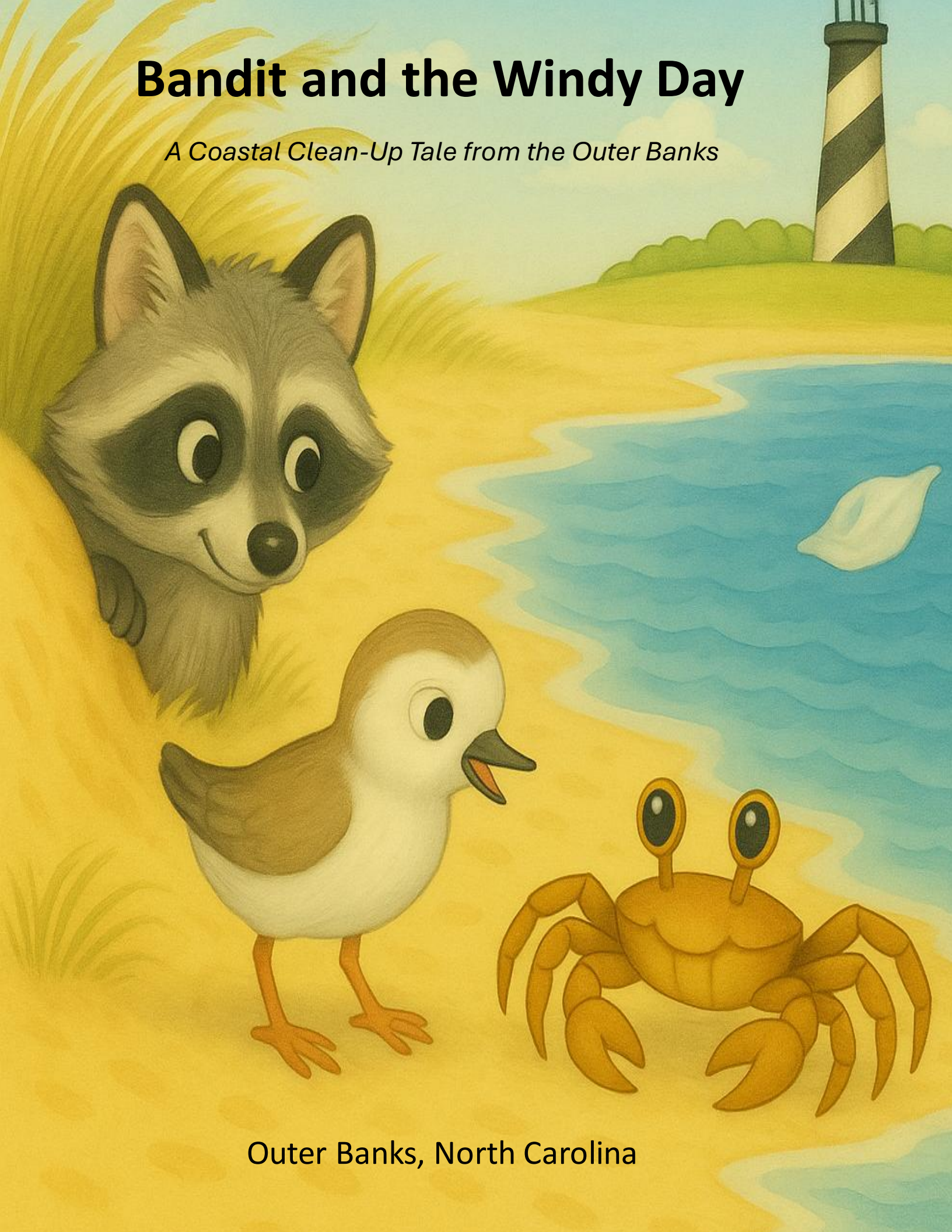


Bandit and the Windy Day

A Coastal Clean-Up Tale from the Outer Banks



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 breezy morning in the Outer Banks, a curious raccoon named Bandit poked his head out from behind a sand dune. The wind ruffled his fur and made the sea oats sway like dancers.



As he walked down the street, he spotted trouble.

"Oh no," Bandit said. "These bins are *bursting!*"

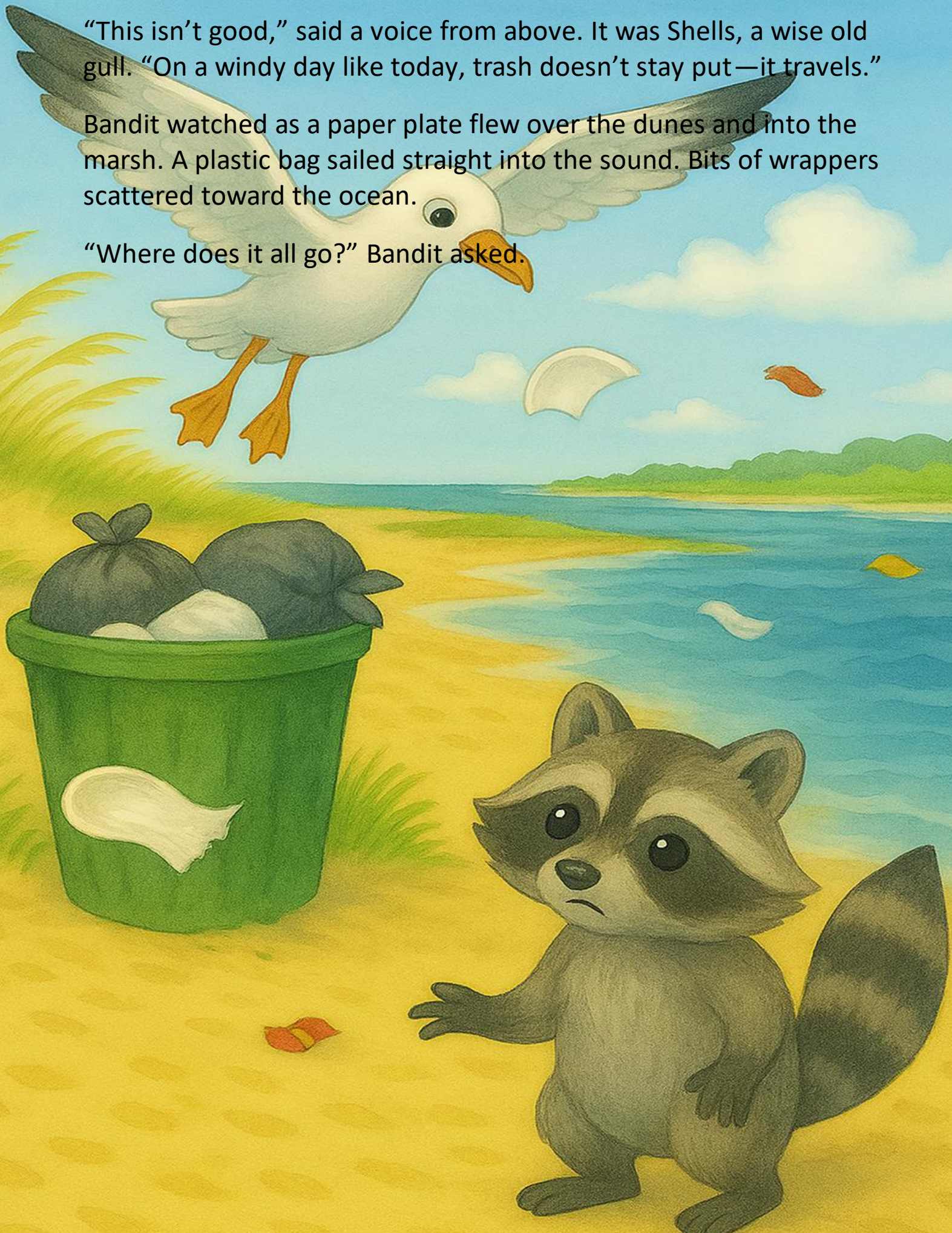
Lids were missing, bags were left beside the cans, and bits of trash were already fluttering into the wind. A plastic cup bounced down the road. A crumpled chip bag spiraled like a kite.



“This isn’t good,” said a voice from above. It was Shells, a wise old gull. “On a windy day like today, trash doesn’t stay put—it travels.”

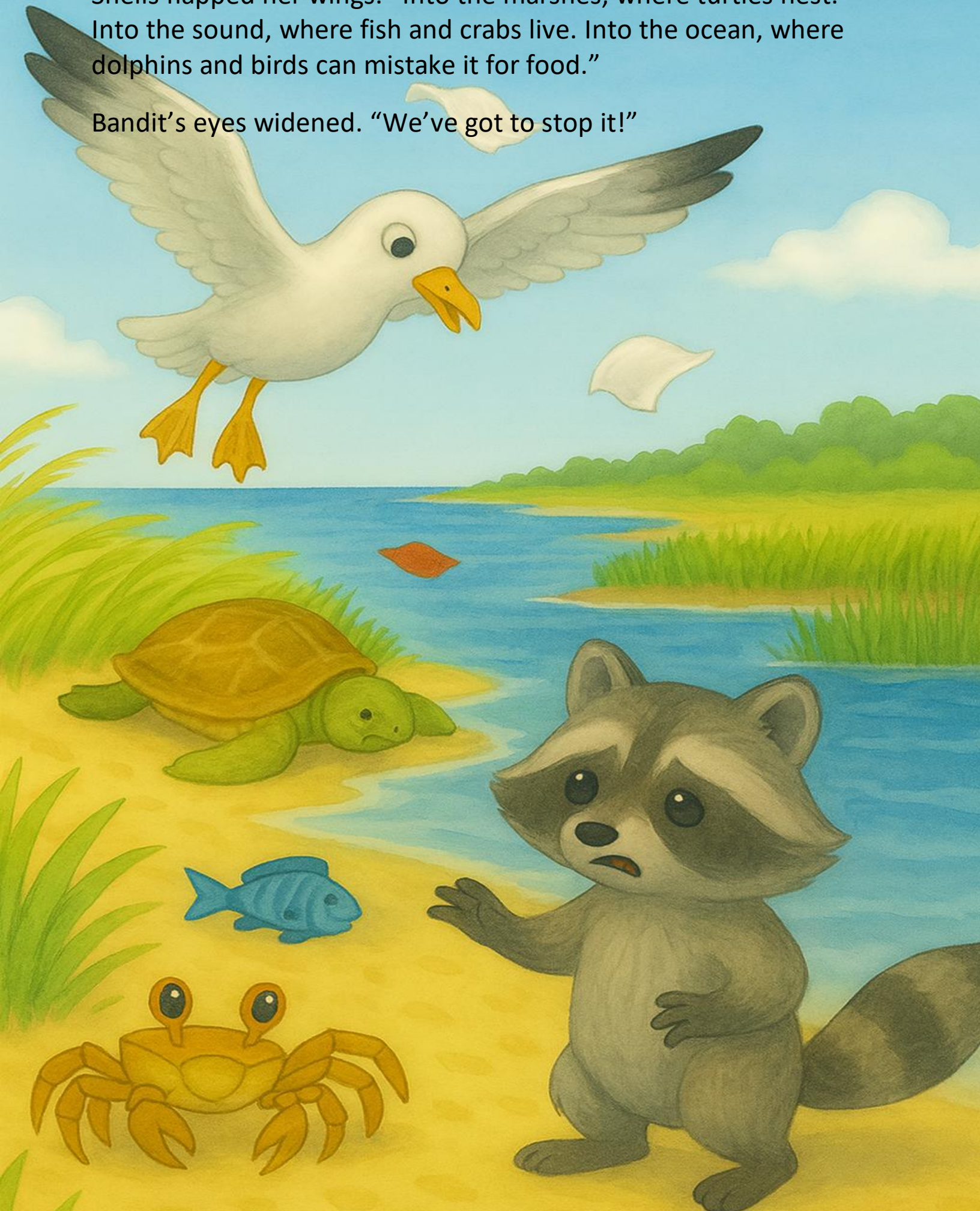
Bandit watched as a paper plate flew over the dunes and into the marsh. A plastic bag sailed straight into the sound. Bits of wrappers scattered toward the ocean.

“Where does it all go?” Bandit asked.



Shells flapped her wings. “Into the marshes, where turtles nest. Into the sound, where fish and crabs live. Into the ocean, where dolphins and birds can mistake it for food.”

Bandit’s eyes widened. “We’ve got to stop it!”



Together, Bandit and Shells gathered their friends: Sandy the crab, Gabby the goose, and Midge the marsh mouse.

They worked as a team—tugging lids back onto cans, tucking trash bags inside, and reminding the humans with little signs:

“Secure your trash! Lids on tight!”

“Don’t overflow—close the can!”

“No loose bags—tie them up and toss them inside!”



The wind still howled, but the streets stayed clean. No bags flew. No cups tumbled. No wrappers reached the sea.

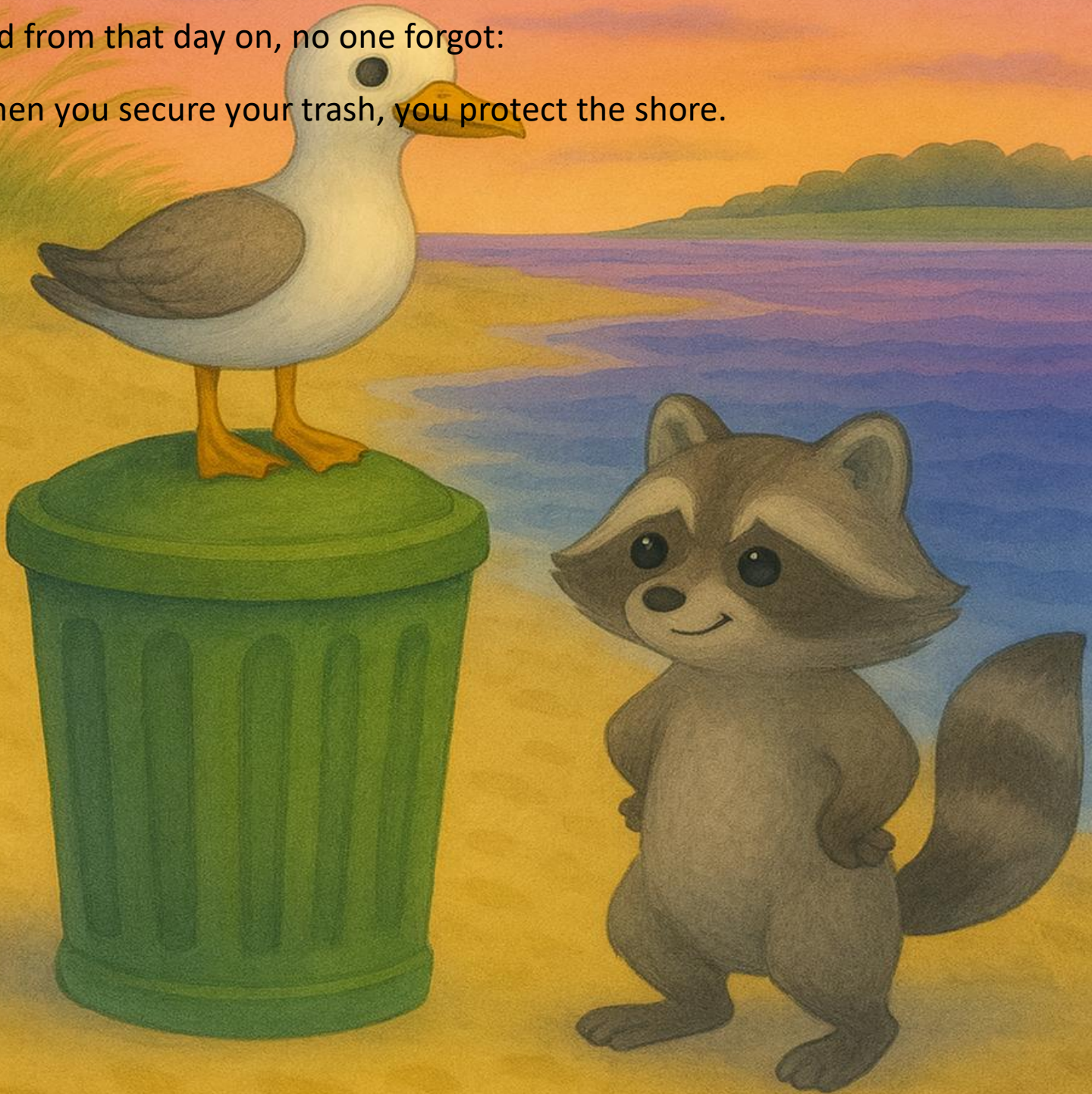
That evening, Bandit stood proudly by a sealed trash can.

"Turns out," he grinned, "being tidy protects more than just streets. It protects our whole home."

Shells nodded. "From the dunes to the deep, every bit of care helps."

And from that day on, no one forgot:

When you secure your trash, you protect the shore.



Did You Know?

In the **Outer Banks**, the wind is super strong—sometimes strong enough to blow trash right out of the can!

When lids aren't closed, the wind can:

- Blow a paper cup **down the street**
- Carry a chip bag **over the dunes**
- Send a plastic bag **into the ocean**

Even a small breeze can make trash travel far—and that trash can hurt turtles, birds, and crabs who might think it's food.

But here's the good news:

If we **close the lid** and **tie the bags**, we can keep our beaches, marshes, and ocean clean!

Be a Trash Hero:

1. Always close the lid tight.
2. Don't overflow the can.
3. Tie your trash bags before tossing them in.

When you keep trash inside the can, you're helping **protect every animal**.

