

# A New Tide of Friends

A Story of Hope and Welcome on 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](http://www.theobcc.org).





The sun had just risen over the Atlantic, turning the sky pink and gold. Lila and her brother Kai were helping their mom clean up Avon Beach. They filled buckets with washed-up bottles, tangled rope, and other trash on the beach.





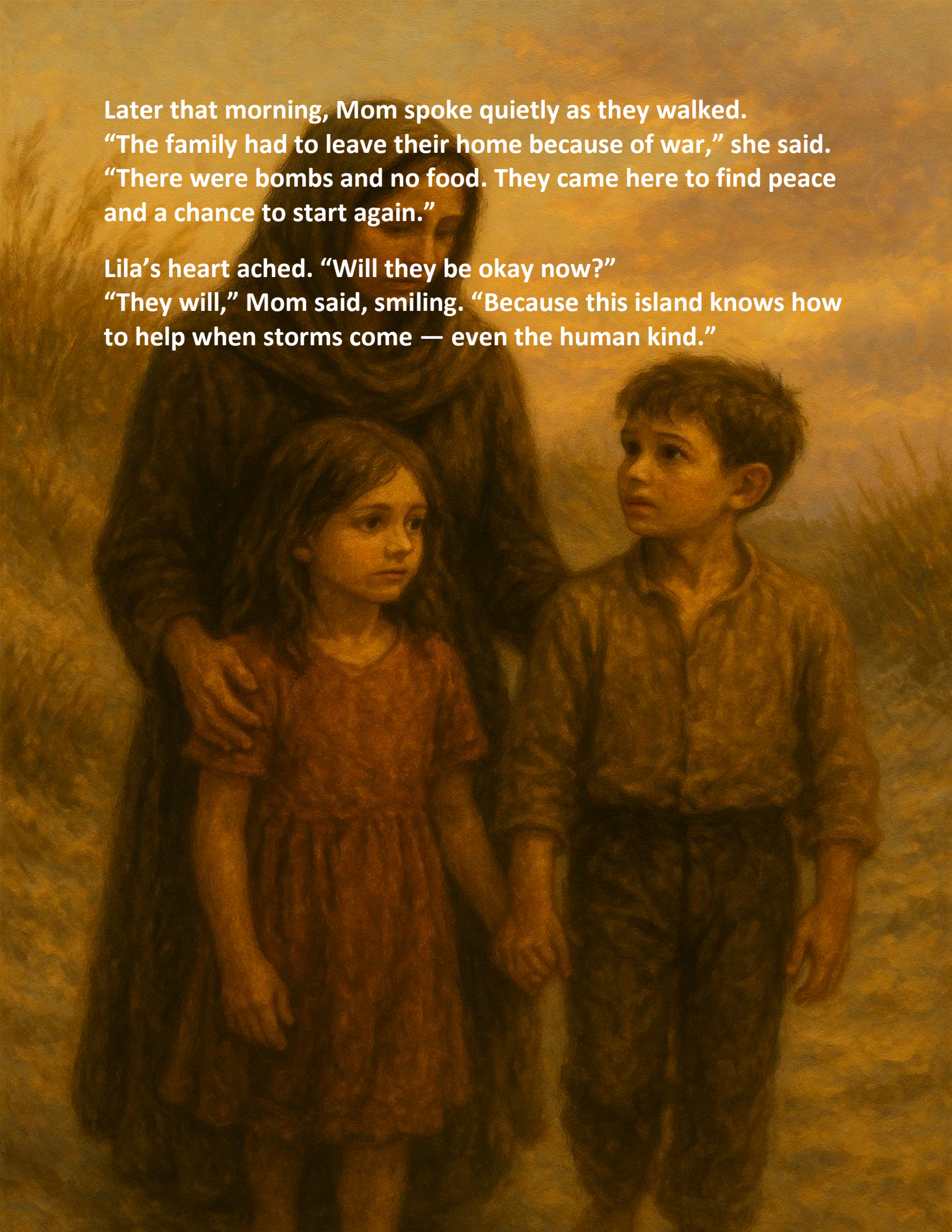
Just beyond the dunes, a small family stood together — a man, a woman, and two children — staring at the endless sea. Their clothes were worn, their faces tired, but their eyes were full of wonder.

“Who are they?” Kai asked.

“They just arrived here,” Mom said gently. “They came from far away — a place where it wasn’t safe to live anymore.”





A painting in a soft, painterly style. A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark shawl, stands behind two children. She has her arms around them. To her left is a young girl with long dark hair, wearing a reddish-brown dress. To her right is a young boy with short dark hair, wearing a brown shirt and dark pants. They are standing in a field with tall grass. The background is a hazy, golden-brown landscape under a soft sky. The overall mood is somber yet hopeful.

Later that morning, Mom spoke quietly as they walked.  
“The family had to leave their home because of war,” she said.  
“There were bombs and no food. They came here to find peace  
and a chance to start again.”

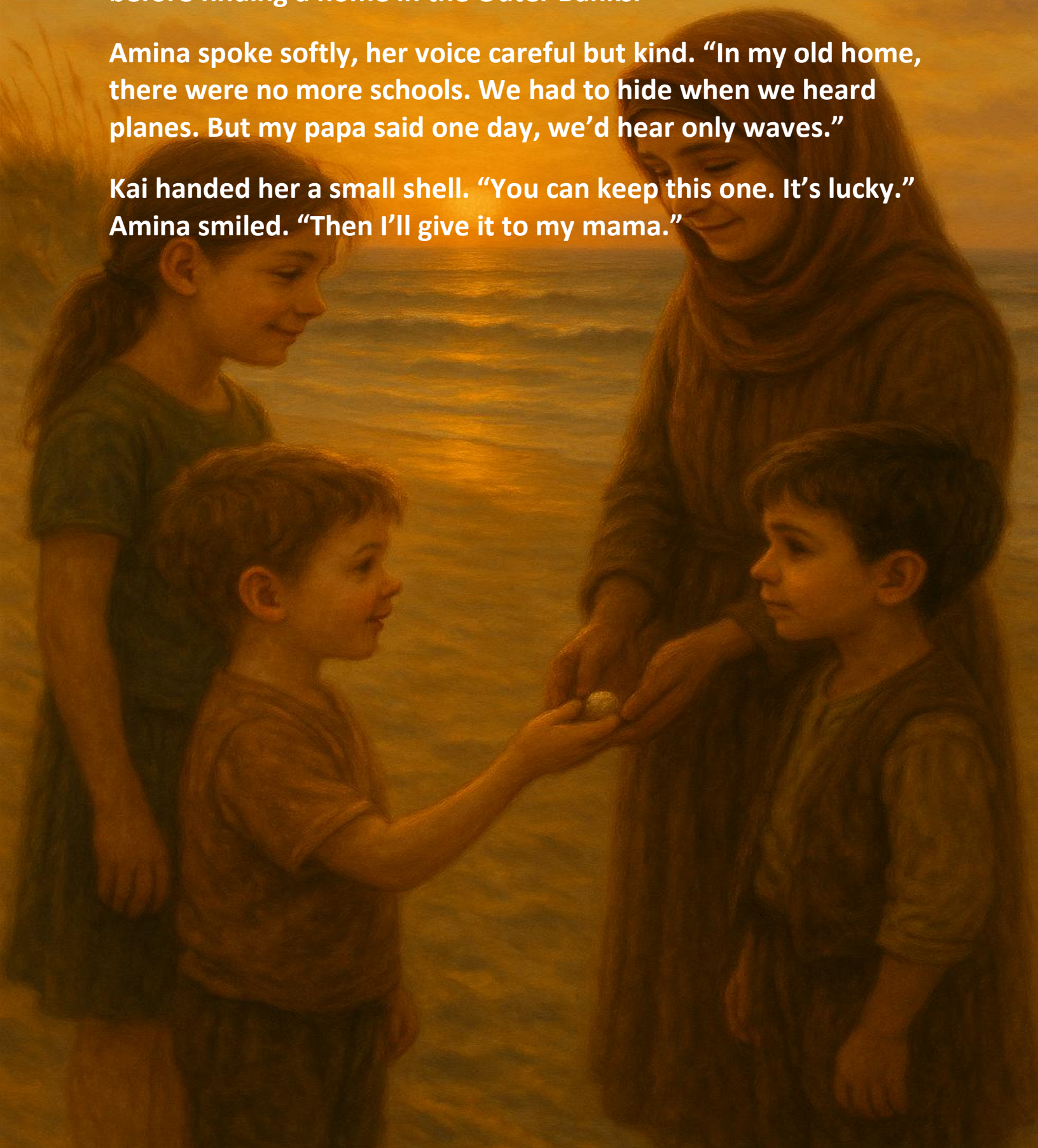
Lila’s heart ached. “Will they be okay now?”  
“They will,” Mom said, smiling. “Because this island knows how  
to help when storms come — even the human kind.”



The girl's name was Amina, and her little brother was Samir. They had crossed oceans and traveled through refugee camps before finding a home in the Outer Banks.

Amina spoke softly, her voice careful but kind. "In my old home, there were no more schools. We had to hide when we heard planes. But my papa said one day, we'd hear only waves."

Kai handed her a small shell. "You can keep this one. It's lucky." Amina smiled. "Then I'll give it to my mama."





That afternoon, Lila brought Amina a sandwich from their cooler. Amina's mom whispered, "Thank you," in accented English.

The children played in the surf, chasing gulls and laughter. Lila noticed Amina collecting bits of rope and driftwood, weaving them together. "In my country, we made baskets to carry rice," Amina said. "Now, I'll make one to hold shells."

Lila grinned. "Let's fill it with good things."



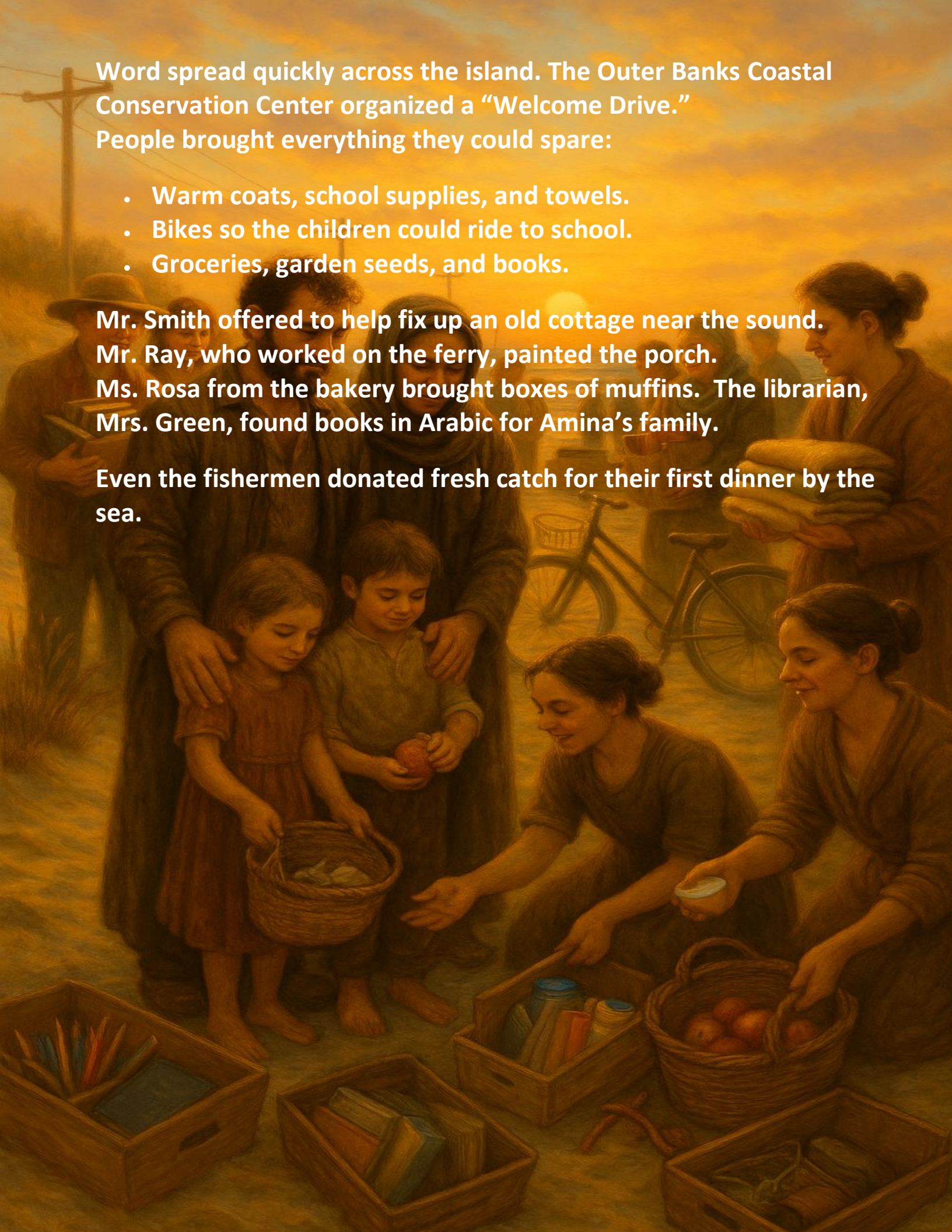


Word spread quickly across the island. The Outer Banks Coastal Conservation Center organized a “Welcome Drive.” People brought everything they could spare:

- Warm coats, school supplies, and towels.
- Bikes so the children could ride to school.
- Groceries, garden seeds, and books.

Mr. Smith offered to help fix up an old cottage near the sound. Mr. Ray, who worked on the ferry, painted the porch. Ms. Rosa from the bakery brought boxes of muffins. The librarian, Mrs. Green, found books in Arabic for Amina’s family.

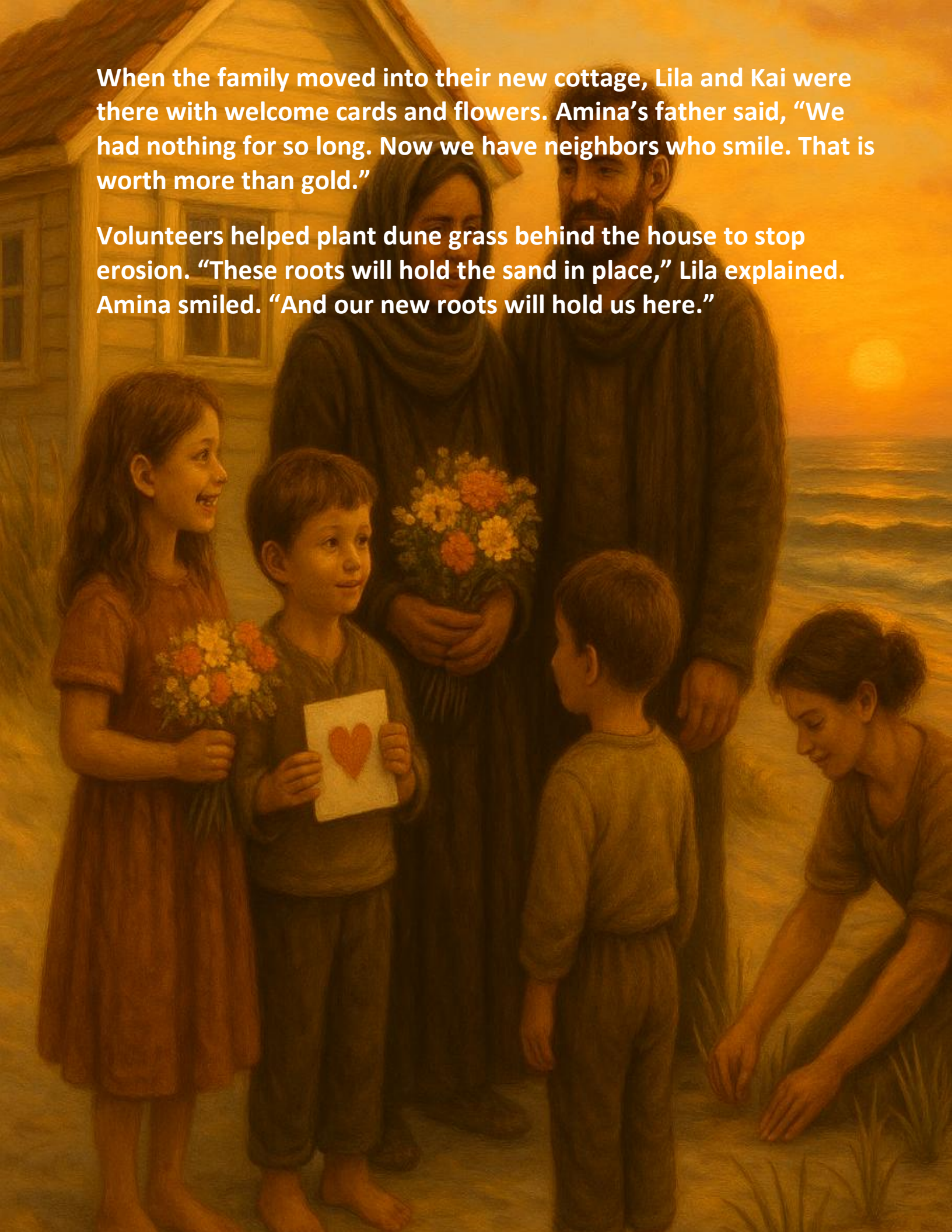
Even the fishermen donated fresh catch for their first dinner by the sea.





When the family moved into their new cottage, Lila and Kai were there with welcome cards and flowers. Amina's father said, "We had nothing for so long. Now we have neighbors who smile. That is worth more than gold."

Volunteers helped plant dune grass behind the house to stop erosion. "These roots will hold the sand in place," Lila explained. Amina smiled. "And our new roots will hold us here."





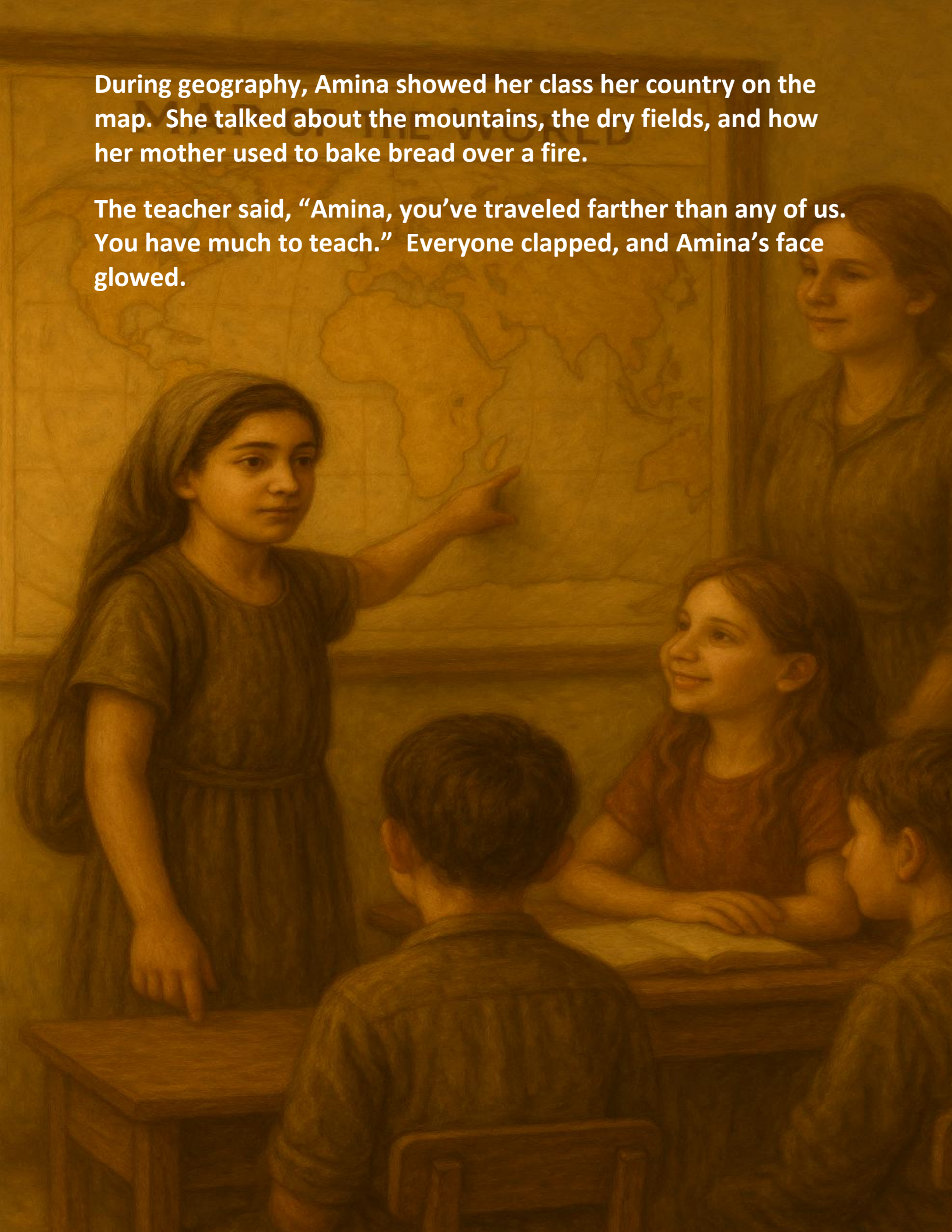
On Amina's first day at Pelican Bay Elementary, she wore her best dress and carried a backpack full of donated supplies. Some kids whispered — but Lila sat beside her. "This is my friend," she said proudly.





During geography, Amina showed her class her country on the map. She talked about the mountains, the dry fields, and how her mother used to bake bread over a fire.

The teacher said, “Amina, you’ve traveled farther than any of us. You have much to teach.” Everyone clapped, and Amina’s face glowed.





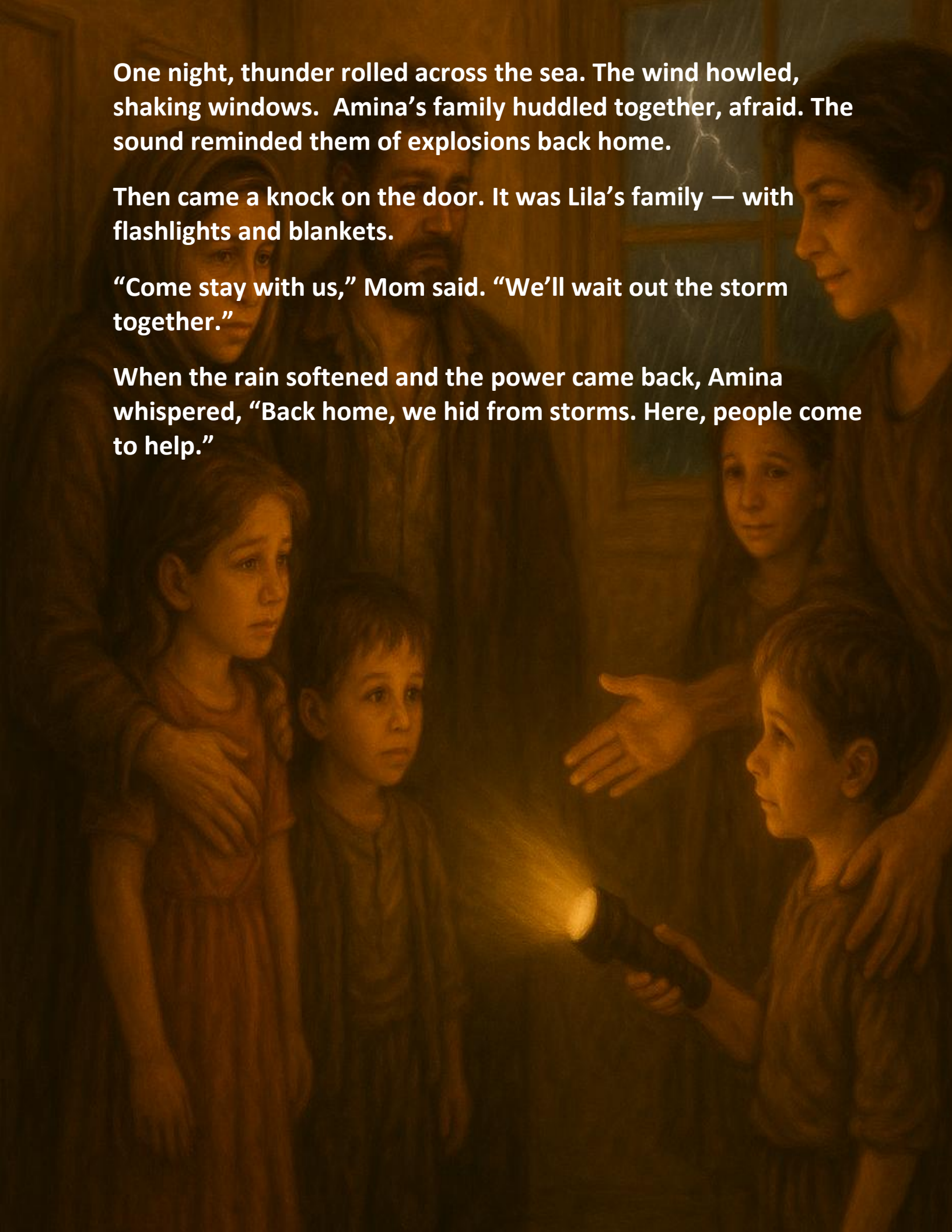


Soon, helping newcomers became part of island life:

- The church choir held a “Songs of Welcome” concert to raise money for refugee families.
- The local farm stand donated fresh vegetables each week.
- Kids collected gently used soccer balls for children in nearby shelters.
- Lila’s class started a “Pen Pal Project,” writing letters to refugee kids in other towns.
- Youth volunteers built birdhouses with recycled wood — “because everyone needs a safe home,” Kai said.

The island buzzed with kindness — proof that small acts can build big hope.



A painting depicting a family of six in a dimly lit room during a storm. A man and a woman stand in the background, looking concerned. In the foreground, three children are gathered. A young boy on the right holds a flashlight, casting a beam of light. A girl on the left and a younger child in the center look on with worry. The scene is filled with a sense of urgency and fear, emphasized by the dark, stormy background and the warm, yellow light from the flashlight.

One night, thunder rolled across the sea. The wind howled, shaking windows. Amina's family huddled together, afraid. The sound reminded them of explosions back home.

Then came a knock on the door. It was Lila's family — with flashlights and blankets.

"Come stay with us," Mom said. "We'll wait out the storm together."

When the rain softened and the power came back, Amina whispered, "Back home, we hid from storms. Here, people come to help."

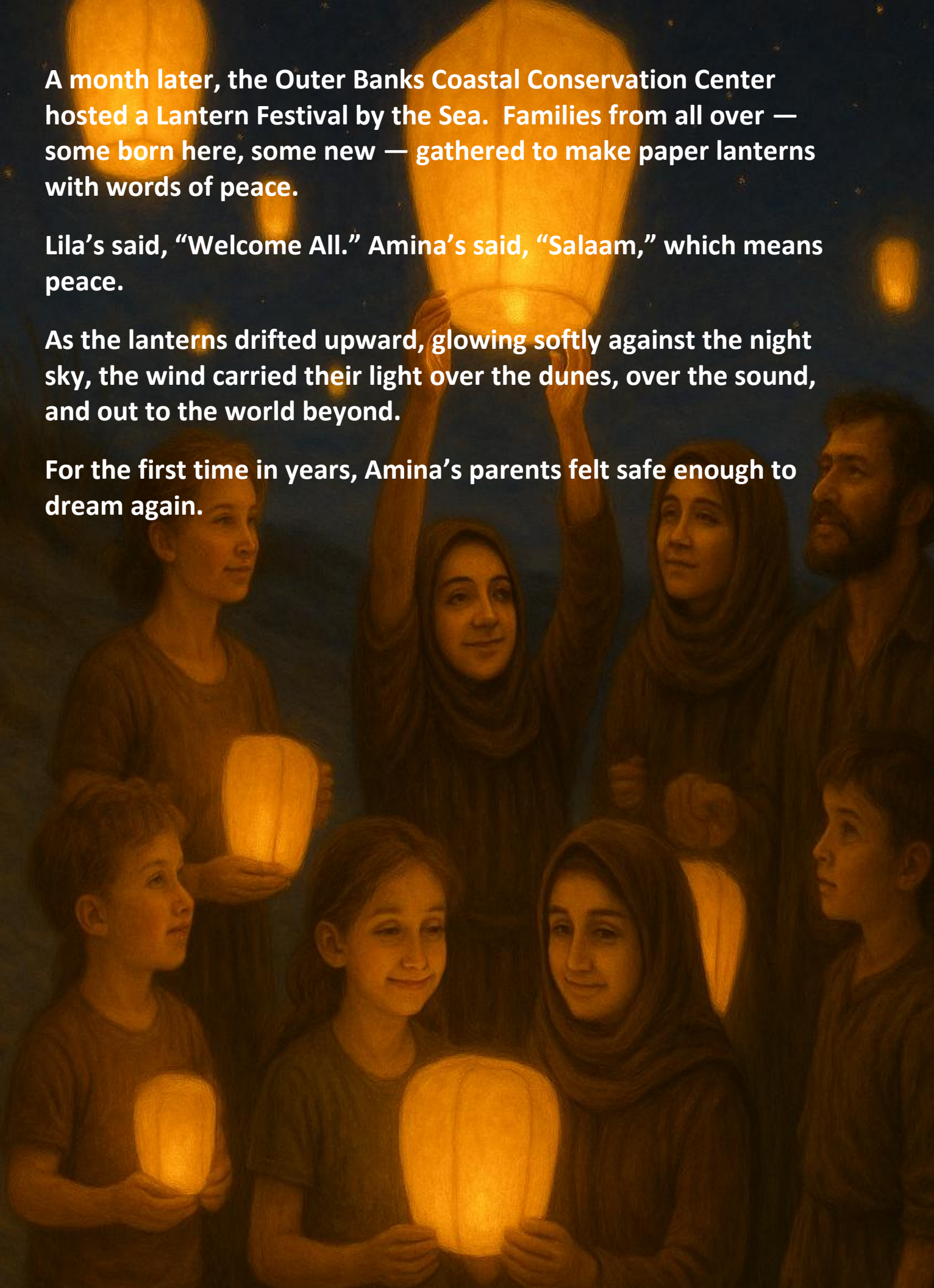


A month later, the Outer Banks Coastal Conservation Center hosted a Lantern Festival by the Sea. Families from all over — some born here, some new — gathered to make paper lanterns with words of peace.

Lila's said, "Welcome All." Amina's said, "Salaam," which means peace.

As the lanterns drifted upward, glowing softly against the night sky, the wind carried their light over the dunes, over the sound, and out to the world beyond.

For the first time in years, Amina's parents felt safe enough to dream again.





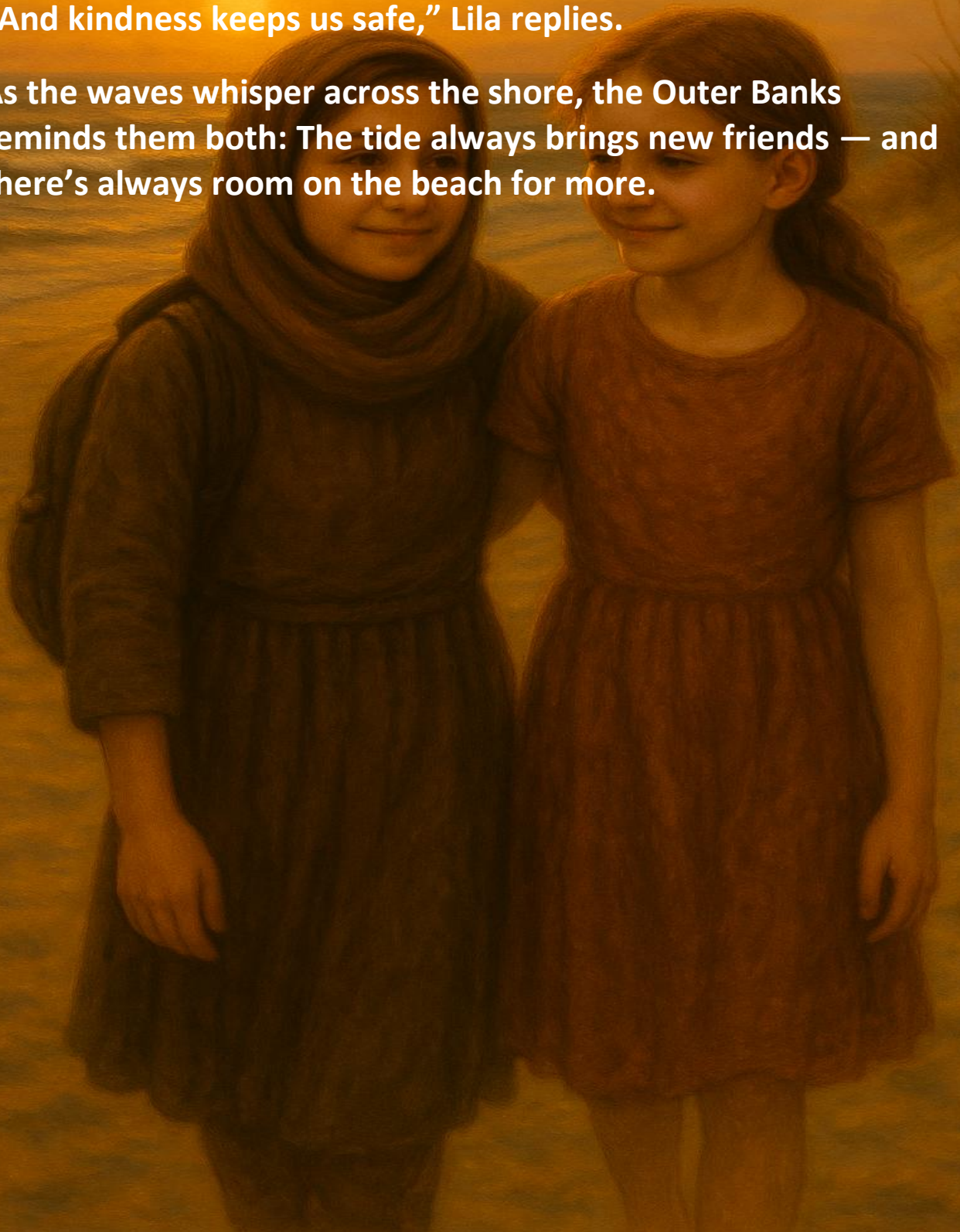
Now, every evening, Lila and Amina walk home together along the sandy path. They trade stories — one about an island by the ocean, the other about a village by the river.

Both stories end the same way — with hope.

“The sea connects us,” Amina says.

“And kindness keeps us safe,” Lila replies.

As the waves whisper across the shore, the Outer Banks reminds them both: The tide always brings new friends — and there’s always room on the beach for more.





# How You Can Help

💙 You can make a difference too!

- Be kind to new students or neighbors who come from other countries or those people who are different from you.
- Share your favorite games, books, or foods.
- Learn how to say “hello” in another language — it’s a small word with a big heart.
- Volunteer with local groups that collect food, clothing, or school supplies for refugee/immigrant families.
- Ask your family or teacher about refugee support programs in your community.

🌍 No matter where we come from, we all share one sky, one sea, and one hope for peace.