

Little Sandpiper's First Day

A Brave Little Story About Finding Your Rhythm



An Inklings World Story



Little Sandpiper's First Day

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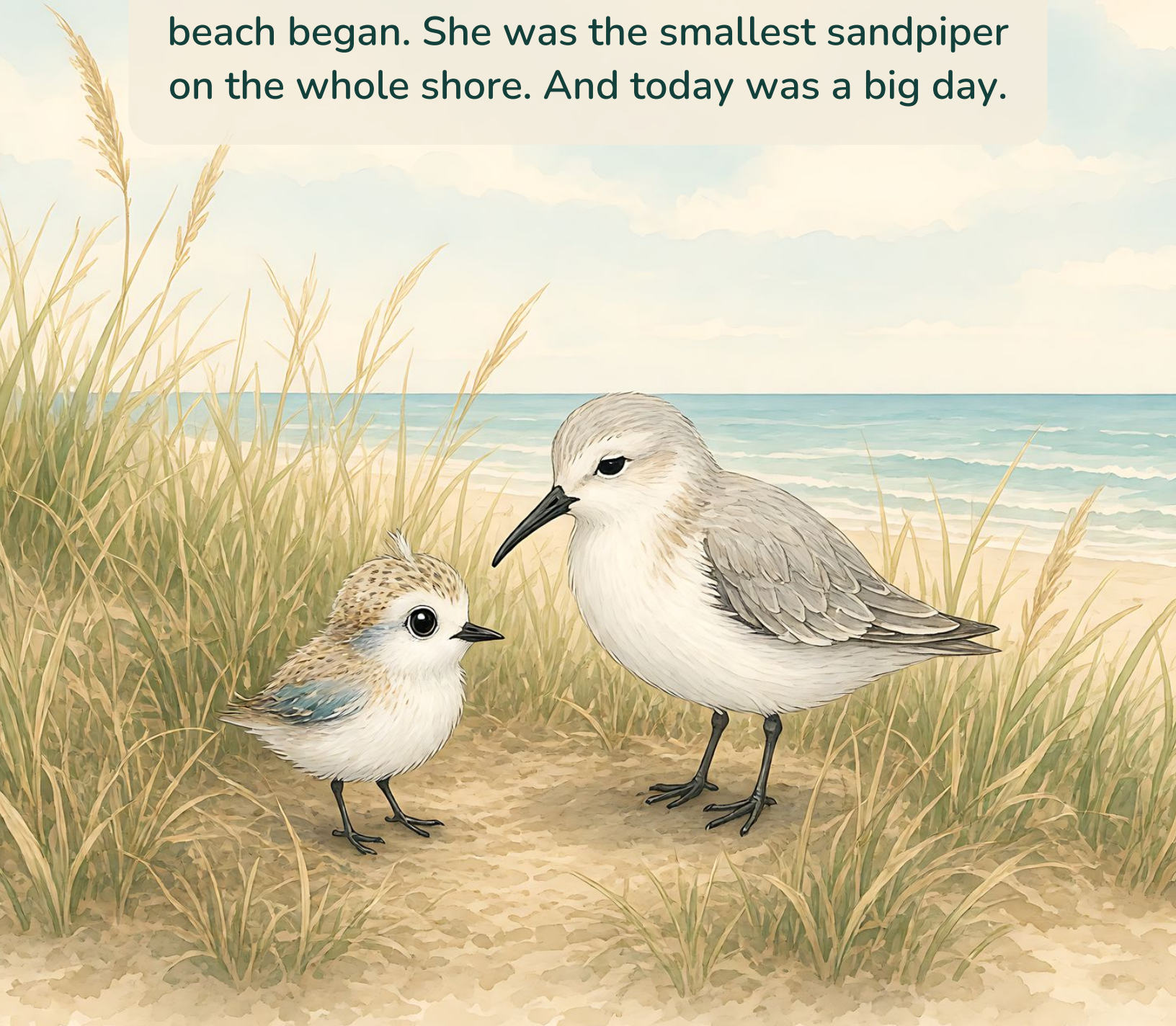
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For every little one on a first day.



Tilly lived in the tall dune grass, where the beach began. She was the smallest sandpiper on the whole shore. And today was a big day.



“Today you hunt for shells all by yourself,” said Papa. “I’ll be right up here on the dune.” Tilly fluffed her feathers. “All by myself,” she said. It sounded very big.

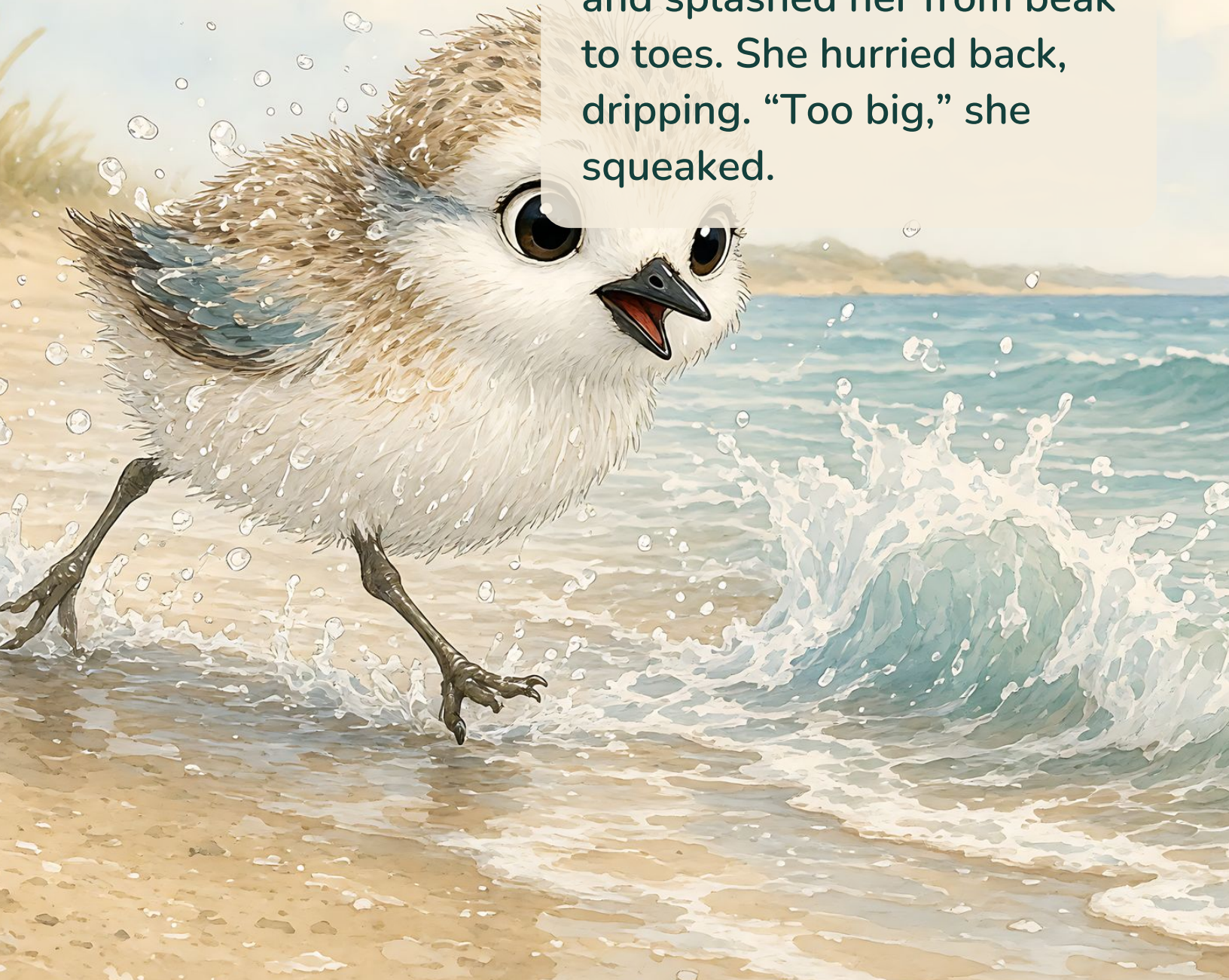


Tilly peeked over the dune. The waves were tall and loud. The gulls were busy and bossy. And the beach went on and on and on.



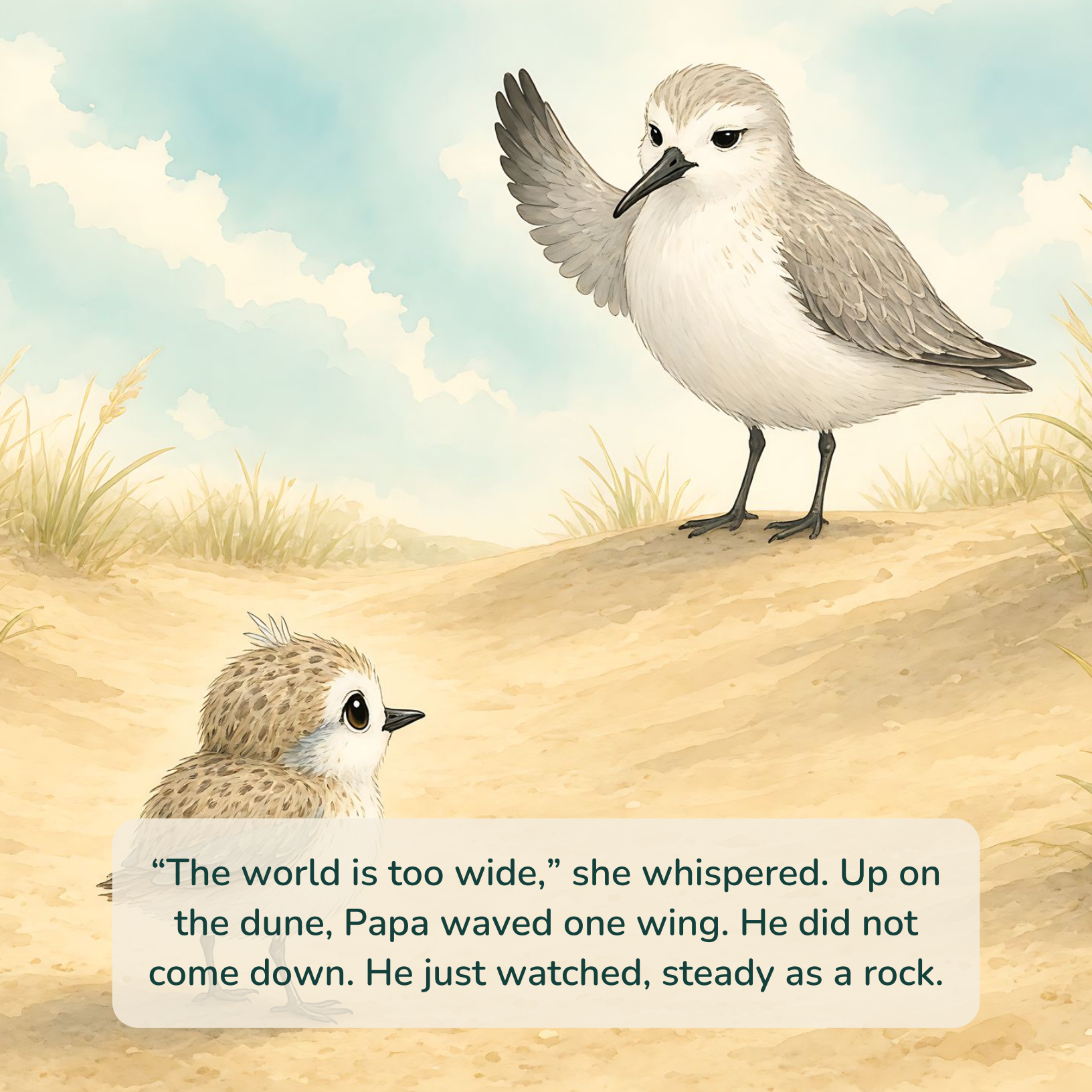


Tilly ran down to the water.
Whoosh! A wave rushed up
and splashed her from beak
to toes. She hurried back,
dripping. "Too big," she
squeaked.



A gull flapped past. A crab clattered by. Tilly tucked herself behind a stone and made herself very small.





“The world is too wide,” she whispered. Up on the dune, Papa waved one wing. He did not come down. He just watched, steady as a rock.



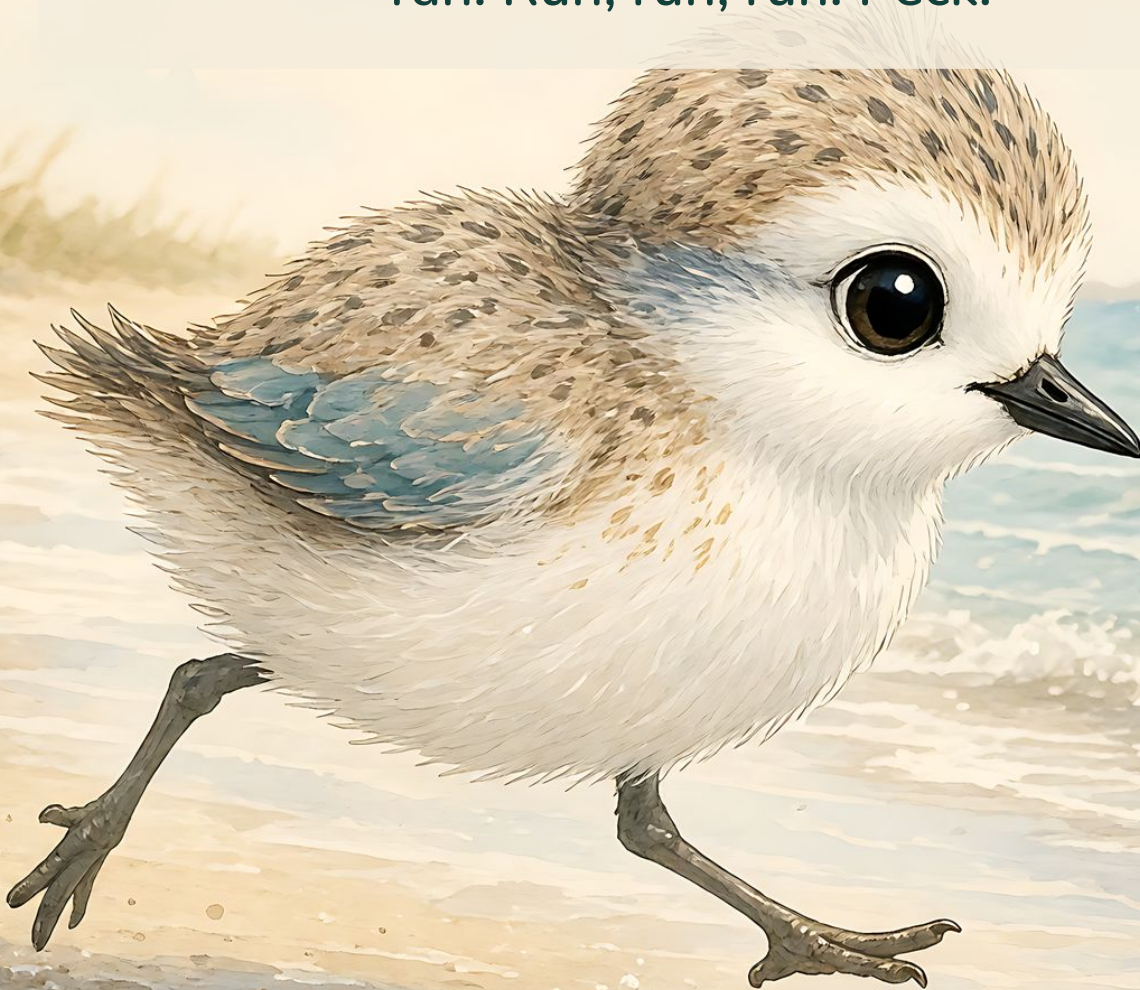
So Tilly watched too. A wave rolled up the sand, shhhh. Then it slid back to the sea, hushhh. Up and back. Up and back.



Each time the water slid away, the sand shone like glass. And in the shiny sand, tiny bubbles popped. Pip, pip, pip.



“Something is down there,” Tilly said. She took a breath. When the next wave slid back, she ran. Run, run, run! Peck!



Just sand. And here came the wave! “Back, back, back!” squeaked Tilly, and she scurried up the beach on her quick little legs.



She tried again. Wave goes out, run down.
Wave comes in, run up. Out and down. In and
up. Her feet began to know the way.





Peck! Something tiny and smooth. A little shell,
pink and purple, like a sunrise you could hold.



The gulls were still busy and bossy. So Tilly found her own spot, right at the shiny edge, where the sand was soft.



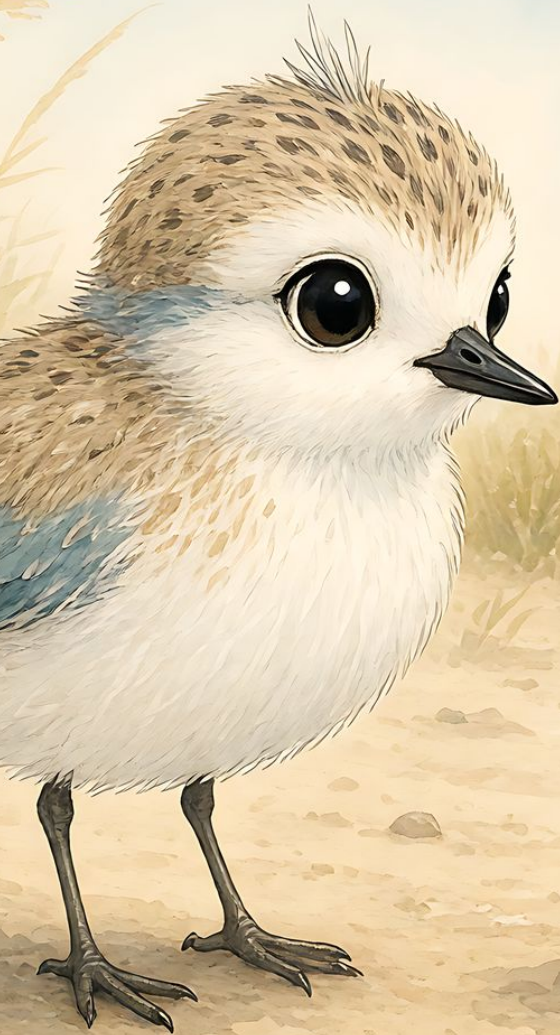
Run, peck, back. Run, peck,
back. Another shell. And
another! Her legs went
pitter-patter like a song.



Then came the biggest wave of all. Tilly did not freeze. She turned and ran with the rhythm, up, up, up, and it only tickled her toes. She laughed out loud.



At the edge of the water stood a sandpiper even smaller than Tilly. His legs were wobbly. His eyes were wide.



“The waves are too big,” he said. Tilly stood beside him. “Watch the water,” she said. “It tells you when.”



Up and back. Run and peck. Two little
sandpipers ran together, side by side, along the
shining edge of the sea.



When the sun was high, Tilly looked back at the dune. Papa was still there, watching. He fluffed up proud and round.



At sunset, Tilly hopped up the dune. “Papa! I found shells all by myself!” “You did,” said Papa. “And I watched every step.”





That night, tucked in the dune grass, Tilly listened to the sea. Shhhh. Hushhh. Up and back.





Tomorrow the waves would still be big. The beach would still be wide. But Tilly knew something now.



She knew the rhythm. Up and back, up and back, Tilly drifted off to sleep. The End.



Real Sandpipers

A few true things about Tilly's world



Sandpipers really do chase the waves.

Sanderlings run down the beach as a wave slides back, peck the wet sand for tiny crabs and clams, and dash up again before the next wave comes.



Tilly's shell is a coquina.

These tiny clams come in sunrise stripes of pink, purple and yellow, and they dig back into the sand after every wave.



Chicks find their own food.

Sandpiper chicks can walk and feed themselves just hours after hatching, while a parent keeps watch. In spotted sandpipers, it is usually the dad who raises the chicks.



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