

## Clumsy Crab

**Ruth Galloway**

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"Everyone decided to play hide-and-seek. Nipper climbed into a big clam shell and pulled it shut." Uh-oh.

It seemed like a good idea, but things don't always work out, especially for Nipper, the little crab who wants badly to be like his friends on the ocean floor. Nipper is always feeling embarrassed about his big claws, which get in the way and ruin everyone's fun. Even though his friends are patient with him when his claws pop the bubble they are playing catch with, or when "Nipper's clumsy claws shattered the shell into hundreds of tiny pieces," he feels sad about being different: "He wished he had tickly tentacles like Octopus and Jellyfish or flippety fins like Turtle and the fish."

The author is also the illustrator of this book, and she combines her skills wonderfully to make one enjoyable story. Galloway has written and illustrated two other Tiger Tales books, *Fidgety Fish* and *Smiley Shark*, and has provided art for numerous other volumes. Her artistic repertoire also includes greeting cards and textbook illustrations.

In this book, Galloway's simplistic drawings and basic color spectrum will draw in the little ones as they watch Nipper and his underwater buddies. Her uncomplicated story and elementary drawings are a signature of Tiger Tales publications. The concise text allows young readers to follow the narrative while they smile at the illustrations of the watery friends playing games.

Although the early-reader market continues to draw kids and parents, some picture books may seem *too* simplified, even for the youngest children. Visual stimulation *is* important, and Galloway's illustrations are amusing and imaginative; however, they are so simple that they might work just as well on a board book.

No child likes to feel that he's different from his friends or uncomfortable about her physical attributes. Even when a child is accepted by peers, poor self-esteem can be detrimental to a child's well being. Galloway addresses this issue in a comical yet understanding way, so that even very young children can understand that it's okay to be different. In *Clumsy Crab*, little readers will find out that because Nipper is different, he is able to do something great for one of his friends.

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