

Hermit Crab



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Hermit Crab wanted to write a novel called *The Autobiography of the Hole the Peeping Tom Drilled into the Hotel Room Wall* but all his friends and family said it wouldn't be a bestseller.

But they also told him not to legally change his name to Hermit Crab so who's laughing last?

Hermit Crab knew he had a better chance of going viral with a name like Hermit Crab. His birth name was Jack Asher Sherlock.

If my last name had been Zimmerman or Zoom or Zenith, my initials would've been JAZ, and maybe I wouldn't have needed to legally change my name, he told his first wife, Beverly.

She divorced him before the name change paperwork was official.

So Hermit Crab set out to write a novel.

Maybe I should write the book in pig's blood, he thought, but the logistics of actually doing that made his brain turn to mush and he gave up on becoming a writer entirely.

I will sell something, he said aloud, to no one in particular. But he didn't actually say it aloud.

He wrote it down on his phone using an app which let you draw with your finger on the screen.

He drew a picture of the thing he was going to sell. Then he deleted the picture. Then he deleted the app.

Then he threw his phone out the window.

Hermit Crab imagined a giant eagle swooping down and picking up the phone and bringing it to its eagle family.

He imagined a young eagle trying to use the phone but getting too frustrated by the sound of its talons scratching against the glass.

He made a microwave pizza and covered it in blue acrylic paint and made a YouTube video of him pretending to eat it but he pretended too vigorously and wound up actually eating a good amount of the pizza. He called 911.

At the hospital they pumped his stomach.

Beverly and his young daughter Sally, whom he called Snail (much to the chagrin of pretty much everyone), came to visit.

Snail was too young to know about the blue pizza video.

When Hermit Crab got home he went looking for his phone. But it had rained and the phone was ruined.

He thought briefly about living the rest of his life without a phone.

He thought about writing with a pen and paper.

He thought about looking at things that weren't trapped in a screen.

He thought about so many thing in a short amount of time.

He thought it was amazing humans could think about so many things, whatever they wanted to think about.

He got a new phone at the phone store before noon.

Age was not in factor in why most people didn't know about the blue pizza video.

It only had seven views when Hermit Crab pulled it up on his new phone.

He thought about deleting it then he deleted it.

He wondered who had viewed it. Beverly, he imagined.

Several of the views had been Hermit Crab himself as he waited for the ambulance.

His friend Scott came over and they talked about the blue pizza video and going to the emergency room.

I don't think it was art, Scott said. Not because of the low view count. It just doesn't sound like art.

Scott hadn't seen the video.

I don't think I'm doing a very good job of describing it, Hermit Crab said.

Maybe. What about the book you were going to write, Scott asked.

I'm not writing any books. I no longer have any aspirations of being a writer. I want to sell something.

A book is a thing.

I'm going to have to ask you to leave, Scott. A book is not something you can sell.

Scott left and Hermit Crab made another microwave pizza. But he just ate the pizza.

He didn't do anything else to the pizza.

He left his new phone in another room while
he ate it.

A few weeks passed before he saw Beverly and Snail again.

They arrived at Hermit Crab's house in a large SUV driven by a man named Paul.

This is Paul, Jack, Beverly said.

Hermit Crab, Hermit Crab said.

Paul looked at Beverly with a look that made Hermit Crab know he thought he was insane.

You don't have to call me that, he said. You can just call me man or something. You don't have to call me anything actually.

Okay, Paul said.

Snail curled under her mother's knee shyly and could not be coaxed inside the house without the promise of future ice cream. Today was her fourth birthday.

So the party is next week, Beverly said. It's at the pottery place.

Wow, that sounds like fun, Hermit Crab said.
Do you like pottery?

Snail didn't answer her father's question. She let it hang in the silence.

Eventually, more words were spoken.

Hermit Crab served tiny microwave pizza bagels.

When it was time for them to leave, Hermit Crab said, happy birthday, Snail. It was the first time he had called her that all day.

Beverly started crying. Then Snail started crying. Paul said he wanted to punch Hermit Crab.

Hermit Crab watched the SUV pull out of the driveway and then picked up his phone.

He downloaded another app which let you draw on the screen with your finger.

He started to draw a thing he could sell but the only thing he drew was a fish.

That's it, he said. This is something I can sell.
This is going to change the world.

Hermit Crab had an idea.

He was going to flood the world and then sell
the world these fishes.

They were robot fish.

They would be the only thing you would need
in this new world of water.

They would fetch your food and send messages to other humans, and you could live inside them so they would be your house, your car (boat), your maid, your assistant, your best friend, everything.

I'm not sure what I should do first, Hermit Crab thought. Flood the world or build the robot fishes?

Supply and demand, he thought.

This is going to be like Twitter meets the grocery store meets Uber meets friendship meets, I don't know, he told Scott the next day.

Scott nodded and said, sure.

I wouldn't worry about getting a patent. Things are going to be chaotic, more primal. It's just about getting the product in people's hands. But the concept of money probably won't exist in this new world. I'm not in it for the money. Gotta let the people make up their own minds.

Over the next few months, Hermit Crab brainstormed ideas about how to flood the world.

The best and fastest solution, he felt, would just be to accelerate climate change, which was already flooding the world.

Trojan Horse, Hermit Crab thought.

To achieve a position of power big enough to achieve these goals he would need to become a celebrity or a politician.

He didn't have any good political ideas so he decided to become a bestselling author.

He still had the idea for the novel about the hole in the hotel room wall.

He walked downtown to the butchershop and asked if they had any pig's blood.