

***10 Little Hermit Crabs* by Lee Fox, illustrated by Shane McG**

What a delightful story about the fascinating adventures of 10 Little Hermits. The idea of a counting to 10 book is not a new one. Yet, the way Lee Fox has written this book makes it a refreshing read.

While Shane McG's colourful illustrations really bring this book to life!

On the inside cover of the book there is a fact section about hermit crabs which is a good introduction into how these unique sea creatures got their name and where they like to live.

As the story commences, 10 little hermit crabs scuttle to the beach. 'Down swoops a seagull. Screech! Screech! Screech!' The reader gets mesmerized by the stunning hermit crabs. They also enjoy singing along to the rhyme and repetition of the lines. The children also really enjoyed chanting to the lyrics, 'Hush says the seashore. Shh, says the sea' and predicting 'How many hermit crabs will there be?'

Although, this picture story book is a great introduction to counting backwards from 10-1, perhaps a 0 could have been included, as children often wonder where it fits in the number line.

After reading this with a prep class we decided to make our own counting to 10 book. We used the beach theme to brainstorm how many sea creatures we know and we thought of our own chant, wrote it down, drew the pictures and then made our own personalized beach book.

I loved this picture story book just as much as the children I read it too did.

Rhiannon Neate, Don Bosco Primary School, Narre Warren, Vic

10 Little Hermits Crabs is a very colourful and delightful book about 10 little crabs that are funny, clever and mischievous. This book is about 10 little hermit crabs going on an adventure and one by one each hermit crab ends up in trouble or disappears leaving one hermit crab all alone until he is found by his friends again. The story is clever and keeps the children interested as they can count along and even guess what will happen to the next hermit crab.

This book was fantastic for my prep age group as the pictures were interesting, bold colours and really focused on beach and under water scenes, which really captivated my young listeners, especially as we are near the coast and have just starting talking about sea creatures and the ocean deep. It took us away from the usual focus of sharks and clown fish, adding variety to our monthly discussion topic. This book was easy to read and easy for the children to follow as it rhymed and was repetitive, encouraging the children to guess the next word as well as repeat the story, which is a great pre reading skill. This book suits ages 3 and up and would be great to include in any sea or ocean theme. We even made our own paper plate hermit crabs and brainstormed different items hermit crabs could use for their homes to live in. Highly recommended by my class and myself.

Claire Evans, Chancellor Park World of Learning, Qld

10 Little Hermit Crabs is the delightful tale of ten crustaceans who one-by-one disappear, before a surprisingly happy twist in the plot. Delightful and detailed illustrations support the text, which is rich in descriptive vocabulary and language features.

The book has numerous applications for the primary school classroom, right through from Kindergarten to Year 6. The book can simply be used to encourage the development of students' skills in counting backwards from ten and identifying rhyming words, or can form the basis for more complex investigation into language structures and features. The use of adjectives, adverbs, and descriptive verb and noun groups can be explored, along with poetic devices such as onomatopoeia, repetition and alliteration, which are utilised throughout the book. Additionally, the beautiful artwork throughout the story can provide a stimulus for classroom activities, for example, making hermit crabs out of coloured paper in the Stage 1 classroom, or investigating depth, layering, perspective and shadow in the Stage 3 context. For younger classes studying mini-beasts or sea creatures, the book could also be used as a platform from which to explore the characteristics and habits of hermit crabs, along with threats to their life and environment.

Alison Henderson, St Philip's Christian College, Newcastle, NSW

This delightful story follows the familiar theme of 10 little, then 9 little and so on until all the 'Littles' have disappeared and this story the subjects are 'Hermit Crabs'. At the beginning of the book there is small paragraph explaining about Hermit Crabs, which I shared with my story time group and a couple of children had Hermit Crabs as pets, which made the story special for them. These are

delightful little hermit crabs with a variety of different shells and although they all eventually disappear, so that only one little hermit crab is left on the pier, the story does have a happy ending. The illustrations are wonderful and the crabs remain the focus in each of the new scenes. As each of the little crabs disappear, we only see a boy's hand, the fisherman's boots, the crayfish pot and the shadow of the gull. There is a *sunshine* look to the illustrations which suggests a balmy day at the beach, where the waves lap gently on the shore and the weather is just perfect. The text flows along in rhyme, '6 little hermit crabs scamper in a throng. One stops to listen to a dolphin's song' and after each disappearance there is a linking verse, 'Hush, says the seashore. Shh, says the sea. How many hermit crabs will there be?'. The children enjoyed counting down along with the story. While there is a seagull taking a crab, a shark, and a fisherman's hook, the drama is only suggested in the illustrations and with the happy ending all is reconciled.

I would recommend this story for ages 2–8; it is suitable for sharing with a group, but would also work well one-on-one, when you could share little elements in the pictures, like the crab hiding in a bucket, behind the sunscreen bottle and looking through the swimming goggles. I teamed this story with an activity of decorating a hermit crabs shell and there is a perfect picture available at this link, <http://www.coloring.ws/crabs.htm>. To decorate the shell we used different types of coloured paper snipped into little shapes and added some glitter.

Cathy Puzey, Youth Services Librarian, Mandurah Libraries, WA

What a lovely Aussie picture book, bright colourful illustrations and a rhyming script to match. The story line is predictable and tells the tale of misadventure of the hermit crabs as each one succumbs to some hazard of the sea. Essentially it is a counting book akin to "10 green bottles" but these hermit crabs are very happy looking beasts and there is a happy ending. Each of the 10 crabs has a different look and inhabits a different shell. There are 9 different adventures, some scary like a meeting with a big shark and others not so, being "plucked up by a child's small hand".

There is the continuous repetition of "Hush, says the seashore. Shh, says the sea." which when read aloud could make for a lovely lullaby to put sleepy little ones to sleep. Some wonderful use of unusual words of our language adds to this book, for example, *skedaddle*, *snaffle* and *scuttle*. Describing the movement of crabs with these words: *waving*, *scamper*, *scurry*, *frolic* is a perfect word picture. The book is introduced with an explanation of what a hermit crab is and his habits. The many shells used by the crabs could lead into discussion about and to the possible collection or "show and tell" with shells. This book would make a lovely introduction or support to a study of the seashore, the beach or marine environments for K to 4.

Lorene Furmage, (Retired teacher librarian), Tas