

The Day the DUNES TURNED WHITE

A Dunehopper Story
About the Big Snow of 2025



Outer Banks, North Carolina

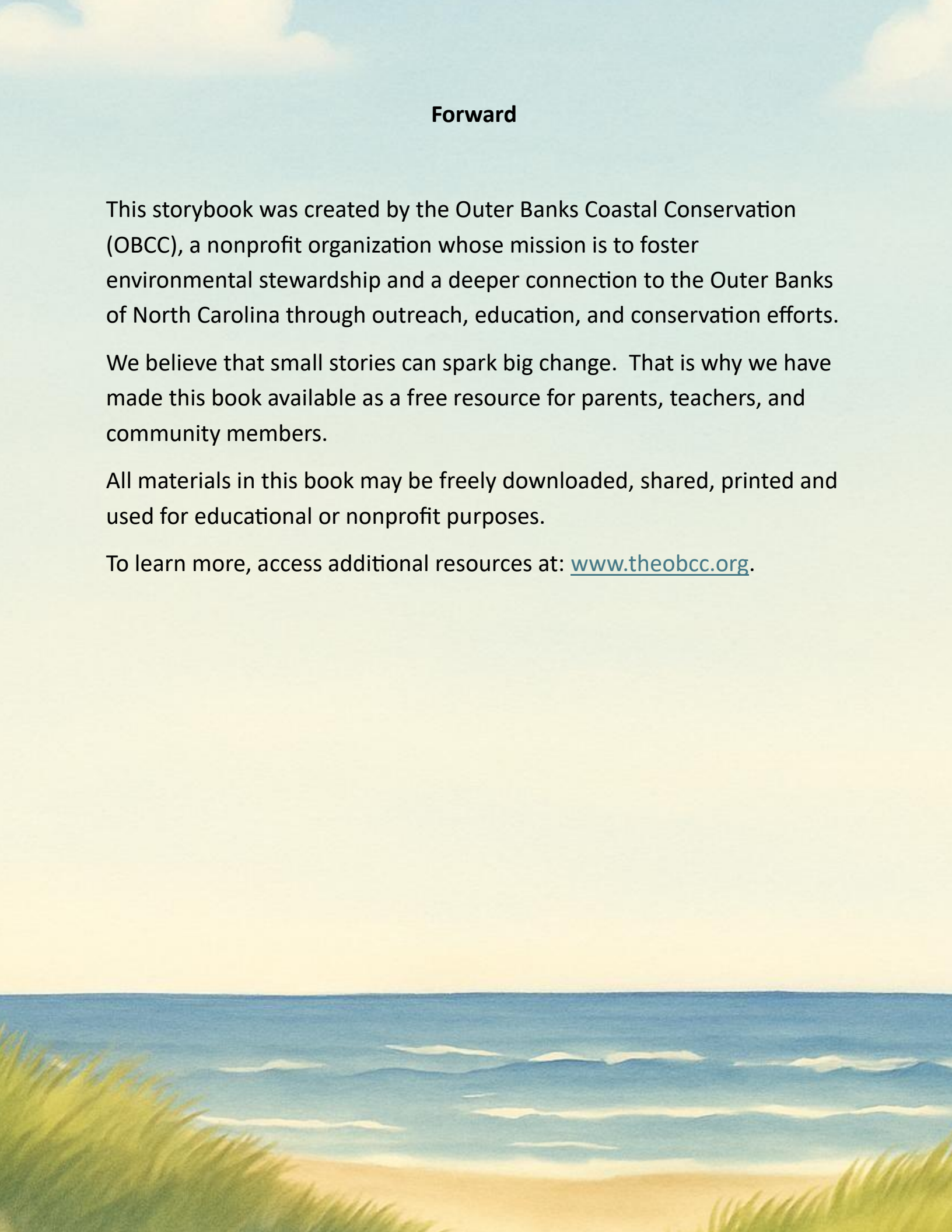
Forward

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.



It was January 20, 2025, and early evening settled quietly over the Outer Banks. Inside their cozy sandy burrow, the Dunehopper family gathered around the television. Papa clicked through channels with the remote until a serious voice caught his attention.

“This just in,” the weather reporter said. “The National Weather Service has issued a Winter Storm Watch for Dare County, including the Outer Banks. Temperatures may drop low enough for snow.”



Snow?

Sandy, Scoot, and Shellby's eyestalks popped up at once.

"Snow!" they cheered. "Maybe we'll have a snow day tomorrow!"

"I'll set the alarm for five o'clock," Sandy said eagerly. "But maybe—just maybe—we'll get to sleep in."

Snow was rare on the Outer Banks, and the Dunehoppers had only seen it a few times before. When it did happen, it felt like magic. That night, tucked safely in their burrow, they drifted to sleep listening to the wind whisper and the soft *shhh* of snow piling up outside.



Beep, beep, beep!

The alarm clock rang, and Sandy quickly turned on the radio.

“No school for Dare County Schools, including Sea Oats School,” the announcer said.

“Yay! Yay!” Sandy, Scoot, and Shellby shouted, doing a happy wiggle before snuggling back under the sand for just a little more sleep.



Papa, however, didn't sleep in. When he peeked toward the burrow entrance, his eyes widened.

The doorway was completely blocked—by a four-foot snowdrift!

"I've never seen snow like this on the Outer Banks," Papa said. "Looks like I've got some digging to do."



It took Papa four long hours to tunnel through the snow and free the burrow. By the time sunlight poured inside, Sandy, Scoot, and Shellby were buzzing with excitement.

Sandy grabbed her camera. "I'm going to take photos for the local newspaper!" she said, racing outside.



Scout had another idea. He called his friend George the grasshopper.

“Want to go sledding?” Scout asked.

“But we don’t have sleds,” George replied.

Scout looked at his surfboard, leaned against the burrow wall, and grinned.

“Then we’ll make one.”

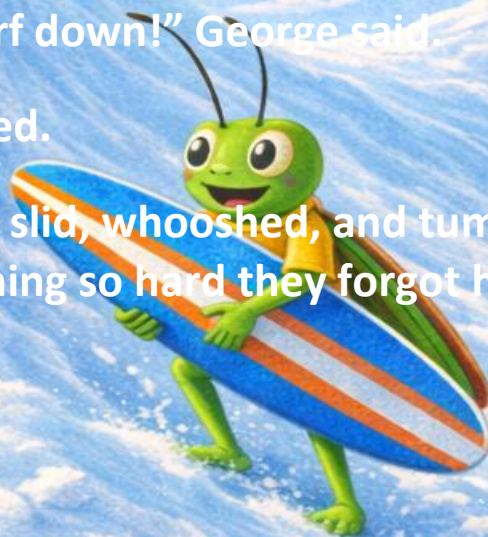


Scoot grabbed his surfboard and met George on the beach, where giant snowdrifts rose like frozen dunes.

“Let’s climb to the top and surf down!” George said.

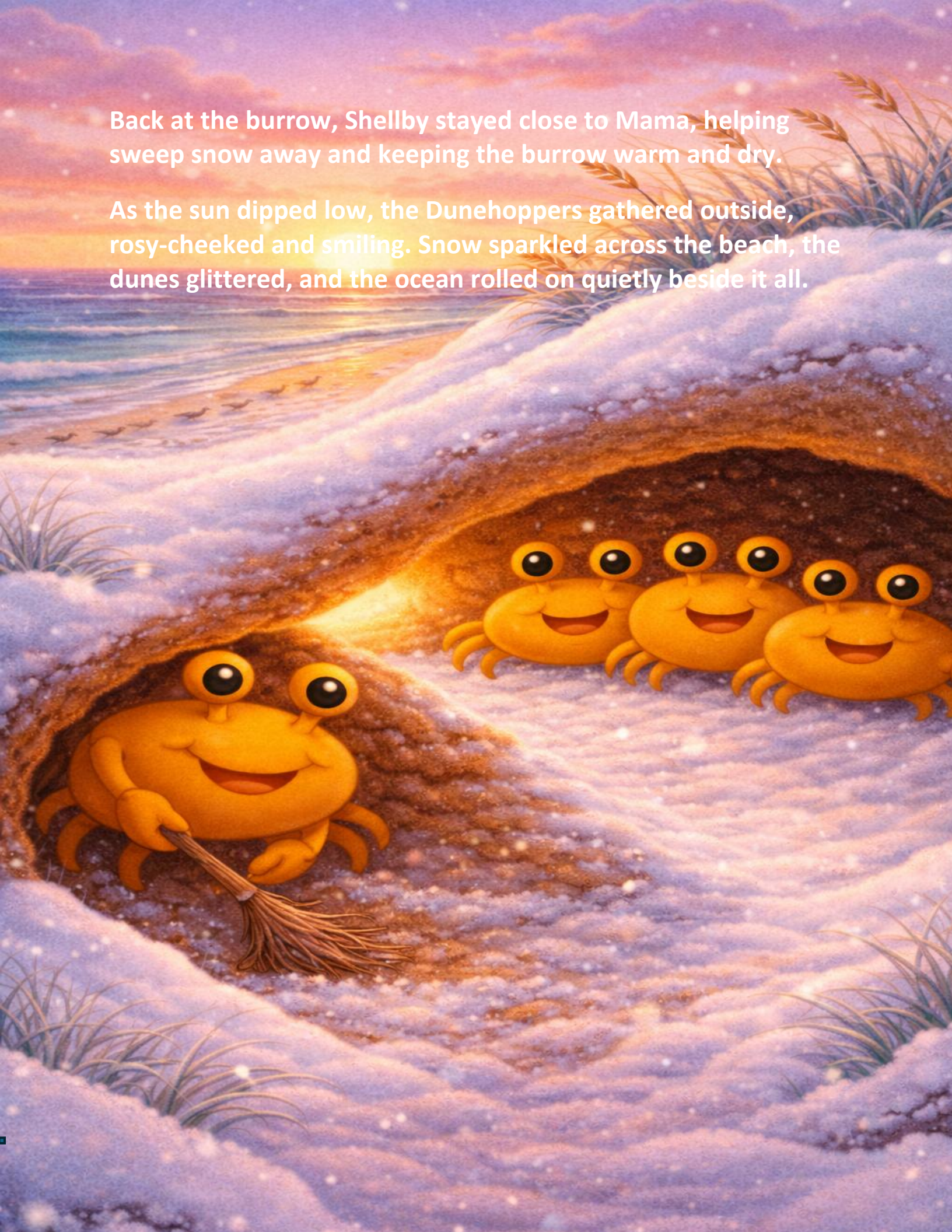
“Best idea ever!” Scoot laughed.

All afternoon, the two friends slid, whooshed, and tumbled down the snowy slopes, laughing so hard they forgot how cold they were.



Back at the burrow, Shellby stayed close to Mama, helping sweep snow away and keeping the burrow warm and dry.

As the sun dipped low, the Dunehoppers gathered outside, rosy-cheeked and smiling. Snow sparkled across the beach, the dunes glittered, and the ocean rolled on quietly beside it all.



Papa looked at his family and smiled.

“Snow may be rare here,” he said, “but days like this remind us—every season brings its own kind of adventure.”

The Dunehoppers nodded in agreement, already knowing this would be a winter day they’d never forget.



Did You Know? Ghost Crabs and Snow!

- Ghost crabs don't like the cold! When temperatures drop, they hide deep inside their burrows, where the sand acts like a warm blanket.
- Snow on the Outer Banks is rare, but ghost crabs can survive it as long as their burrows stay dry and don't collapse.
- Sand is a great insulator. Even when snow covers the beach, the sand underground can stay much warmer than the chilly air above.
- In winter, ghost crabs save energy. They slow down their bodies and stay hidden until warmer weather returns.
- Cold weather keeps them underground longer. Unlike summer nights when they race across the beach, winter days are mostly for resting.
- Stormy waves are more dangerous than snow. Flooding from winter storms can fill burrows with icy seawater, which is harder for ghost crabs to survive.
- Winter beaches need extra care. Footprints can crush burrows, and in cold weather, ghost crabs can't rebuild them as easily.

That's why the Dunehoppers were so smart to stay cozy and help protect their burrow during their snowy adventure!

