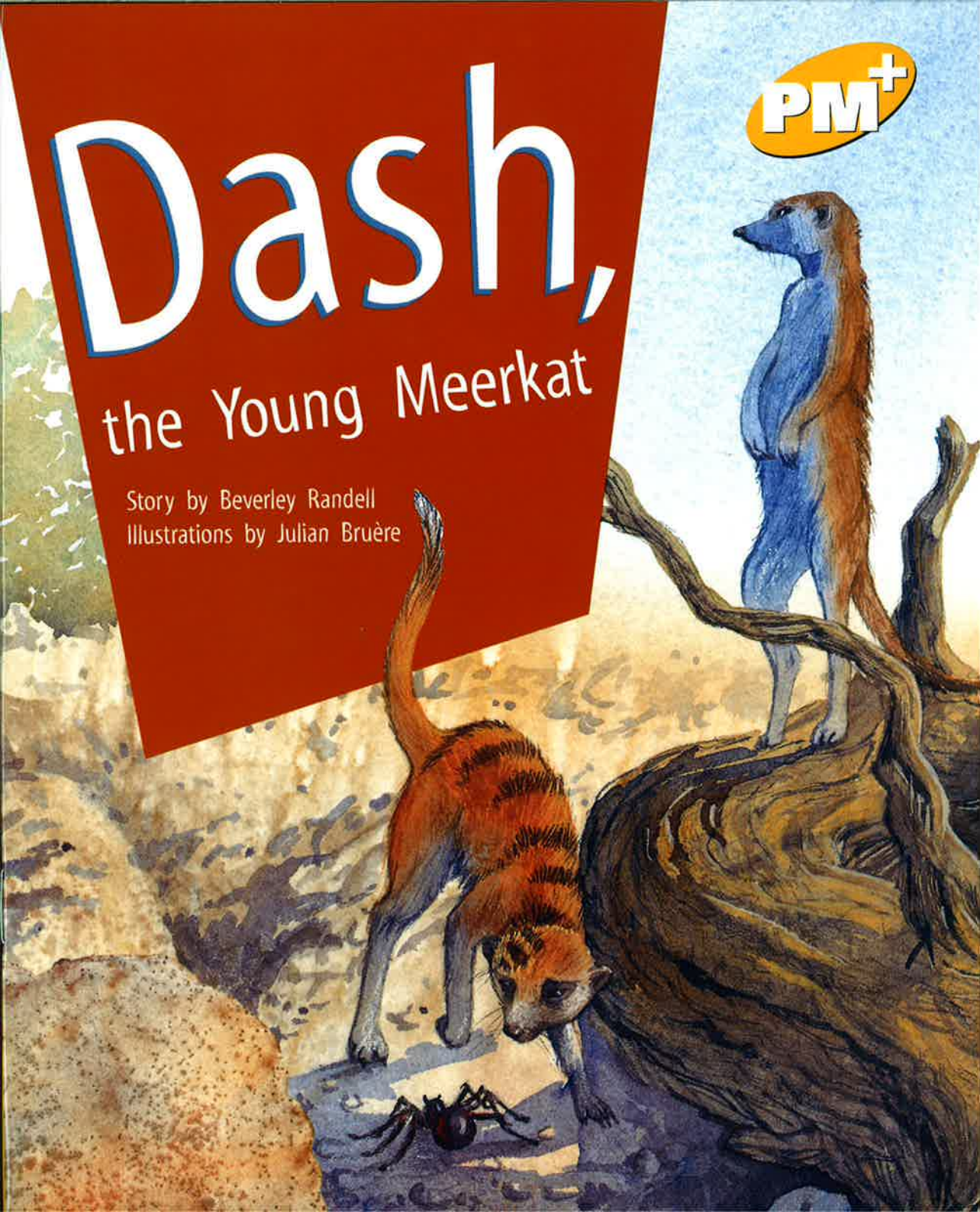
# Dash, the Young Meerkat

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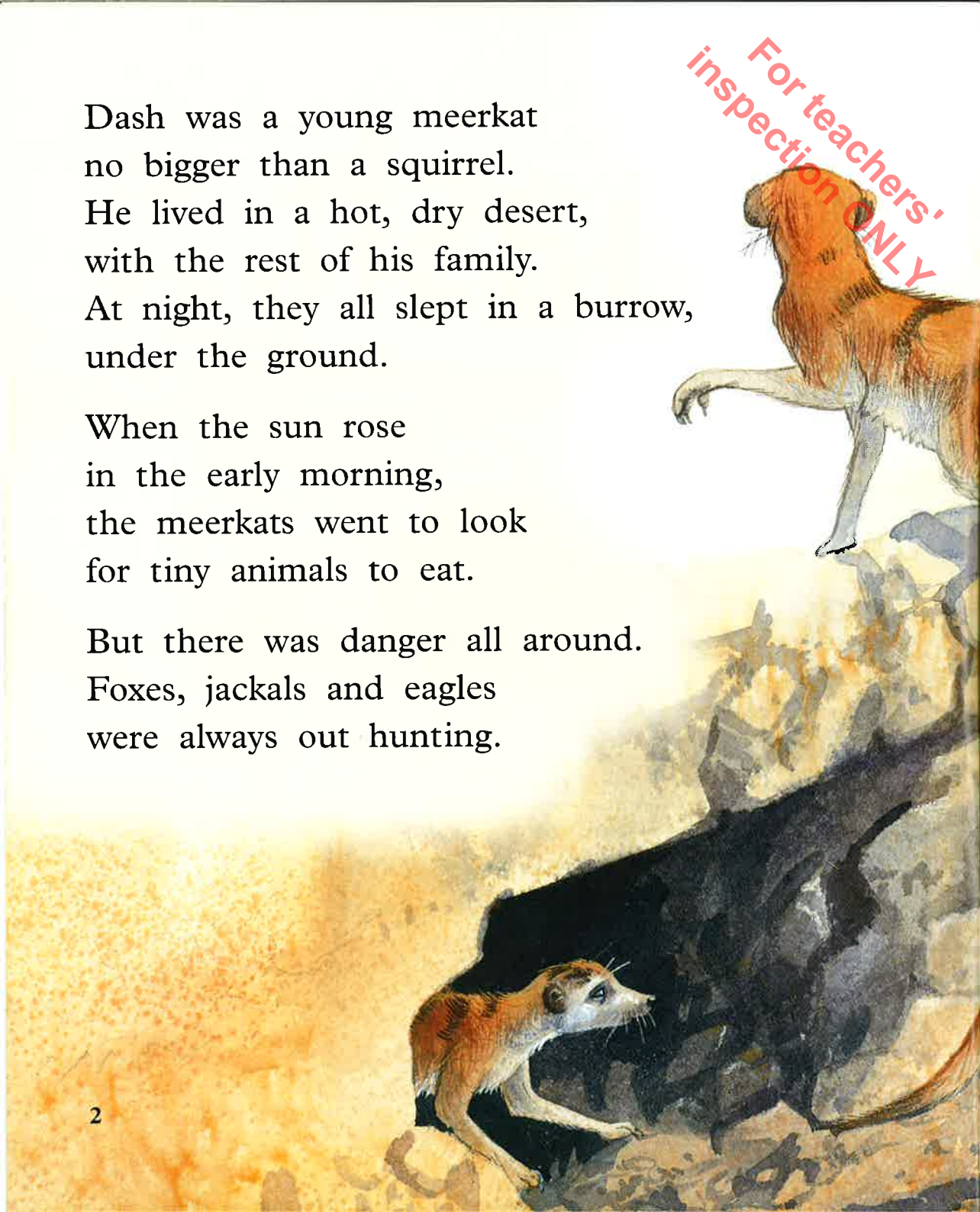
Story by Beverley Randell
Illustrations by Julian Bruère



Dash was a young meerkat
no bigger than a squirrel.
He lived in a hot, dry desert,
with the rest of his family.
At night, they all slept in a burrow,
under the ground.

When the sun rose
in the early morning,
the meerkats went to look
for tiny animals to eat.

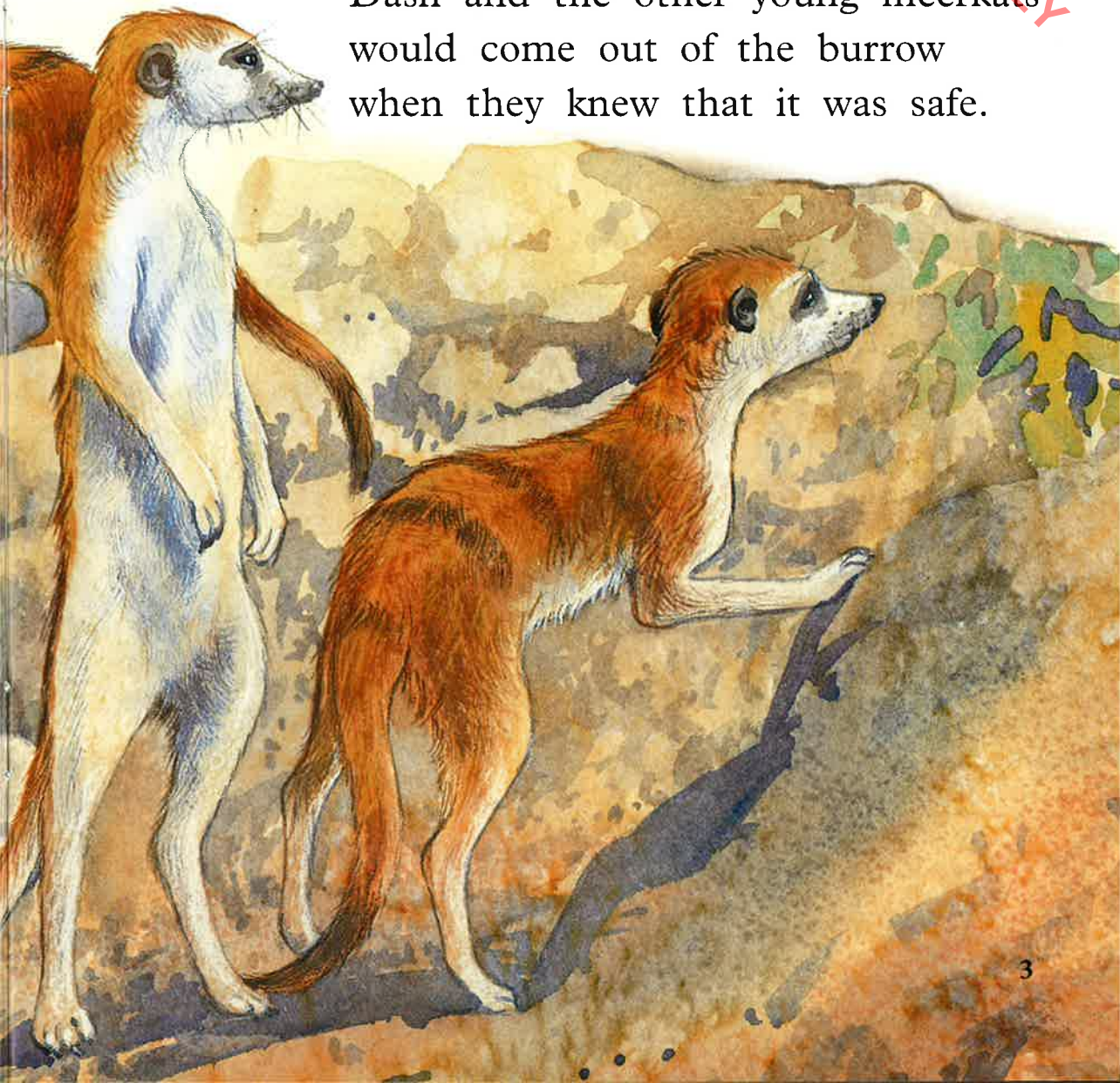
But there was danger all around.
Foxes, jackals and eagles
were always out hunting.



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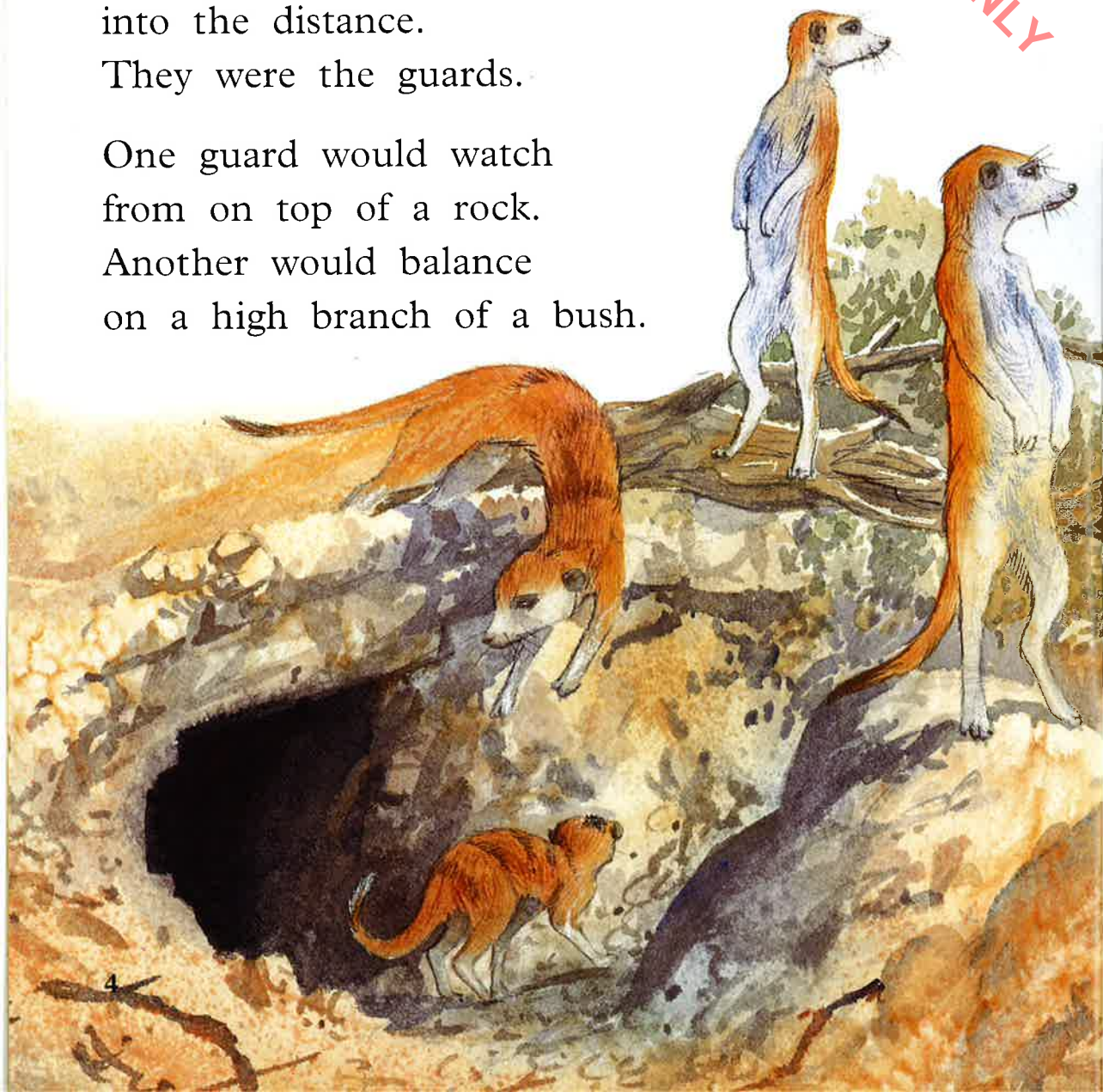
So the older meerkats
took it in turns
to watch for danger.
Dash and the other young meerkats
would come out of the burrow
when they knew that it was safe.



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The meerkats on watch always stood upright.
When they were standing straight and tall,
they could see a long way
into the distance.
They were the guards.

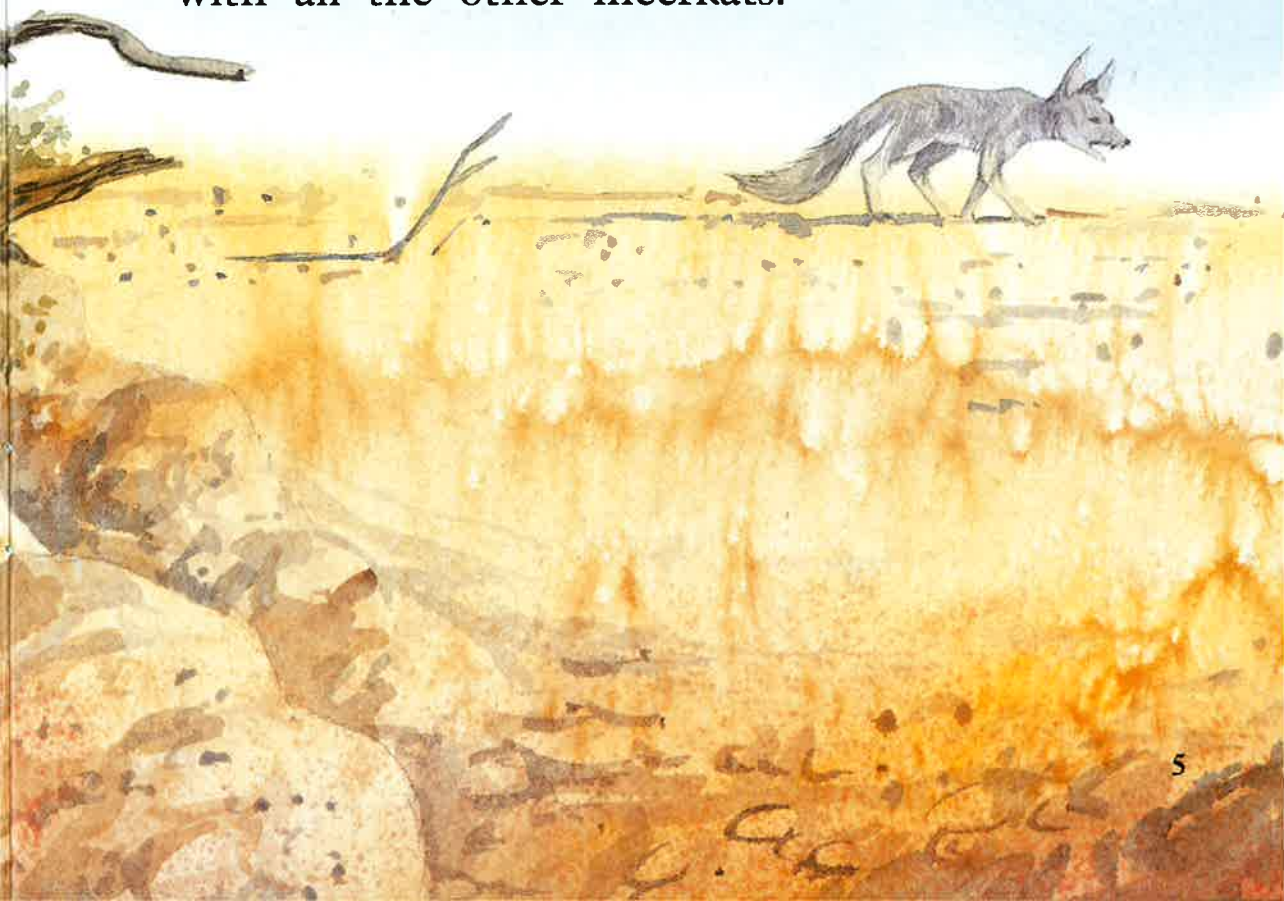
One guard would watch
from on top of a rock.
Another would balance
on a high branch of a bush.



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Dash, the young meerkat,
learned to listen for danger.
If the guards made soft little chirps,
he knew that it was safe to be above ground.

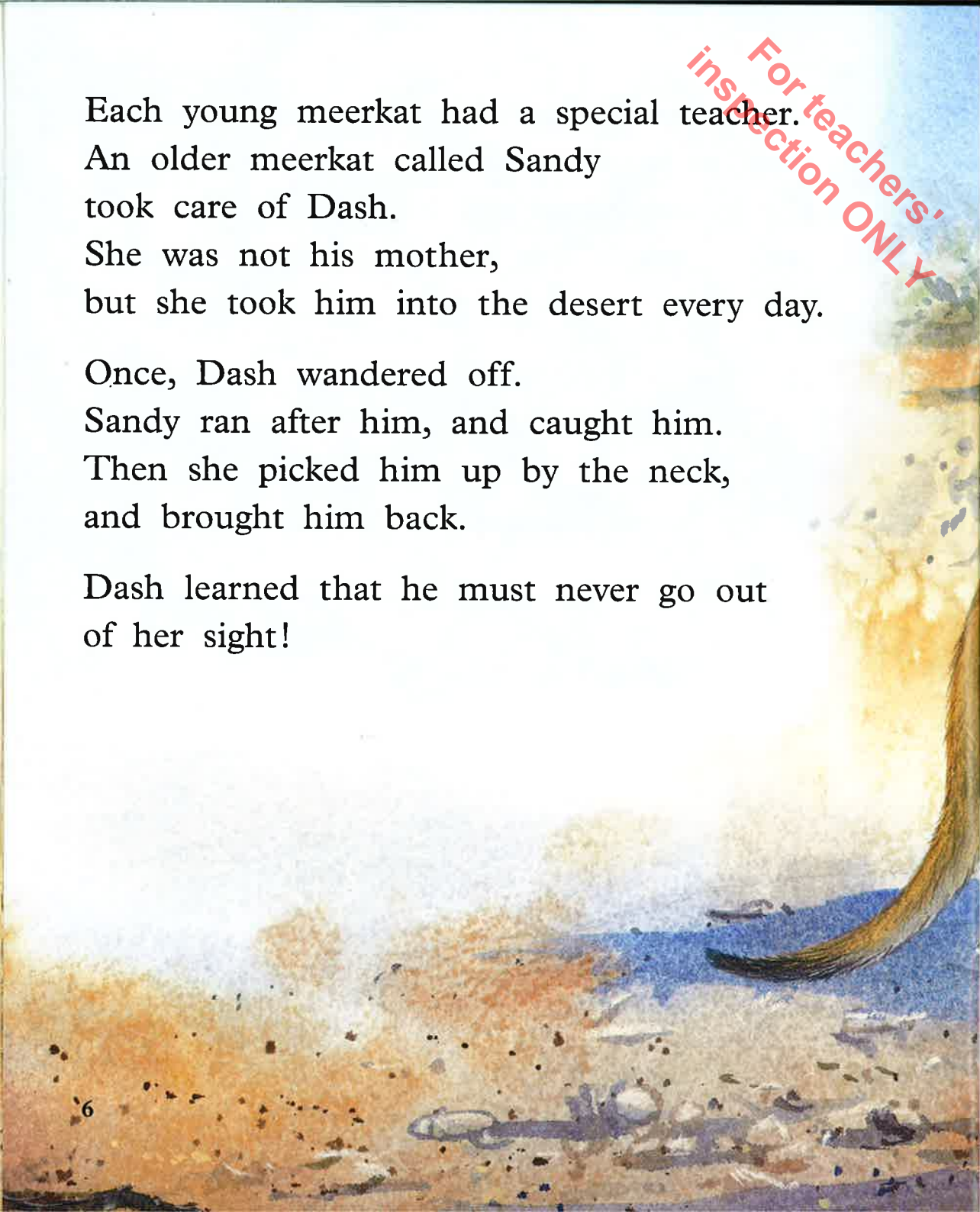
But if the guards saw an enemy,
they made a loud warning call.
Then Dash would race
for the safety of the burrow
with all the other meerkats.



Each young meerkat had a special teacher.
An older meerkat called Sandy
took care of Dash.
She was not his mother,
but she took him into the desert every day.

Once, Dash wandered off.
Sandy ran after him, and caught him.
Then she picked him up by the neck,
and brought him back.

Dash learned that he must never go out
of her sight!



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