



# Herman, P.I.C., and the hunt for a disaster-proof shell

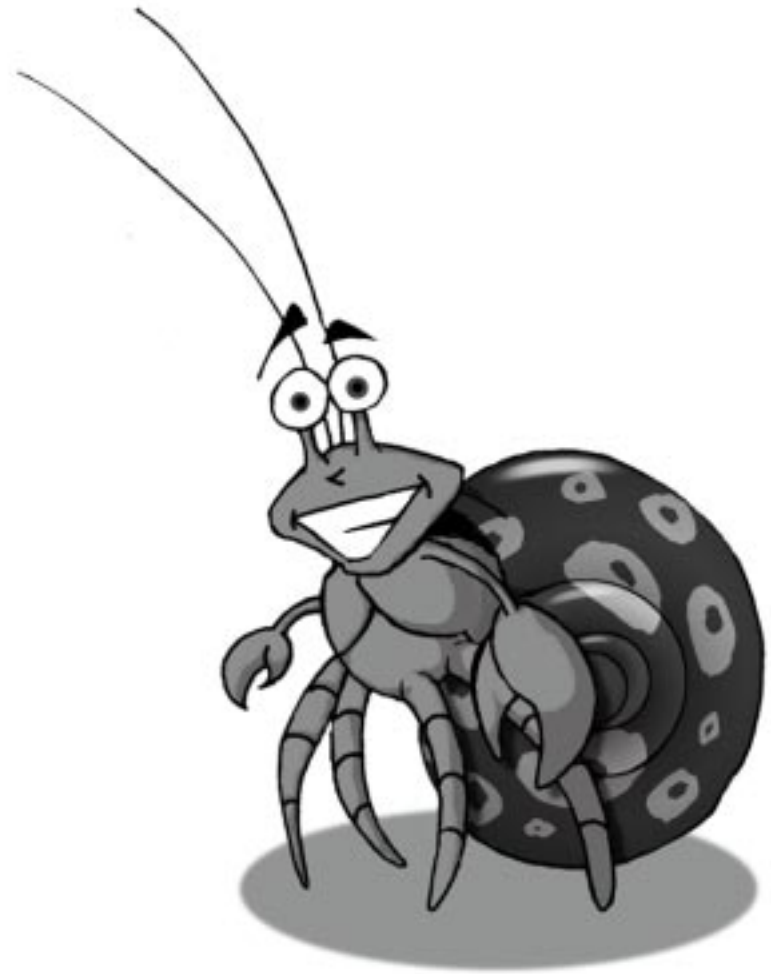
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# Herman, P.I.C., and the hunt for a disaster-proof shell

**H**ello. I'm Herman and I'm a hermit crab. I know what you're thinking. Hermit crabs can't talk! We can talk, although we usually just talk quietly among ourselves.

But I'm speaking up now because I have a story to tell. I've learned a lot since I was a little hermit crab searching for my first shell. Let me tell you about it.



First, did you know that hermit crabs aren't born with a shell? When we're still just little hermit crabs our parents send us out to select a shell. It's not hard for us to find one. There are shells all around for us to choose from.

I was given this advice: Don't get one too small or too big! I thought that was all I needed to know.

My first shell was not too small or too big. It fit me just right. I liked the color and thought I'd live in that shell for a long time. Finding a good shell was easy.

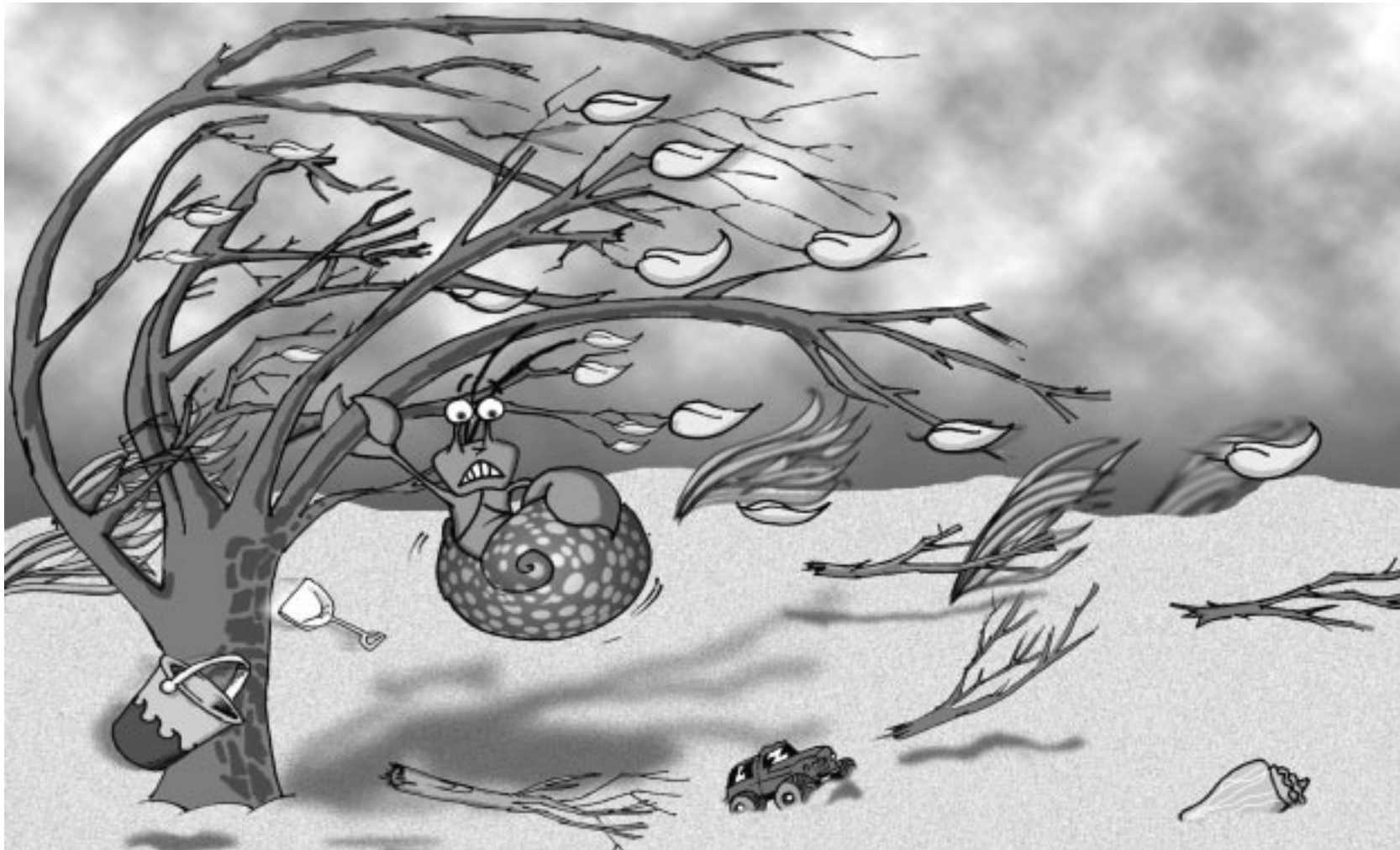
I was wrong!



Not long after I got my first shell, a terrible wind started blowing. I could hear the wind howling outside my shell. It was loud and I had to hold tight to a

branch. I got deep in my shell and figured I was safe.

Then, before I knew it, something terrible happened . . .



My shell blew right off! I never saw it again!

The wind was very strong and I had not taken any action to protect my house. When the storm died down, I had no choice but to search for a new, and hopefully better, shell. Soon, I



found a new shell. I liked it a lot. This would be a good home, I thought. This time, though, I would make sure it stayed on during strong winds!

I applied hurricane straps and took other steps to protect my shell from the wind. I was very happy. My new home was snug and safe.

Or so I thought.

Then one day, a terrible rain fell. It rained and rained. It seemed like days went by. I stayed in my shell and was warm and dry – for a while. Then the water rose and the next thing I knew my neighborhood was under water!

And then the flood waters swept into my shell and covered it in mud! It was a mess and I wasn't happy about it! I had to leave my shell and look for a new one again.

I bet you didn't know being a hermit crab was this much trouble!



I was determined to learn my lessons well and pick the perfect shell. And this time, I took steps to protect it from high winds *and* floods. I was happy again. No hurricane, no tornado and no flood could damage my shell.

Being a hermit crab wasn't so bad after all!

All was well for awhile. Then one day the ground shook. The ground rumbled and shifted underneath me. I didn't know what to do! I stayed in my shell and hoped for the best. But it was not to be. Things began to tumble around me and something landed on me. There was a huge crack in my shell and suddenly I could see outside!

This was terrible and I was very mad. Why did things keep happening?



So when I went looking for yet another new shell, I made sure:

It was not too big  
It was not too small  
It was windproof  
It was floodproof  
and  
It was earthquake proof.

I checked and double-checked my shell. I read reports that taught me how to become disaster resistant. Some of the things were simple and others were a bit harder and I had to ask for help. But all in all, it wasn't difficult. And it was well worth the time and trouble.





Finally I was safe in my shell. The wind blew hard, but my shell stayed on. The high water came, but my shell stayed dry and when the ground shook, my shell stayed in one piece.

Being a hermit crab was good again. I settled down to have a nice life. How could I know what was ahead?

I was having a barbecue with some of my friends. It was a nice summer day and we were having a good time. All of a sudden, my shell caught on fire.

I didn't have a fire extinguisher and I had not taken precautions to cut back dry brush around my neighborhood. I had to run

out of my shell and leave it behind! It was a total loss.

I was very sad.

My special shell, which I had worked so hard on, was ruined yet again.



So this time, when I looked for my new shell, I made sure it was:

not too big  
not too small  
windproof  
waterproof  
earthquake proof

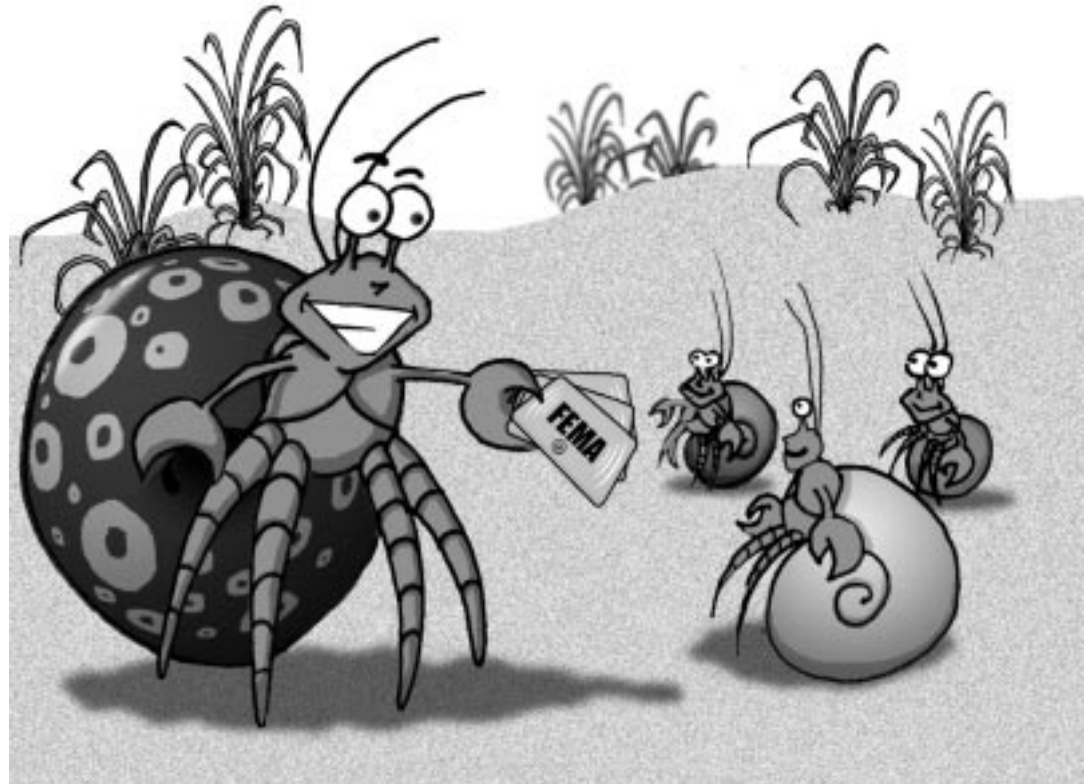
and

fireproof.

And I knew I was safe and had learned my lessons well. My shell was completely disaster resistant!

But then I realized that other hermit crabs didn't know what I had learned. And other people – like you – didn't know what I had learned either.

That's why I'm speaking out. I had learned about the importance of being disaster proof from FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA teaches people how to make their homes safe from disasters *before* disasters happen.



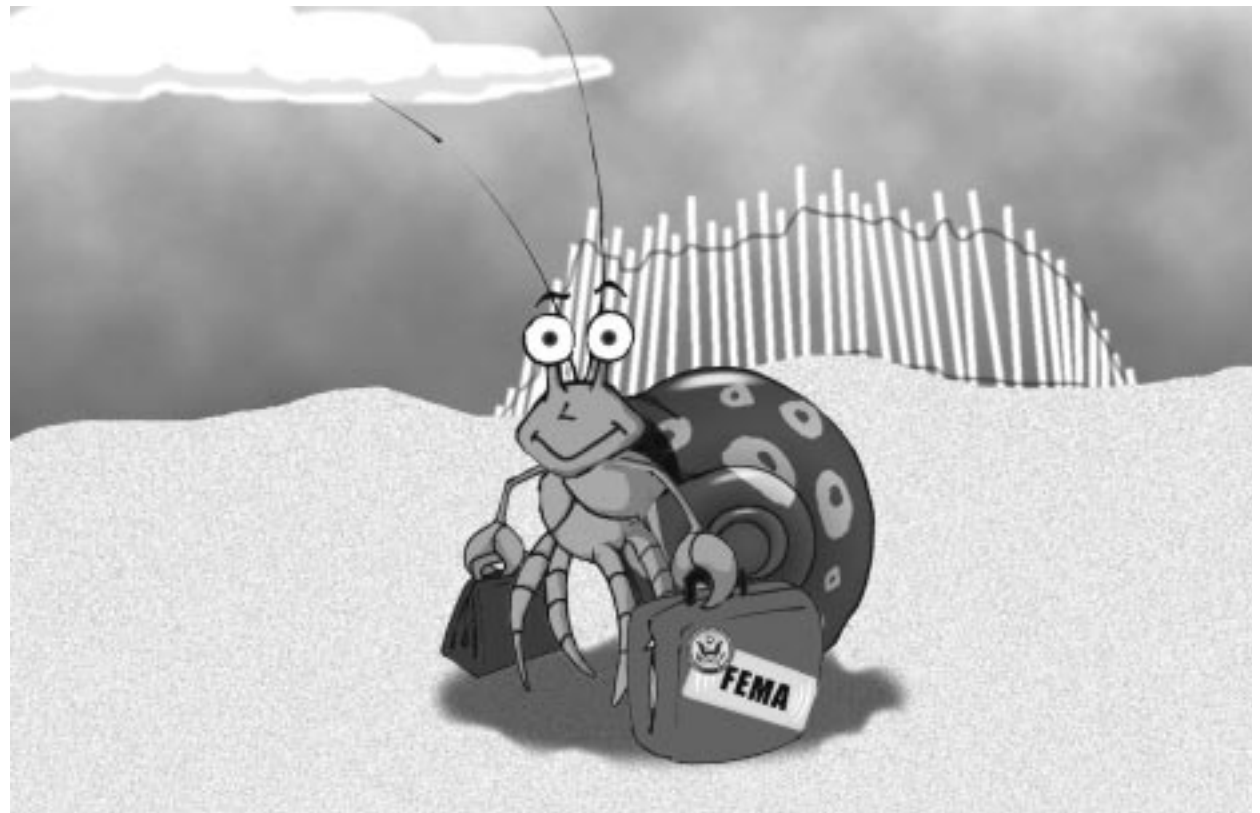
Now I call myself Herman, P.I.C. – Particularly Important Crab. And I travel around telling everyone about preventing disaster damage.

You can join me. Find out what disasters might happen in your neighborhood and then find out how to make your home, yourself and your family safe. You can learn more about disasters from the FEMA web site or by asking your town's emergency manager. There are many things you can do to prevent disaster damage.

Now I have to go. There are many people out there who don't know about preventing disasters.

You can help me spread the word. Tell everyone about my story.

And the next time you see a hermit crab, you could stop and whisper "Hello." It just might be me!



# What did you learn?



## 1. FEMA:

- a. Helps people prevent disasters
- b. Reduces the speed limit
- c. Teaches hermit crabs to dance

2. There is nothing you can do to protect your home (or your shell if you're a hermit crab) to prevent disaster. True or False?

- a. True
- b. False

3. Where can you find information about what disasters might happen in your town?

- a. In the backyard
- b. In a dictionary
- c. On the FEMA web site
- d. In tea leaves

Answers: 1. A; 2. B; 3. C



*Dear Readers:*

*Want to learn more about disasters? I am the mascot and spokescrab for the FEMA for Kids web site. The site can teach you more about preparing for disasters and about preventing disaster damage. Go to [www.fema.gov/kids](http://www.fema.gov/kids).*

*When you get there, click on me for help in getting around the site. You'll be able to check the kind of disasters that can happen in your state. There are also games, quizzes, stories, songs and other fun activities. See you there!*

*Herman, P.I.C.*

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Herman, P.I.C. ● Herman, P.I.C. ● Herman, P.I.C.