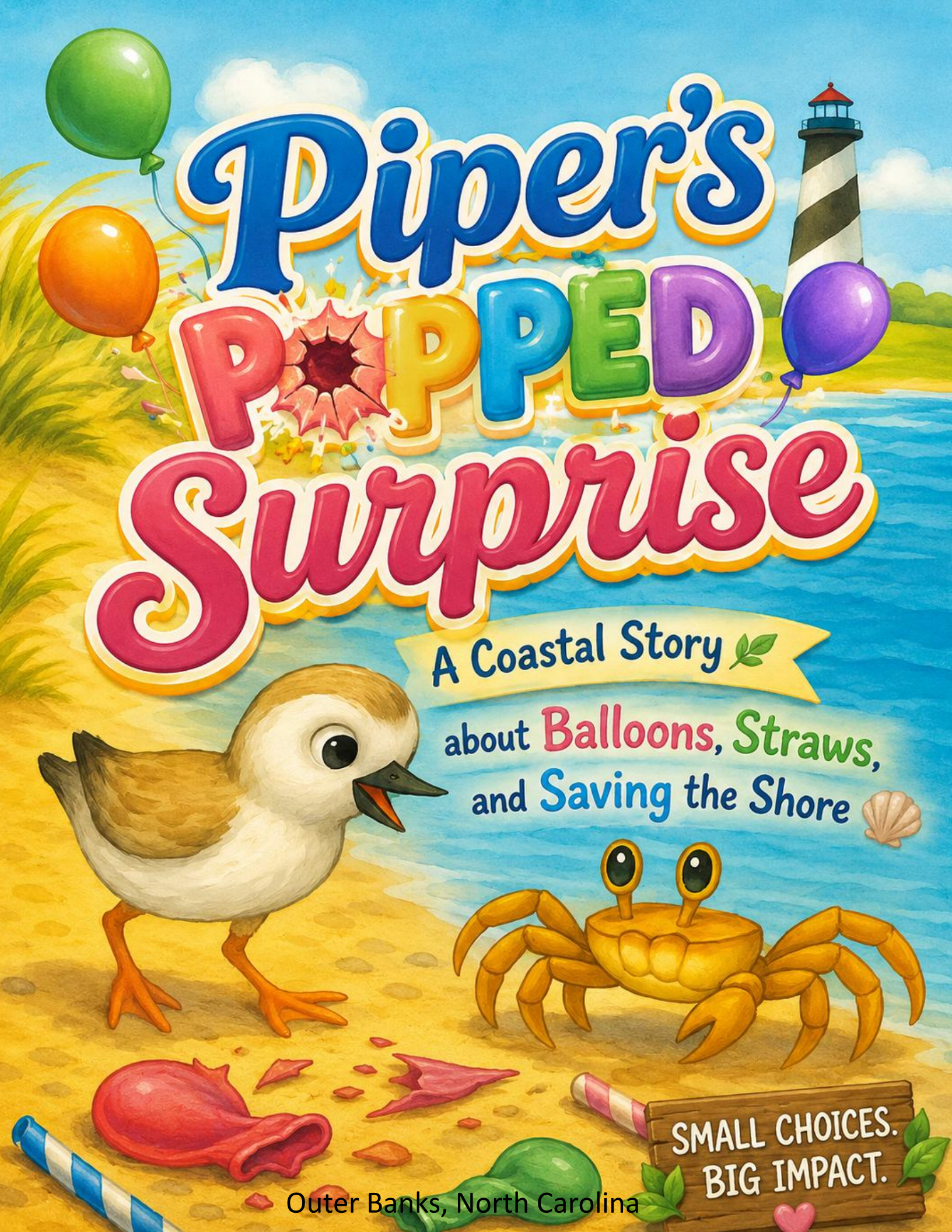


The background of the entire page is a colorful illustration of a beach. In the upper right, a black and white striped lighthouse stands on a grassy dune overlooking the ocean. To the left, a green balloon and an orange balloon float in the sky. The title 'Piper's Popped Surprise' is written in large, bubbly, multi-colored letters. Below the title, a yellow banner reads 'A Coastal Story'. Further down, text describes the book's themes: 'about Balloons, Straws, and Saving the Shore'. In the foreground, a small brown and white bird stands on the sand. To its right, a yellow crab is also on the sand. At the bottom, there are illustrations of a broken red balloon, a blue and white striped straw, and a green balloon. A wooden sign in the bottom right corner says 'SMALL CHOICES. BIG IMPACT.' with a small pink heart next to it. The text 'Outer Banks, North Carolina' is at the very bottom.

Piper's Popped Surprise

A Coastal Story

about **Balloons**, **Straws**,
and **Saving the Shore**



SMALL CHOICES.
BIG IMPACT.

Outer Banks, North Carolina

Piper's Popped Surprise: A Coastal Story about Balloons, Straws, and Saving the Shore

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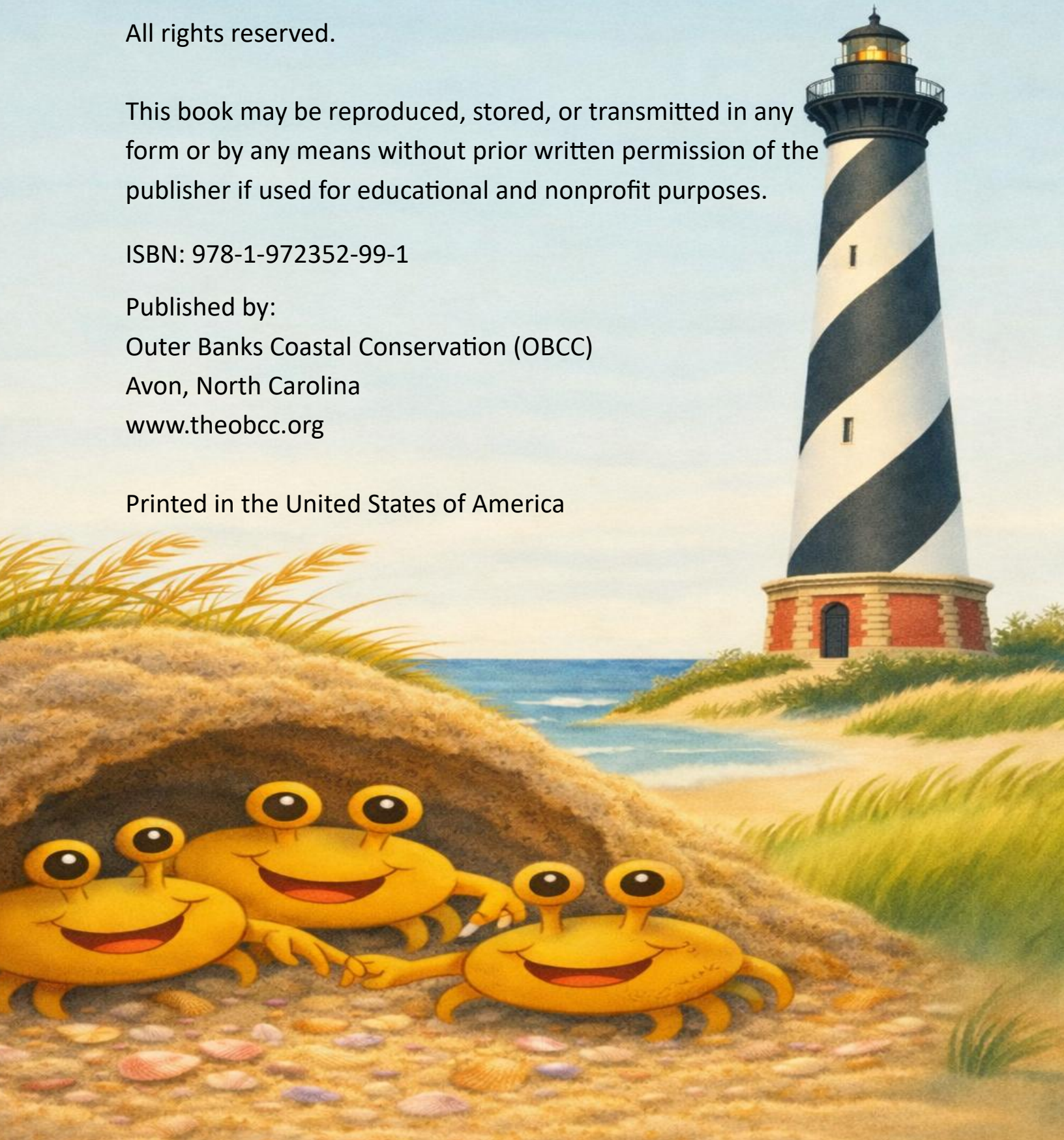
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About This Book

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.

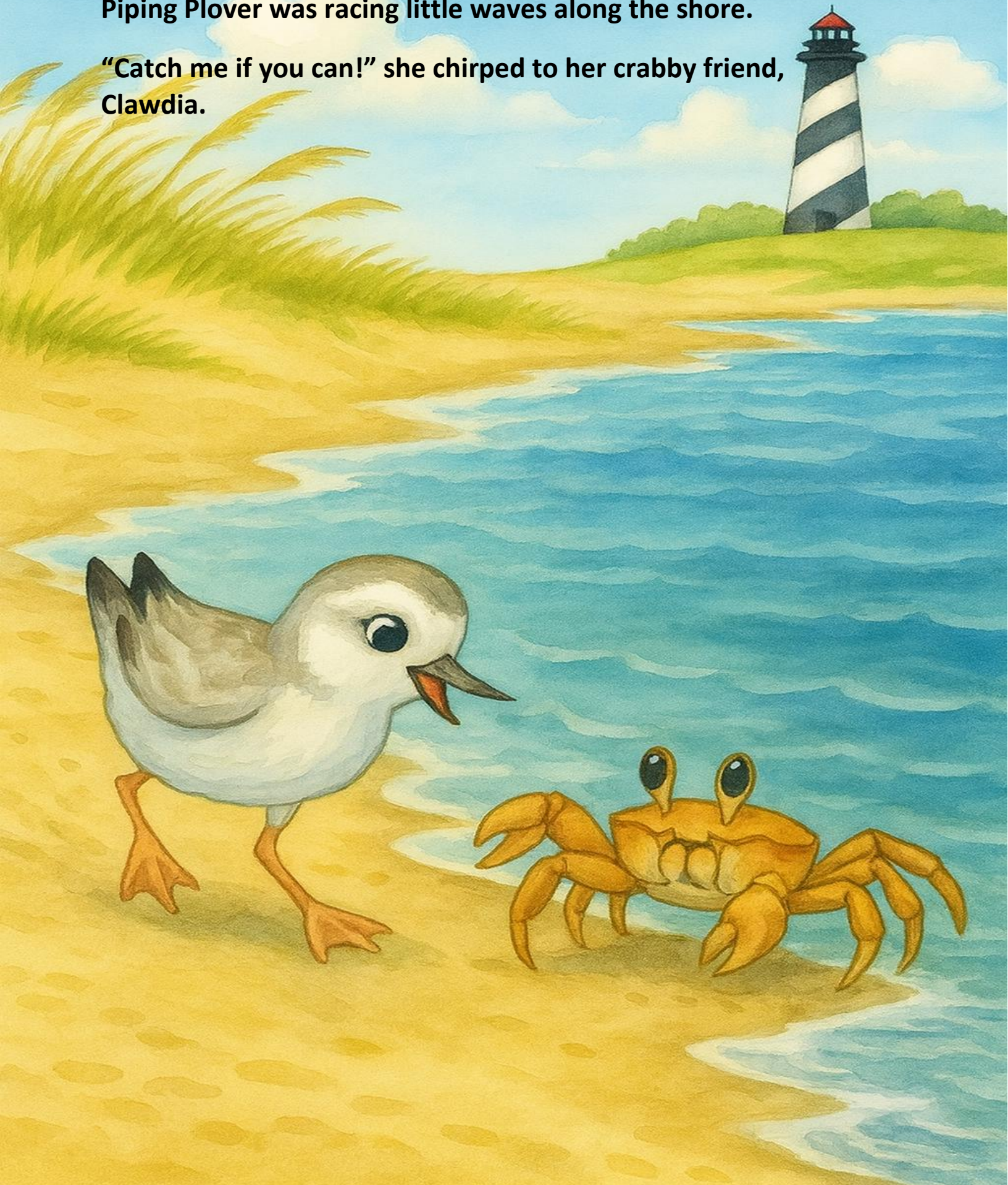
All materials in this book may be freely downloaded, shared, printed and used for educational or nonprofit purposes.

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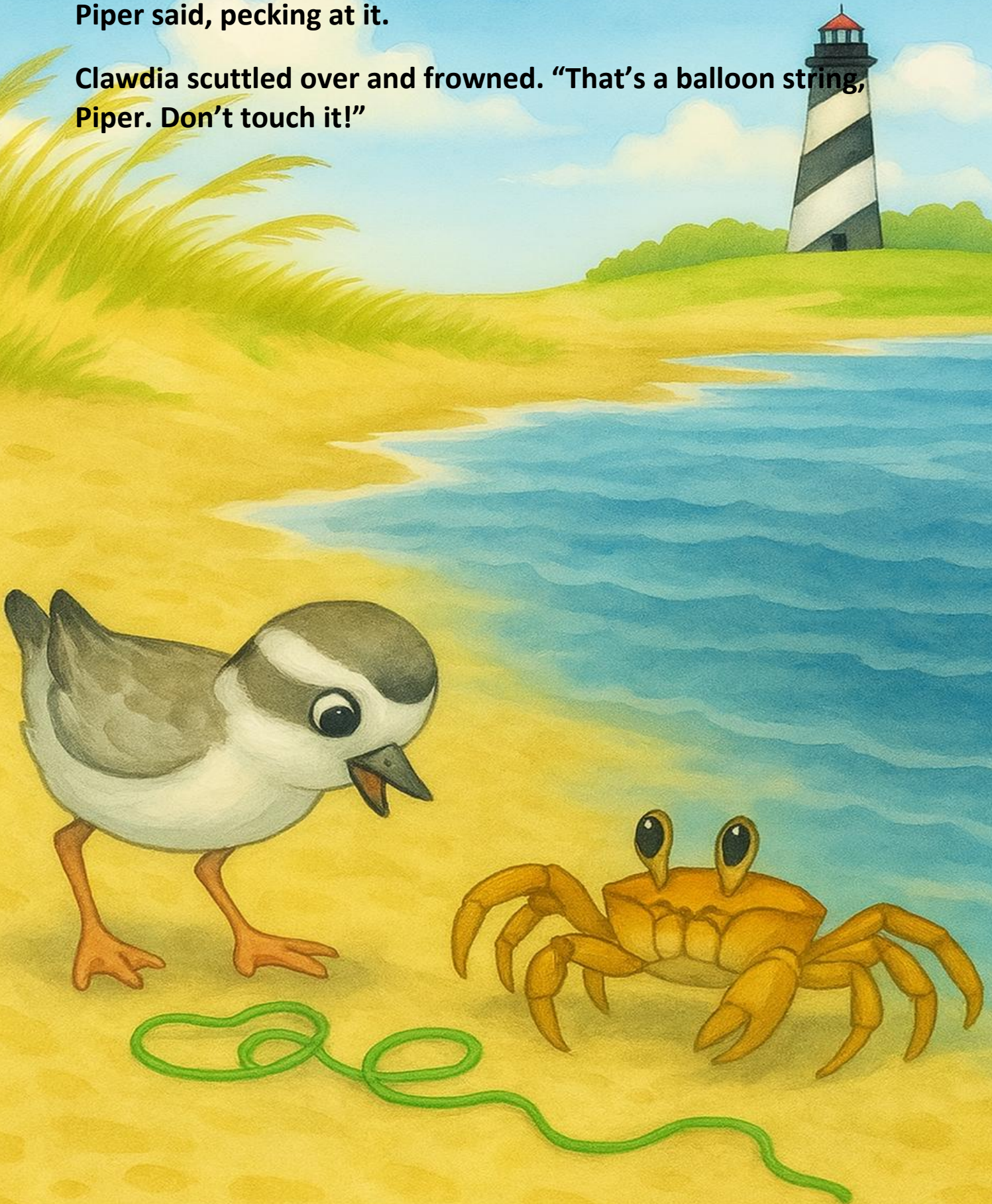
It was a sunny morning on the Outer Banks, and Piper the Piping Plover was racing little waves along the shore.

“Catch me if you can!” she chirped to her crabby friend, Clawdia.



Something shiny was stuck in the sand. "Ooh! What's this?"
Piper said, pecking at it.

Clawdia scuttled over and frowned. "That's a balloon string,
Piper. Don't touch it!"



Just then, a breeze picked up the balloon. It whipped around wildly—snap!—and tangled around Piper's tiny leg!

"Ow! I can't move!" she cried.



Clawdia quickly pinched the string and tugged it free.

Piper shook her feathers. “That was scary! Why would someone leave a balloon here?”

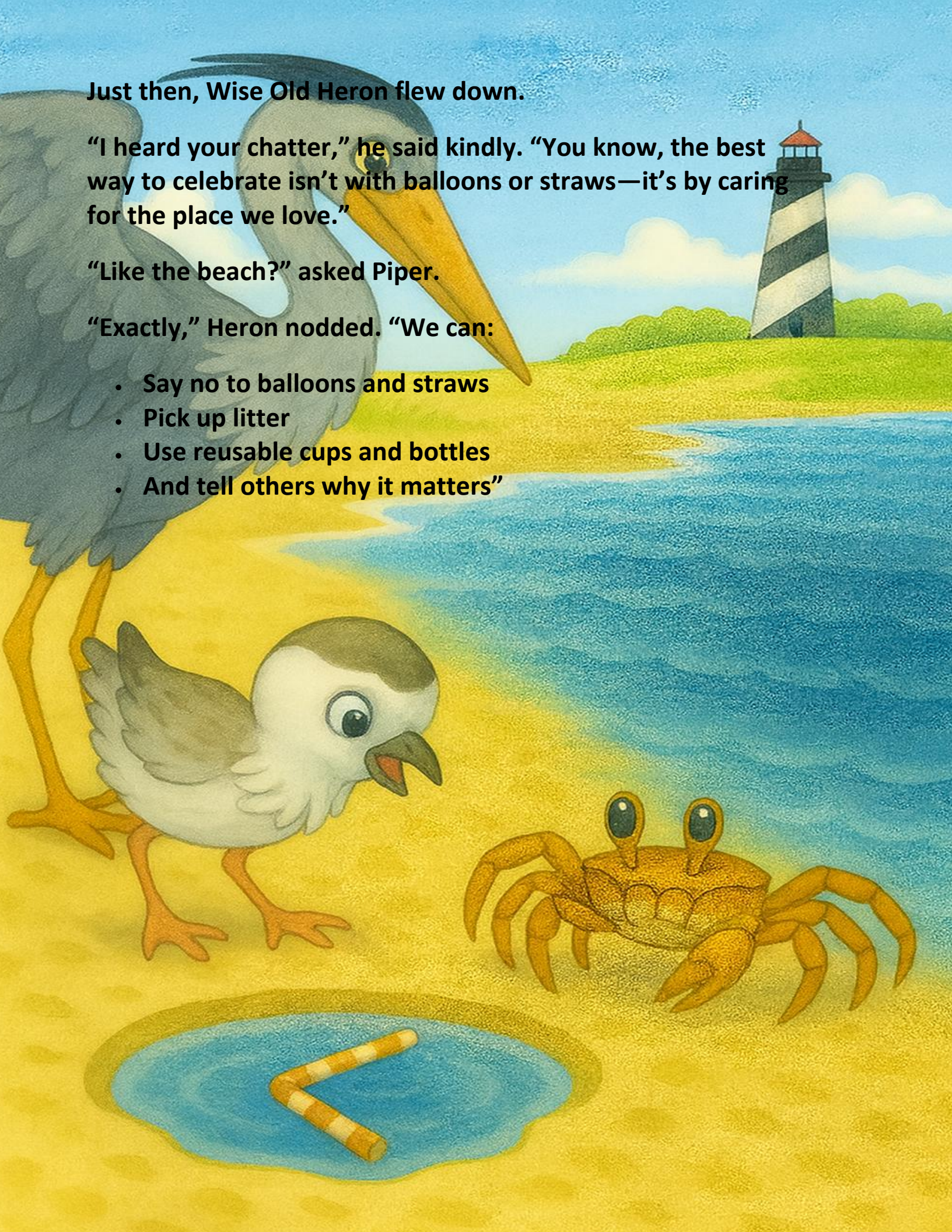
Clawdia sighed. “Sometimes balloons float away during parties and end up in the ocean. Sea turtles think they’re jellyfish and eat them. It can make them very sick... or worse.”



Piper's eyes grew wide. "And what about this other thing?" she said, pointing to a plastic straw bobbing in a tidepool.

"That's even worse," said Clawdia. "Straws don't break down. They can hurt fish, get stuck in birds' beaks, or tangle in nests."



A colorful illustration of a beach scene. In the background, a lighthouse with black and white stripes stands on a grassy hill under a blue sky with white clouds. In the foreground, a large grey heron with a long yellow beak stands on the left. A small white chick with a brown headband and orange beak stands in the center. A brown crab with large eyes is on the right. In the bottom center, a small blue puddle contains a discarded cigarette.

Just then, Wise Old Heron flew down.

“I heard your chatter,” he said kindly. “You know, the best way to celebrate isn’t with balloons or straws—it’s by caring for the place we love.”

“Like the beach?” asked Piper.

“Exactly,” Heron nodded. “We can:

- Say no to balloons and straws**
- Pick up litter**
- Use reusable cups and bottles**
- And tell others why it matters”**

Piper perked up. “We can still party—just in a safer way!”

That afternoon, the friends threw a “Coastal Celebration” with seaweed streamers, shell confetti, and a big sandy cake made by Clawdia.

No plastic. No pollution. Just laughter and love for the shore.



And from then on, Piper always told every creature she met:



"Skip the balloon. Save a loon."



"Say 'no straw, hoorah!'"



"Because a clean coast is the best party of all."



Fun Fact

Balloons and plastic straws are some of the top polluters on beaches. You can help protect sea life by using eco-friendly alternatives like paper decorations and reusable straws, or better no straws.



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Piper's Popped Surprise: A Coastal Story about Balloons, Straws, and Saving the Shore

Piper the Piping Plover finds a balloon on the beach that gets tangled around her leg. Her friend Clawdia explains how balloons and plastic straws harm wildlife. Wise Old Heron teaches them safer ways to celebrate—like using reusable items and picking up litter. Piper and her friends throw a pollution-free beach party and spread the message:

“Skip the balloon. Save a loon.”

“Say ‘no straw, hoorah!’”

“A clean coast is the best party of all.”

The story encourages children to protect the shore with eco-friendly choices.

About the Publisher

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