



The Life of a
DRAGONFLY

By Heidi Jenkins

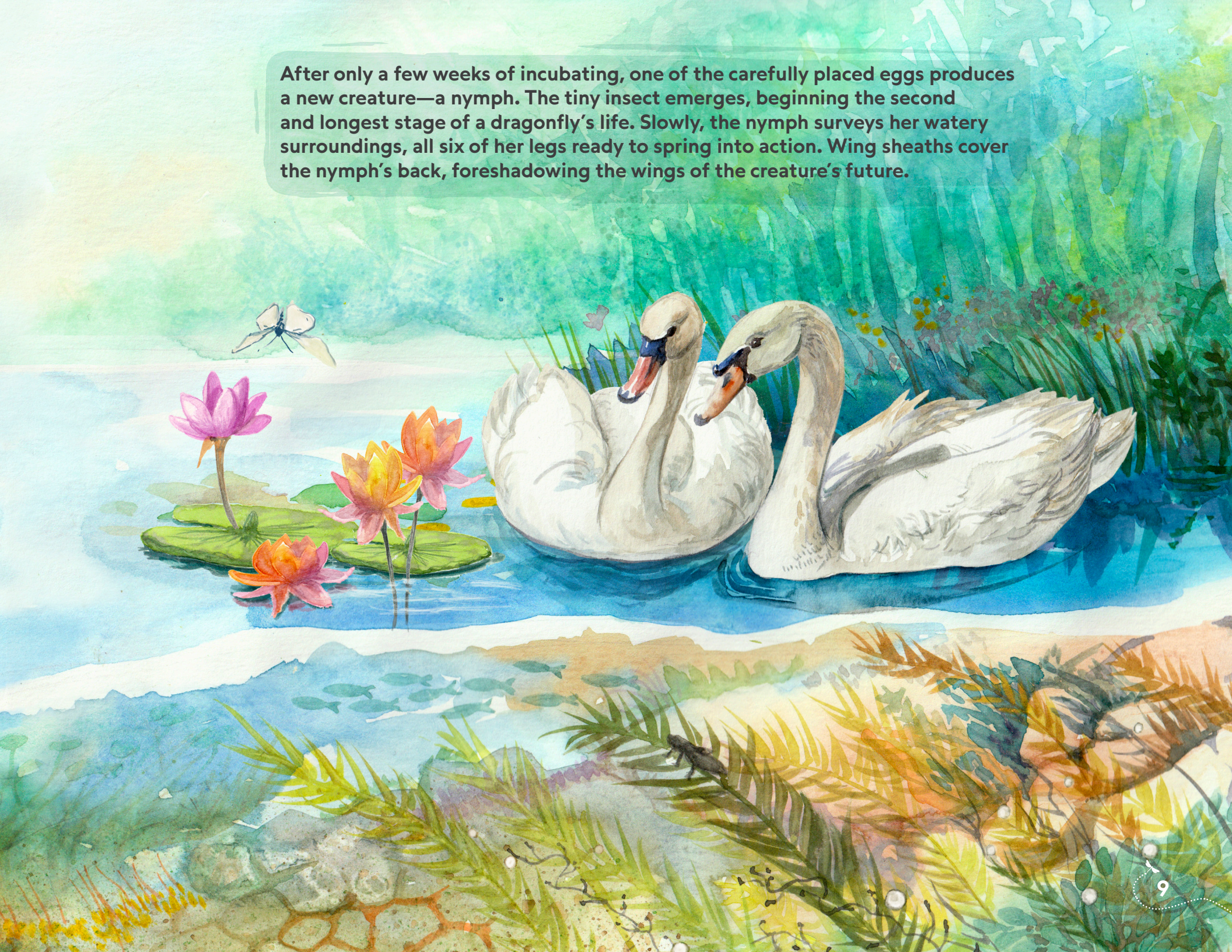


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The early summer evening is quiet as darkness falls on a beautiful little pond. The silence is deceptive, though; much is going on around the water. The most careful of listeners would hear a symphony of sounds, and the sharp observer would find plenty to contemplate, for evening is the best time to see the pond's resident life.



After only a few weeks of incubating, one of the carefully placed eggs produces a new creature—a nymph. The tiny insect emerges, beginning the second and longest stage of a dragonfly's life. Slowly, the nymph surveys her watery surroundings, all six of her legs ready to spring into action. Wing sheaths cover the nymph's back, foreshadowing the wings of the creature's future.





While the creature's transformation is complete, the dragonfly isn't ready for flight just yet. Her newly created body must harden first. During this time, the dragonfly is particularly vulnerable to hungry birds and even falling rain, as her soft tissue can be easily damaged.

The combined powers of flight and sight make her the best hunter around. As the dragonfly's eyes detect the movement of her prey, she quickly engages her wings, which enable her to fly in any direction she needs to go, including up, down, or sideways!

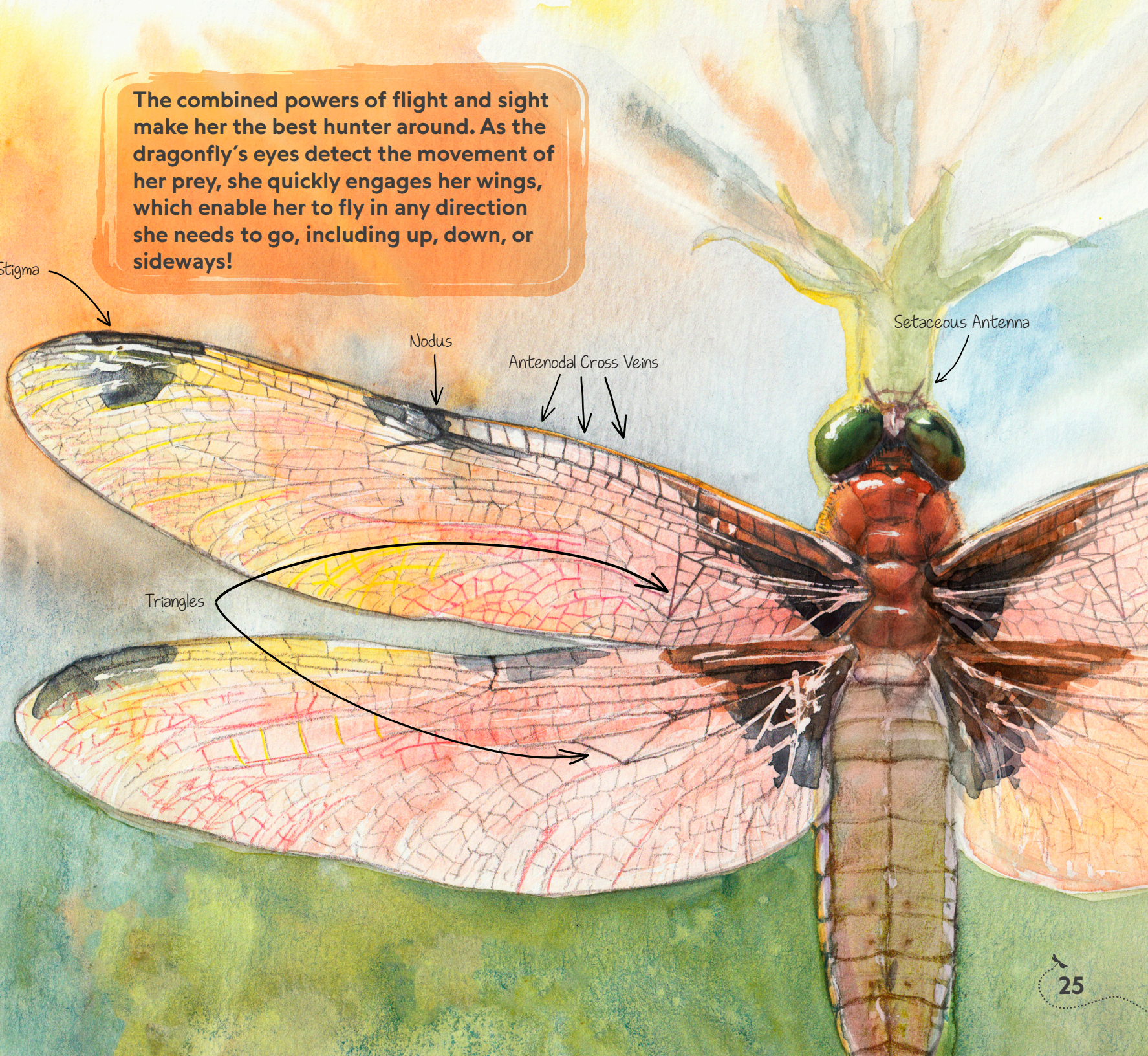
Stigma

Nodus

Antenodal Cross Veins

Setaceous Antenna

Triangles



A watercolor illustration of two dragonflies in a pond. The top dragonfly is yellow and black with white wings, and the bottom one is green with white wings. The background is a mix of blue, purple, and green washes representing water and plants.

Fun Facts About Dragonflies

- * Dragonflies spend most of their lives underwater.
- * Dragonfly nymphs can breathe underwater.
- * The nymphal stage lasts for an average of one to three years, though it can be shorter or longer depending on various circumstances, such as water temperature and availability of food.
- * A nymph will molt as many as 14 times before it is ready for emergence.
- * Emergence takes between one and three hours.
- * Dragonflies eat many other insects that humans consider problematic, such as mosquitoes and termites.
- * The average lifespan of a dragonfly is relatively short, lasting only a few years.
- * There are at least 5,000 species of dragonflies!
- * Dragonflies can fly in any direction, including backward!
- * Dragonflies lay their eggs during or right after mating.
- * Dragonfly nymphs can help researchers determine mercury levels in an area.
- * Dragonflies can sport all sorts of colors, including green, blue, orange, black, white, brown, and gold.
- * A single female dragonfly can lay thousands of eggs during her short lifetime.



The Life of a **DRAGONFLY**

A calm and peaceful pond is home to many creatures, but perhaps the most fascinating of them all is the dragonfly—which begins life underwater but ends up in the sky! *The Life of a Dragonfly* depicts the remarkable life cycle of this dazzling creature while inviting the reader to explore the tranquil beauty of pond life. Learn about the dragonfly's marvelous transformation and God's incredible design through the pages of this stunning science reader.



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