



Animal Sidekicks

The Skua and the Puffin



Above the frigid waters of the northern Atlantic Ocean, a career criminal scans the skies for potential marks. The skua, a type of seabird, is a kleptoparasite – an animal who survives by stealing from others. It's hungry for fresh fish and it prefers to get it the easy way: up to 95% of the skua's meals are taken straight from the mouths of other birds.



Today's Victim

This puffin has just caught some lunch. But trouble is incoming. The puffin is one of many seabird species terrorized by the skua.



The Lesser of Two Losses

The skua swoops down and grabs the fish from the puffin's beak. The puffin doesn't resist the thieving skua. Why risk it? It would have little hope of winning a fight – it evolved to catch fish, while the skua evolved for aerial battle and could kill and eat the puffin. It's an easy choice: miss a meal or gamble with your life.



The Getaway

The skua flies off, heist complete. It will plot another as soon as it gets hungry again. all parasites are thieves in some sense, but few make this more apparent than the skua.



The Snail and the Hermit Crab





Sea Snail
(Still Alive)



Empty Sea
Snail Shell



No Vacancy

Sometimes, one hermit crab will wait next to a slightly bigger one.

The smaller crab hopes that the bigger crab will move out of its shell, allowing it to move in. occasionally, multiple crabs queue up in this manner, resulting in a crab conga line.

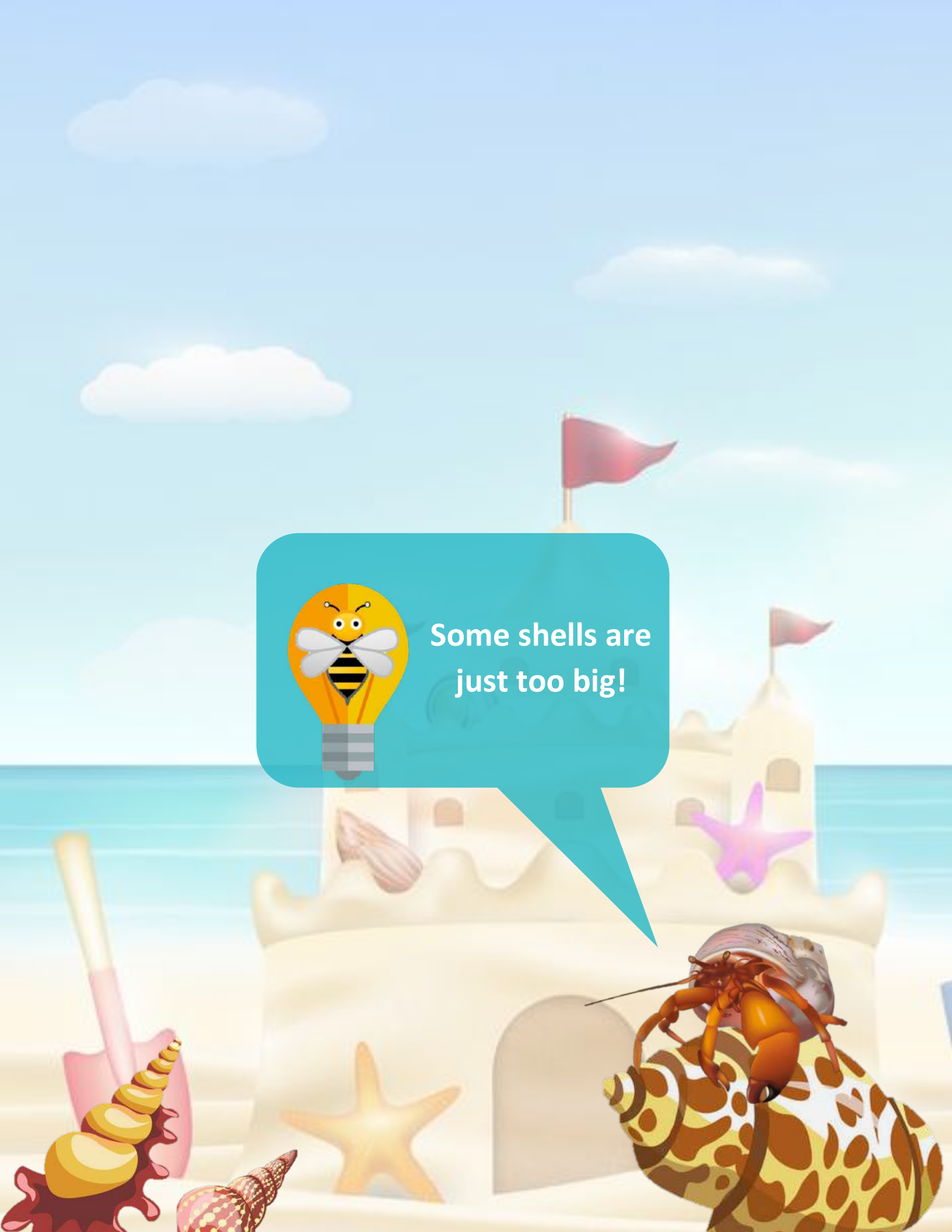


Every hermit crab's home is a hand-me-down. These crustaceans have a soft, vulnerable lower body, so they can't survive without a shell. They look for used sea snail shells to act as their mobile homes and they're always trying to upgrade as they grow bigger, the need bigger shells.





Some shells are
just too big!



Alternative Housing

A good home is hard to find and sometimes hermit crabs improvise, using pieces of rubbish (such as plastic bottle caps or drinks cans) instead. Unfortunately, our litter is an inadequate shelter and they'd be better off if they kept looking.




The Bees and the Flowers



When you see a bee buzz on by, it's hard to imagine it's doing one of the nature's most important jobs – but it is.

Bees spend their days flitting from flower to flower, searching for tasty nectar. They pollinate the flowers as they go, helping plants make more plants.



An illustration of an apple tree with a wooden bucket full of apples in a green field. The tree is on the left, with many red apples hanging from its green leaves. In the foreground, a wooden bucket with two white bands is overflowing with red apples. Two more apples are on the grass in front of the bucket. The background shows rolling green hills, a blue sky with white clouds, and several tall, thin trees in the distance.

Without bees, you
wouldn't have so
much food on your
plate: these creatures
help pollinate over 90
species of crops that
you eat.



To attract pollinators like bees, flowers are often brightly coloured.





Pollen sticks to
the bee's legs
and fuzzy body.



How Pollination Works

Pollination is the way flowering plants reproduce. When a pollinator like a bee visits a flower, it accidentally picks up some pollen. When it visits another flower, it accidentally delivers the pollen. If pollen makes it from one flower's anther to another flower's pistil, its seeds will be fertilized – ready to turn into new plants.

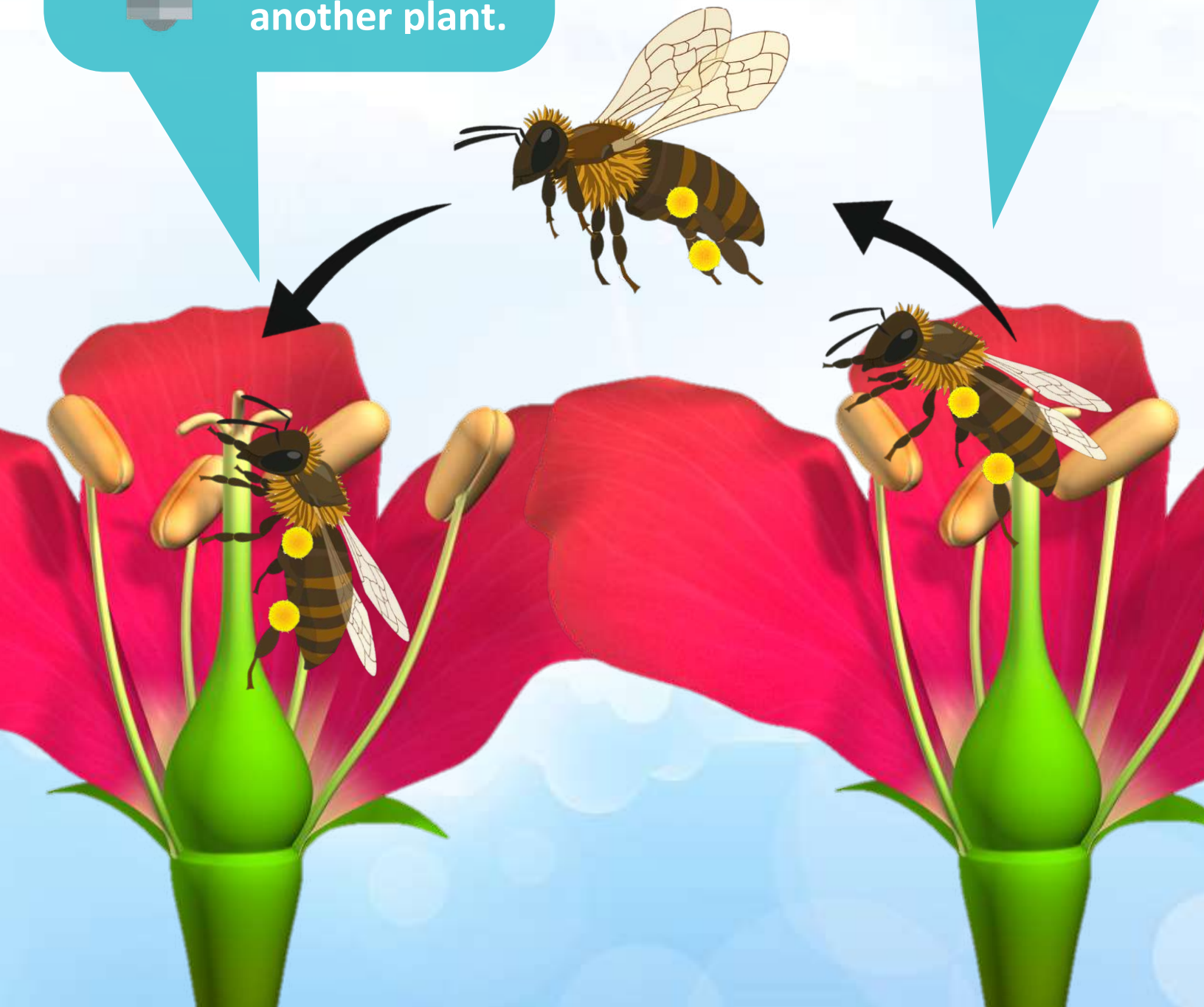




Then the bee delivers the pollen to the pistil of another plant.



The bee picks up pollen from the anther.





THINK
DIGITAL ACADEMY