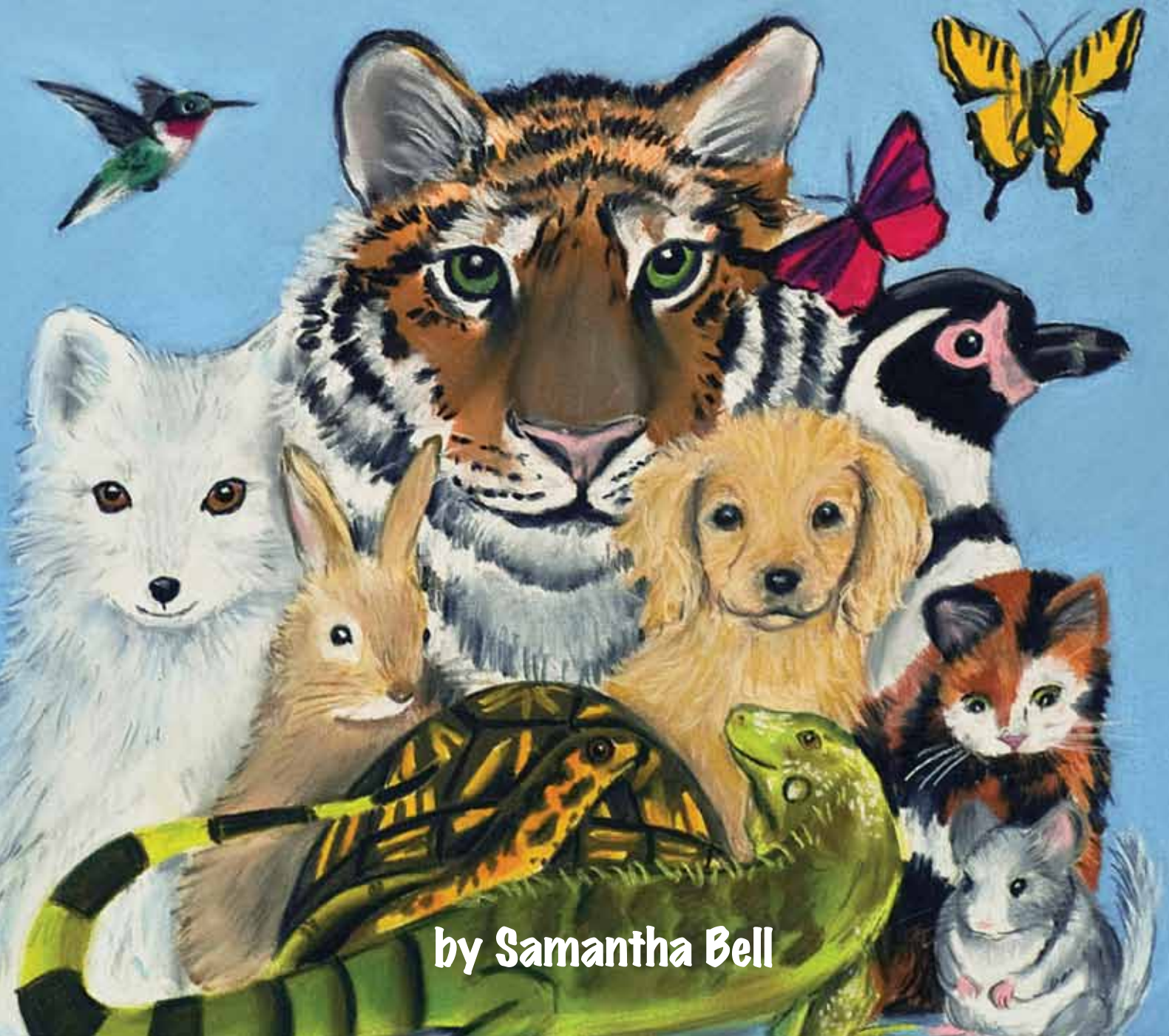


The Perfect Pet



by Samantha Bell

The Perfect Pet

After begging for a pet, a child's mother finally says "yes." But which animal will be the best pet? Using animal classification and habitat needs, the child narrows it down from Kingdom Animalia, through invertebrates to vertebrates. Reptiles and amphibians are out, and birds and fish are soon off the list. That leaves mammals, but which one? An elephant won't fit through the door, and a tiger would be too hard to walk. What's a child to do?

This is so much more than a picture book! This fun-to-read story is a launch pad for learning and discussion, at home or in the classroom. We encourage adults and children together to explore the activities in the back of the book and on the book's homepage. Free online resources and support at ArbordalePublishing.com include:

- For Creative Minds as seen in the book (in English & Spanish):
 - Animal Classification
 - Compare and Contrast the Animals
- Teaching Activities (to do at home or school):
 - Reading Questions
 - Language Arts
 - Science
 - Coloring Pages
- Interactive Quizzes: Reading Comprehension, For Creative Minds, and Math Word Problems
- Related Websites
- Aligned to State and Core Standards
- Reading Levels: AR, Lexile, Fountas & Pinnell

eBooks with Auto-Flip, Auto-Read, and selectable English and Spanish text and audio available for purchase online.

Thanks to Hattie Frederick, former interpretive ranger at Acadia National Park and National Association for Interpretation Certified Interpretive Guide, for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.



Samantha Bell is both the author and the illustrator of *The Perfect Pet*. As a teacher, Samantha was looking for a way to help her children understand animal classification. Some of the other books that she has written or illustrated include *It's Birthday Time*, *Jake!*, *Shaping up the Year*, *As I Watch*, *Growing Up Dreams*, *Cinderfella and the Furry Godmother*, and *One Pelican at a Time*. Samantha is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. A native of sunny central Florida, she grew up in an area brimming with wildlife. She now lives in the upstate of South Carolina with her husband and four children where she's found plenty of room for the family's animal friends. Visit her website at samanthabellbooks.com.



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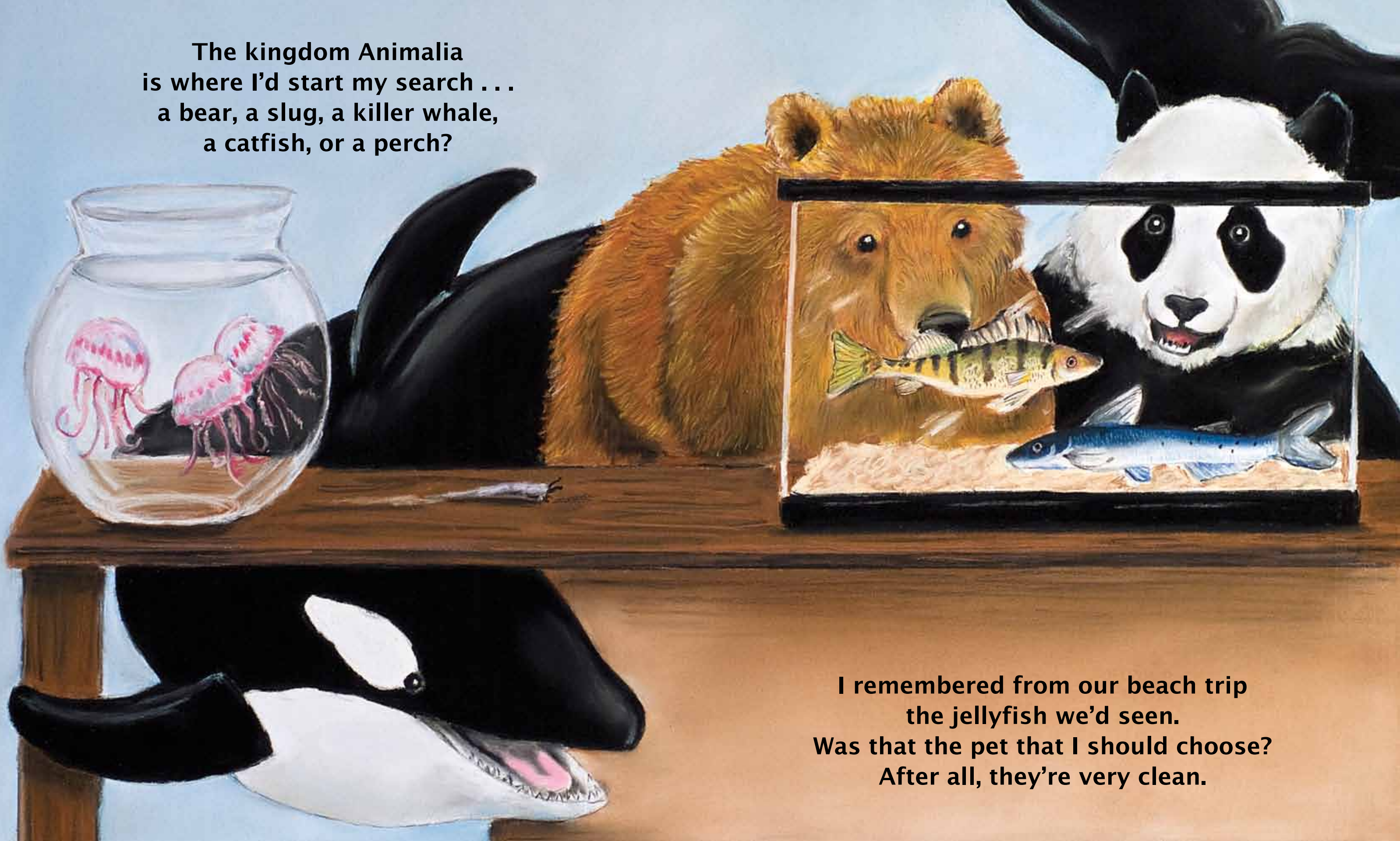


**It happened just like this one day,
I never could have guessed.
I'd waited so long for a pet—
Mom finally said "yes!"**

**We drove down to the pet store
and I wondered what to get.
I have so many favorites;
which would make the perfect pet?**

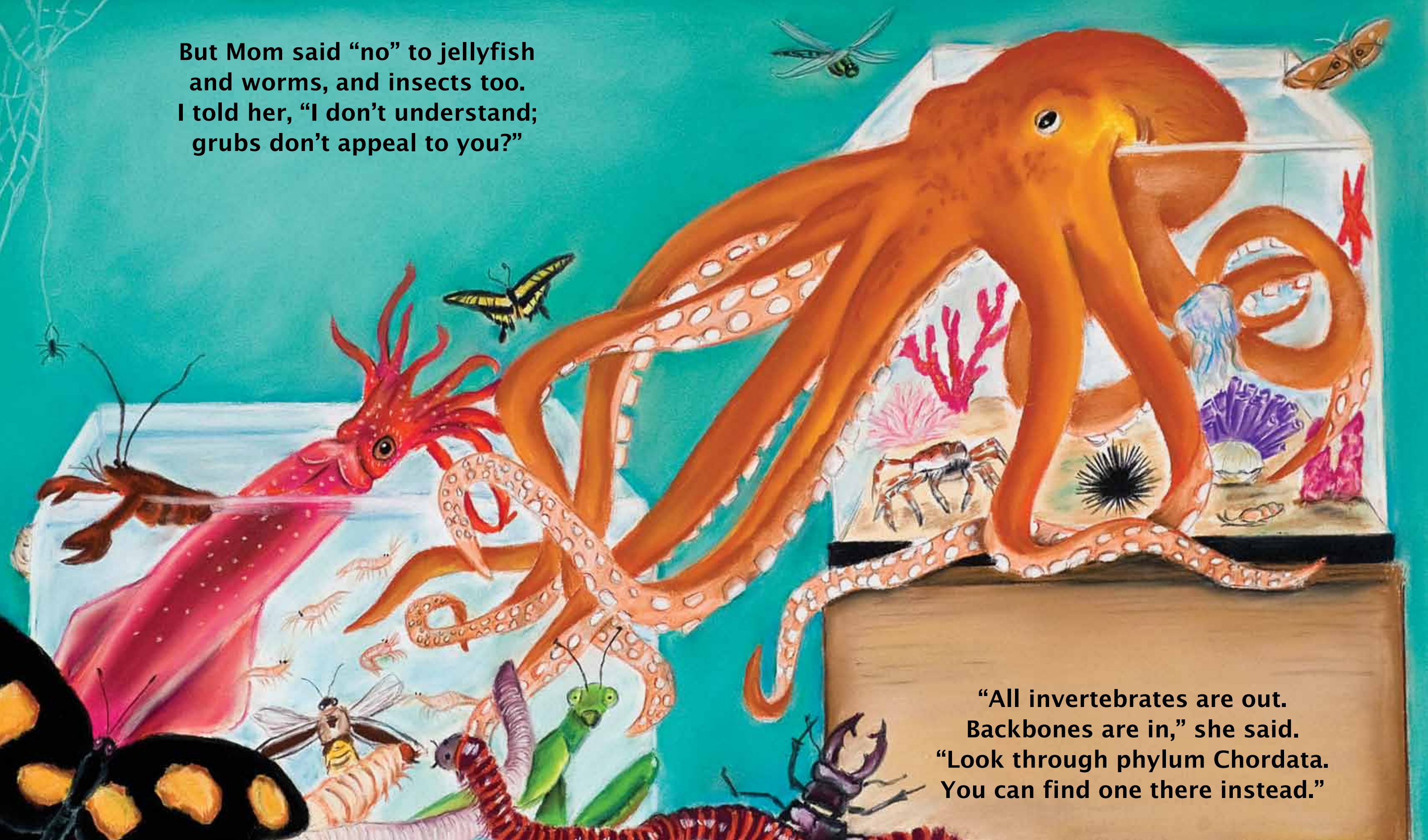


The kingdom Animalia
is where I'd start my search . . .
a bear, a slug, a killer whale,
a catfish, or a perch?



I remembered from our beach trip
the jellyfish we'd seen.
Was that the pet that I should choose?
After all, they're very clean.

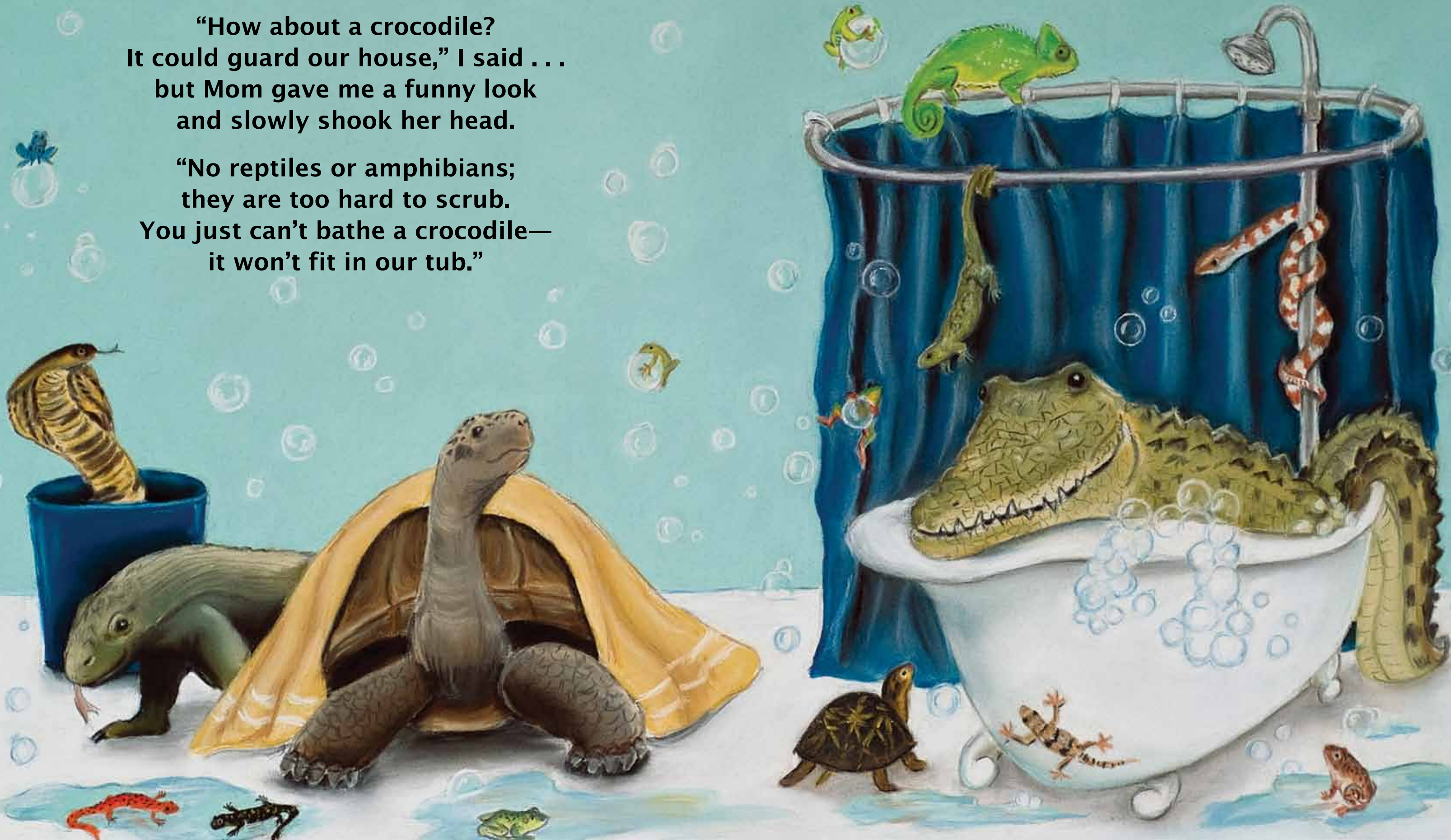
**But Mom said “no” to jellyfish
and worms, and insects too.
I told her, “I don’t understand;
grubs don’t appeal to you?”**



**“All invertebrates are out.
Backbones are in,” she said.
“Look through phylum Chordata.
You can find one there instead.”**

**“How about a crocodile?
It could guard our house,” I said . . .
but Mom gave me a funny look
and slowly shook her head.**

**“No reptiles or amphibians;
they are too hard to scrub.
You just can’t bathe a crocodile—
it won’t fit in our tub.”**



For Creative Minds

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Animal Classification

If you have ever sorted candy or toys into piles, you are grouping them by some characteristic. You might sort candy by the shape or by what's in the candy. Or you might sort some types of candy by color. You can sort toys by how you use them, where you use them, or by size. When you sort things, you are classifying them by some characteristic.

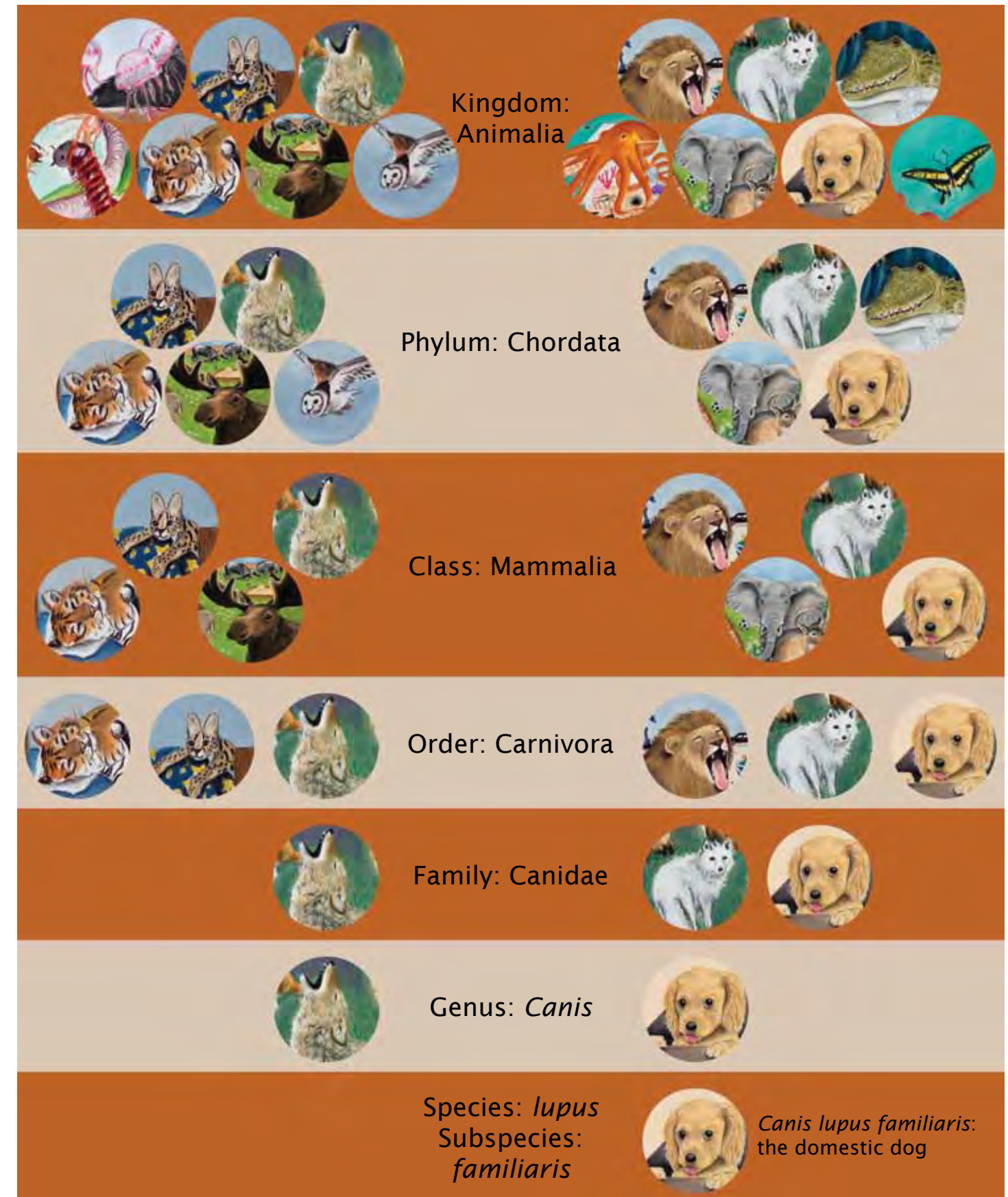
Scientists sort things too. They sort all living things into groups to help us understand and connect how things relate to each other. This sorting of living things is called **taxonomy**. Scientists ask questions to help them sort or classify animals.

- Does it have a skeleton? If so, is the skeleton inside (endoskeleton) or outside (exoskeleton) of the body?
- Does it get oxygen from the air through lungs or from the water through gills?
- Does it have a backbone?
- What type of skin covering does it have?
- Does the animal have a steady body temperature (warm-blooded) or does it use the heat of the sun or surrounding water to warm itself (cold-blooded)?
- Are the babies born alive or do they hatch from eggs?
- Does the baby drink milk from its mother?

The first and broadest sort is a kingdom. All living things can be sorted into one of the five commonly-accepted kingdoms (Monera, Protista, Fungi, Plantae, and Animalia).

Next, living things are sorted into phyla. In the animal kingdom, a scientist asks if the animal has (or ever had) a backbone. If the answer is "no," the animal is an invertebrate. If the answer is "yes," the animal is a vertebrate. All animals with backbones are in the phylum Chordata, in a subphylum called Vertebrata. Scientists continue to ask questions and sort into more specific categories.

Once identified, living things are named by their genus and species.



There are five major classes of vertebrates:

Fish:

- most have scales covered with a thin layer of slime
- backbone (vertebrate)
- inside skeleton (endoskeleton)
- gills to breathe
- babies are either born alive or hatch from eggs
- cold-blooded



Amphibians:

- soft, moist skin
- backbone (vertebrate)
- inside skeleton (endoskeleton)
- most hatchlings are called larvae or tadpoles and live in water, using gills to breathe
- as they grow, they develop legs and lungs and move onto land
- cold-blooded



Reptiles:

- dry scales or plates
- backbone (vertebrate)
- inside skeleton (endoskeleton); most turtles also have a hard outer shell
- lungs to breathe
- most hatch from leathery eggs
- cold-blooded



Birds:

- feathers
- backbone (vertebrate)
- inside skeleton (endoskeleton)
- lungs to breathe
- hatch from eggs
- warm-blooded



Mammals:

- hair, fur, whiskers, or quills at some point during their lives
- backbone (vertebrate)
- inside skeleton (endoskeleton)
- lungs to breathe
- most give birth to live young
- produce milk to feed young
- warm-blooded



Compare and Contrast the Animals

Which animals have fur and which have feathers or scales?
Which do *you* think would make a good pet? Why?



Answers: Fur: dog and rabbits. Feathers: penguin and cockatiel parrots. Scales: corn snake, beta fish, and chameleon.

To my mom, Karole Schweizer, who helped all of us find our perfect pets.

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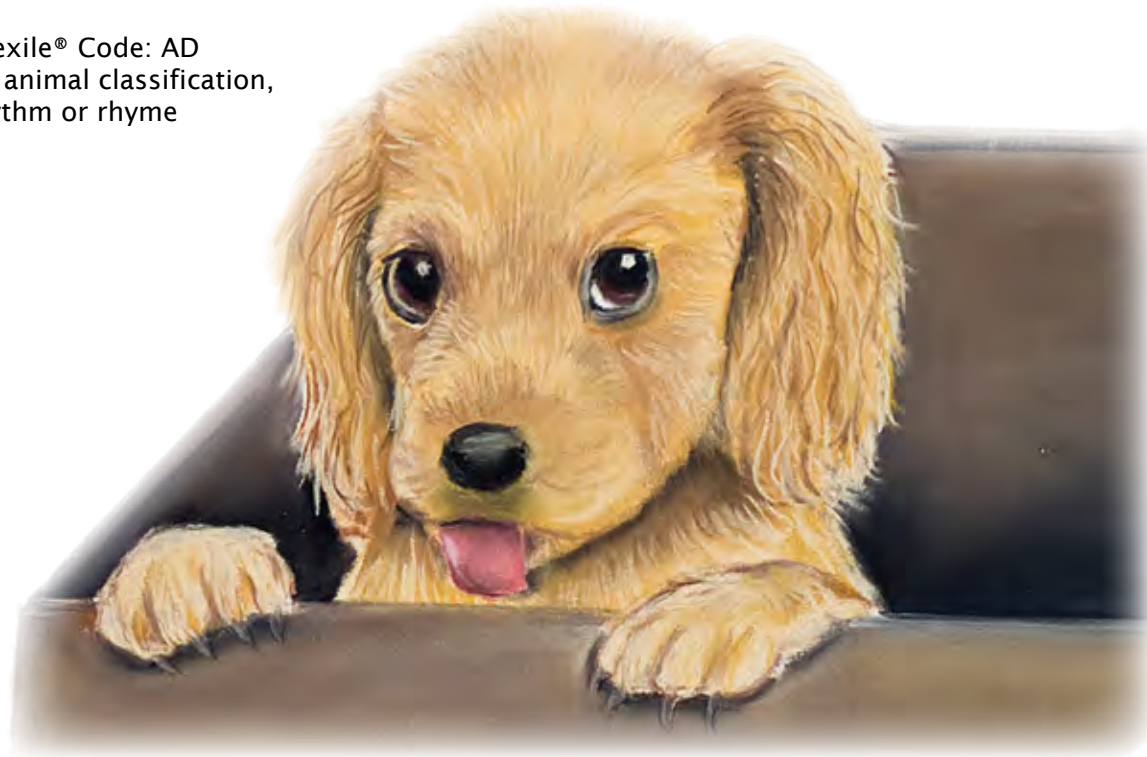
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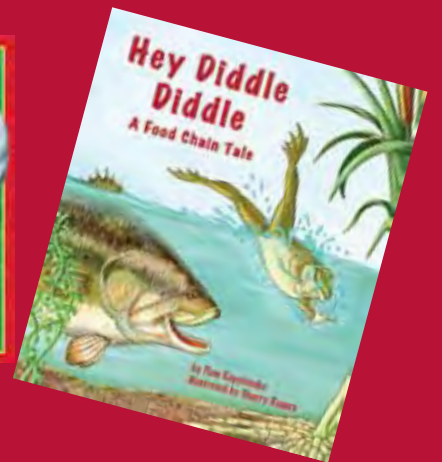
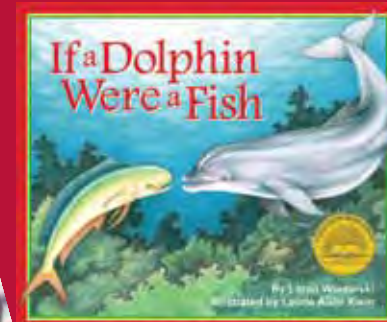
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