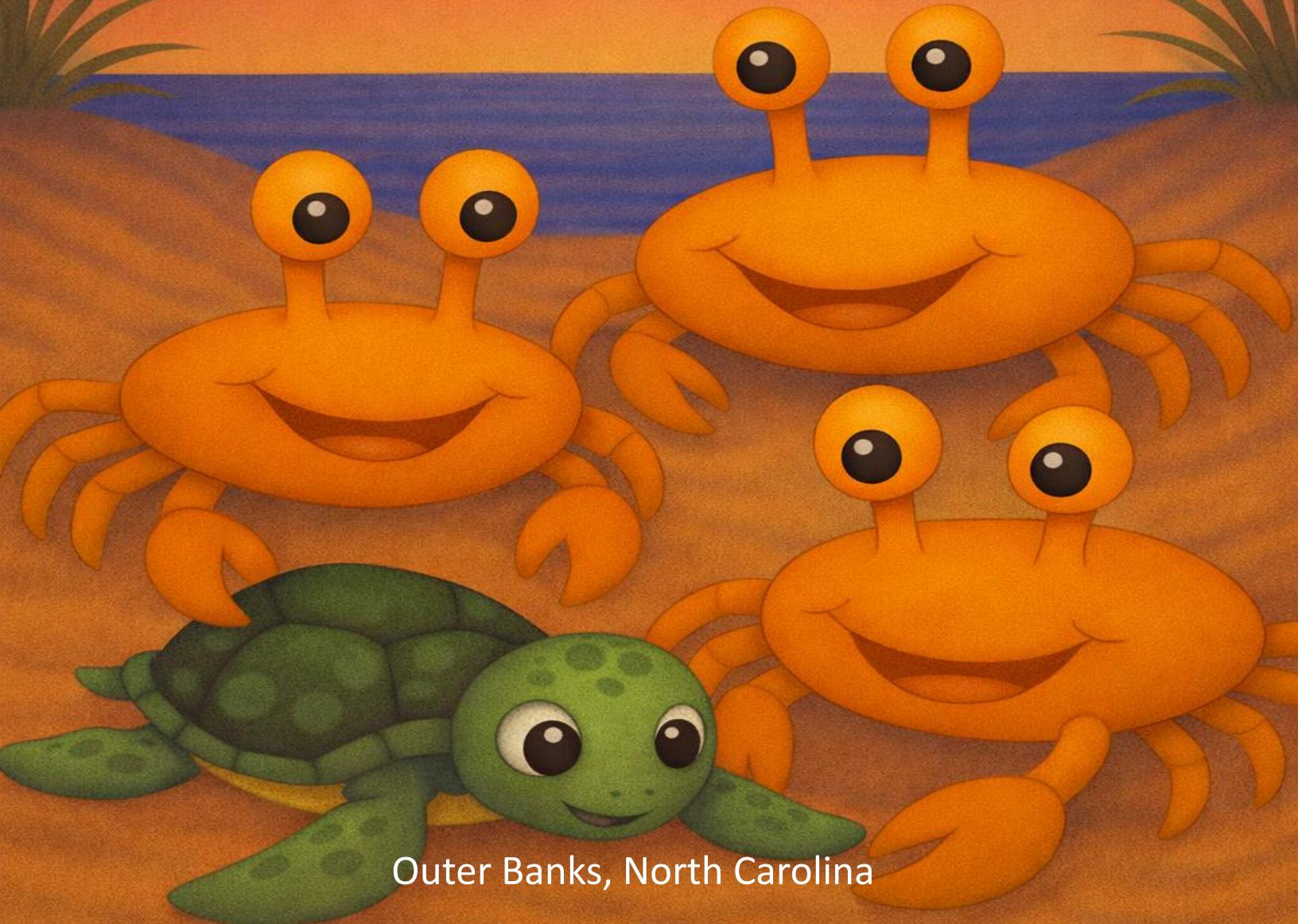


The **Dunehoppers** and the Day of **Helping Hands** (and Claws)



Outer Banks, North Carolina

Forward

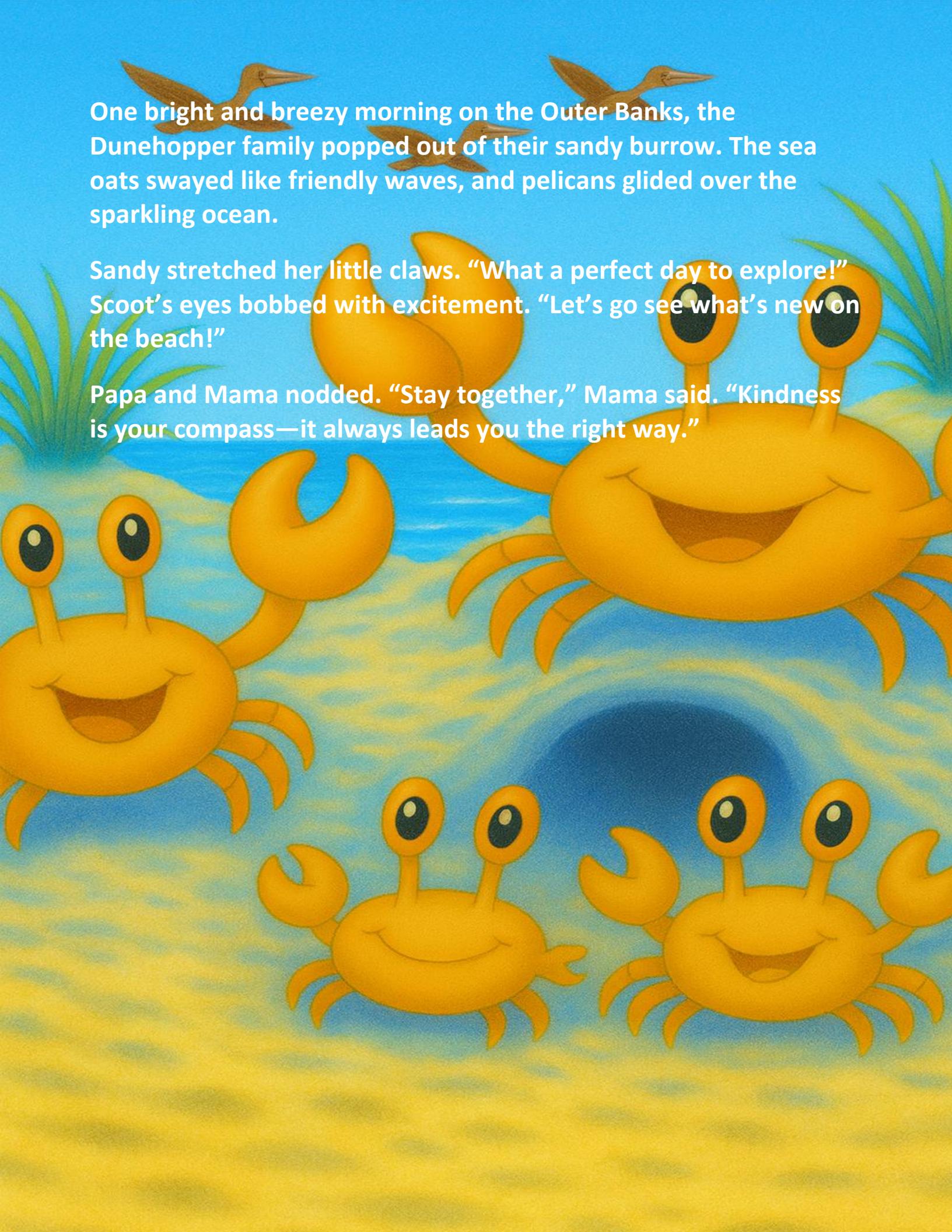
This storybook was created by the Outer Banks Coastal Conservation (OBCC), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to the Outer Banks of North Carolina through outreach, education, and conservation efforts.

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.





One bright and breezy morning on the Outer Banks, the Dunehopper family popped out of their sandy burrow. The sea oats swayed like friendly waves, and pelicans glided over the sparkling ocean.

Sandy stretched her little claws. "What a perfect day to explore!" Scoot's eyes bobbed with excitement. "Let's go see what's new on the beach!"

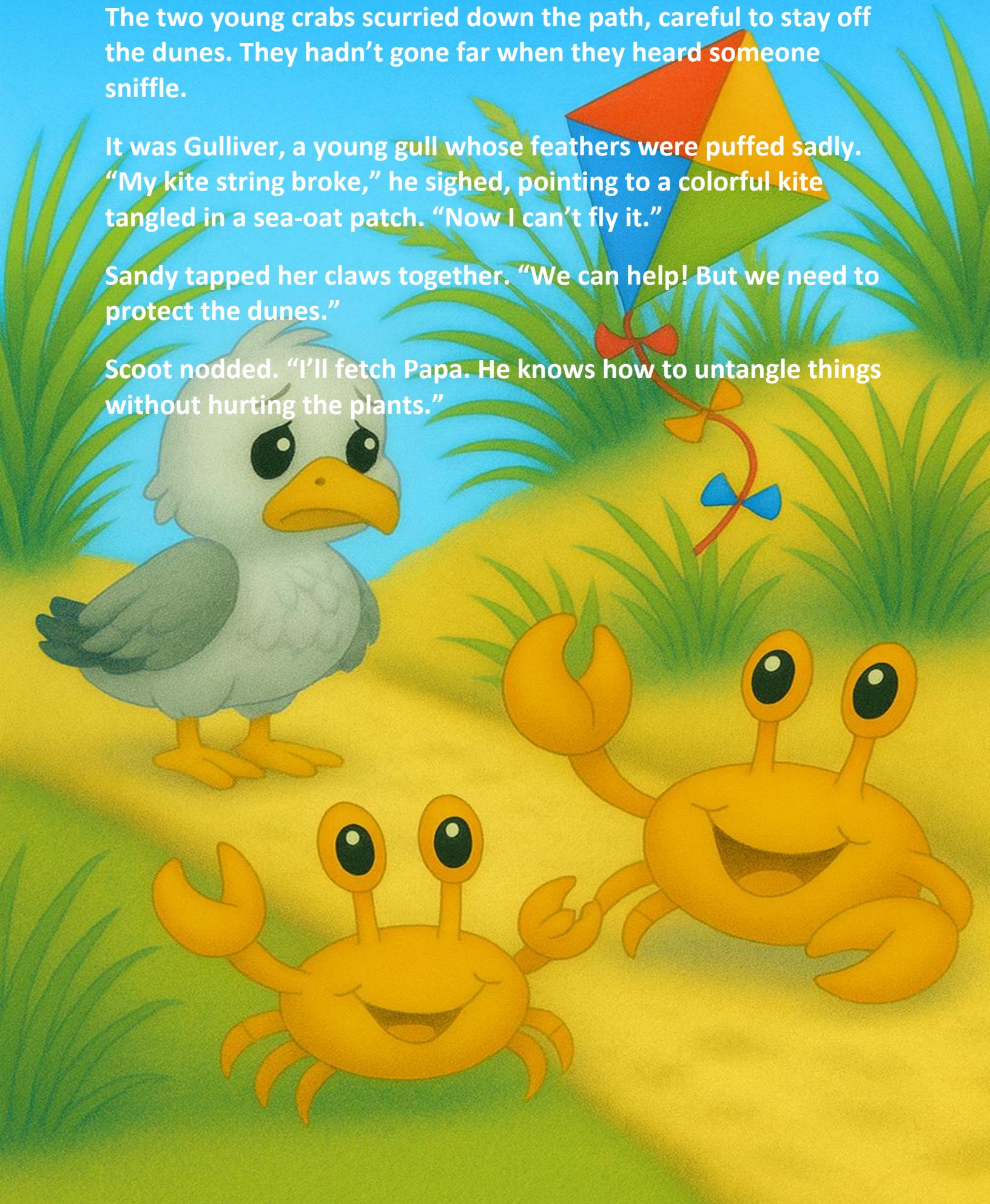
Papa and Mama nodded. "Stay together," Mama said. "Kindness is your compass—it always leads you the right way."

The two young crabs scurried down the path, careful to stay off the dunes. They hadn't gone far when they heard someone sniffle.

It was Gulliver, a young gull whose feathers were puffed sadly. "My kite string broke," he sighed, pointing to a colorful kite tangled in a sea-oat patch. "Now I can't fly it."

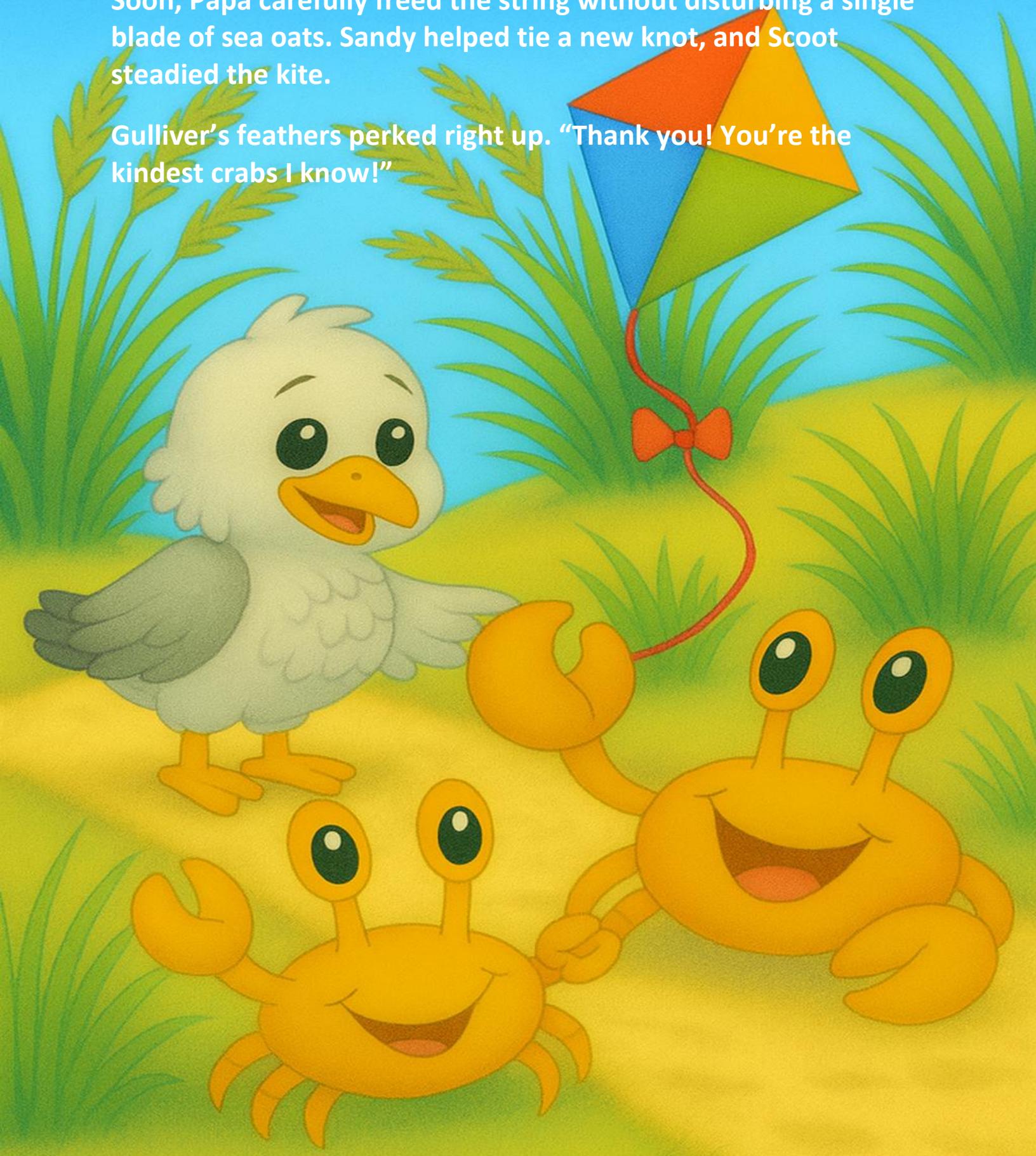
Sandy tapped her claws together. "We can help! But we need to protect the dunes."

Scoot nodded. "I'll fetch Papa. He knows how to untangle things without hurting the plants."



Soon, Papa carefully freed the string without disturbing a single blade of sea oats. Sandy helped tie a new knot, and Scoot steadied the kite.

Gulliver's feathers perked right up. "Thank you! You're the kindest crabs I know!"



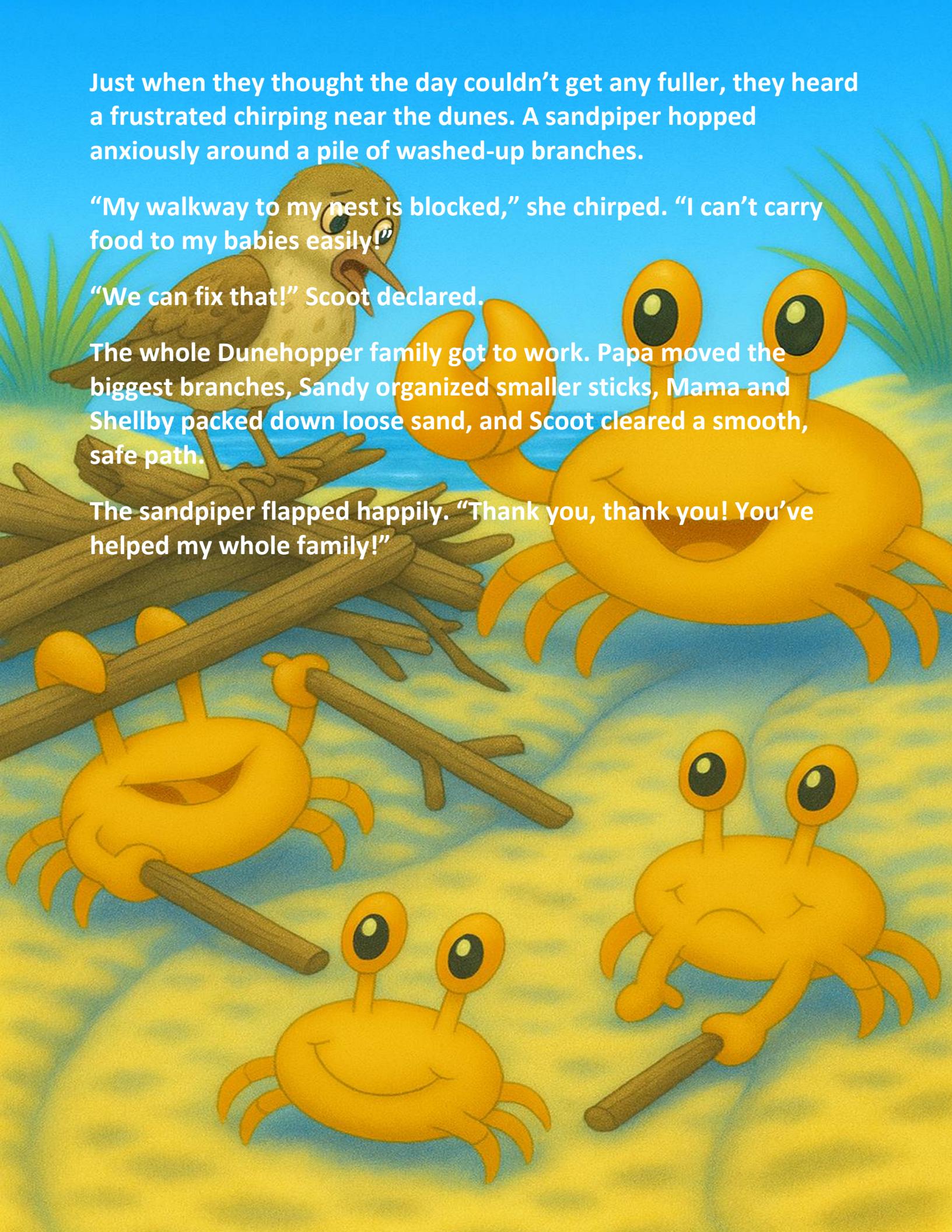
Farther down the beach, they saw a tiny loggerhead hatchling stuck in a small dip in the sand.

"Oh no!" Sandy gasped. "He needs help too."

Scoot gently scooped sand away while Mama shaded the hatchling with her shell so it wouldn't get too warm. Together, the family guided the little turtle toward the shimmering water.

"Safe travels, little friend," Mama said as the waves carried the hatchling into its new ocean home.





Just when they thought the day couldn't get any fuller, they heard a frustrated chirping near the dunes. A sandpiper hopped anxiously around a pile of washed-up branches.

"My walkway to my nest is blocked," she chirped. "I can't carry food to my babies easily!"

"We can fix that!" Scoot declared.

The whole Dunehopper family got to work. Papa moved the biggest branches, Sandy organized smaller sticks, Mama and Shellby packed down loose sand, and Scoot cleared a smooth, safe path.

The sandpiper flapped happily. "Thank you, thank you! You've helped my whole family!"

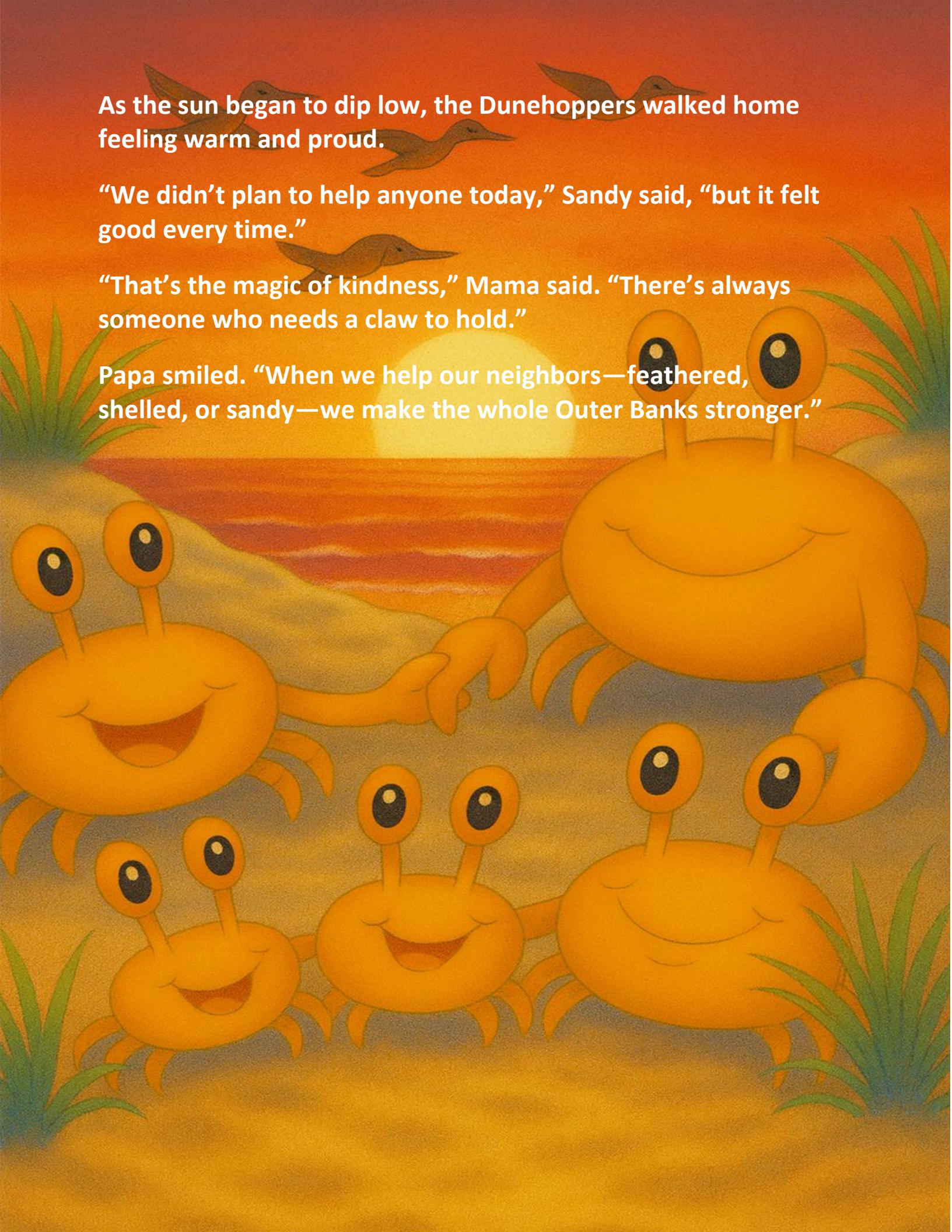


As the sun began to dip low, the Dunehoppers walked home feeling warm and proud.

“We didn’t plan to help anyone today,” Sandy said, “but it felt good every time.”

“That’s the magic of kindness,” Mama said. “There’s always someone who needs a claw to hold.”

Papa smiled. “When we help our neighbors—feathered, shelled, or sandy—we make the whole Outer Banks stronger.”



Sandy's eye stalks stretched high with joy.
"We're not just a family," she said.
"We're a helping family."

And as they settled into their cozy burrow, the sea oats rustled softly in the twilight breeze, whispering the same message:

Kindness grows wherever you plant it—even on the dunes.

