

Dunehoppers Go Camping

Moonlight • Sand • Stories & Smiles



Outer Banks, North Carolina

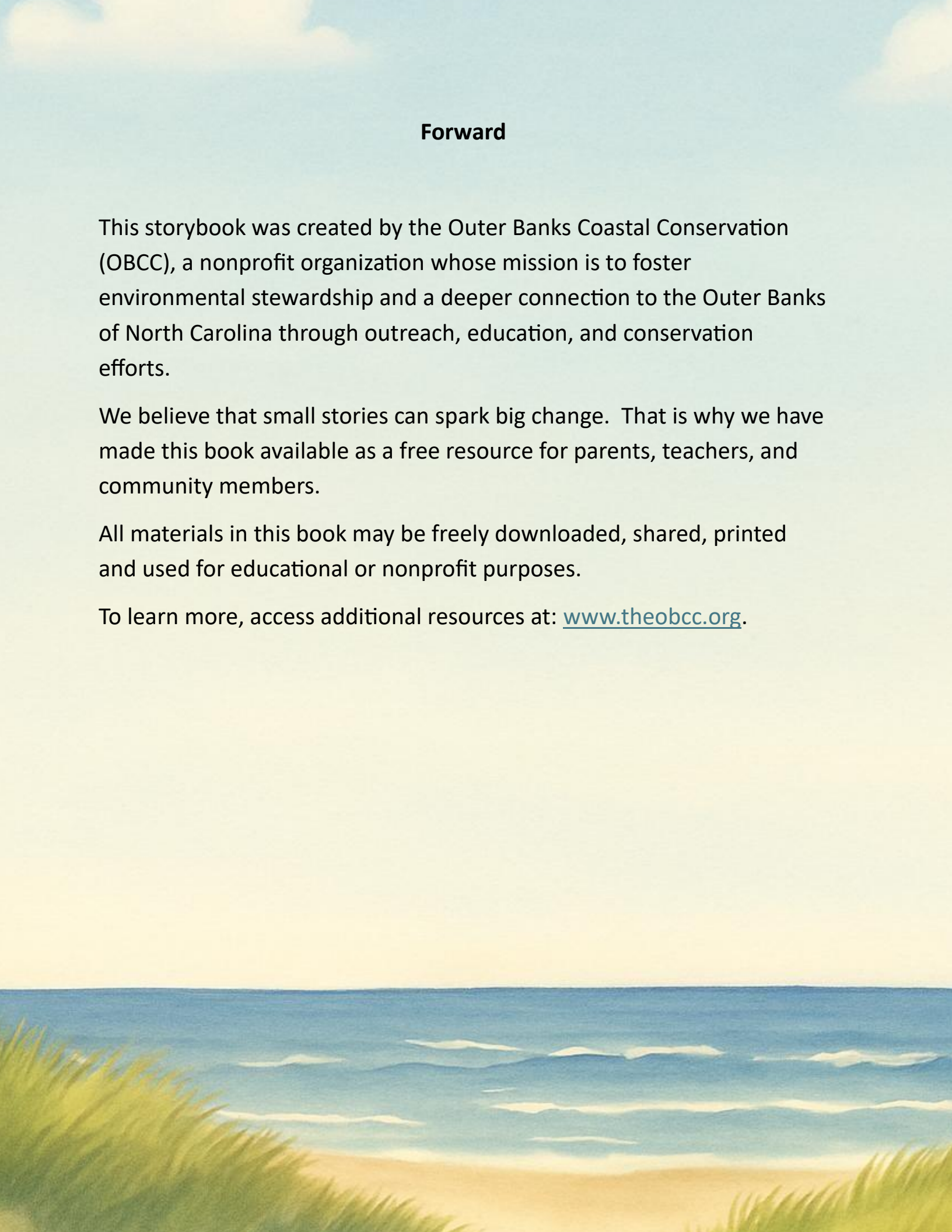
Forward

This storybook was created by the Outer Banks Coastal Conservation (OBCC), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to the Outer Banks of North Carolina through outreach, education, and conservation efforts.

We believe that small stories can spark big change. That is why we have made this book available as a free resource for parents, teachers, and community members.

All materials in this book may be freely downloaded, shared, printed and used for educational or nonprofit purposes.

To learn more, access additional resources at: www.theobcc.org.



On a warm, starry evening in the Outer Banks, the Dunehopper Ghost Crab Family popped out of their cozy burrow with excitement. Mama Crab brushed off her sandy shell. Papa Crab straightened his tall eye stalks. Sandy, Scoot, and little Shellby grabbed their tiny backpacks, each one filled with treasures only crabs would pack—smooth pebbles, sea-worn shells, and a crumb of driftwood for fun.

“Tonight,” Papa said proudly, “we’re going camping!”



The Sideways Hike to the Campsite

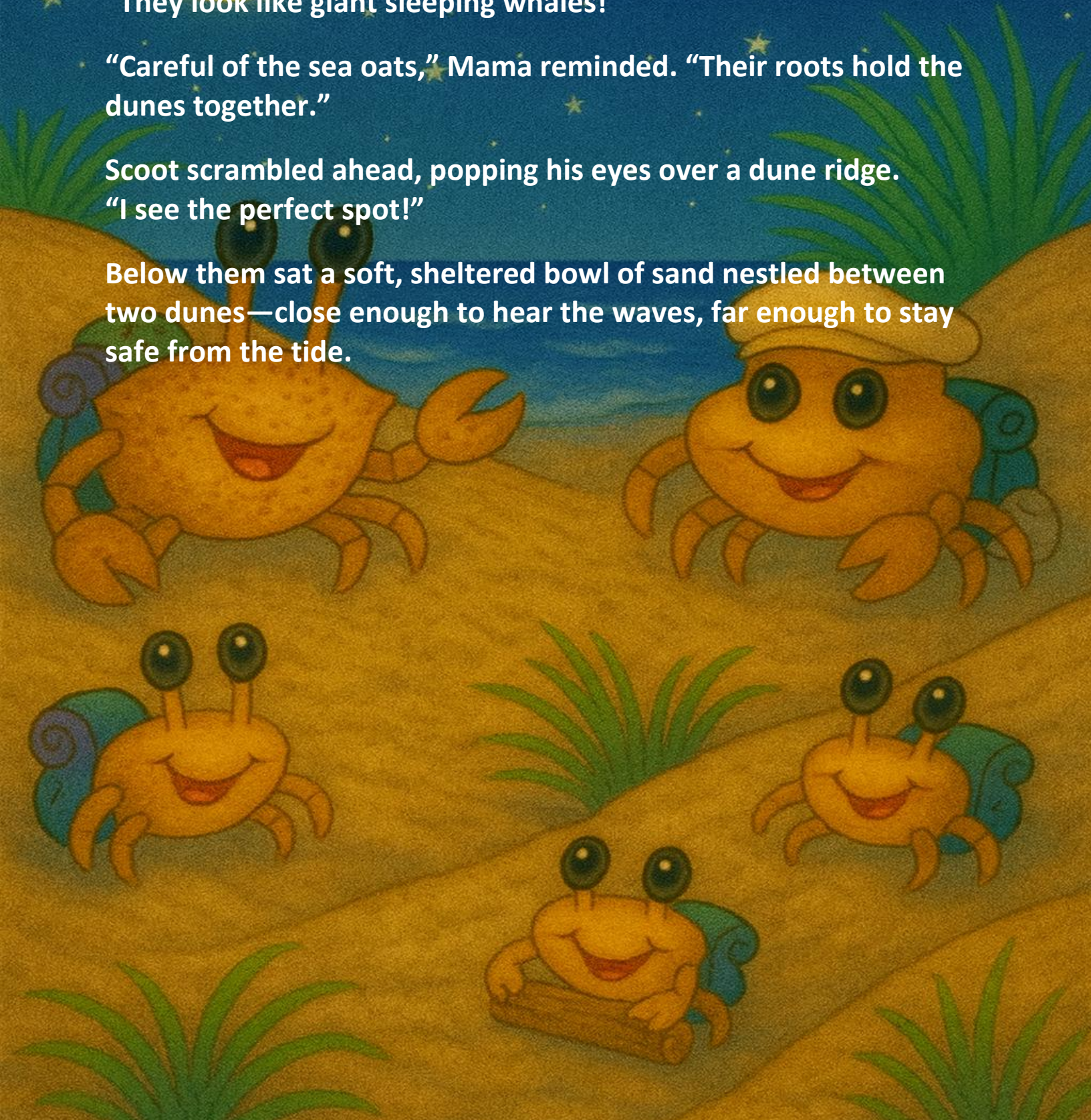
The family scurried across the beach in their usual sideways march. The moon lit a glittering path across the sand. Sandy pointed to the dunes.

“They look like giant sleeping whales!”

“Careful of the sea oats,” Mama reminded. “Their roots hold the dunes together.”

Scout scrambled ahead, popping his eyes over a dune ridge. “I see the perfect spot!”

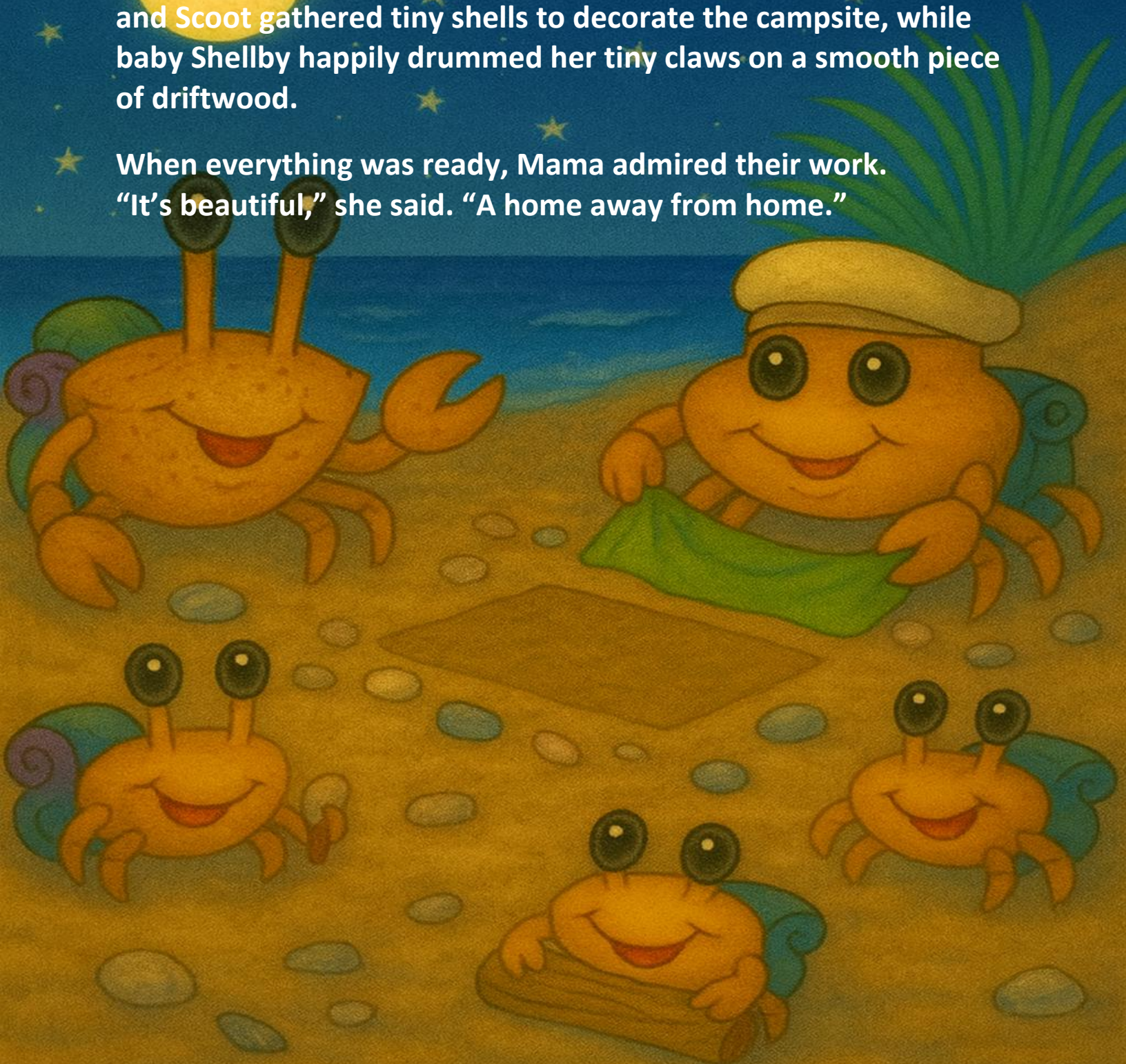
Below them sat a soft, sheltered bowl of sand nestled between two dunes—close enough to hear the waves, far enough to stay safe from the tide.



Setting Up Camp

Papa began digging a shallow, cozy pit for their “tent.” Mama unfolded a piece of dried seaweed to make a soft blanket. Sandy and Scoot gathered tiny shells to decorate the campsite, while baby Shellby happily drummed her tiny claws on a smooth piece of driftwood.

When everything was ready, Mama admired their work. “It’s beautiful,” she said. “A home away from home.”



Campfire Glow (Except Crabs Don't Make Fire...)

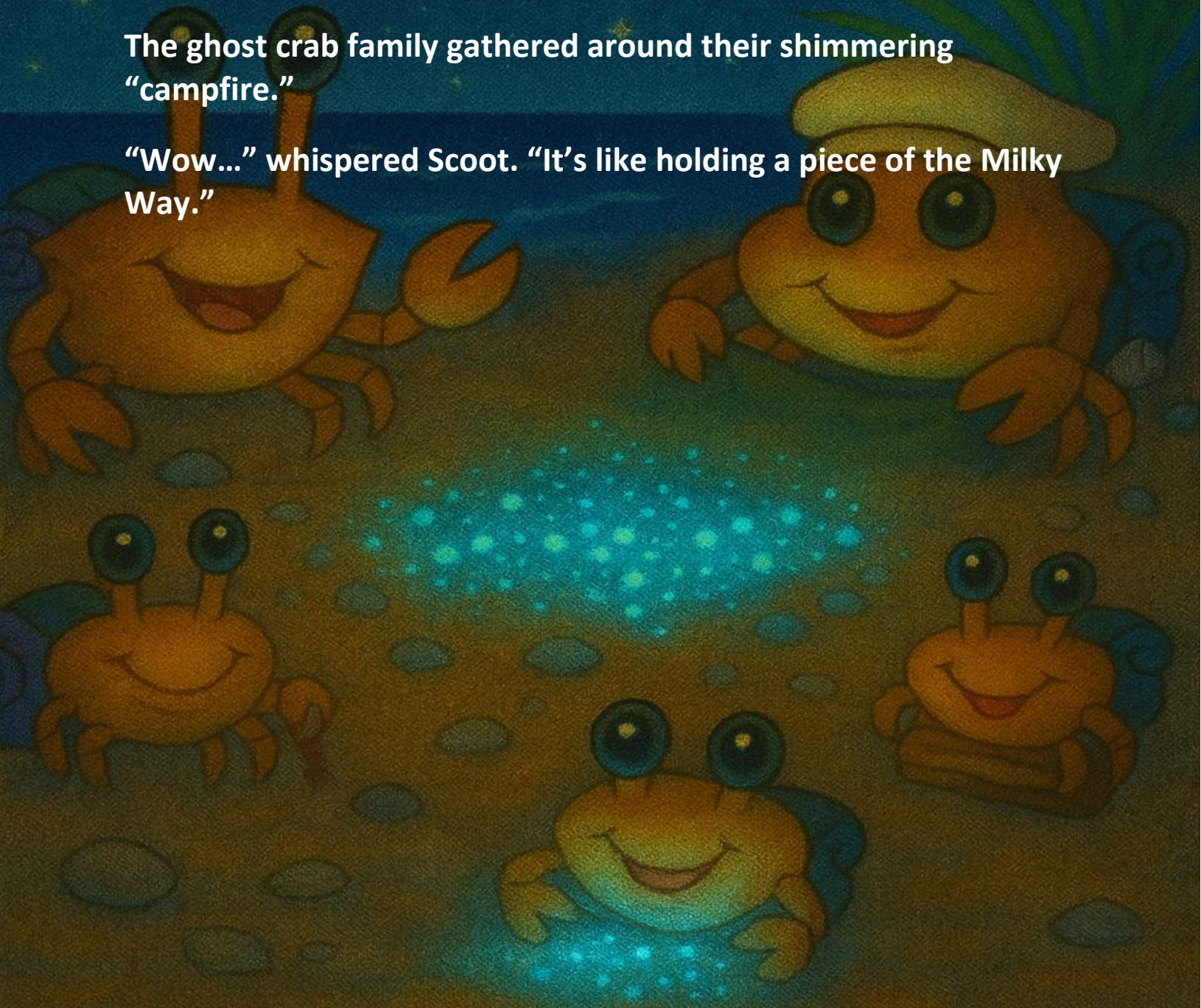
"We can't make a fire," Sandy said sadly.

"No fire needed!" Papa said.

He scooped up a pile of glowing plankton washed ashore. The bioluminescent specks twinkled like fairy lights.

The ghost crab family gathered around their shimmering "campfire."

"Wow..." whispered Scoot. "It's like holding a piece of the Milky Way."



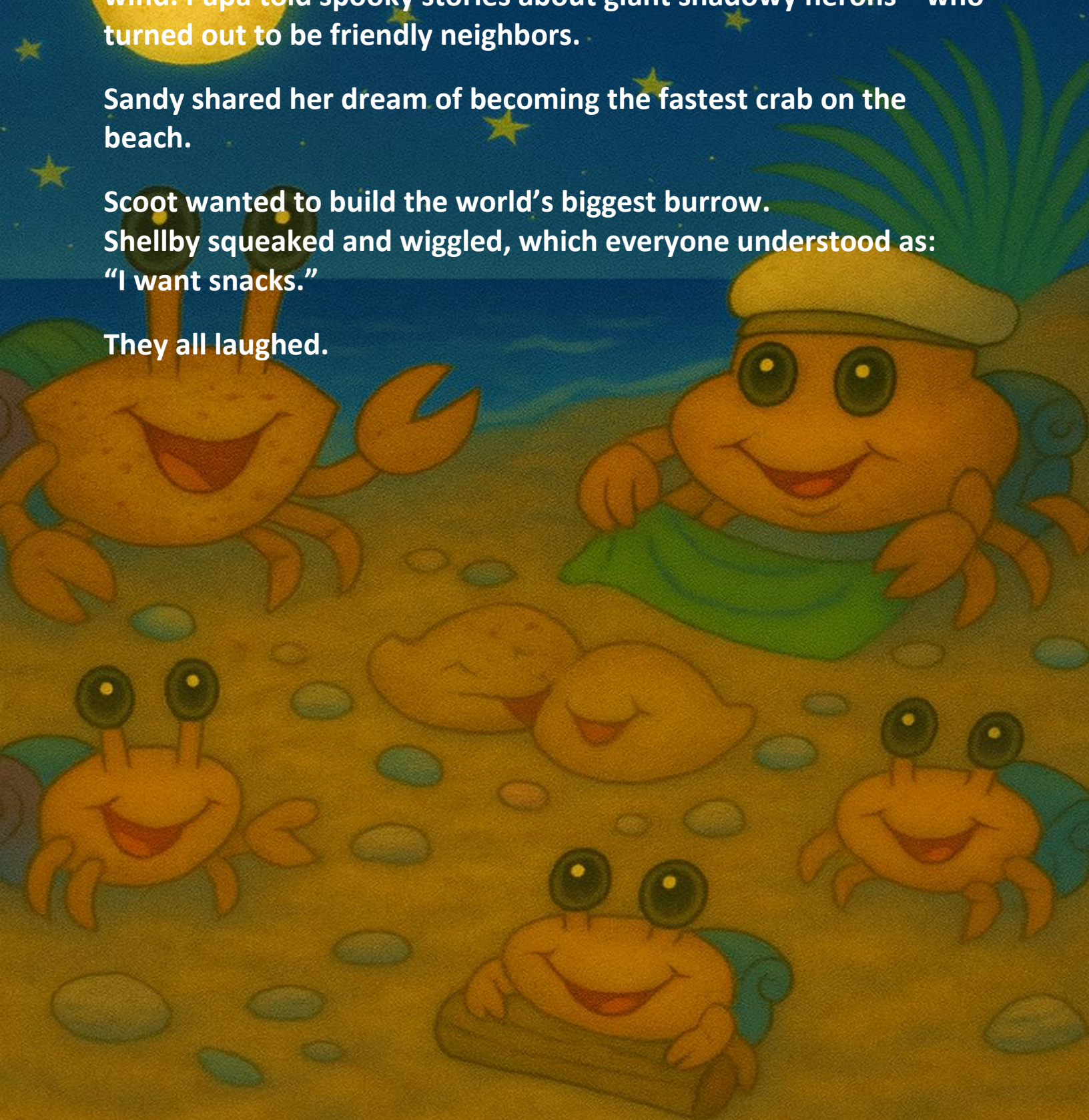
Stories Under the Stars

Mama told tales of crab ancestors who could run faster than the wind. Papa told spooky stories about giant shadowy herons—who turned out to be friendly neighbors.

Sandy shared her dream of becoming the fastest crab on the beach.

Scout wanted to build the world's biggest burrow.
Shellby squeaked and wiggled, which everyone understood as:
“I want snacks.”

They all laughed.



The Midnight Beach Parade

Suddenly the sand began to tremble—just a little.

“What’s that?” Sandy whispered.

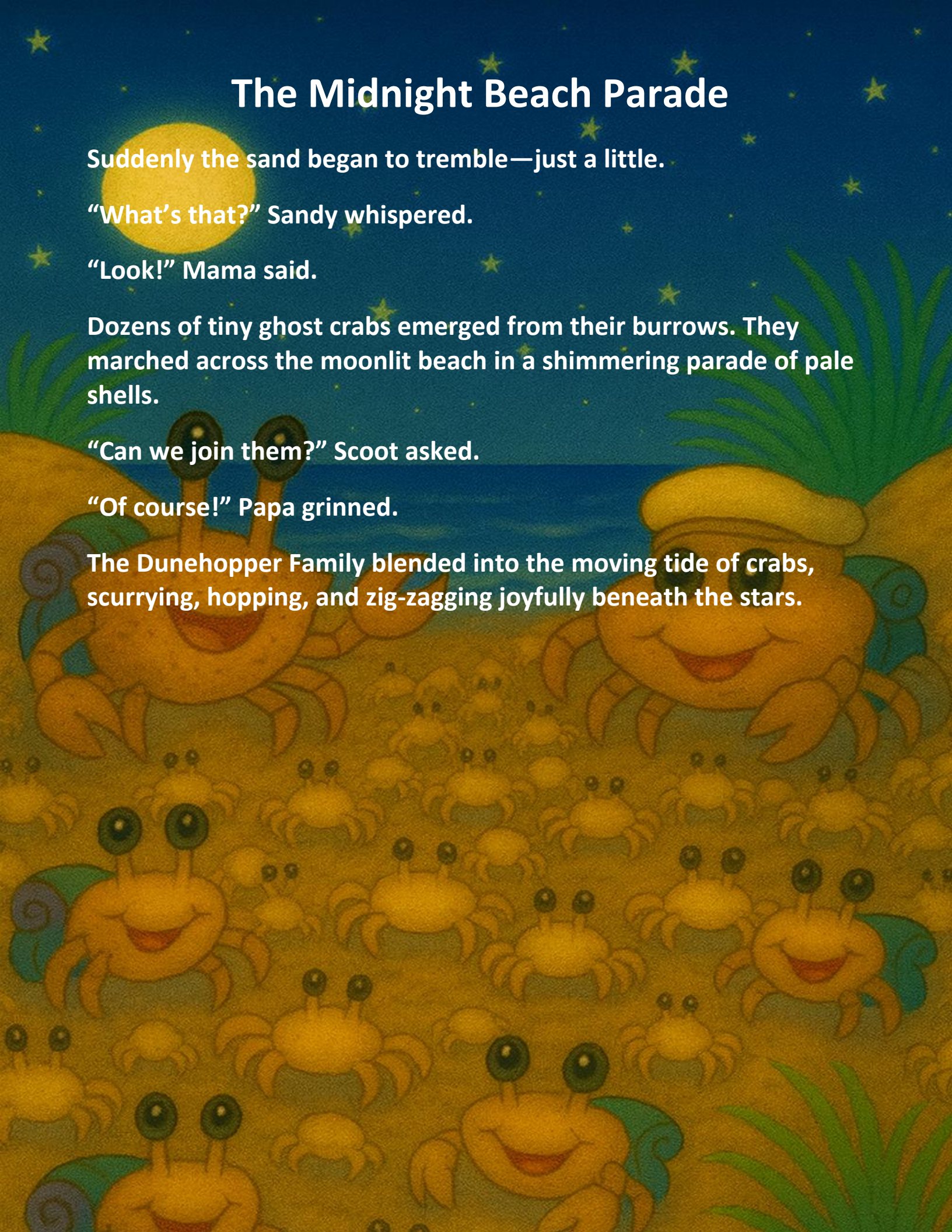
“Look!” Mama said.

Dozens of tiny ghost crabs emerged from their burrows. They marched across the moonlit beach in a shimmering parade of pale shells.

“Can we join them?” Scoot asked.

“Of course!” Papa grinned.

The Dunehopper Family blended into the moving tide of crabs, scurrying, hopping, and zig-zagging joyfully beneath the stars.



Driftwood Dreams

After the parade, the family returned to their campsite. They snuggled together on their seaweed blanket.

The ocean hummed a sleepy lullaby.

The plankton lights dimmed.

The warm sand wrapped around them like a hug.

Mama whispered, "This is what memories are made of."

Papa nodded.

"Camping with you is the best adventure of all."

And as the first hints of sunrise brushed the sky, the Dunehopper Ghost Crab Family drifted into peaceful, sandy, seaside dreams.

