 EXT. BEACH - DAY 13

Louie now lives in his gorgeous new shell.

It glistens in the sunlight as he walks past Nick and Hermit Crabs 1 and 3.

Nick and the other two crabs stare at him in awe.

HERMIT CRAB 1  
New guy in town.

Louie looks over at the group proudly.

NICK  
Wait. Is that? Louie? I didn't hear  
of any battles!

LOUIE  
There was no battle.

NICK  
Then how'd you steal that shell?

LOUIE  
I didn't steal it. I made it.

Louie proudly continues past them. Settles his shell in line  
with the fanciest shells, and smiles.

THE END.