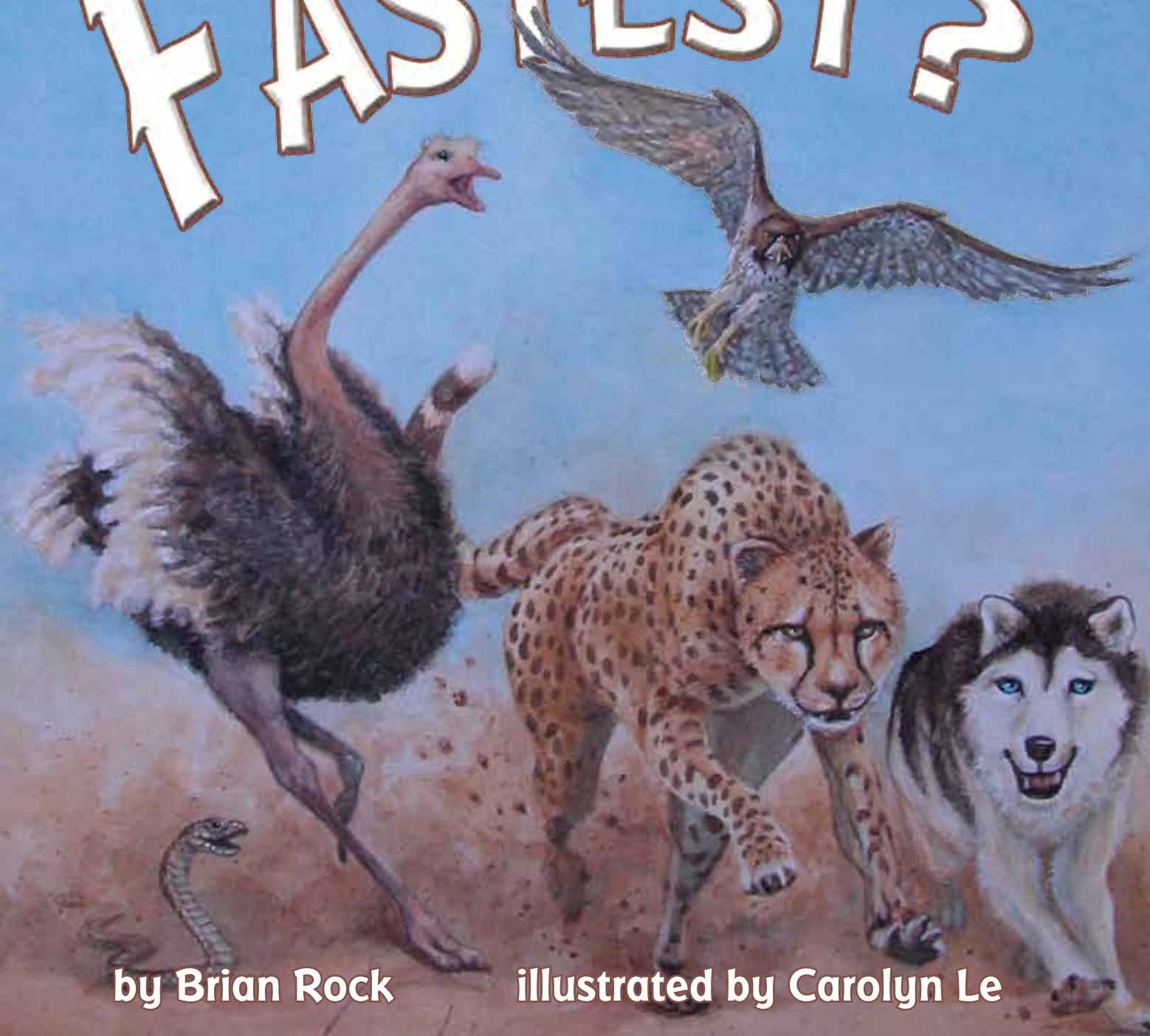


# WHICH ANIMAL IS FASTEST?



by Brian Rock

illustrated by Carolyn Le

# WHICH ANIMAL IS FASTEST?

After Cheetah wins the 100-meter dash, King Lion is ready to crown him the world's fastest animal. But before he can give the award, there are some objections from the crowd. One-by-one, other animals come forward to claim that they are the fastest. Even the turtle argues that she is faster than a cheetah—in the right conditions. This assembly of nature's speediest species examines the fastest on land, air, and sea. While the animals engage in a rapid fire war of words, readers discover a new speed record holder with each turn of the page.



Arbordale Publishing offers so much more than a picture book. We open the door for children to explore the facts behind a story they love.

Thanks to Christine Lewis and Kate Davis, Zoo Educators at the Birmingham Zoo, for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

The *For Creative Minds* includes

- Animal Movement
- Different Animals Have Different Strengths
- Animal Body Parts
- Speed Sequencing

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**Brian Rock** is not very fast. He can barely outrun a sloth. But he does enjoy writing children's books at his own, measured pace. In addition to *Which Animal is Fastest*, Brian has written *The Deductive Detective* for Arbordale, *Martian Mustache Mischief*, *Don't Play with Your Food!*, *Piggies*, and *With All My Heart*. He received a master's degree in Children's Literature/Creative Writing from Hollins University. For six years, Brian worked in the Chesterfield County public school system teaching at-risk students. Visit Brian's website at [www.brianrock.net](http://www.brianrock.net).

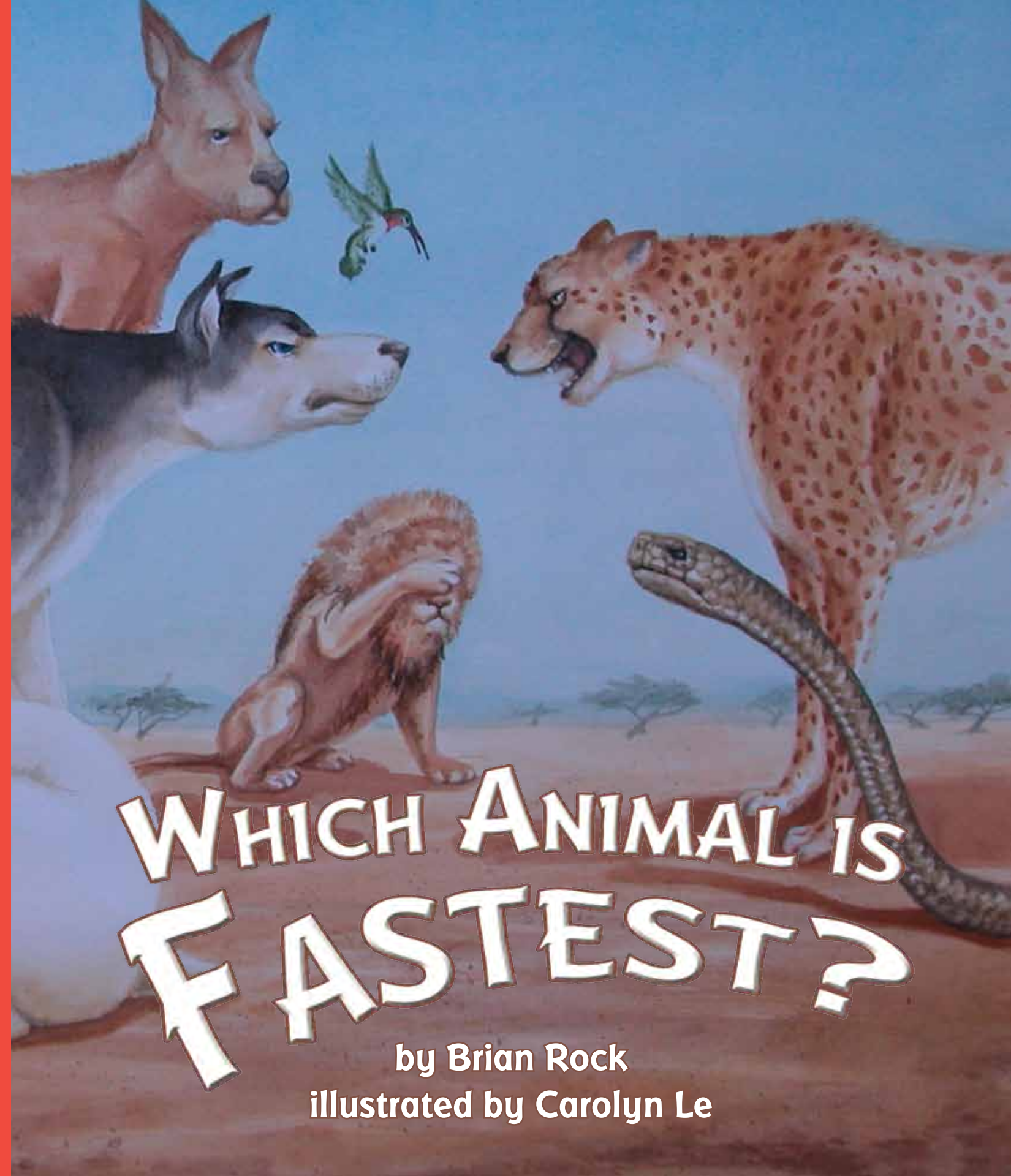
**Carolyn Le** was born in Viet Nam and grew up in California. She dreamed of becoming an illustrator and, after graduating from Otis College of Art and Design with a BFA in Illustration, she illustrated her first picture book, *Clarence and the Traveling Circus*. Carolyn's watercolor paintings are a reflection of the beauty she sees around her, from the bright sunny Southern California days to the memories of the books she loved to read as a child. She has received numerous awards for her art and has shown her work in galleries in Los Angeles and London. Carolyn is living her dream (occasionally with a bunny roommate), sharing her love of art with her students, illustrating picture books and exploring writing and illustrating her own books. Visit her website at [www.carolynle.com](http://www.carolynle.com).



Brian Rock



Carolyn Le



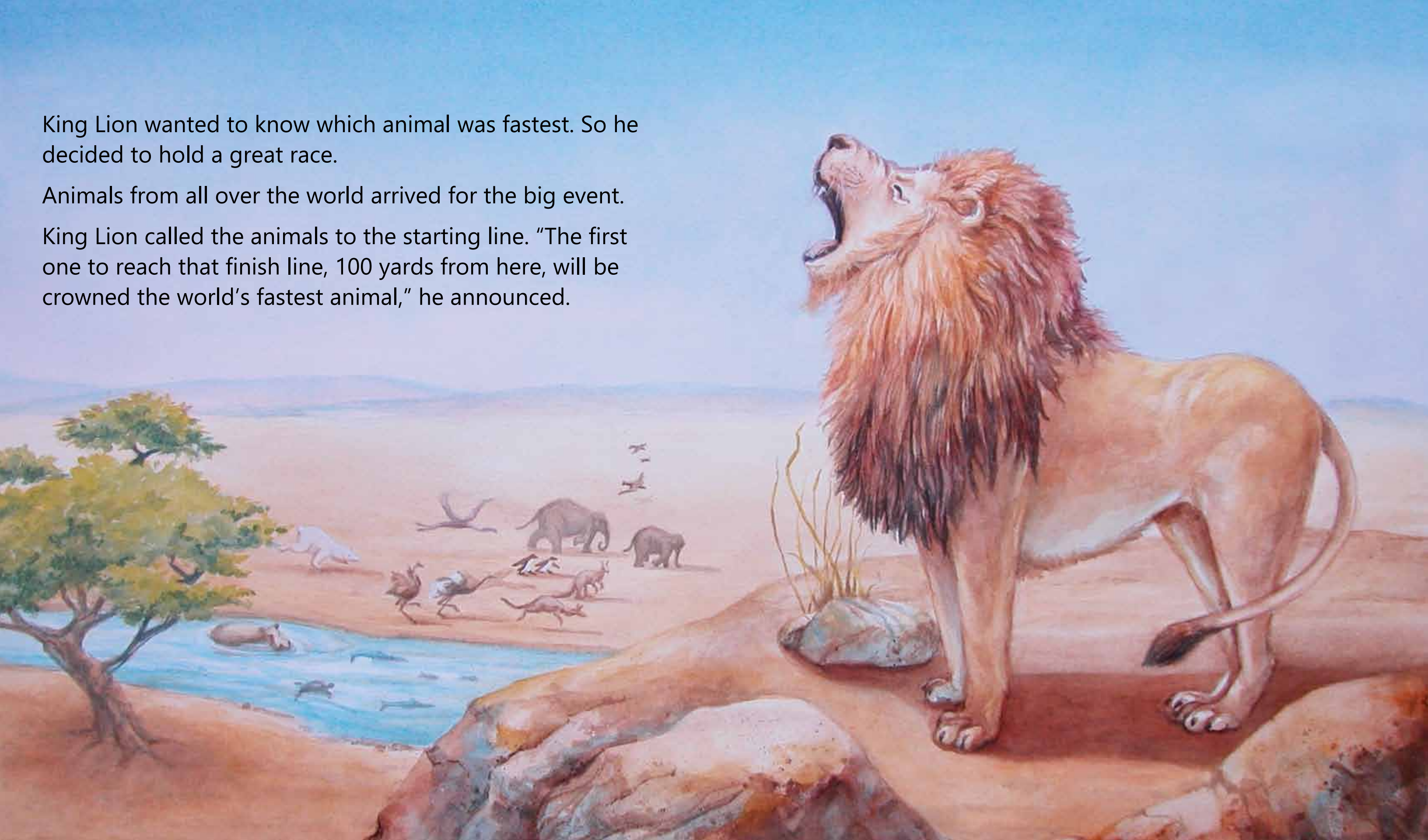
# WHICH ANIMAL IS FASTEST?

by **Brian Rock**  
illustrated by **Carolyn Le**

King Lion wanted to know which animal was fastest. So he decided to hold a great race.

Animals from all over the world arrived for the big event.

King Lion called the animals to the starting line. "The first one to reach that finish line, 100 yards from here, will be crowned the world's fastest animal," he announced.



The animals took their places at the starting line.

Thousands more watched from the sidelines. They held their breath as King Lion called out:

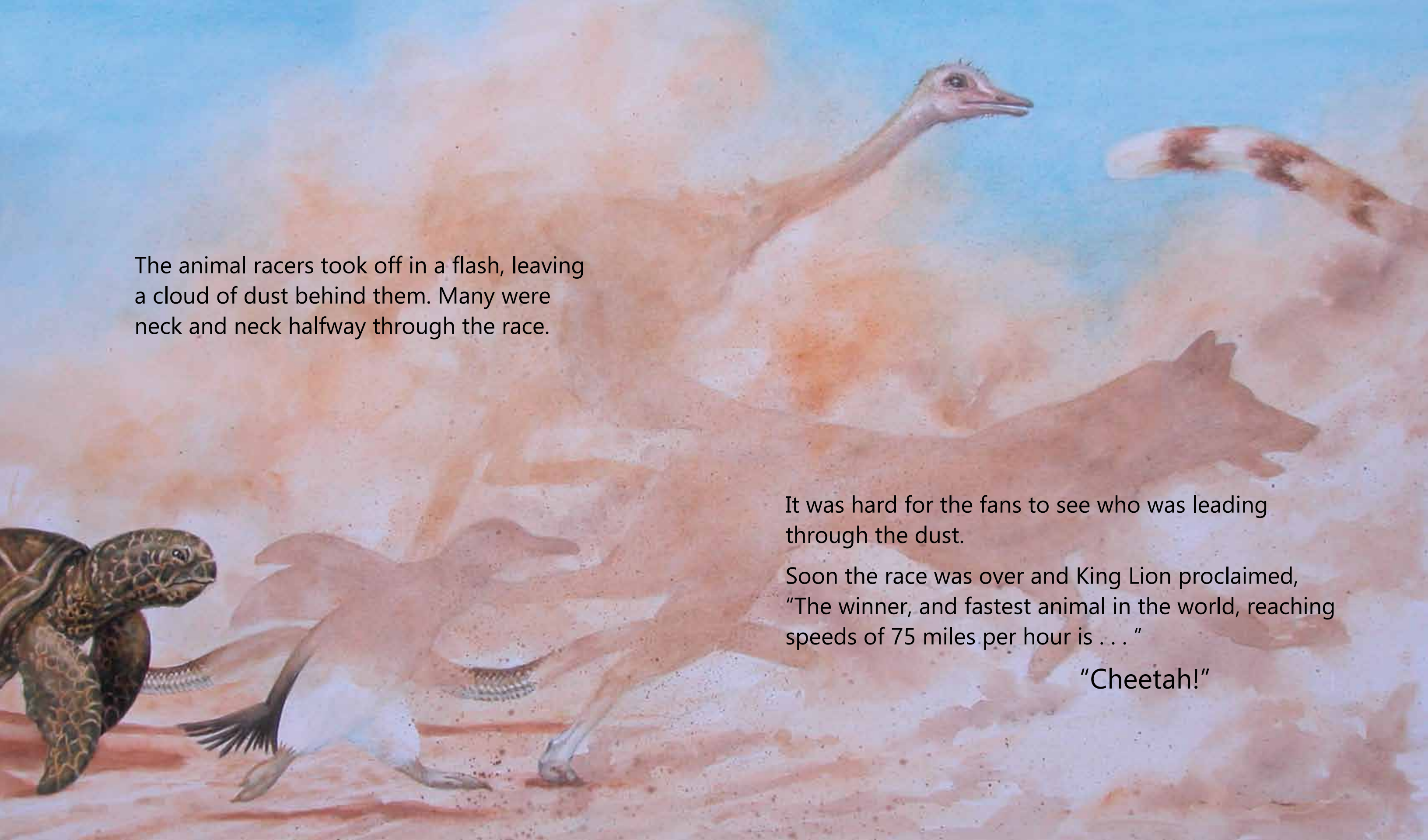


“Runners, take your mark.”

“Get set . . .”

The crowd erupted with roars, squeals, and squawks when the king yelled,

**“GO!”**

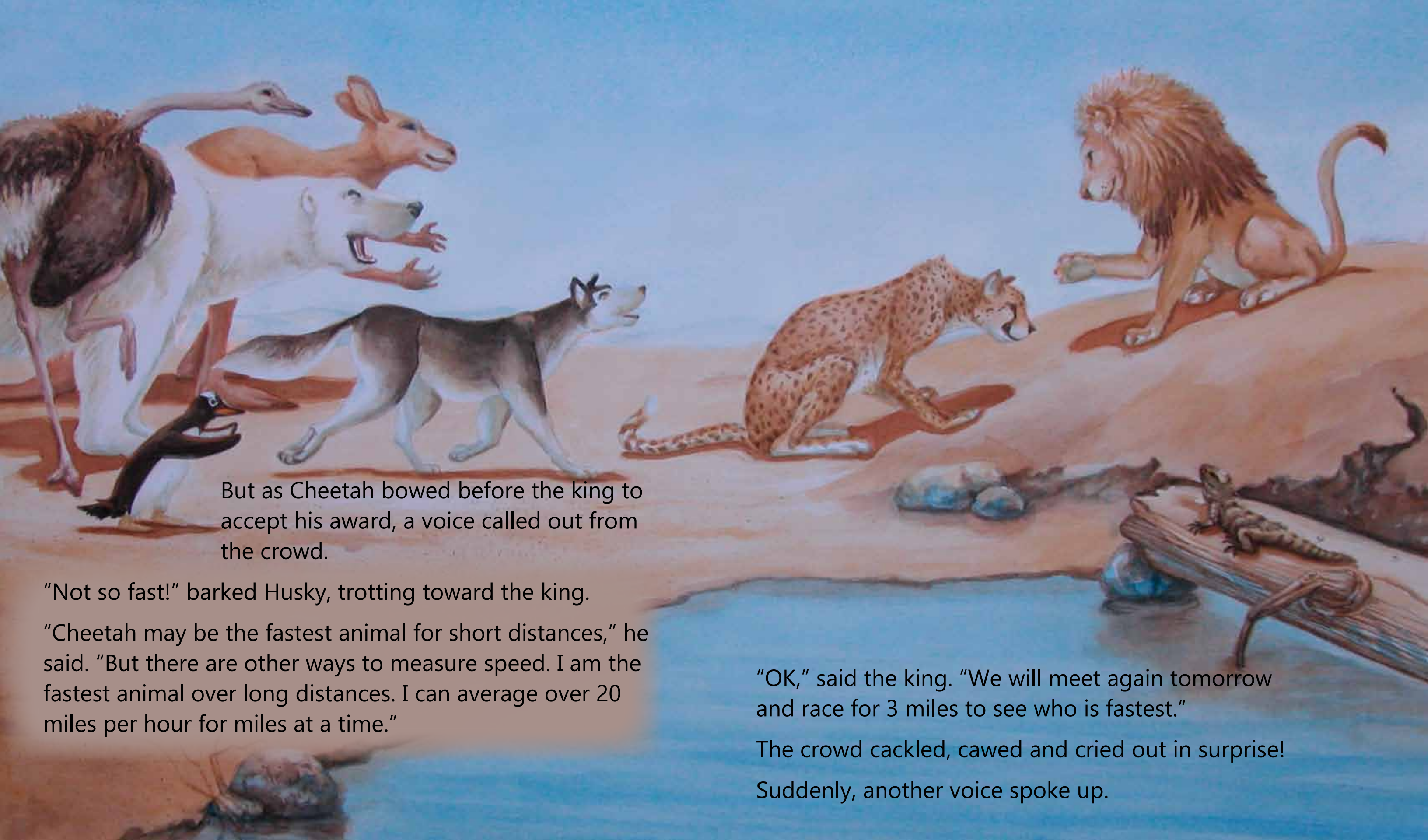


The animal racers took off in a flash, leaving a cloud of dust behind them. Many were neck and neck halfway through the race.

It was hard for the fans to see who was leading through the dust.

Soon the race was over and King Lion proclaimed, "The winner, and fastest animal in the world, reaching speeds of 75 miles per hour is . . ."

"Cheetah!"



But as Cheetah bowed before the king to accept his award, a voice called out from the crowd.

"Not so fast!" barked Husky, trotting toward the king.

"Cheetah may be the fastest animal for short distances," he said. "But there are other ways to measure speed. I am the fastest animal over long distances. I can average over 20 miles per hour for miles at a time."

"OK," said the king. "We will meet again tomorrow and race for 3 miles to see who is fastest."

The crowd cackled, cawed and cried out in surprise! Suddenly, another voice spoke up.

## For Creative Minds

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### Animal Movement

Match each animal to the way it moves. How do *you* move?

Hop

Run (four legs)

Swim

Fly

Run (two legs)

Slither

bat

lion

ostrich

snake

sea turtle

rabbit

Answers: hop: rabbit. fly: bat. run (four legs): lion. run (two legs): ostrich. swim: sea turtle. slither: snake.

## Different Animals Have Different Strengths

Just like all people are different, all animals are different. A lion and a polar bear are both fast, but if you ask them both to swim a hundred miles through icy water, one of them is sure to win *that* race. If you put a marlin on the savannah to race against a cheetah, that wouldn't be very fair. The marlin would be a fish out of water!

King Lion wanted to know who is the fastest, so he created a race: running across the savannah. That is a race a lion would do well in! But as each of the animals came forward and told him about their different strengths, he realized there are more ways to race than sprinting across the savannah. How was King Lion able to compromise? Do you think his solution was fair?

All of the animals wanted a race where they could best show their talents. Maybe not every animal in the world can be the fastest animal, but they can all find a race where they can truly show their stuff.

Many of the fastest animals are predators. Why do you think that is?

What skills or strategies do slower animals use to avoid these fast hunters?

Which do you think is more important to an animal, speed or strength? Why?

Did any of the animals in this book surprise you? Which ones?

Do you think it's more important for an animal to be really fast over short distances or kind of fast over longer distances? Why?

Which kind of animal speed do you think is most important? Why?



## Animal Body Parts

Animals' bodies help them succeed in their environment. Some body parts help animals be better hunters, or help them hide from predators. Some body parts help animals stay warm in icy water, or stay cool in hot, humid habitats.

Match the animals below with their body parts . . . and the fun-fact that tells what that body part is used for!

1



A

I can pack quite a punch. My **claws** go from completely still to 50 mph in less than 3 milliseconds.

2



B

If I swim through a school of fish, my **bill** is sure to hit a few. Then it's easy to eat the injured prey.

3



C

When it's time for a snack, I swoop down from the sky and grab my prey with my **talons**.

4



D

My fur keeps me warm, but there's no fur on my nose. So I tuck my nose into my **tail** to stay warm.

5



E

I can run fast, but not far. My **spots** help me hide in the tall grass until my prey is near.

cheetah

falcon

husky

marlin

mantis shrimp

Answers: cheetah-2E. falcon-1C. husky-3D. marlin-5B. mantis shrimp-4A

## Speed Sequencing

Some animals are fastest in water. Some are fastest on land. Some animals are fastest over long distances and others can only hold their speed for a short burst (sprint). The animals in this story all have different ways that *they* are the fastest. But what if you look at a group of animals that are all fast in a similar way?

Each of the animals in the list below is at its fastest when it runs on land for a short distance. If you had a race between these animals, what do you think the results would be?

Animal	Speed (mph)	Speed (km/h)
African wild dog	45	72
blue wildebeest	50	80
cheetah	75	120
coyote	43	69
elk	45	72
lion	50	80
pronghorn antelope	55	88
quarterhorse	55	88
springbok	56	90
Thompson's gazelle	40	75

Many of the animals on this list live on flat, grassy land in warm climates. But not all! Elk live in forests in cool climates where it often snows.

What if the elk held a race where all of the animals on this list sprinted through a snowy forest? They would still race on land for a short distance, but do you think the results would be the same?





Dedicated to Maisy, the world's fastest dog—at winning hearts!—BR  
To my family and friends for their unfailing support. Thank you.—CL

The author donates a portion of his royalties to The Humane Society of the United States, to help support their efforts to fight animal cruelty, provide shelter for rescued animals and help save endangered animals.

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#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Rock, Brian, 1966- author. | Le, Carolyn, illustrator.

Title: Which animal is fastest? / by Brian Rock ; illustrated by Carolyn Le.

Description: Mount Pleasant, SC : Arbordale Publishing, [2018] | Summary: After Cheetah wins a 100 year dash, King Lion is ready to crown him the world's fastest animal but other animals, even turtle, claim they are fastest in their own realms. Includes activities, facts about animals, and information about habitats.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018005029 (print) | LCCN 2018013250 (ebook) | ISBN 9781607187578 (English Downloadable eBook) | ISBN 9781607187691 (English Interactive Dual-Language eBook) | ISBN 9781607187639 (Spanish Downloadable eBook) | ISBN 9781607187288 (Spanish Interactive Dual-Language eBook) | ISBN 9781607187394 (English hardcover) | ISBN 9781607187455 (English pbk.) | ISBN 9781607187516 (Spanish pbk.) | ISBN 9781607187578 (English ebook) | ISBN 9781607187639 (Spanish ebook)

Subjects: | CYAC: Speed--Fiction. | Animals--Fiction. | Individuality--Fiction.

Classification: LCC PZ7.R5868 (ebook) | LCC PZ7.R5868 Whi 2018 (print) | DDC [E]--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018005029>

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Manufactured in China, June 2018  
This product conforms to CPSIA 2008  
First Printing

Arbordale Publishing  
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464  
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