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What The Crab Does

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The crab is quick to get cross. Are you?

He likes to fight. In that he is like a bad boy. When he sees some other crab near his house, he is angry. Then he stands high on his toes.

He pulls in his eye-pegs, for fear they will be hurt. He spreads out his big arm. Now he is ready to fight!

He runs at his enemy! Each tries to hit the other with his big claw.

This big claw, or hand, can cut and pinch hard.

Sometimes one crab cuts off the hand or leg of the other crab. Or he bites the shell on his back.



If only a leg is cut off, the crab may keep on fighting. But if his hand, or eye, or back shell is hurt, he must give up. He runs home to hide, until a new eye, or hand, or leg can grow.

If your hand is cut off, will it grow again?

When a crab is afraid, he runs home. But he is very brave, and does not much fear other crabs.

He fears birds most; for birds eat small crabs; and the crab cannot fight a big bird.

Swing a rag over a crab's head. Up fly his eye-pegs! Up comes his big hand! There, he has caught the rag!

He will not let go. You can lift him into the air by the rag; still he holds on.

Once I saw a blue crab catch a dog's tail. The crab held on fast. The dog gave yelps, and ran up and down the beach. We had to catch the dog, and pry open the crab's claw.

Let us look at this crab; he has let go the rag, and has gone to dig in his house.

Lay this bit of shell on his hole.

See it shake!

He has run up and hit it with his head. Now he waits.

Watch well.

There, the shell flies up in the air!

He struck it hard as he ran, and made it fly up.

I have seen him try twice, and make the shell shake before he found how hard he must hit, to get it out of the way.

Some folks think he shuts the door of his house with his big hand. I do not think so. He knows that the tide will wash a lump of sand over his hole, for a door. The tide shuts him in. He watches the waves come near.

At the last wave he jumps through his door, for he knows the next wave will close it.

He never stays up one wave too long. He gets in in time.

He is shut in his house with Mrs. Crab. He knows that the tide will pass, and he has bugs to eat.

When Mr. Crab has lost a leg or hand, and a new one grows, it is small at first. Then when he gets a new coat, the new hand or leg becomes half as large as the one he lost.

The next new coat, the new hand or leg comes out the full size it should be.

When crabs get a new shell we say they molt.

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