



## Footprints Erased

**Directions:** Read the passage carefully. Pay attention to how the story builds toward its ending. Then, write a **new ending** that changes how the story concludes. Your alternate ending should still make sense with the events that came before it but take the characters or plot in a different direction. Afterward, reflect on how your ending changes the story's meaning or theme.

### The Disappearing Footprints

Jonah was the last to leave the beach after sunset, dragging his surfboard across the sand. As he glanced behind him, he noticed something strange: his footprints were vanishing as soon as he made them, erased before the waves could reach. At first, he thought it was just the dim light playing tricks, but then he saw the prints disappear in front of his eyes.

His chest tightened, and he walked faster, leaving a trail that dissolved instantly. The hairs on his arms stood on end. He sprinted toward the boardwalk, but the wooden steps creaked louder than usual, echoing as if warning him to turn back.

When Jonah reached the top, he stopped and looked once more at the empty sand. The beach lay quiet, no trace of him anywhere. He felt a chill creep up his spine, realizing he might have discovered something about the beach that no one else was meant to see.

### Activity: Alternate Ending Writing

1. In 4-6 sentences, write your own alternate ending to the story. Be creative, but make sure it connects logically to the events in the passage.
2. How does your alternate ending change the theme or message of the story compared to the original ending?
3. Why do you think authors sometimes choose mysterious or open-ended conclusions?