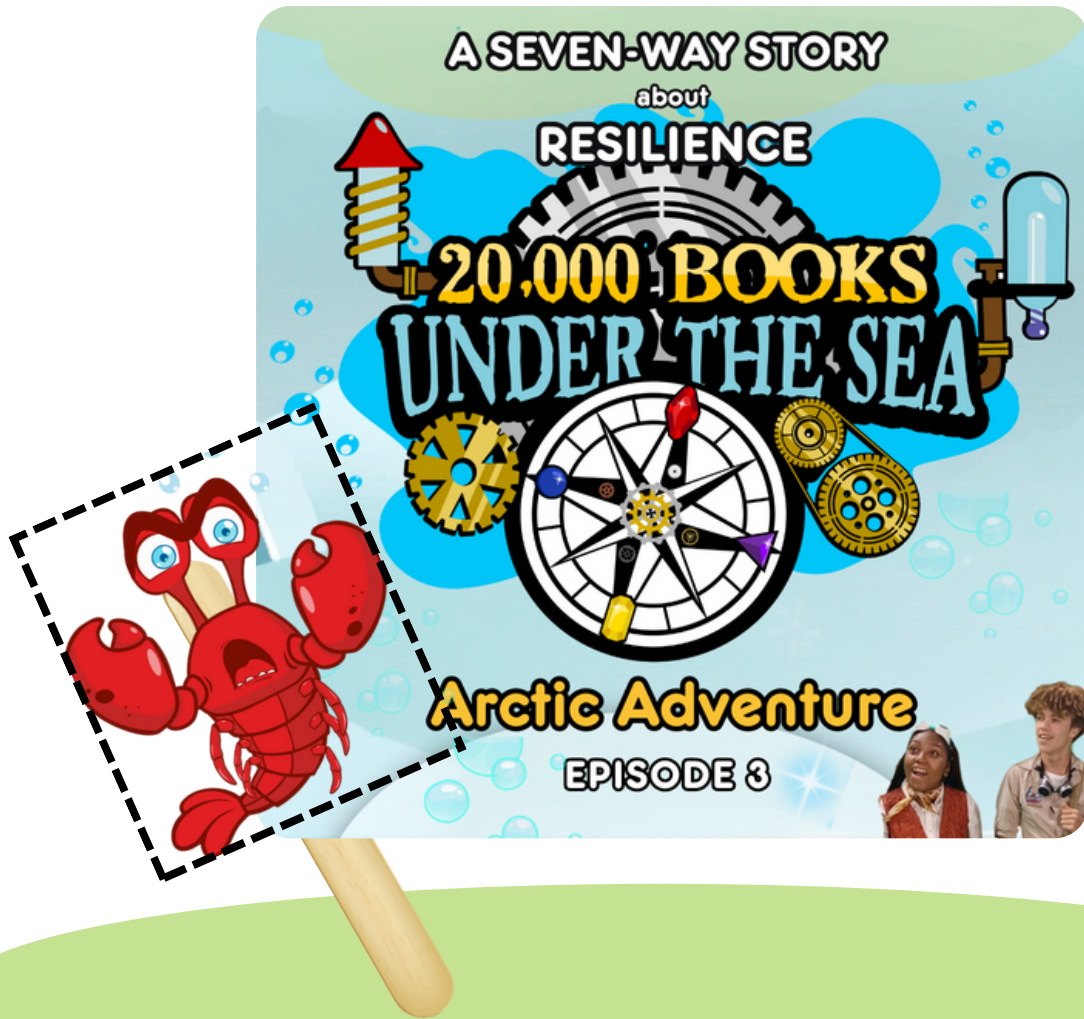




# READER'S THEATER SCRIPT

## THE SELFISH SHELLFISH

One Part of a  
Seven-Way Story Adventure



# CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

LOBSTER

SEAOTTER#1

SEAOTTER#2

BABYSEAOTTER

OTHERSEACREATURES(OPTIONAL)

**NOTE:** This story is based on science facts. See the end for more info about kelp forests, sea otters, lobsters, and sea urchins.

NARRATOR

One day a grumpy lobster moved into a kelp forest.

LOBSTER

This is a good spot. I'm going to live under a rock.  
All. By. My. Self.

NARRATOR

Except, the lobster wasn't really by himself.  
There were fish and sea stars, eels and seals,  
snails and sharks, octopuses, and anemones.  
And...sea otters.

OTTERS  
Weeeee!

NARRATOR  
Shouted the otters as they dived past the lobster,  
looking for sea urchins, their favorite snack.

OTTERS  
Helloooooo!

NARRATOR  
They called as they twirled and swirled.  
The grumpy lobster found it very annoying.

LOBSTER  
I want to be by myself. I don't want to live with fish and sea stars,  
eels and seals, snails and sharks, octopuses, and anemones.  
But most of all I do not want to share this kelp forest  
with sea otters! Everyone, leave!

NARRATOR  
He shouted and snapped his claws.  
The lobster was so grumpy that he frightened everyone away.

LOBSTER  
Finally... Now, maybe I can get some sleep!

NARRATOR  
The only creatures that didn't leave were three  
little sea urchins. But they were quiet and quite  
tasty, so the lobster let them stay. He crawled  
under his rock and took a long nap.

While he slept, three sea urchins became five.  
Five sea urchins became ten.  
Ten became twenty. Twenty became forty  
and so forth and so on. When the lobster  
finally woke up, he stretched and yawned.

LOBSTER  
Ah, it's so much better here without all those other creatures.

NARRATOR

Pleased with himself, the selfish shellfish was ready to enjoy his own private kelp forest and maybe a sea urchin snack or two. But when he crawled out from under his rock, the lobster was shocked at what he saw.

The kelp forest was gone! Not a single frond of seaweed danced in the currents or swayed in the dappled sunlight. What he did see were sea urchins, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of sea urchins!

LOBSTER

What happened to my beautiful kelp forest?

NARRATOR

A baby sea otter poked her head out from behind a rock.

BABY SEA OTTER

Well, sea otters eat sea urchins. They're our favorite treat. But when you made everyone leave, the sea urchins were free to multiply and they ate all the kelp."

LOBSTER

I had no idea this would happen. Can you help me fix it?

BABY SEA OTTER

Don't you mean *kelp* you fix it?

NARRATOR

The baby sea otter pulled a tiny kelp plant out from a small pocket under her armpit. With the lobsters help she planted it in the sand.

LOBSTER

Please, tell everyone to come back.

NARRATOR

Soon the kelp forest grew again. The fish and sea stars, eels and seals, snails and sharks, octopuses, and anemones, and...theseaottersreturned.

OTTERS  
Weeeee!

NARRATOR

The grumpy lobster was no longer quite so grumpy.  
Sometimes he even laughed at the otter's antics.

They all lived happily together because the lobster  
realized that really we all need each OTTER.

THE END

## SCIENCE FACTS

### Kelp Forests

Kelp forests are a very important part of the ocean's ecosystem. Kelp looks like a plant but it's actually a type of large algae. Kelp forests are important in the earth's battle against climate change because they absorb huge amounts of carbon dioxide. They are also home to many kinds of sea-life, including fish, sharks, sea turtles, whales, sting rays, crabs, lobsters, sea urchins, and of course, sea otters!

### Sea Otters

Sea Otters are considered a keystone species, which means they are extremely important. Sea otters help protect kelp forests by controlling sea urchin populations. When sea otter numbers decline, sea urchins are free to multiply and destroy kelp forests.

### Sea Urchins

Sea urchins look like pin cushions because they are covered with moveable spines. They use these spines to walk and to keep away enemies. Sea urchins love to eat kelp which can be a big problem if their populations get out of control.

### Lobsters

Lobsters can grow back lost limbs in a process called regeneration. Lobsters never stop growing. The largest lobster on record was 44.6 lbs. which is the size of an average six-year-old child.

## FUN FACTS

When sea otter mothers hunt for food, they wrap their babies (called pups) in kelp to keep them from floating away.

Sea otters use rocks to break open hard-shelled prey. This use of "tools" is very unusual in the animal kingdom.

Sea urchins use shells as hats to make them feel safe. Sea urchins in aquariums have been known to wear tiny cowboy hats and top hats created for them on 3-D printers.

Kelp isn't just important for sea creatures. Humans also use kelp in a variety of products like ice cream, cereal, ranch dressing, yogurt, and toothpaste.