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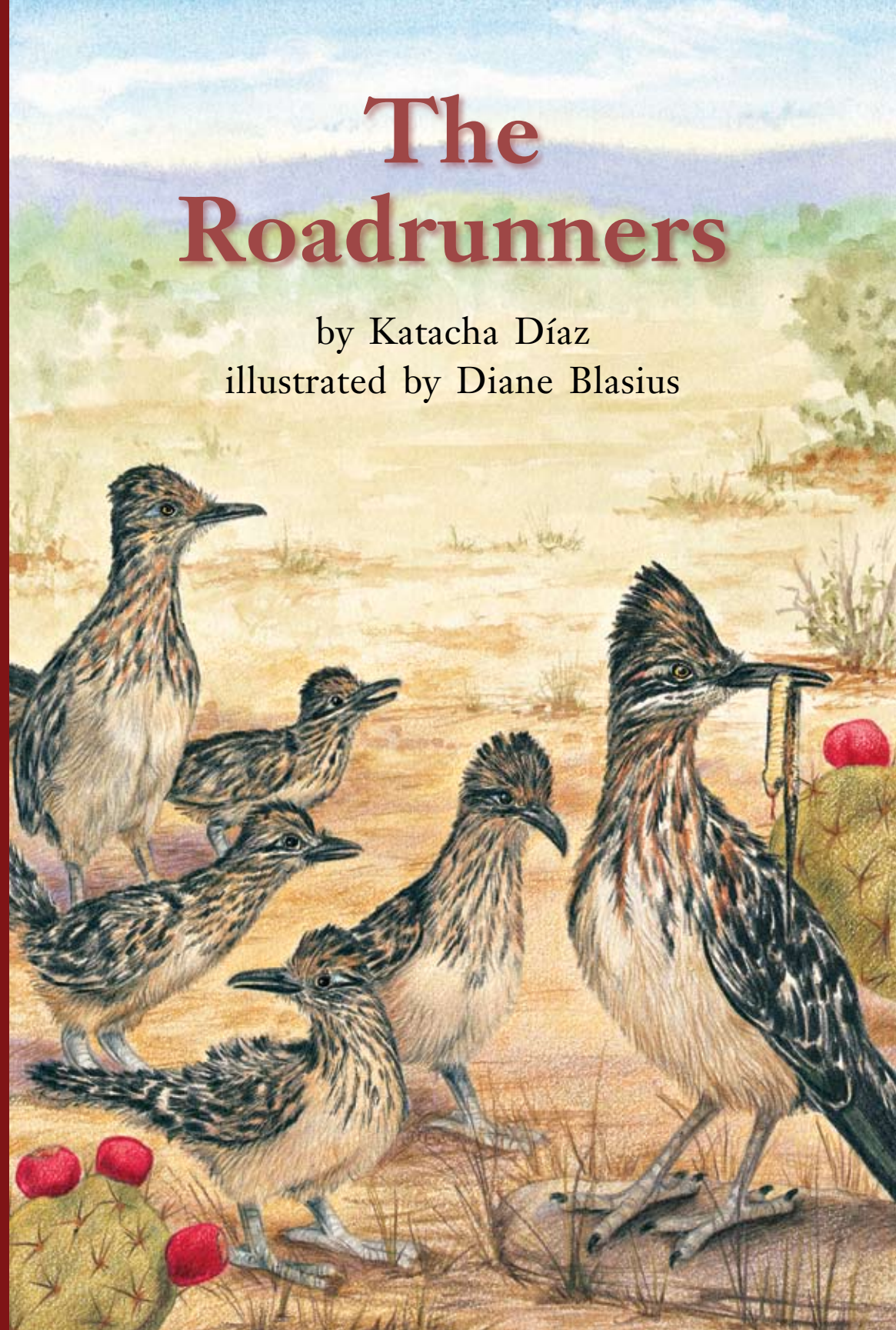


Book 103

Level M

The Roadrunners

by Katacha Díaz
illustrated by Diane Blasius



The Roadrunners

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Glossary

desert	a dry place where there is little rain
guarding	watching something to keep it safe
hatch	to come out of an egg
lizard	a reptile with a body covered in scales
peck	to make a hole in something by hitting it with a beak

The Roadrunners

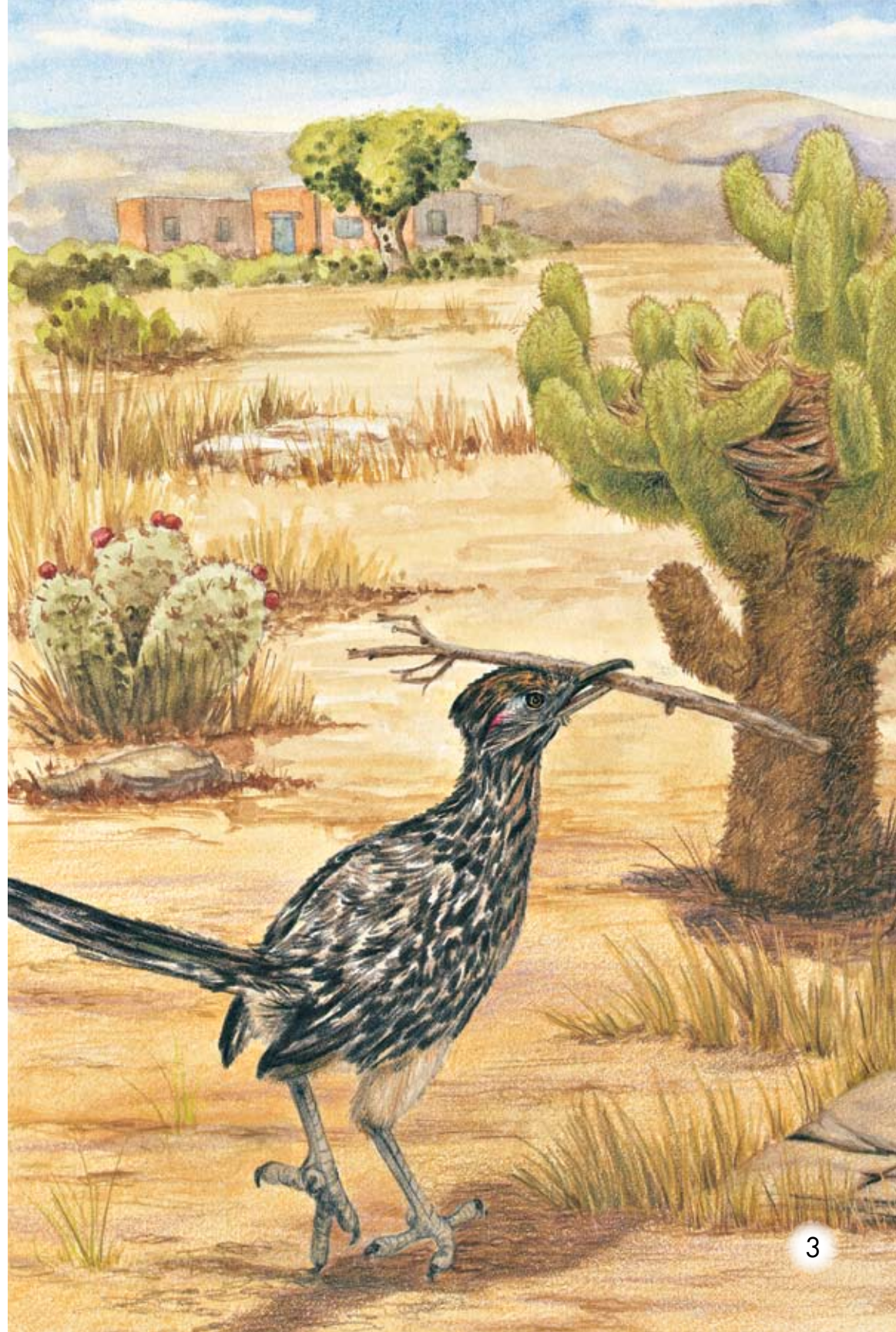
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Building a Nest

It is a spring day in the desert. A bird is collecting sticks behind an old house on Cactus Road. She uses the sticks to make a nest.

The bird is Mother Roadrunner. Her name tells you that she likes to run. She doesn't fly well, so she doesn't make her nest high in a tree. She tucks the nest in some cactus plants.



Eggs in the Nest

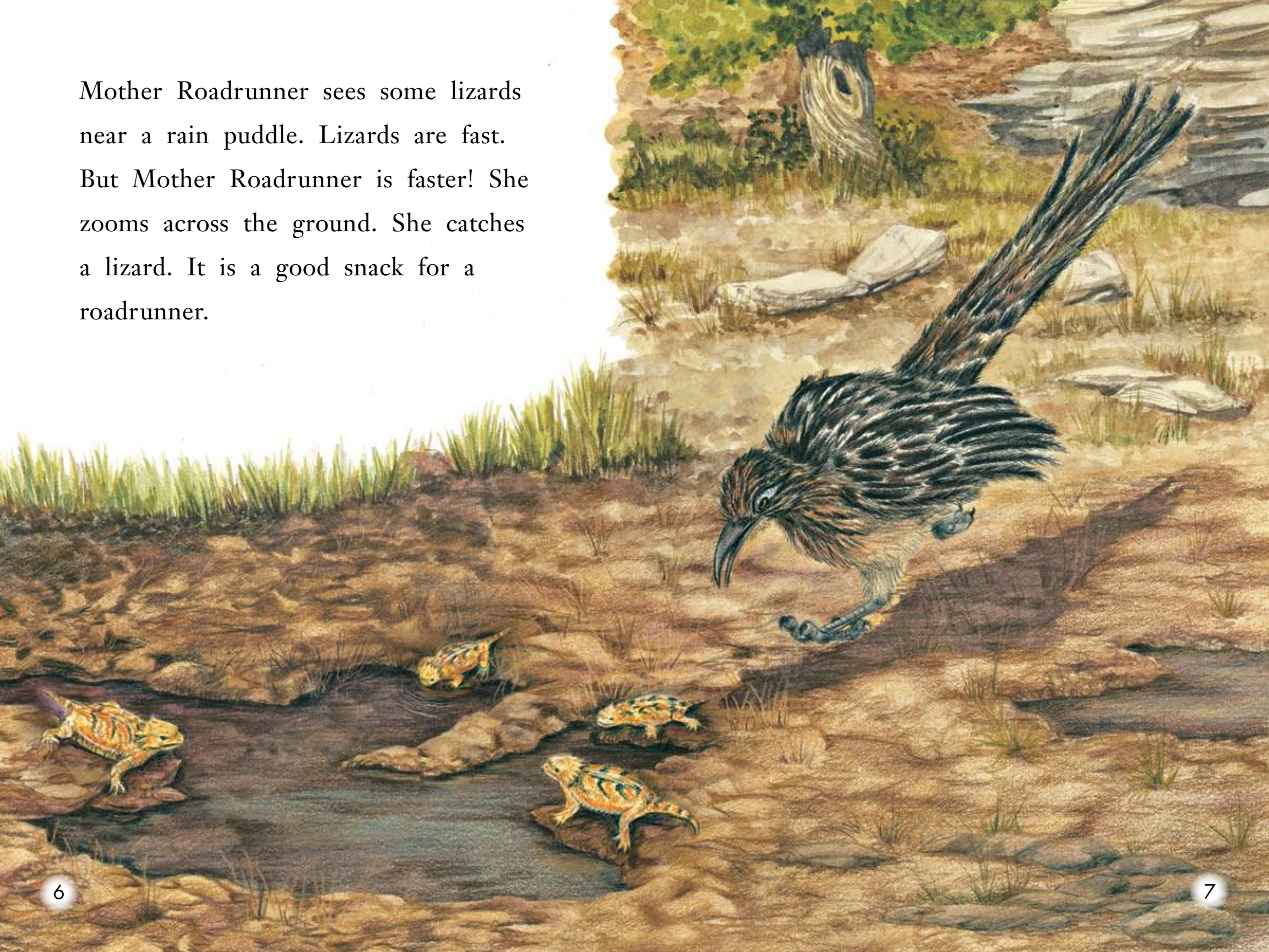
Mother Roadrunner lays four eggs in the nest over the next four days. Then she settles down to sleep. She is tired after all her hard work.

Later, the sound of rain wakes Mother Roadrunner. She leaves her nest and runs into the desert to sip rainwater. Mother Roadrunner always runs wherever she goes!

Father Roadrunner stays in the nest while she is gone. He protects the eggs until Mother Roadrunner comes back.



Mother Roadrunner sees some lizards near a rain puddle. Lizards are fast. But Mother Roadrunner is faster! She zooms across the ground. She catches a lizard. It is a good snack for a roadrunner.

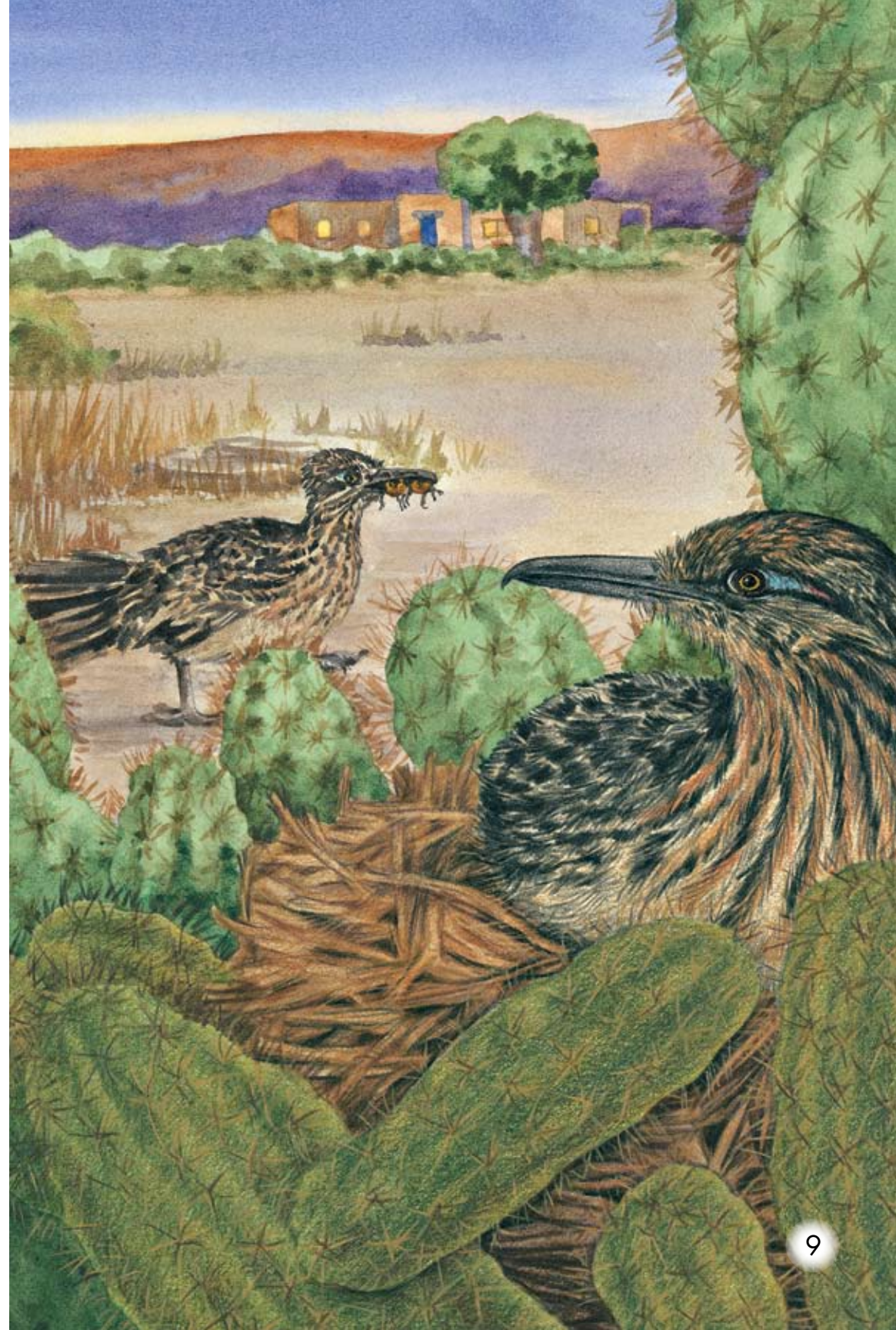


Guarding the Nest

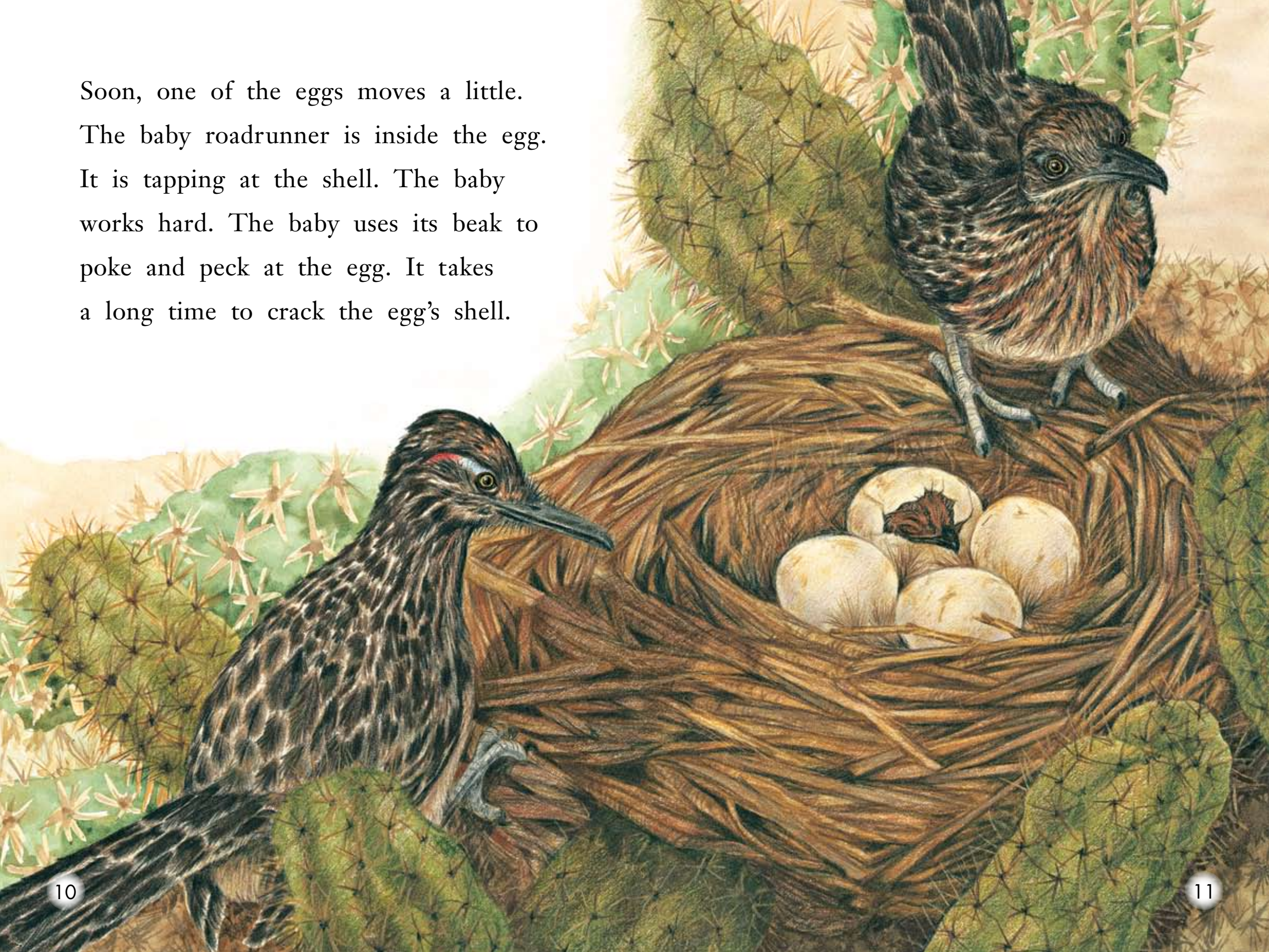
Mother and Father Roadrunner take turns guarding the nest for 14 days. Mother Roadrunner stays in the nest during the day. She goes out to hunt for food at night. Then Father Roadrunner watches the nest.

When 14 days have passed, both Mother and Father Roadrunner stay close to the nest.

Mother Roadrunner does make one quick trip to get some spiders. But she runs right back!



Soon, one of the eggs moves a little.
The baby roadrunner is inside the egg.
It is tapping at the shell. The baby
works hard. The baby uses its beak to
poke and peck at the egg. It takes
a long time to crack the egg's shell.



Baby Roadrunners

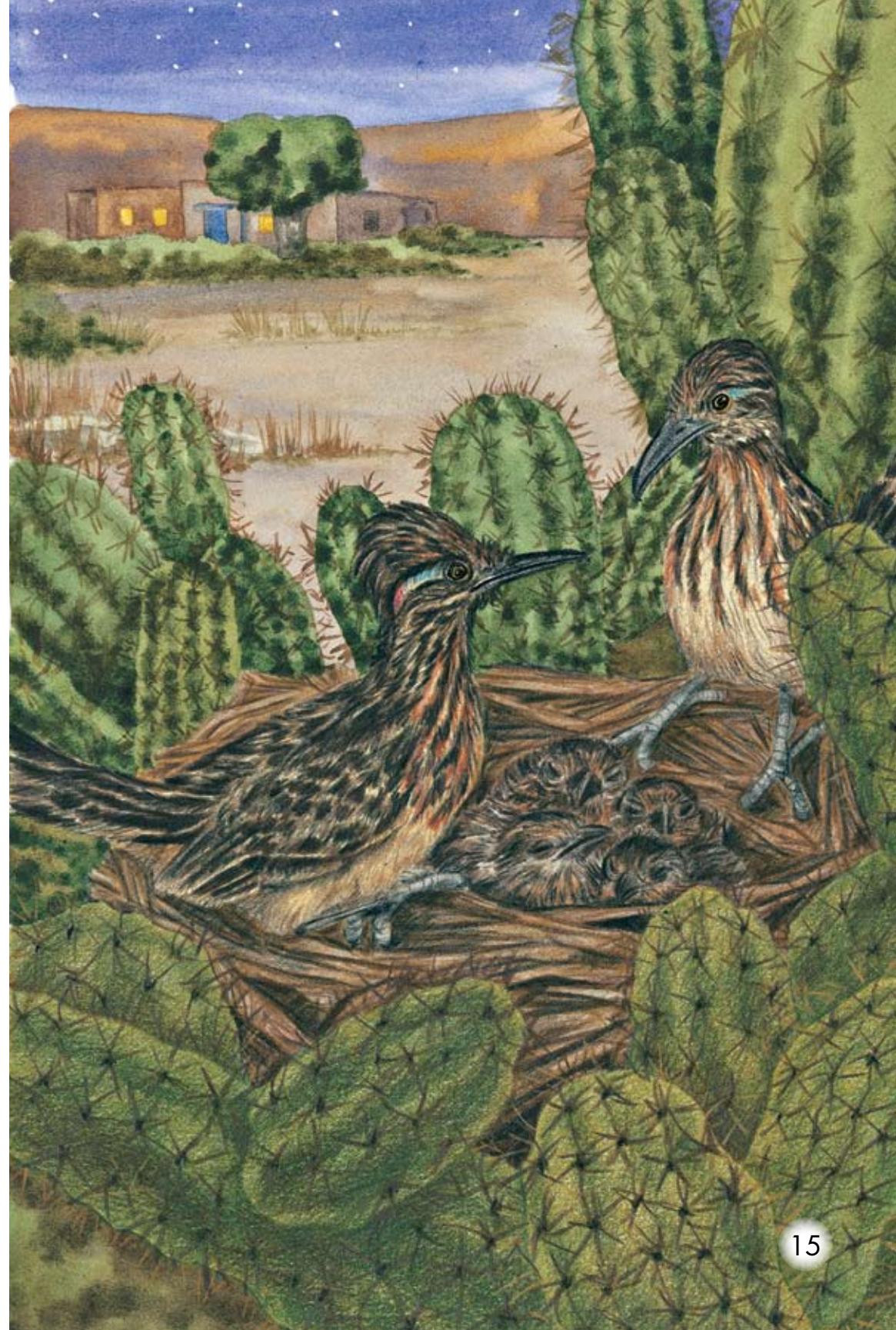
One by one, the baby roadrunners hatch out of the eggs.

The babies are hungry. They cheep and peep. Mother Roadrunner feeds her babies. Then the babies fall asleep. The roadrunner babies can not run yet. They can not even walk.



The roadrunner babies will be ready to get their own food soon. They will run fast. They will need less help from Mother and Father Roadrunner.

But now, Mother and Father Roadrunner protect the babies. Mother and Father bring the babies food. They keep the babies safe and warm in their nest near Cactus Road.



Roadrunner Facts

- Roadrunners live in the desert. They like to run along the road. That's how they got their name.
- Roadrunners are speedy birds. They can run as fast as 15 miles per hour.
- Roadrunners' feet are very strong. Each foot has two toes in front and two toes in back. It makes a footprint that looks like an X.