



Animal Sidekicks

The Honeyguide and the Humans

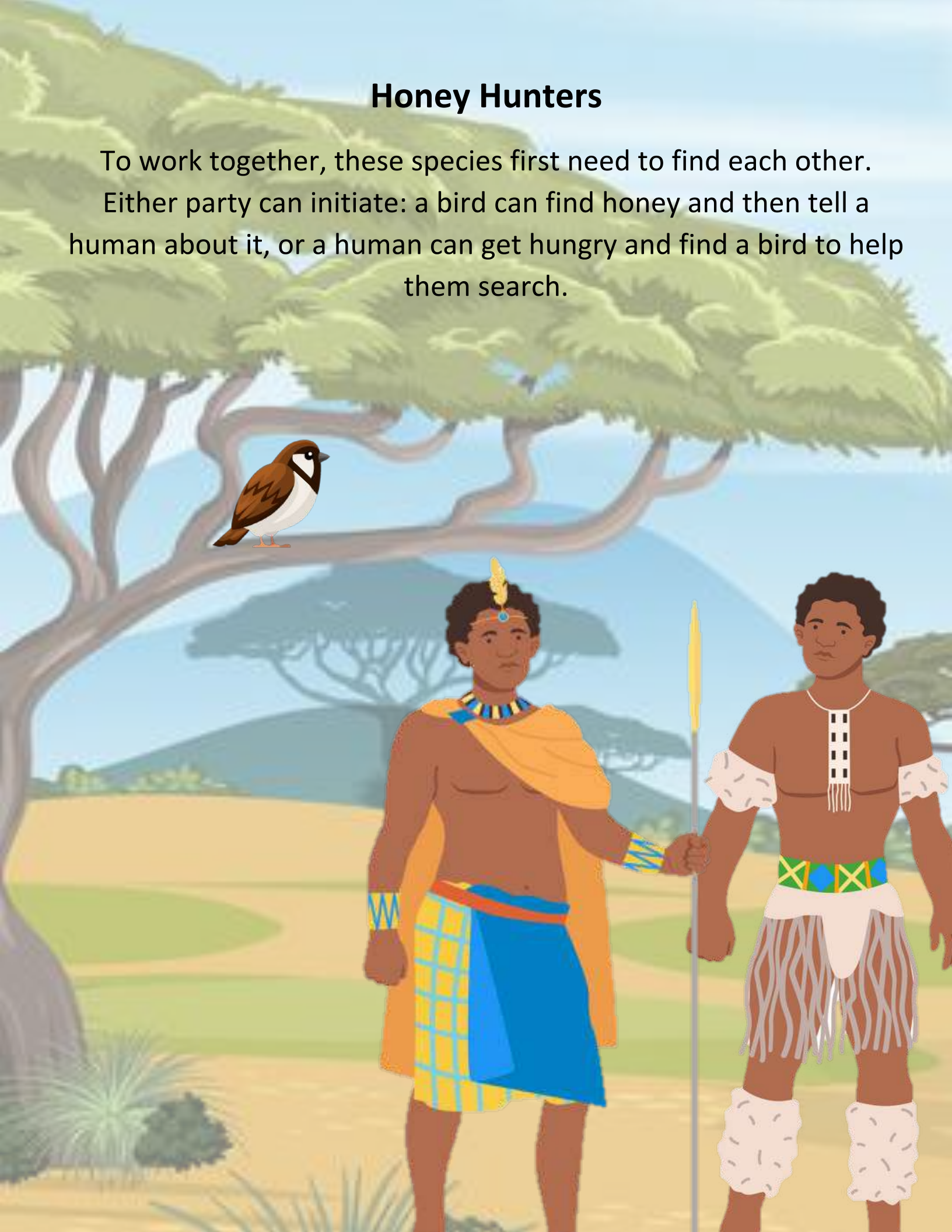


A type of African bird, called a honeyguide, makes a great team with humans. Honeyguides lead humans to beehives and then humans get rid of the bees, so they can both enjoy the honey. Some scientists think this partnership dates back almost two million years.



Honey Hunters

To work together, these species first need to find each other. Either party can initiate: a bird can find honey and then tell a human about it, or a human can get hungry and find a bird to help them search.



This Way!

Honeyguides show the humans where to go, by flying towards the beehive stopping, calling out and waiting for the humans to reply, before repeating the process.



Fire in the Hole

If you've ever been stung by a bee, you know that humans aren't immune to their attacks. But the humans have something the honeyguide doesn't: fire! They hold flames to the beehive, smoking out the insects.

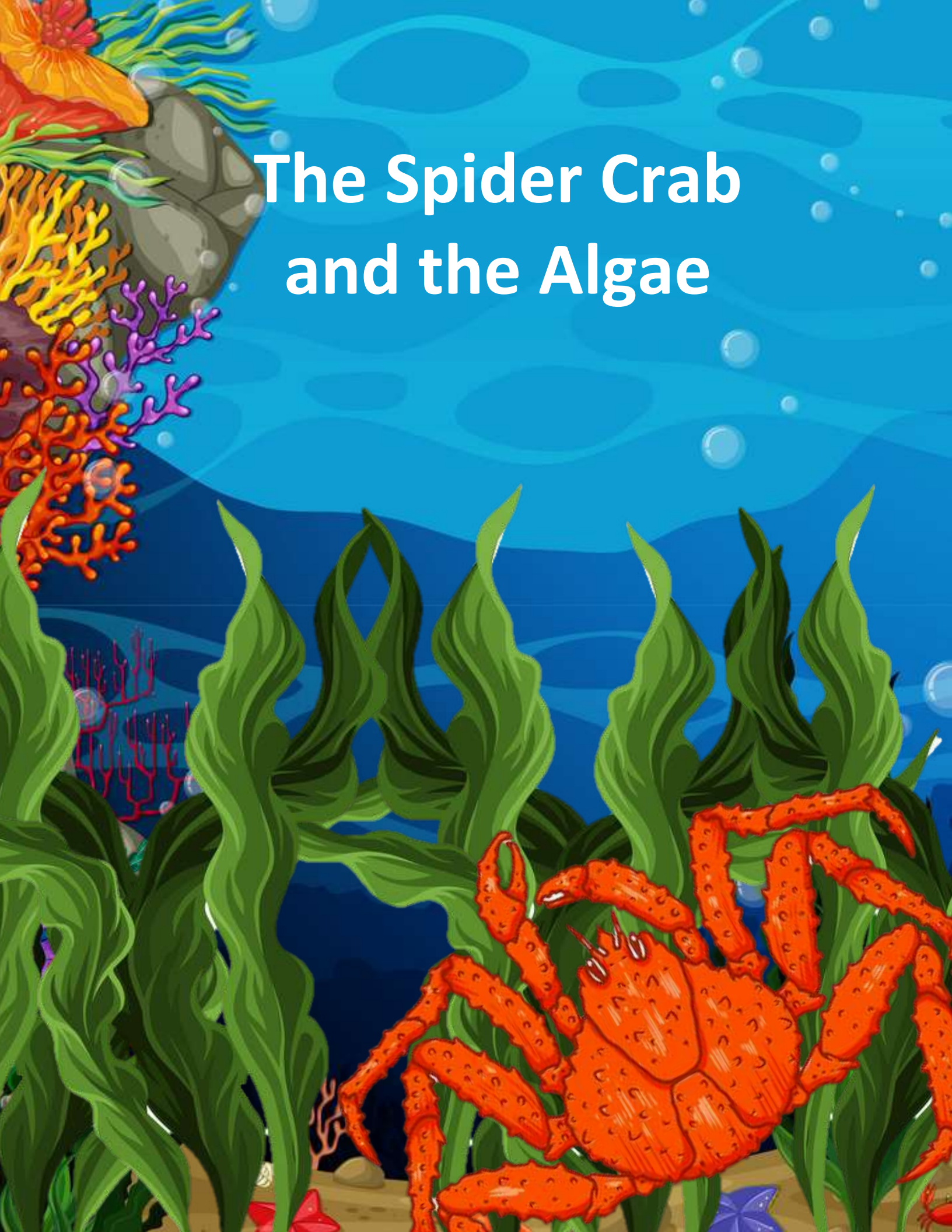


Sharing the Spoils

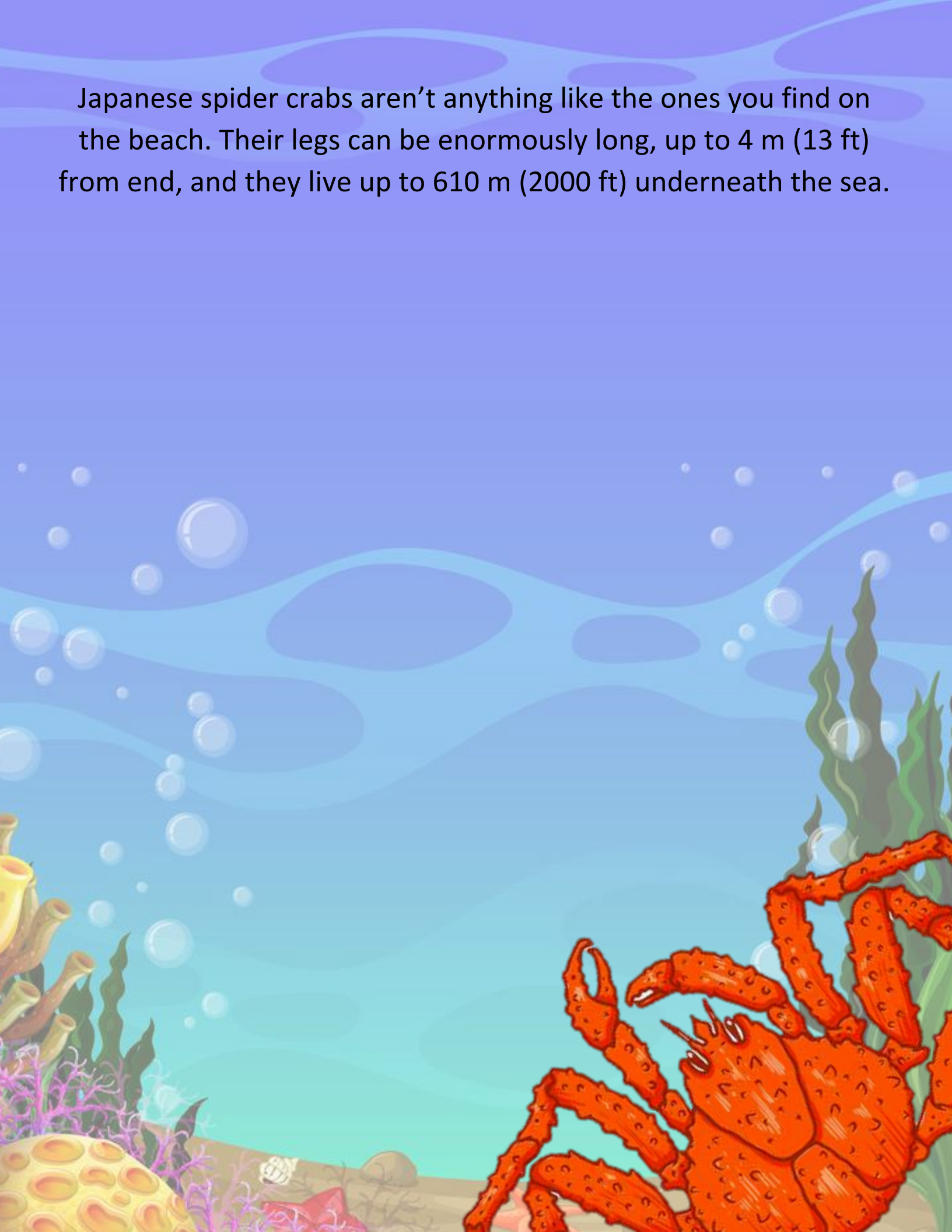
The humans are fair to their honeyguide friend – once they've secured some honeycomb, they break it up and toss some to their avian assistant. No wonder they've been colleagues for so long.



The Spider Crab and the Algae



Japanese spider crabs aren't anything like the ones you find on the beach. Their legs can be enormously long, up to 4 m (13 ft) from end, and they live up to 610 m (2000 ft) underneath the sea.



Dangerous predators stalk them through the depths, but they have a secret weapon: camouflage. This is the ability to cleverly blend in their surroundings.



Naked and Afraid

Without a disguise to protect it, a Japanese spider crab is a painfully obvious prey item. Its bright red body stands out like a sore thumb against the muted colours of the seabed.



The Humpback Whale and the Barnacles



A giant of the ocean, a humpback whale is about the size of a school bus. And like school buses, these whales often carry passengers – barnacles! Clamped tight to the whale's body, barnacles get a free ride to the best feeding spots in the sea.





Barnacles start off as tiny swimming larvae. Scientists aren't sure how they manage to hitch a ride on a whale.



Barnacles dig into the whale's skin and form a hard shell.



What's in it For Me?

As the whale swims, the barnacles stick out feathery filaments to catch small organisms called plankton. It isn't clear what the humpback gets from the relationship. The barnacles might even slow it down.





THINK

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