

Respect All Creatures

An Outer Banks Children's Story about Respecting all Creatures



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.

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



One sunny morning, Juanita walked along the sandy path through the dunes, her bare feet brushing over sea oats swaying in the wind. She carried her little bucket, ready for an adventure.

First, she saw a ghost crab scuttling sideways into its burrow. “Don’t worry, little crab,” she said softly. “I won’t step on your home.”



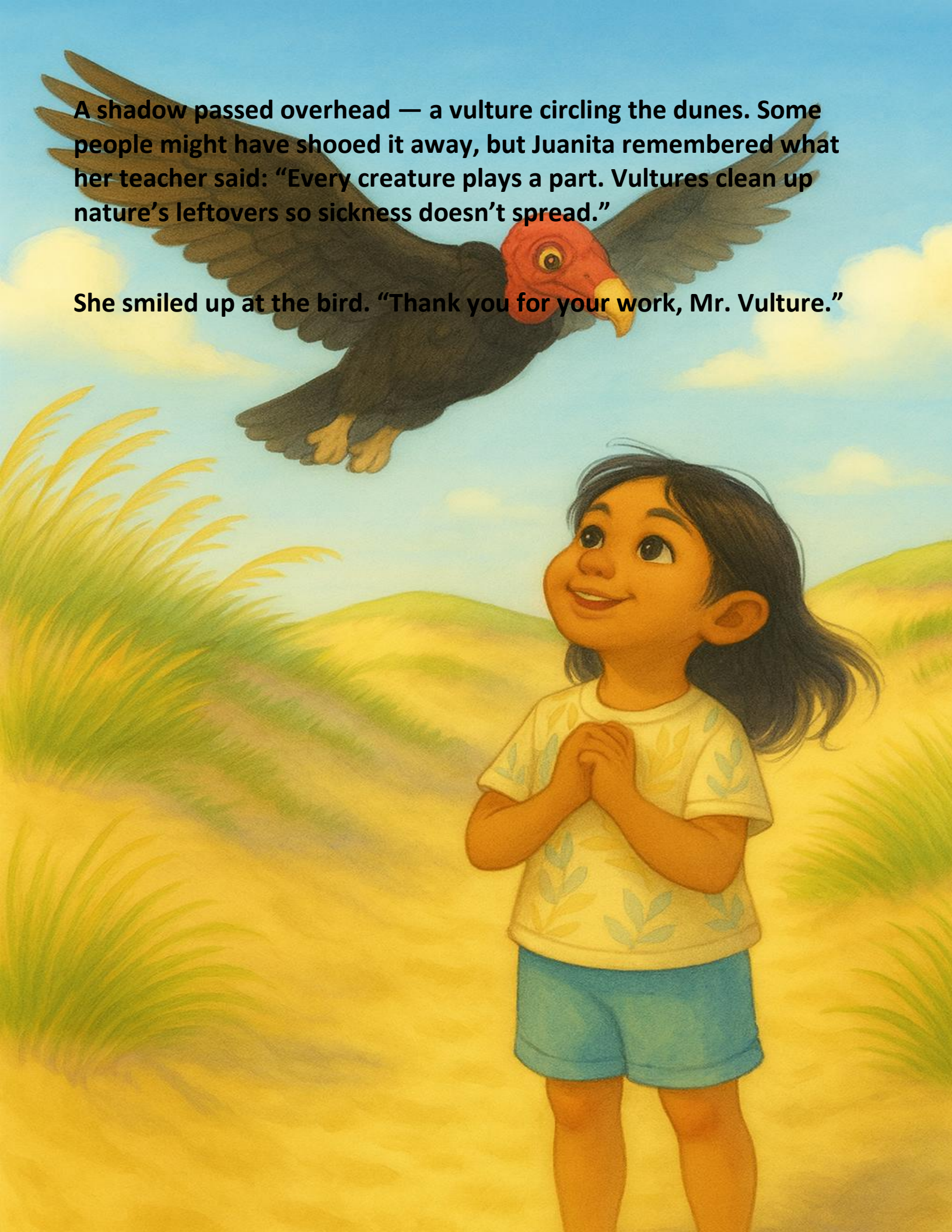
Next, a pelican swooped low and plunged into the waves, catching a silvery fish. Juanita laughed and clapped quietly so she wouldn't startle it.

"Good job, Mr. Pelican!" she whispered.



A shadow passed overhead — a vulture circling the dunes. Some people might have shooed it away, but Juanita remembered what her teacher said: “Every creature plays a part. Vultures clean up nature’s leftovers so sickness doesn’t spread.”

She smiled up at the bird. “Thank you for your work, Mr. Vulture.”



A few steps later, she heard a rattle. Juanita froze. In the sunlight lay a rattlesnake, coiled and calm, its tail shaking gently to say, "Stay back." Her heart beat fast, but she didn't scream or throw a rock like she'd seen others do.

Instead, she whispered, "It's okay, rattlesnake. I won't hurt you. Don't worry—I won't let anyone hurt you either." She took a careful step backward and watched as the snake slithered peacefully into the tall grass.



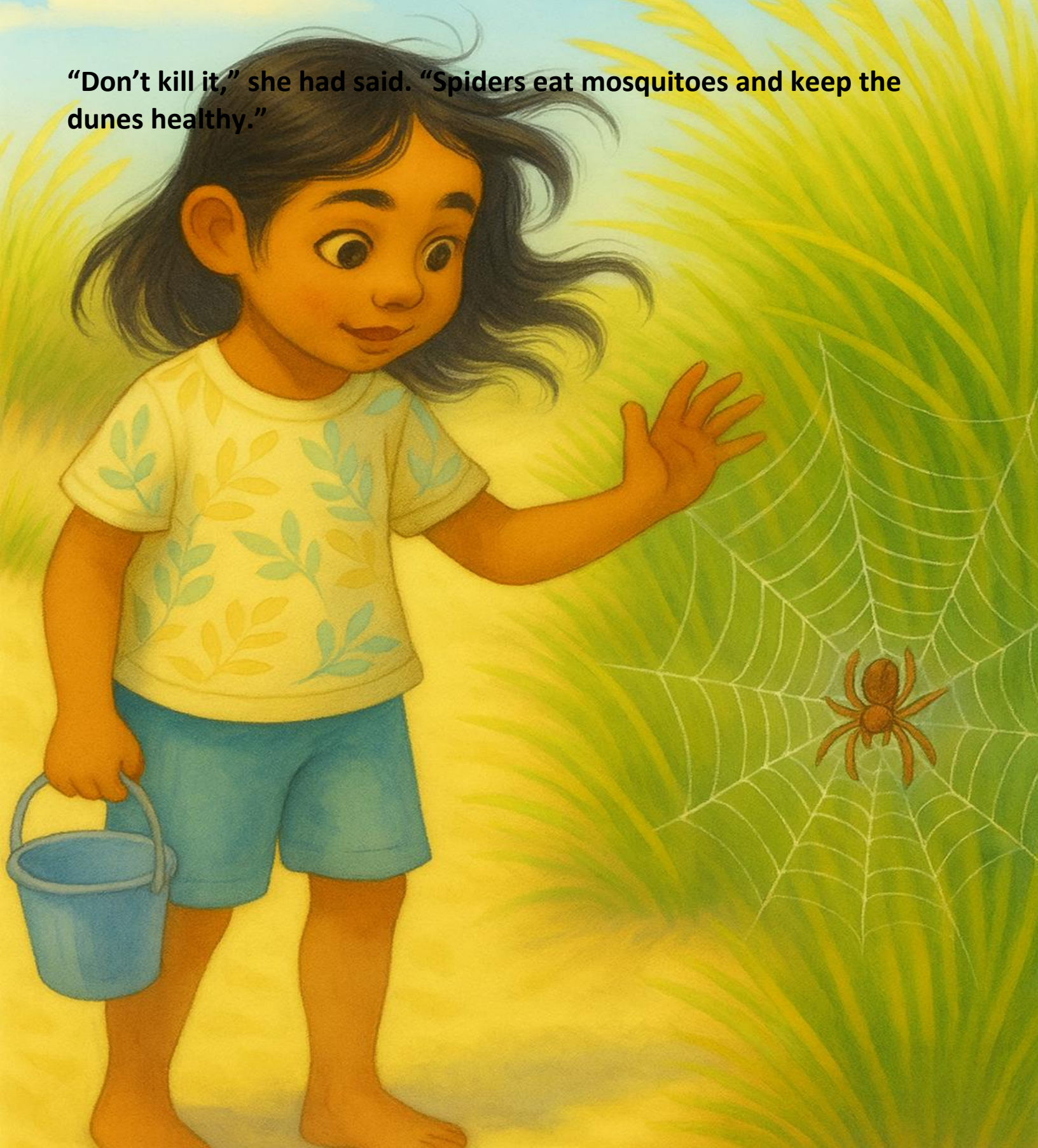
Near the shoreline, Juanita spotted a jellyfish glistening on the wet sand. "Some people poke or stomp jellyfish," she said sadly, "but that's not kind."

She used her shovel to scoop a little water around it and called a lifeguard for help. "Every creature deserves a chance to live."



Among the sea oats, a spider spun a web that sparkled in the sun. Juanita's brother once tried to crush a web like that, but she stopped him.

"Don't kill it," she had said. "Spiders eat mosquitoes and keep the dunes healthy."



A little farther down the beach, Juanita found a plastic bottle near a turtle nest.

She picked it up and placed it in her bucket.

“No one should have to live with trash in their home,” she said softly.



She waved to dolphins leaping beyond the waves and watched sandpipers run along the surf, their tiny feet dancing across the sand.



That evening, Juanita told her mom, “Even the rattlesnake and the jellyfish shouldn’t be killed. They just want to live in peace.”

Her mom smiled. “That’s right, sweetheart. When we protect life—all life—the whole world stays in balance.”

**And from that day on, Juanita always remembered:
Every creature has a place.
Every creature deserves love.
Don’t kill—just respect, protect, and let them live.**



Did You Know?

- Rattlesnakes aren't aggressive — they only rattle to warn others to stay back. They help control rodent populations and keep ecosystems balanced.
- Vultures are nature's clean-up crew! By eating dead animals, they stop diseases from spreading and recycle nutrients back into the environment.
- Spiders keep insect numbers under control, preventing swarms of mosquitoes and flies. Without them, beaches and dunes would have far more pests.
- Jellyfish play a big role in the ocean's food chain — sea turtles, sunfish, and some seabirds depend on them for food.
- Ghost crabs clean beaches by scavenging leftover debris and dead fish. They're also an important meal for shorebirds.
- Every animal has a job. Even the ones that look scary or strange have a purpose in nature's balance.
- "Don't kill — just respect." When we stay calm, give space, and protect every living thing, we help the coast — and the world — stay alive and healthy.



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