



# From Paw Prints to Crab Smiles



Outer Banks, North Carolina

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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.

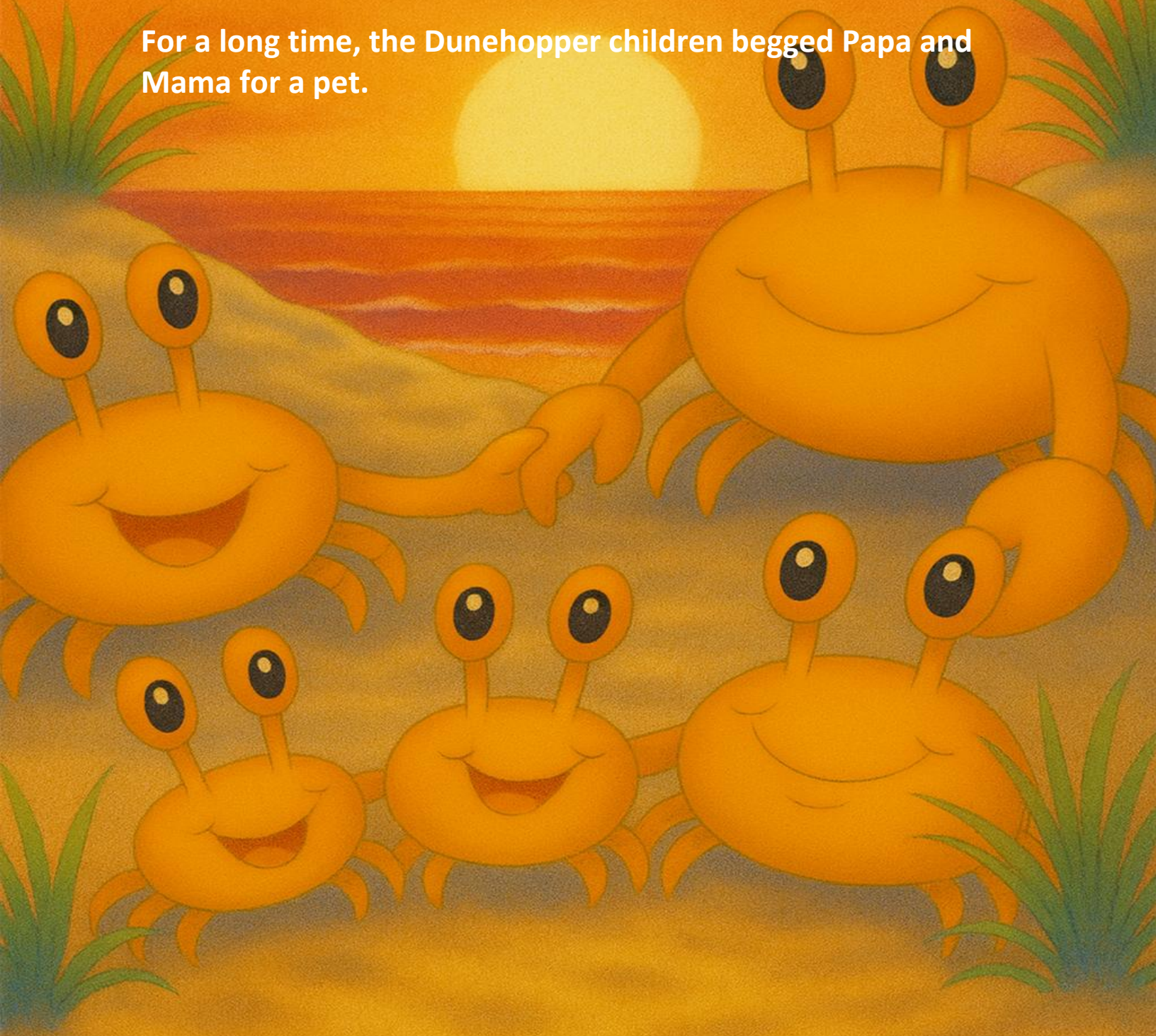
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Sandy, Scoot, and Shellby Dunehopper loved animals.  
They had loved them ever since they were tiny little crabs.

After school, they often stopped by the Moondune family's  
burrow to play with their friendly beagle pup.  
Each visit made them dream even more about having a dog of  
their own.

For a long time, the Dunehopper children begged Papa and  
Mama for a pet.

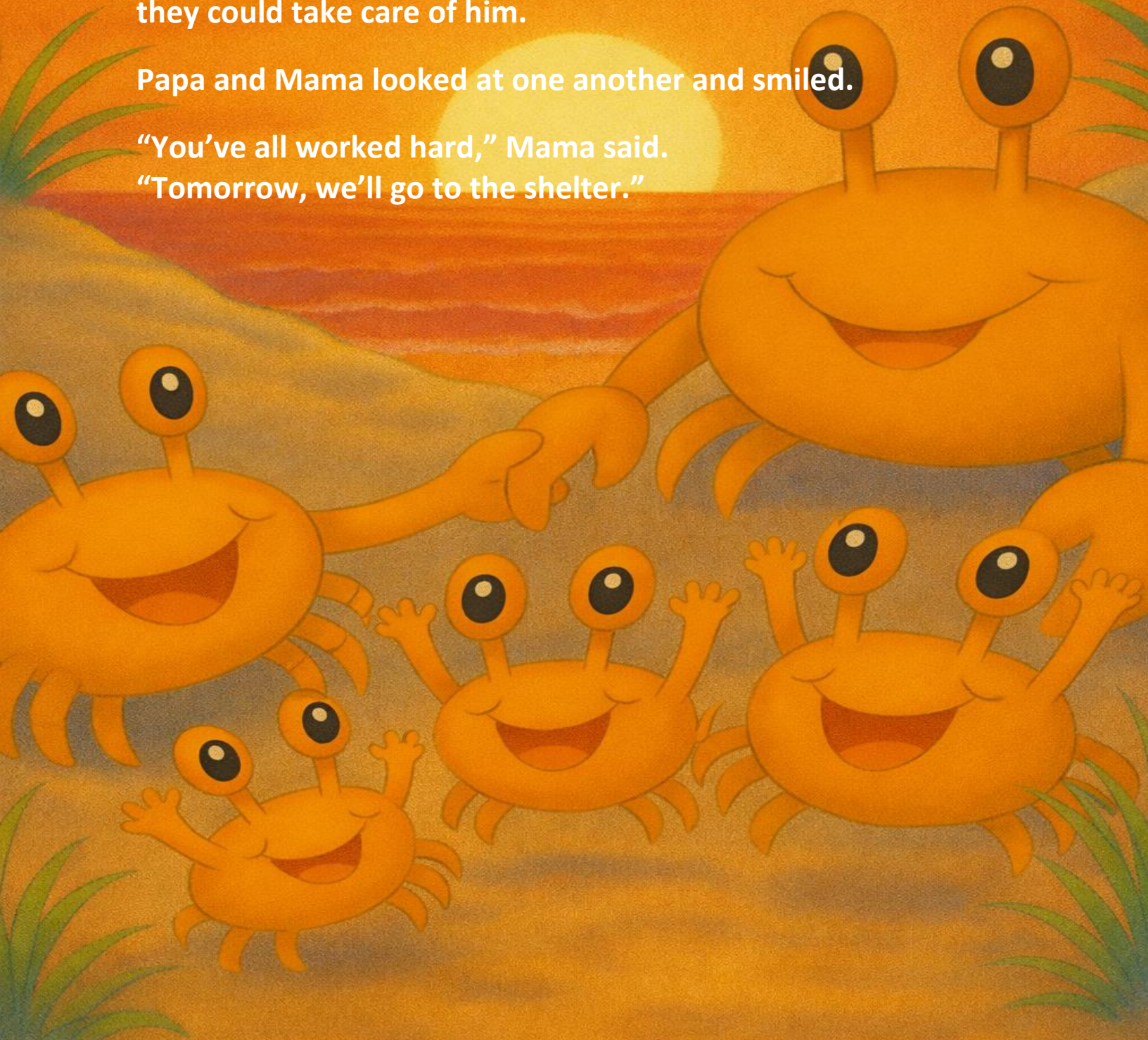


One day Sandy said, "I've saved money from my part-time job at the Ice Cream Shack. I can help take care of a dog. Please—can we adopt one? We promise to be responsible."

Sandy had learned from her friend Luna that there was an older dog, a Chihuahua, with disabilities at the Outer Banks Animal Shelter. He had been there for years because no one thought they could take care of him.

Papa and Mama looked at one another and smiled.

"You've all worked hard," Mama said.  
"Tomorrow, we'll go to the shelter."



The next day, the Dunehopper family piled into their dune buggy and headed to the animal shelter.



Inside, they saw many animals waiting for homes.  
Sandy spoke to the adoption coordinator, Clara.

“We heard about a small dog named Pedro,” Sandy said.  
“He’s older and needs extra care.”

Clara nodded kindly.

“Yes. Pedro has been waiting a long time. I’ll show you.”

Pedro was curled up quietly in his space.

But when the family peeked in, his eyes lit up—and his tail wagged!

“We’ll take him,” Sandy said.

Pedro jumped with joy.

After so many years of waiting, he finally had a family to love.



At home, Papa Dunehopper gathered everyone together.

“Before Pedro settles in,” Papa said, “we need reminders about being responsible pet owners.”

## Papa Dunehopper's Pet Care Reminders

### Dogs Depend on Us

- Dogs can't take care of themselves.
- They need people for food, water, shelter, love, and safety.

### Food & Water Come Every Day

- Dogs must be fed on time and always have fresh water.
- Dogs shouldn't eat human treats unless an adult says it's safe.

### Exercise Is Not Optional

- Dogs need walks, playtime, and fresh air every day.
- Walks help dogs stay healthy and calm.

### Health Matters

- Dogs need vet visits, vaccines, and sometimes medicine.
- If a dog looks hurt or sick, tell an adult right away.

### Cleanliness & Grooming

- Brushing, bathing, and cleaning up after dogs is part of caring.
- Picking up poop is a rule—every time.

### Gentle Hands & Respect

- Never pull tails, ears, or fur.
- Never hit or tug a dog.
- Let dogs rest, eat, and have quiet time.

If a dog growls, or backs away, it means, "I need space."

### A Dog Is a Long-Term Promise

- Caring for a dog means showing up every day.

### Safety First

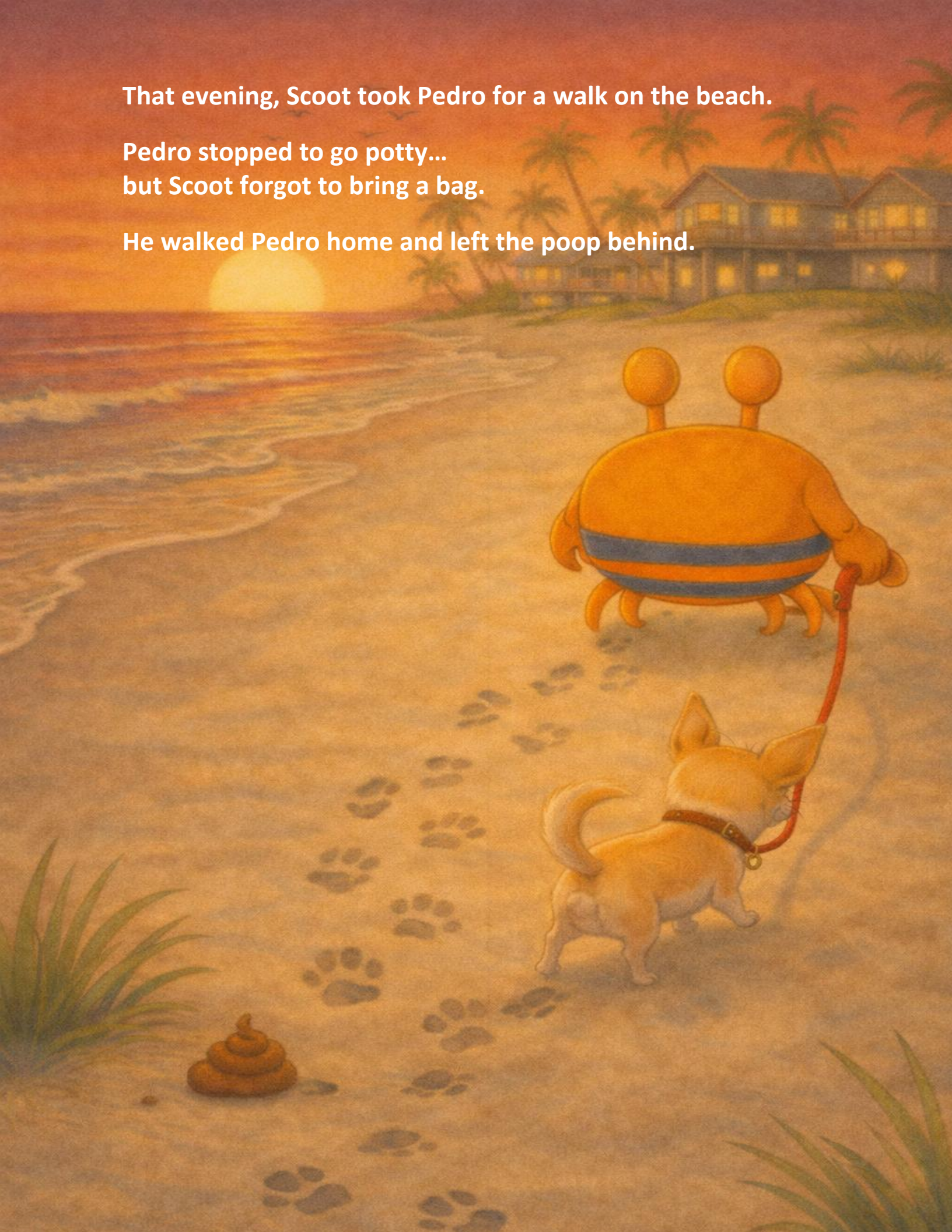
- Dogs should stay leashed or fenced so they don't get lost or hurt.



That evening, Scoot took Pedro for a walk on the beach.

Pedro stopped to go potty...  
but Scoot forgot to bring a bag.

He walked Pedro home and left the poop behind.



Back at the burrow, Papa asked gently,  
“Scoot, what did you do with the poop bag?”

Scoot looked down.

“I didn’t bring one. Pedro pooped on the beach, and I left it there.”

Papa knelt beside him.

“Now Scoot,” Papa said kindly,  
“dogs are part of beach life—just like us. But when dog poop is left  
behind, it can cause big trouble in our sandy home.”

“Big trouble?” Scoot asked.



“Yes,” Papa nodded.

“Dog poop has germs that can make humans, birds, and even crabs like us sick. When the tide comes in, those germs wash into the ocean and can hurt fish and turtles.”

Scoot wrinkled his nose.

“Ew.”

“And think about our neighbors,” Papa added.

“Shorebirds nesting nearby or baby turtles crawling to the sea. One careless pile can scare them away or make them ill.”



Papa placed a claw on Scoot's shoulder.

"That's why good beach neighbors always pick up after their dogs. Caring for your pet means caring for the beach too."

Scoot smiled.

"So... clean beach, happy crabs?"

Papa smiled back.

"Clean beach," he said proudly,  
"happy crabs, healthy ocean, and smiles all around."



# Did You Know?

Did you know that dog poop doesn't just disappear in the sand? When it's left on the beach, rain and waves can wash tiny germs into the ocean.

Those germs can make people, birds, fish, turtles, and even crabs feel sick!

Picking up after dogs helps keep:

- ✓ Beaches clean
- ✓ People and Animals safe
- ✓ The ocean healthy

A clean beach means happy crabs and smiling neighbors!



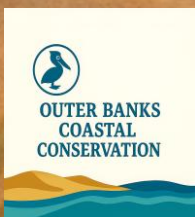
# *From Paw Prints to Crab Smiles*

is a children's story set in the Outer Banks that follows the Dunehopper crab family as they adopt an older dog named Pedro and learn what it truly means to be responsible pet owners. Through gentle storytelling, the book shows how everyday choices—like picking up after dogs—help protect beach wildlife, keep people healthy, and care for the ocean they all share. Blending kindness, community, and environmental stewardship, the story teaches young readers that loving animals also means respecting nature, and that a clean beach leads to happy crabs, healthy oceans, and smiles all around.

## About the Publisher

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