

The Pelican and the Crab



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On a sunny beach, where the waves went swish-swash and the sand was warm as toast, lived a pelican named Percy. He had white and grey feathers, a long orange-yellow beak with a big pouch, and a small blue sailor scarf around his neck. Percy loved to fly high above the water and watch the world below. Every morning he swooped over the sparkling sea, looking for fish and friendly faces.



Down by the rocks lived Clement the crab. He had a bright coral-red shell with sandy speckles, two big claws, and six quick little legs. A tiny green seaweed bow was tied on one claw. Clement scuttled sideways along the sand, checking every shell and rock. He was curious and careful, and he never missed a thing. Percy and Clement were best friends, even though one flew high and the other stayed low.



One morning, Percy landed on the warm sand near Clement's rock. "Good day, Clement!" he called. "The tide is low and the beach is full of treasures." Clement waved a big claw. "And I have already checked every shell from here to the big driftwood!" he said. "But something feels different today. The seagulls are squawking and the sand seems... messy." Percy tilted his head. "Messy? Let's take a look."



Just then, a little sandpiper named Pip ran up, flapping tiny wings. "Oh dear! Oh dear!" Pip chirped. "My shiny blue button is missing! I left it by my nest, and now it's gone!" Percy and Clement looked at each other. "Don't worry, Pip," said Percy kindly. "We'll help you find it." Clement nodded. "A mystery! And mysteries are made for solving. Let's look for clues."



Percy spread his wide white wings and flew high into the sky. From up there, he could see everything—the curl of the waves, the pattern of the sand, and a strange trail of tiny marks leading away from Pip's nest. "I see something!" he called down. "A line of little dots in the sand, going toward the dunes!" Clement scuttled over. "Little dots? Let me check them up close. I can follow them right away!"



Clement hurried along the trail, his stalk eyes shiny and bright. He stopped at a small shell and peeked inside. "Nothing here," he said. Then he checked under a rock. "Nothing here either." But then he spotted something glimmering in the sunlight—a tiny piece of blue thread caught on a piece of driftwood. "Percy!" he called. "I found a clue! A bit of blue thread, just like Pip's button!"



Percy swooped down to see the thread. "Good work, Clement!" he said. "Now let me fly up and look for more." He soared over the dunes, his sharp blue-grey eyes scanning the ground. "There's a shiny thing near the big sand castle!" he called. "And another trail of dots leading toward the rocks!" Clement waved his claws. "I'll check the rocks! You keep watching from above!"



Clement scuttled to the rocks and searched every crack and crevice. He found a small red bead, then a crumpled leaf, and then—a second blue button! "This isn't Pip's," he said. "It's smaller and has two holes." Percy landed beside him. "So there are two mysteries," he said. "Pip's button and someone else's bead. Maybe they're connected." Clement nodded. "Let's put our clues together."



They laid out everything they had found: the blue thread, the red bead, the small button, and the trail of dots. "The dots lead from Pip's nest to the rocks," said Clement. "And the thread was on the driftwood near the dunes." Percy looked at the clues with his bright eyes. "So whoever took the button went from the nest, past the driftwood, and over to the rocks. But why?"



Just then, a little voice came from behind a rock. "Squeak!" It was a tiny mouse named Milly, holding a small sack. "I'm sorry!" she cried. "I didn't mean to take anything. I was collecting shiny things for my nest because my babies are coming. I found the button and the bead, and I didn't know they belonged to anyone." Percy and Clement looked at each other and smiled kindly.



"It's all right, Milly," said Percy gently. "Everyone makes mistakes. But taking things that aren't ours makes others sad." Clement added, "We can help you find your own shiny things. There are lots of pretty shells and pebbles on the beach." Milly's eyes lit up. "Really? You'd help me?" Percy nodded. "That's what friends do. And we have clues to follow!"



So Percy flew high and spotted a patch of shiny pebbles near the water's edge. "Over there!" he called. Clement scuttled along the sand and gathered the prettiest pebbles he could find. "These are perfect for your nest, Milly," he said. Together, they helped Milly fill her sack with safe, natural treasures. Then Milly gave back Pip's button and the red bead. "Thank you!" she squeaked. "I'll never take things again."



Pip was overjoyed to get the blue button back. "My lucky button!" she chirped, hopping up and down. "You found it!" The other beach animals gathered around—seagulls, sandpipers, and a wise old turtle. "How did you solve the mystery?" asked the turtle. Percy puffed out his pouch proudly. "I flew high and spotted clues from the air," he said. "And Clement checked every shell and rock up close."



"We shared what we found," said Clement, "and put the clues together." The turtle smiled. "You see," she said, "everyone has different talents. Percy's wings are perfect for seeing far, and Clement's claws and quick legs are perfect for searching small places. When friends use their talents together, they can solve anything." All the animals cheered, and Pip gave them each a tiny shell as a thank-you gift.



From that day on, Percy and Clement were known as the best mystery-solving team on the beach. Percy would fly high and call out what he saw, and Clement would scuttle below and check every detail. They helped find lost shells, misplaced seaweed, and even a missing sandal. And they always remembered that teamwork made them strong—and that being kind was the best clue of all.



As the sun set over the sparkling sea, Percy and Clement sat together on the warm sand. "What a day!" said Percy, tucking his beak into his blue sailor scarf. "We make a good team," said Clement, adjusting his green seaweed bow. "The best," agreed Percy. And with the waves going swish-swash, they watched the stars come out, happy and ready for whatever mystery tomorrow might bring.