

The Dunehoppers' Night-Sky Lesson



Outer Banks, North Carolina

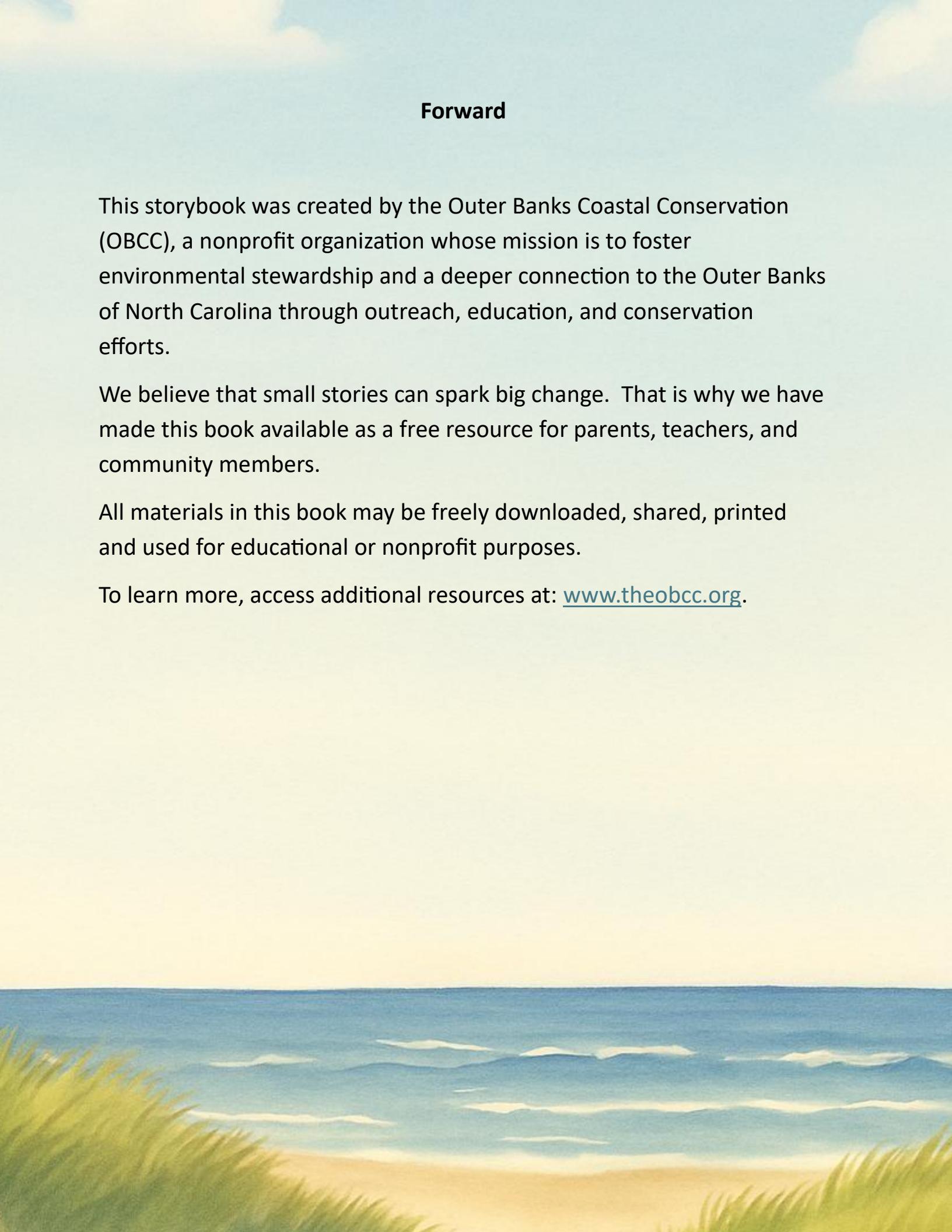
Forward

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.

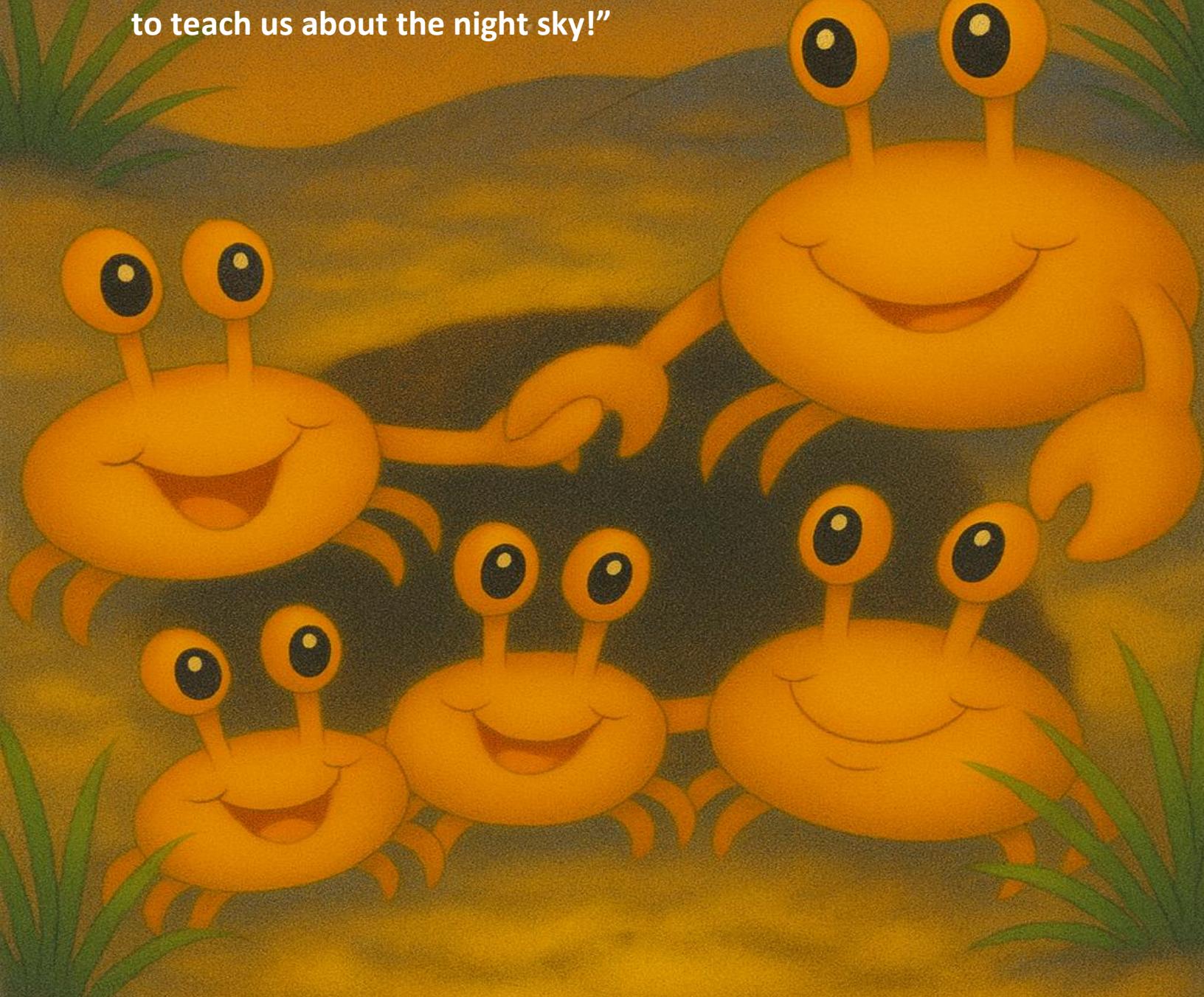
To learn more, access additional resources at: www.theobcc.org.



One calm evening on the Outer Banks, the sun dipped low and painted the dunes in soft orange light. Sandy and Scoot Dunehopper peeked out of their burrow, eye stalks stretching high with excitement.

“Tonight’s the night!” Sandy whispered.

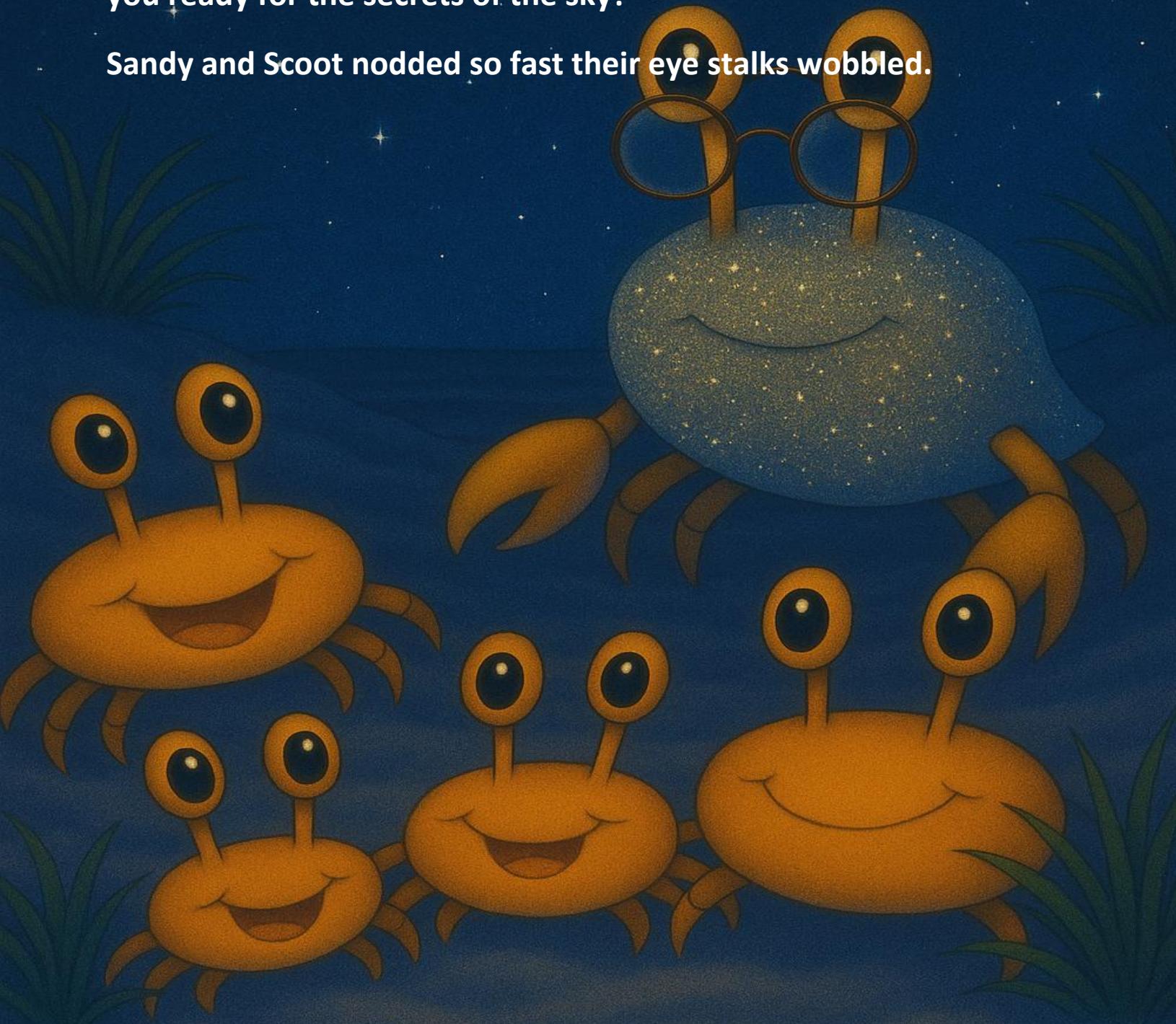
Scoot clacked his claws softly. “Professor Twinkleclaws promised to teach us about the night sky!”

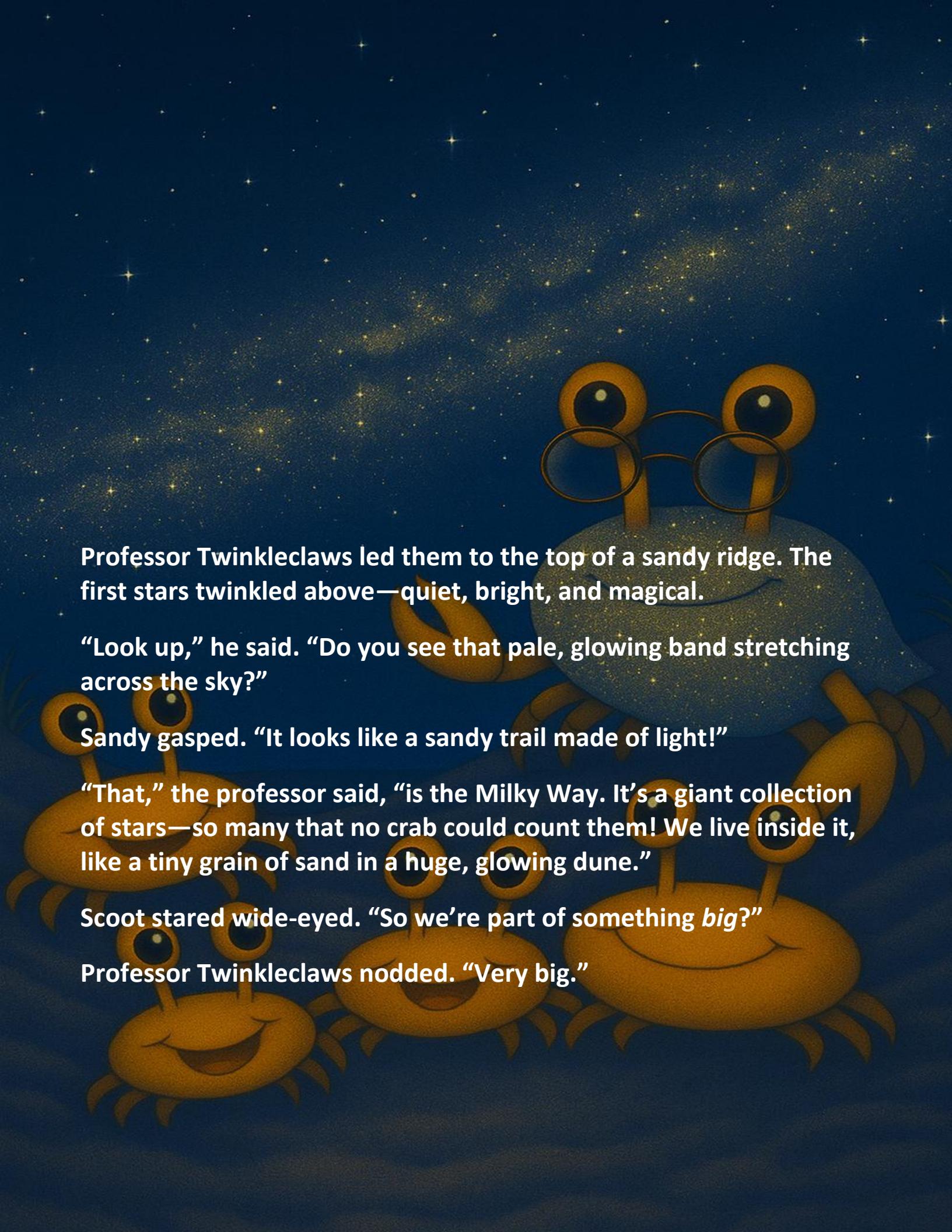


Just then, a gentle shimmer appeared on the dune path. Out stepped Professor Twinkleclaws, the wise old ghost crab whose shell sparkled like tiny stars.

"Good evening, little learners," he said in a soft, glowing voice. "Are you ready for the secrets of the sky?"

Sandy and Scoot nodded so fast their eye stalks wobbled.





Professor Twinkleclaws led them to the top of a sandy ridge. The first stars twinkled above—quiet, bright, and magical.

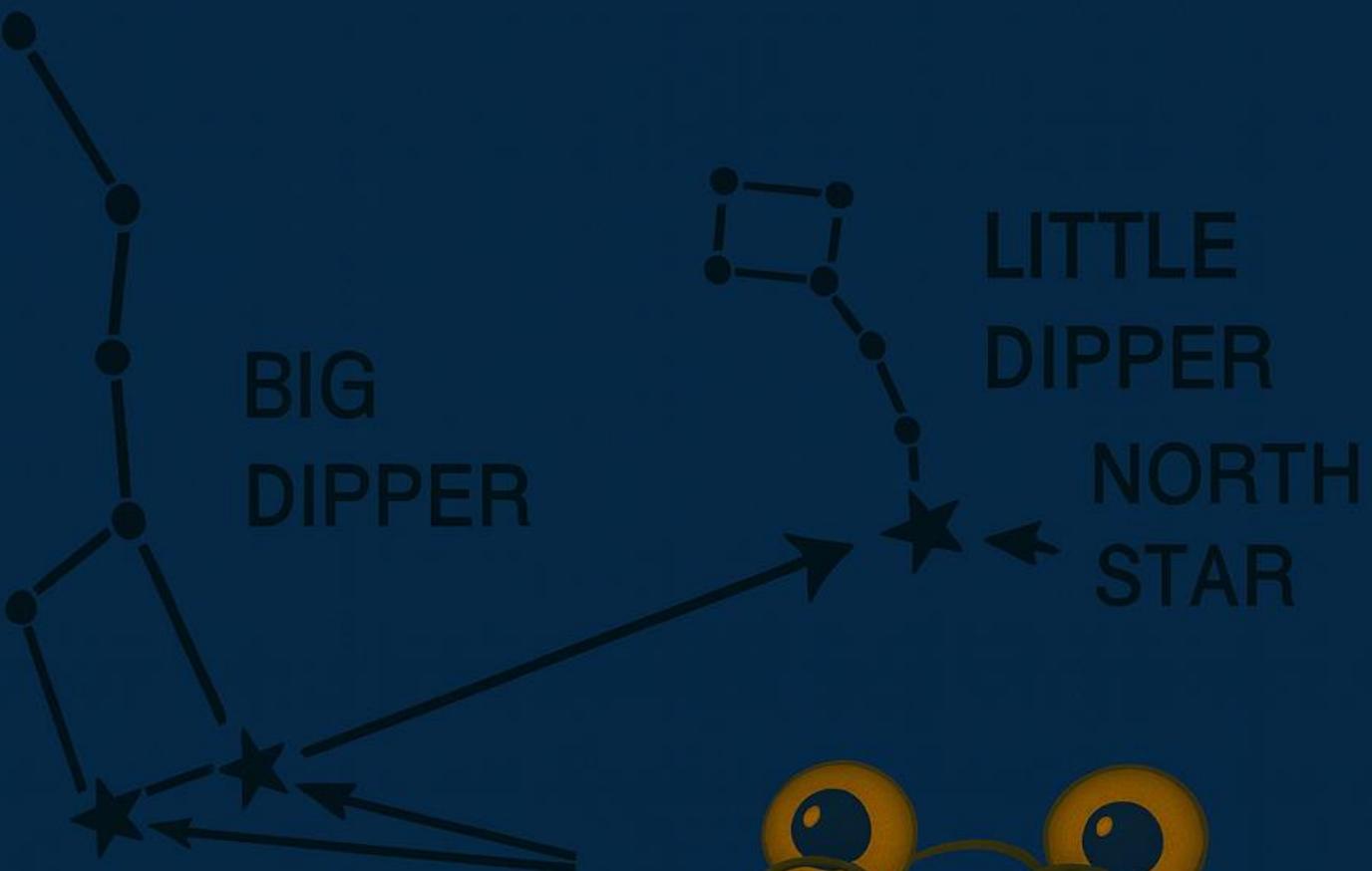
“Look up,” he said. “Do you see that pale, glowing band stretching across the sky?”

Sandy gasped. “It looks like a sandy trail made of light!”

“That,” the professor said, “is the Milky Way. It’s a giant collection of stars—so many that no crab could count them! We live inside it, like a tiny grain of sand in a huge, glowing dune.”

Scoot stared wide-eyed. “So we’re part of something *big*?”

Professor Twinkleclaws nodded. “Very big.”



He raised one glowing claw toward a group of bright stars. "Now, over here is a shape many humans know. This is the Big Dipper."

Sandy tilted her head. "It looks like a scoop!"

"Exactly," chuckled the professor. "Humans use it to find the North Star. It points the way, just like your kindness points you to a good path."

"And what about that smaller one?" Scoot asked, pointing with a tiny claw.

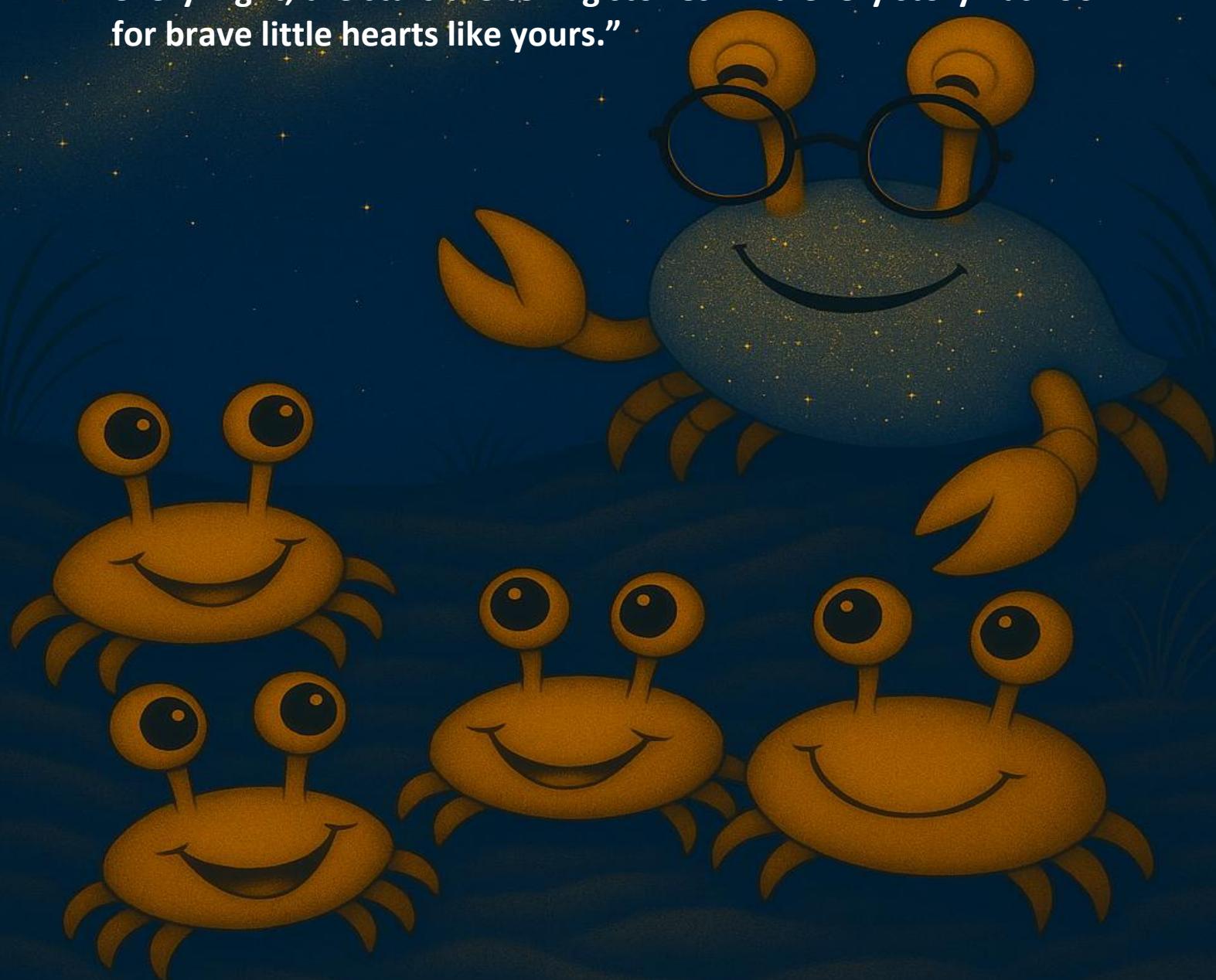
"That is the Little Dipper," Professor Twinkleclaws said. "It holds the North Star at the end of its handle. Even though it's smaller, it shines with great importance. A good reminder that even little crabs can make a big difference."

The children beamed proudly.

They spent the next hour tracing star shapes, whispering wishes, and watching the sky shimmer like a giant treasure map. The dunes were quiet except for the sound of soft waves and the rustle of sea oats.

At last, Professor Twinkleclaws' glow flickered gently.

"Time for your dreams to take over," he said. "But remember—every night, the stars are telling stories. And every story has room for brave little hearts like yours."



Sandy and Scoot walked home, shells glowing with wonder.

“The Milky Way,” Sandy whispered.

“The Big and Small Dipper,” Scoot added.

“And Professor Twinkleclaws,” they said together, “the best teacher in the whole sky.”

The sea breeze hummed around them, as if the stars themselves were saying:

Good night, Dunehoppers. Keep looking up.

