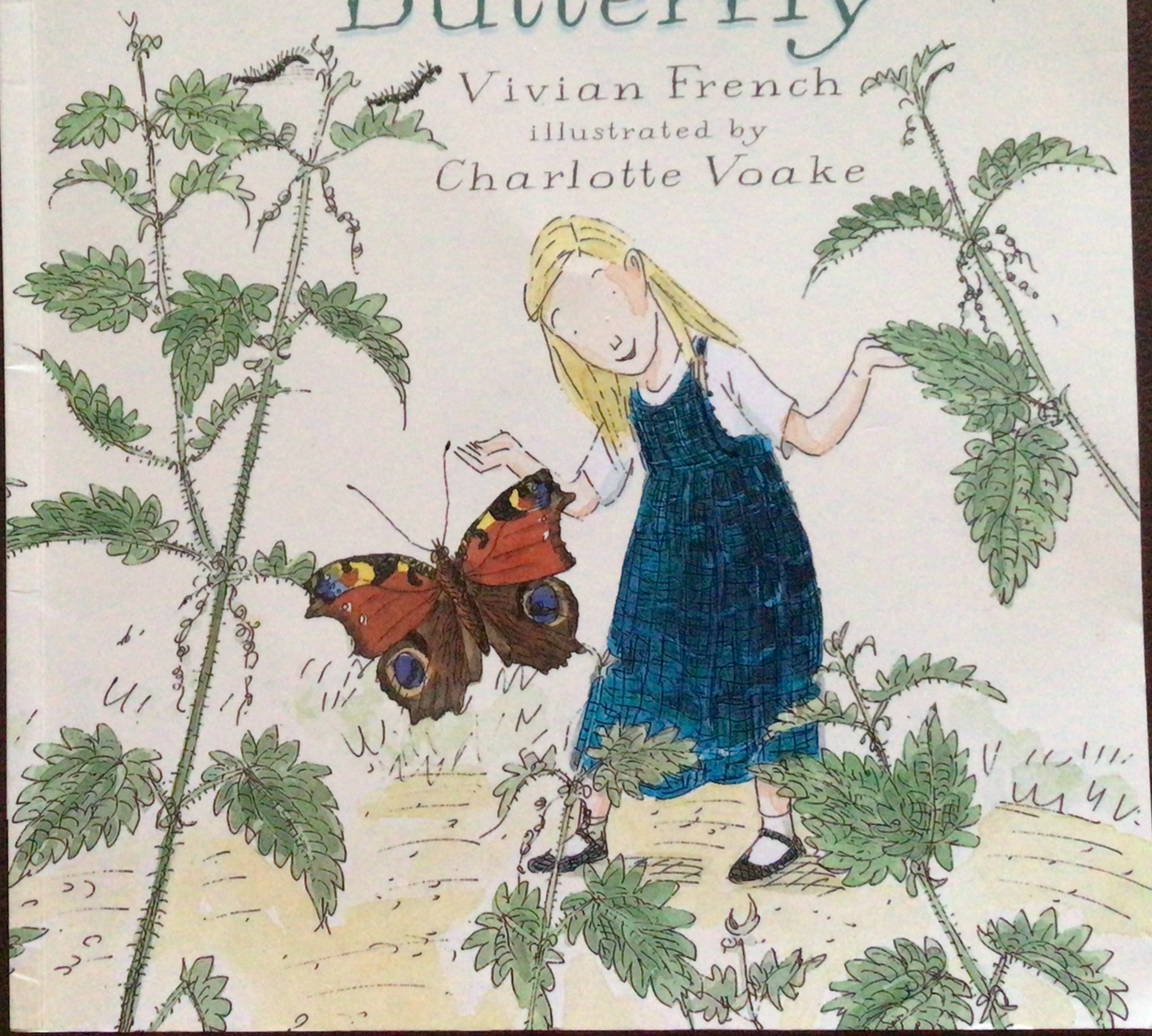




Caterpillar Butterfly



Vivian French
illustrated by
Charlotte Voake

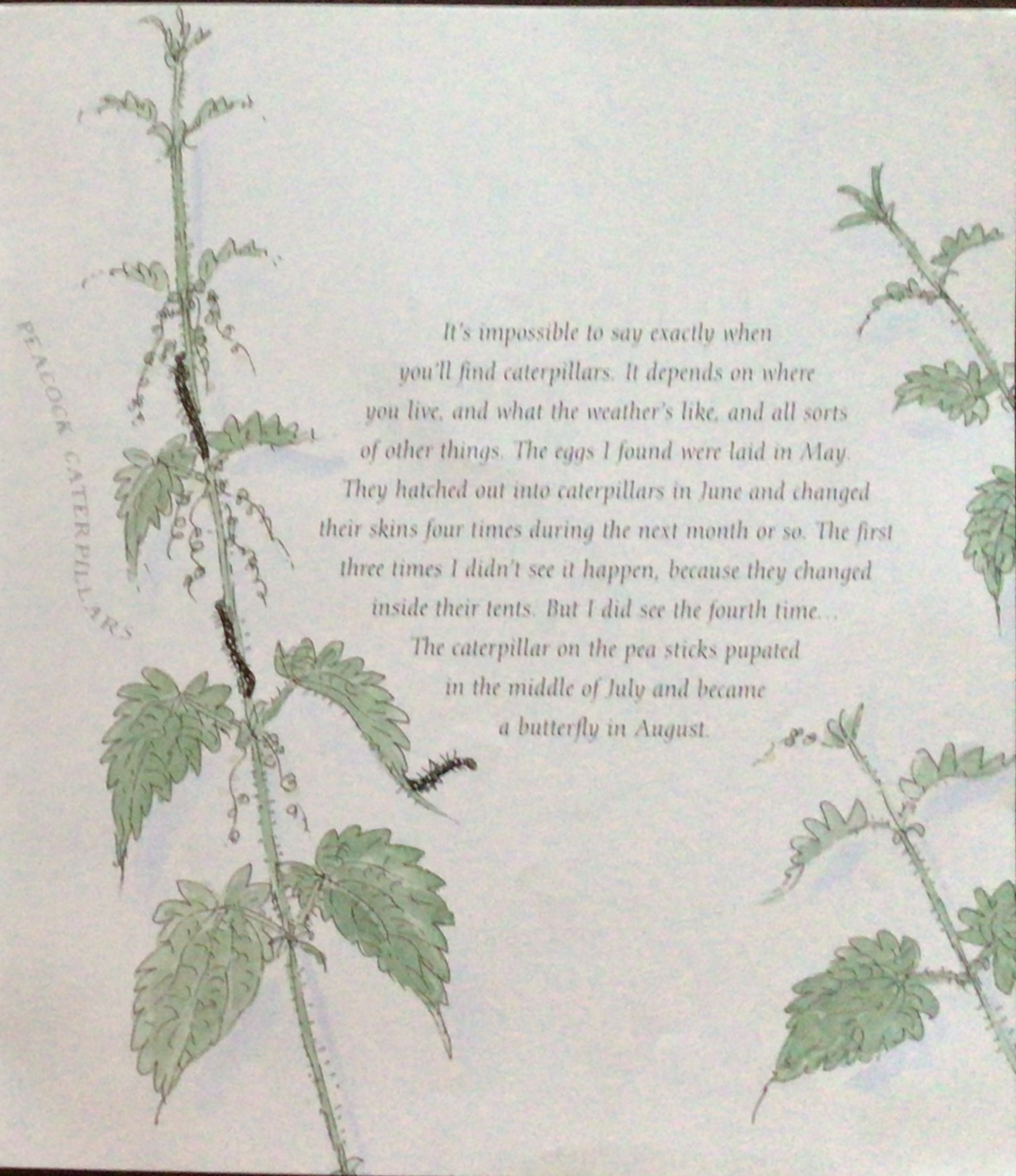




COMMA CATERpillars



ORANGE TIP CATERpillars



PEACOCK CATERpillars

It's impossible to say exactly when you'll find caterpillars. It depends on where you live, and what the weather's like, and all sorts of other things. The eggs I found were laid in May. They hatched out into caterpillars in June and changed their skins four times during the next month or so. The first three times I didn't see it happen, because they changed inside their tents. But I did see the fourth time... The caterpillar on the pea sticks pupated in the middle of July and became a butterfly in August.

My father and my grandfather both liked gardening very much, but my grandfather used to grow stinging nettles. My father didn't; he said they were weeds, and rooted them out.

"Why don't you get rid of your nettles?"

I asked my grandfather.

"Stinging nettles grow butterflies," he said. "Go and look."

I went and looked. I couldn't see any butterflies, though. My grandfather turned one of the nettle leaves over to show me the bumps on the back of it, but I didn't know what they were.

"Butterfly eggs," said my grandfather.



"What sort of butterflies?"

My grandfather peered closely at the bumps.

"Haven't got my specs on," he said, "but they could be Tortoiseshells, or Peacocks. They both like nettles. If you keep an eye on them you'll see when the caterpillars hatch out."

"Won't they crawl away?" I asked.

My grandfather straightened up and looked down at me.

"Humph," he said.

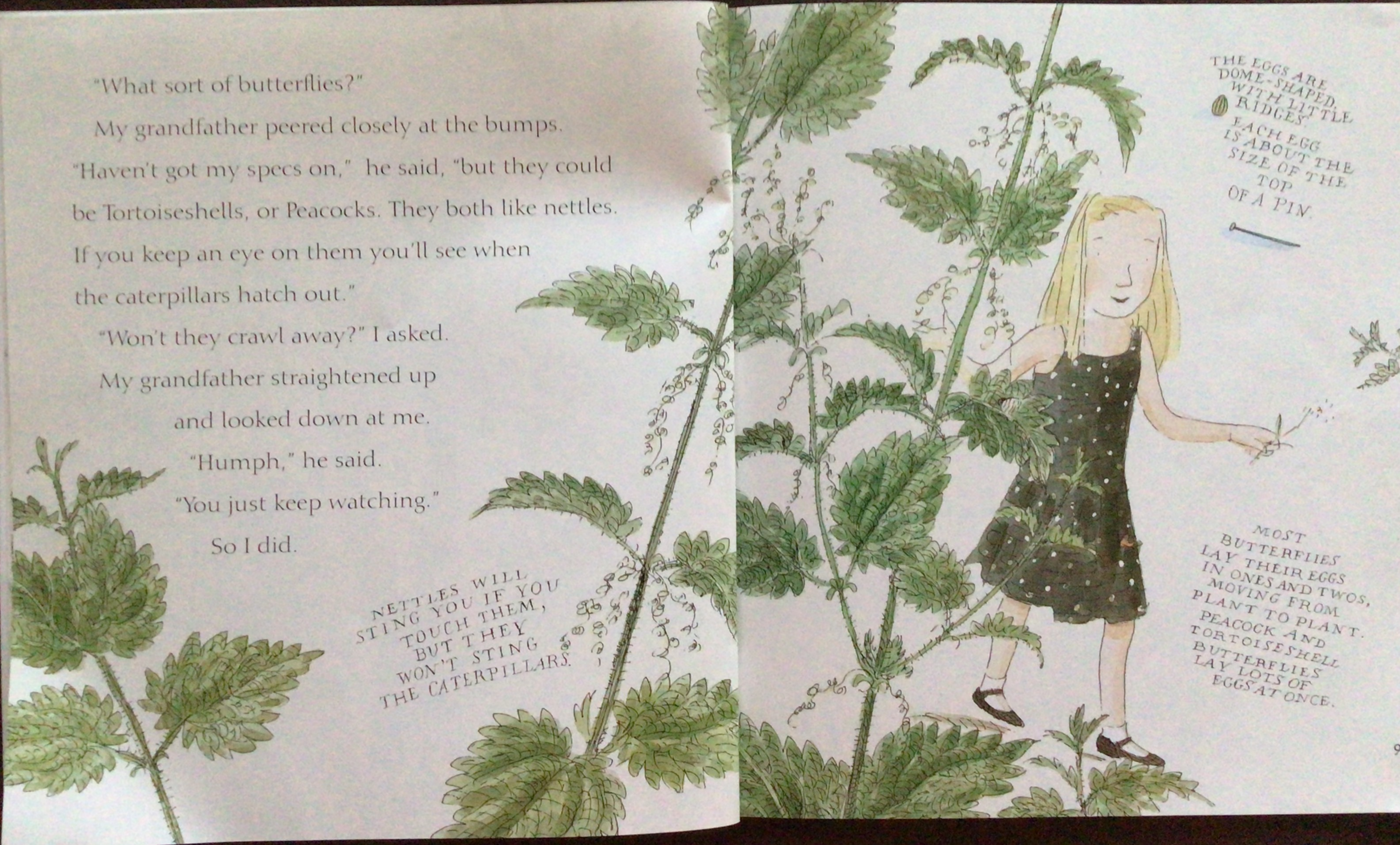
"You just keep watching."

So I did.

NETTLES WILL
STING YOU IF YOU
TOUCH THEM,
BUT THEY
WON'T STING
THE CATERpillARS.

THE EGGS ARE
DOME-SHAPED,
WITH LITTLE
RIDGES.
EACH EGG
IS ABOUT THE
SIZE OF THE
TOP
OF A PIN.

MOST
BUTTERFLIES
LAY THEIR EGGS
IN ONES AND TWOS,
MOVING FROM
PLANT TO PLANT.
PEACOCK AND
TORTOISESHELL
BUTTERFLIES
LAY LOTS OF
EGGS AT ONCE.



Nothing happened at all for
two days. It rained very hard
on the second day, but the
eggs were quite safe.



The next day there were lots and lots of little tiny caterpillars crawling on the nettle leaves. The eggs were papery and empty. I squashed some with my fingernail.

THE CATERPILLARS EAT
THEIR WAY OUT OF THE
EGGS WHEN THEY'RE
READY TO HATCH,
AND STAY TOGETHER
IN A BIG CROWD.

THEY MAKE A WEB OF
WHITE SILK BETWEEN
THE STEM OF THE PLANT
AND THE LEAVES.
IT'S LIKE A TENT.

WHEN THEY'VE EATEN
ALL THE LEAVES NEARBY,
THEY MOVE ON AND
MAKE A NEW TENT.

My grandfather came over to see what I was doing.

"Ah," he said, "Peacock caterpillars."

"Do they eat cabbage?" I asked.

I'd seen caterpillars on cabbages.

He shook his head. "Caterpillars are fussy eaters.

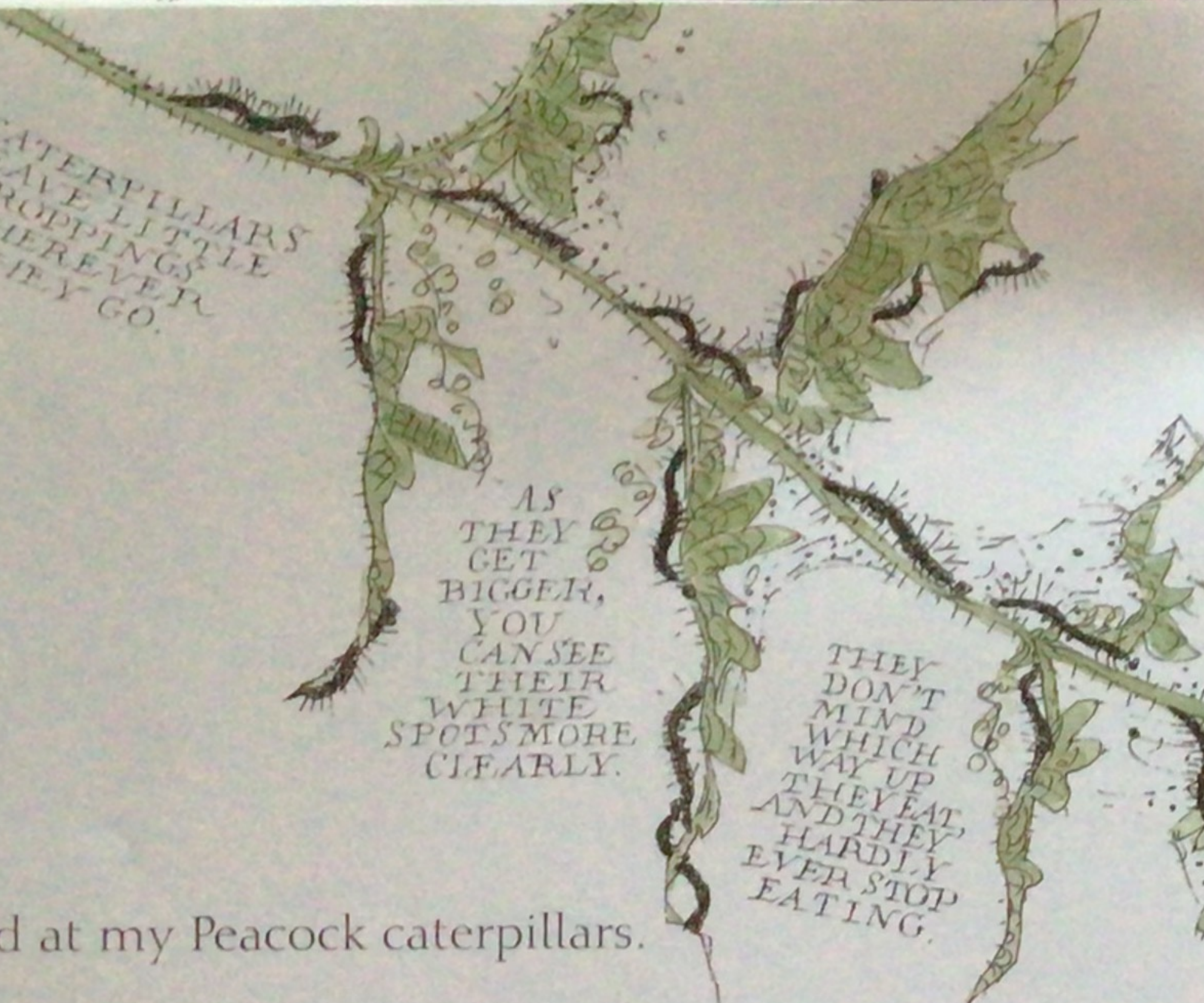
If you put a nettle-eating caterpillar on a cabbage it'll set off to look for nettles, and if it can't find any it'll sit down and die rather than eat cabbage."

SOME OF THE CATERPILLARS YOU SEE ON CABBAGES ARE

ORANGE TIP CATERPILLARS
EAT LADY'S SMOCK AND
GARLIC MUSTARD.
(SOMETIMES THEY EAT
EACH
OTHER.)

CABBAGE WHITES. THEY LOVE CABBAGE.

PEACOCK,
SMALL TORTOISESHELL,
AND RED ADMIRAL
CATERPILLARS ALL
LIKE NETTLES BEST.



THE CATERPILLARS
LEAVE LITTLE
DROPPINGS
WHEREVER
THEY GO.

AS
THEY
GET
BIGGER,
YOU
CAN SEE
THEIR
WHITE
SPOTS MORE
CLEARLY.

THEY
DON'T
MIND
WHICH
WAY UP
THEY EAT,
AND THEY
HARDLY
EVER STOP
EATING.

I looked at my Peacock caterpillars.
They were all together in a little
crowd, eating as fast as they could.

"Won't the birds eat them?" I asked.

"Couldn't we cover them up?"

"No need," said my grandfather.

"Caterpillars that don't hide away are really saying,
'I'm poisonous – keep off!' And the birds know that."


He pulled his pipe out of his pocket and very,
very gently nudged one of the caterpillars.
It curled itself up at once and fell off the leaf.

"There," he said. "Even if something does come along
looking for a snack, the caterpillar might still escape."

"Can I make one curl up?" I stuck my finger out.

"Don't touch them," my grandfather said.

"Some spiny caterpillars can give you a rash,
and other kinds leave a nasty smell on
your fingers. Besides, you might hurt them."



THEY HAVE VELVETY BODIES AND SILKY HEADS.
LOOK AT THEIR SPINY BACKS! WITH LITTLE
THEY HAVE THREE PAIRS OF LEGS
IN FRONT, AND LITTLE
CLAWS ON THEM, AND LITTLE
STUMPIER LEGS... AND LITTLE
FURTHER DOWN.

I went on watching the caterpillars.

They were getting bigger. By the second Saturday in July they had eaten nearly all the plant they had hatched out on and were crawling over the other nettles.



WHEN IT'S READY
TO CHANGE ITS SKIN,
A CATERPILLAR SPINS A LITTLE SILK
MAT ON THE LEAF AND FASTENS
ITS LAST
TWO LEGS
TO IT.

Some of them were lying completely still, though, and not eating at all. All of a sudden one of them gave a little wriggle, and its skin split right open. Inside was another brand new caterpillar, and it crawled out of the old skin as if it were crawling out of a sleeping bag. It looked quite fresh and clean, and it seemed to be bigger than before. All the other caterpillars changed skins too.

I knew something must be eating my caterpillars, because by now there weren't so many of them.

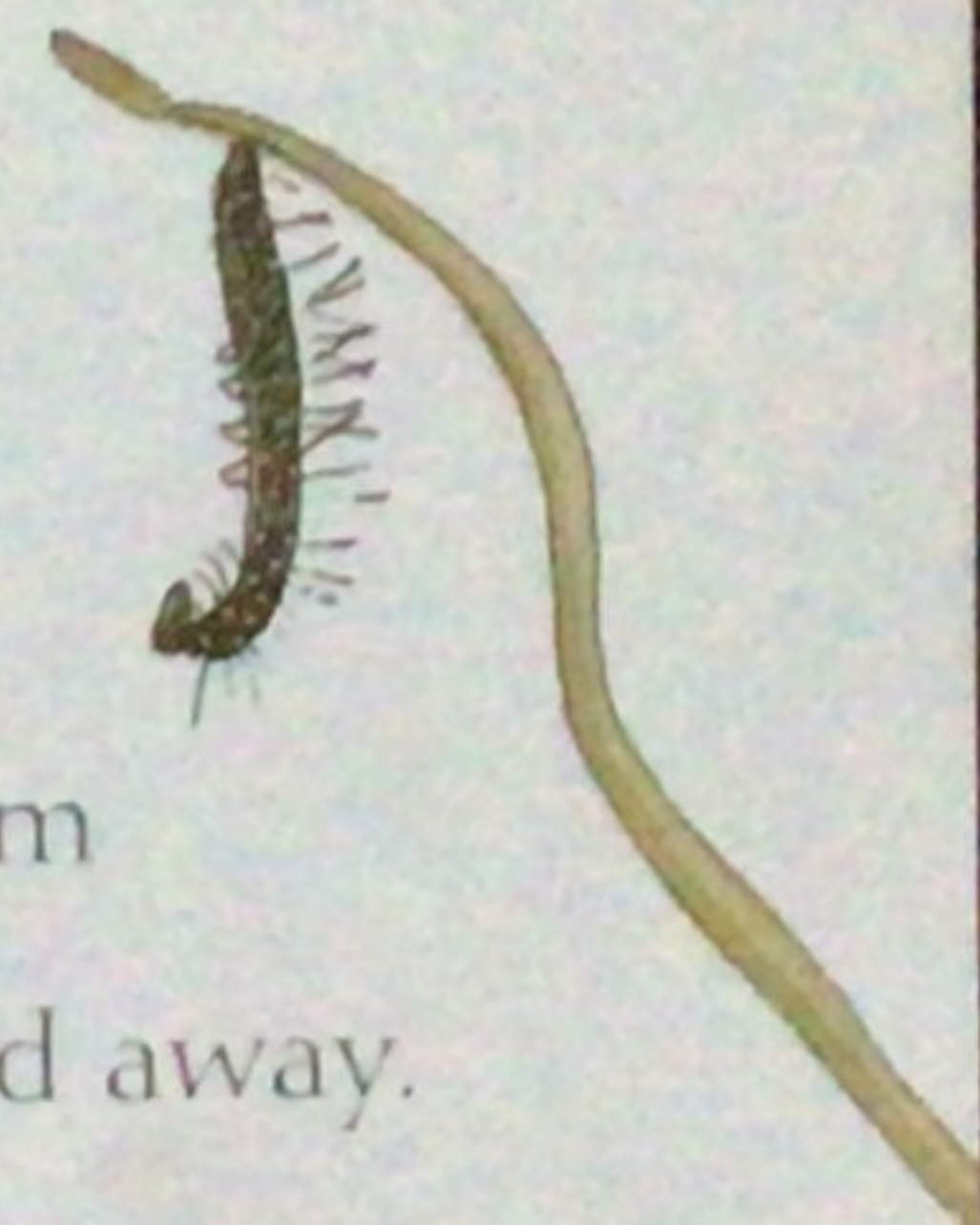
I didn't mind that, but I did mind five days later when I found that every single one of them had disappeared.

"Where have they gone?" I asked. I was close to tears. "Pea sticks," said my grandfather. We marched round the corner of the shed to where the pea sticks were.

"Sometimes one or two come here," my grandfather said.

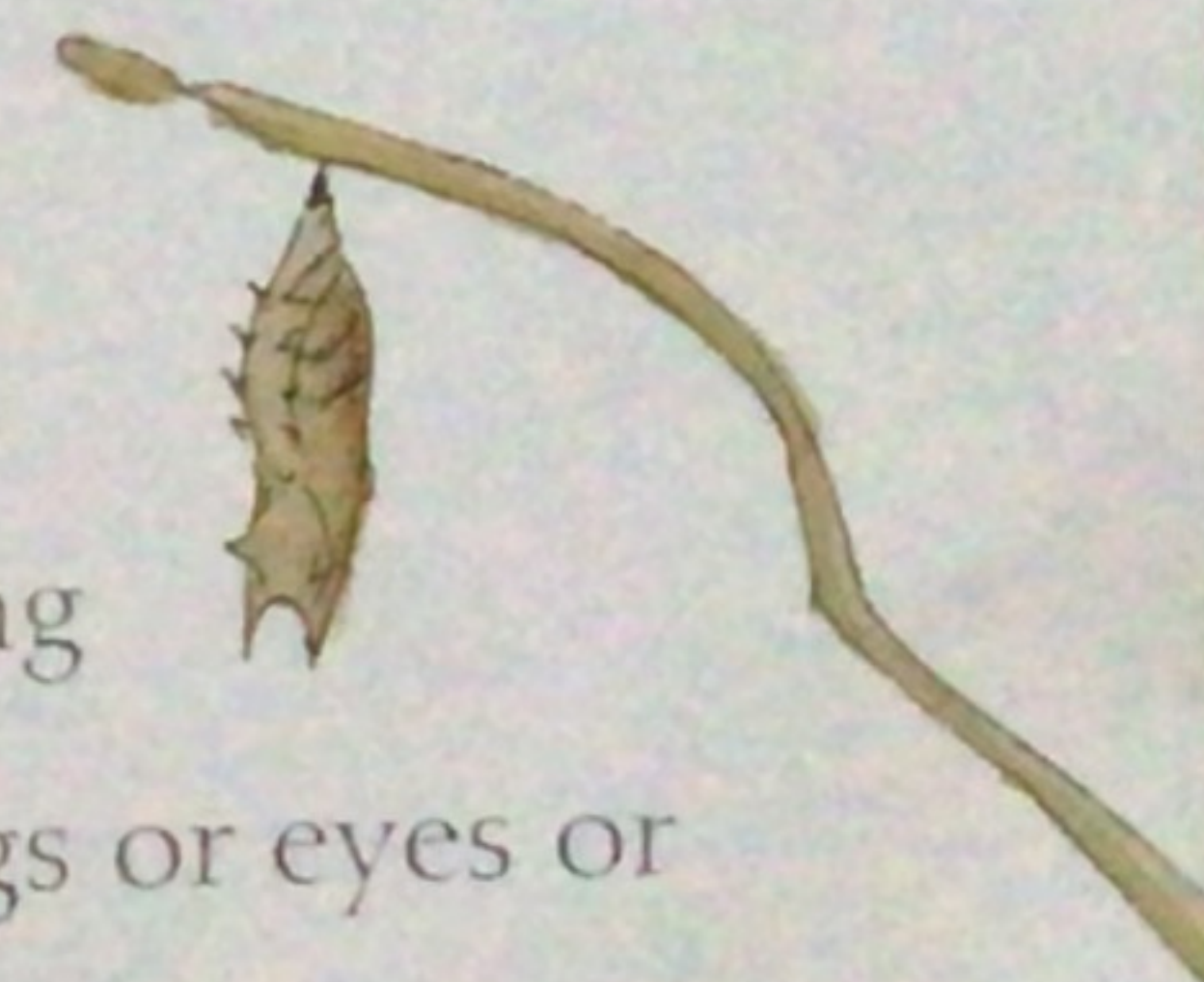


"Ah, yes, here we are." Sure enough, there was one of the caterpillars, hanging head downwards off a pea stick. And to my amazement, before my very eyes, its skin began to peel off from its head upwards ... and shrivelled away.




This time there wasn't another caterpillar ready to come out.

Instead there was something like a little soft brown bag, hanging on the pea stick. It didn't have legs or eyes or anything, and it dried up into a little case.



My grandfather said that was just what it was,
but the proper name for it was a pupa.


"But where's the caterpillar gone?" I asked.
All the bits of caterpillar were inside the case,
he said, and they were changing.




WHEN THEY'RE READY TO
PUPATE, THE
CATERPILLARS
LEAVE THEIR
NETTLES.

EACH ONE OF THEM
FINDS A
PLACE TO
BE ON ITS
OWN.

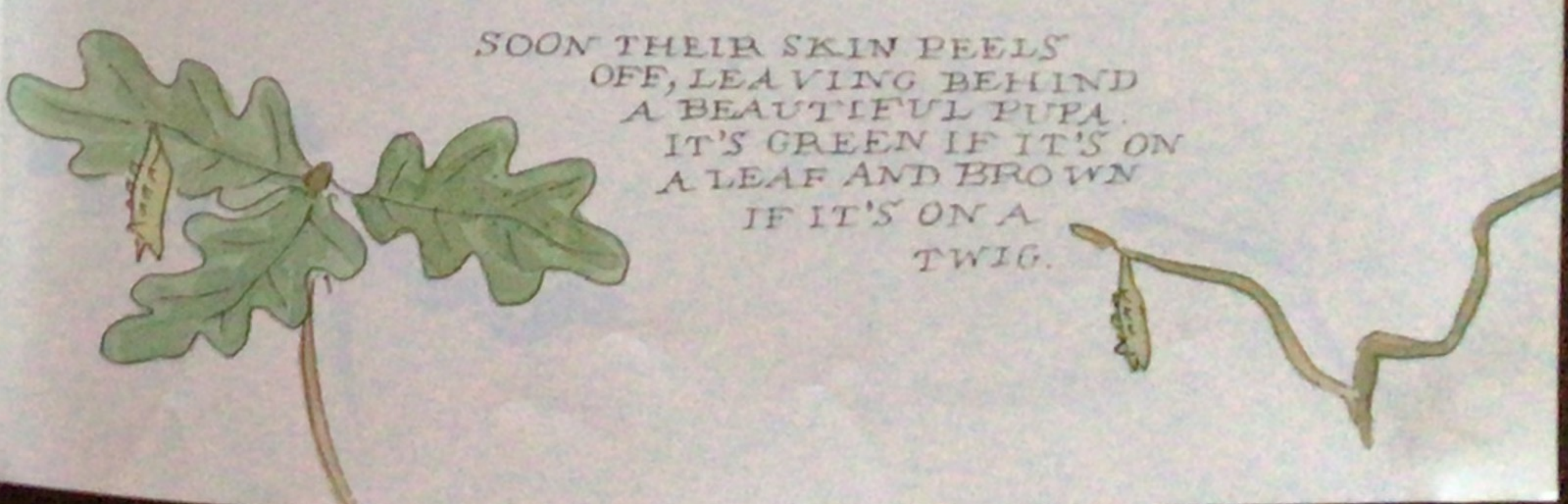
IT MIGHT BE UP A
TREE, A FENCE,
A STICK, OR A TWIG.



EACH
CATERPILLAR
MAKES
A TINY WHITE
PAD...



THEN
ATTACHES ITS
BACK LEGS TO
IT, AND HANGS
UPSIDE DOWN.



SOON THEIR SKIN PEELS
OFF, LEAVING BEHIND
A BEAUTIFUL PUPA.
IT'S GREEN IF IT'S ON
A LEAF AND BROWN
IF IT'S ON A
TWIG.

Just this once, I was allowed to bring the stick with the little case on it into the kitchen. I watched for ten whole days and on the tenth day the pupa went very, very dark.

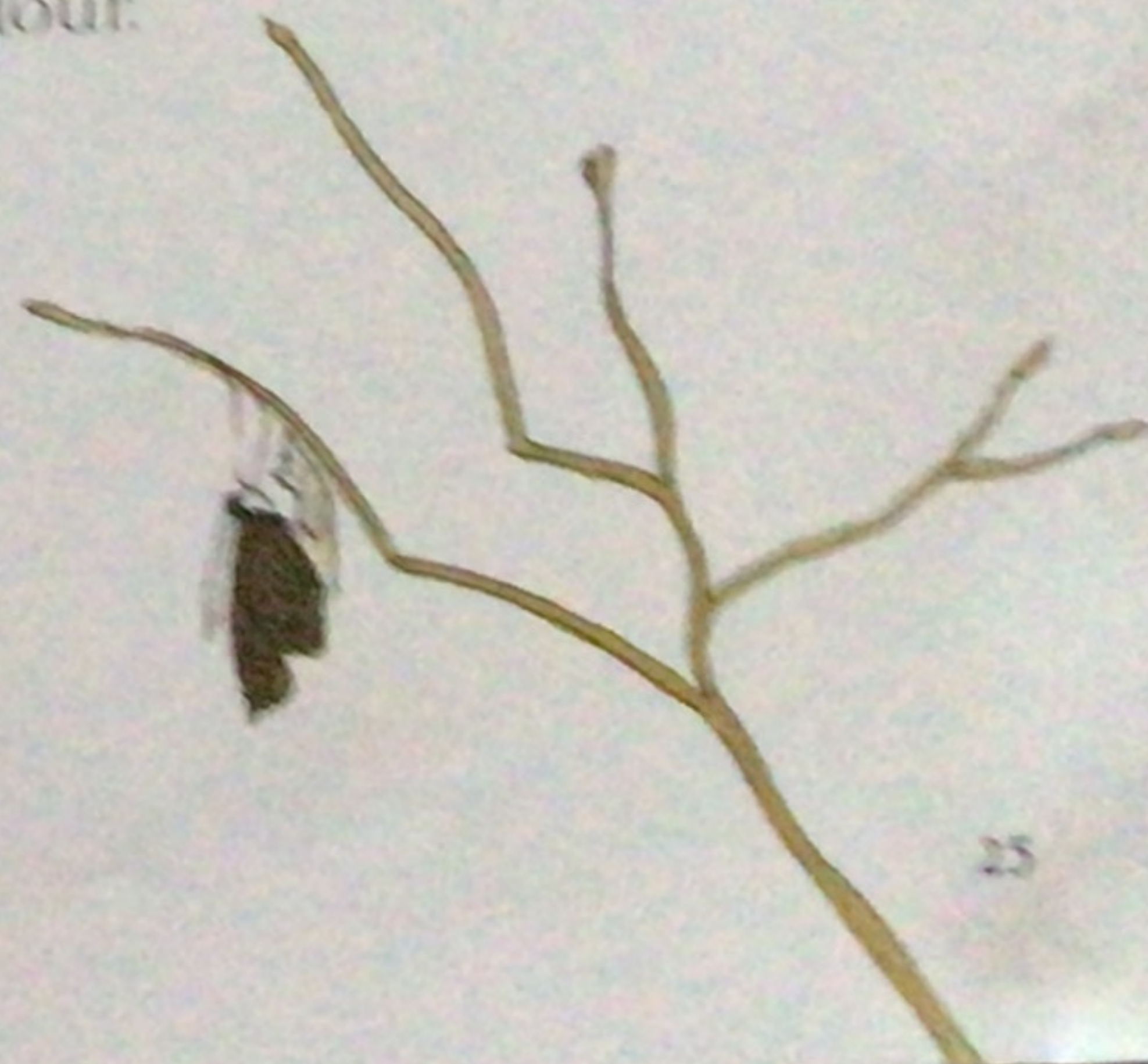
The next morning I was eating my breakfast when my grandfather suddenly said, "LOOK!"



I rushed to see, and the case of the pupa had split. Something was crawling out ... but it didn't look a bit like a butterfly.

It was crumpled, and it looked damp, and it wasn't at all a pretty colour.

"It must have gone wrong," I said, feeling very sad.

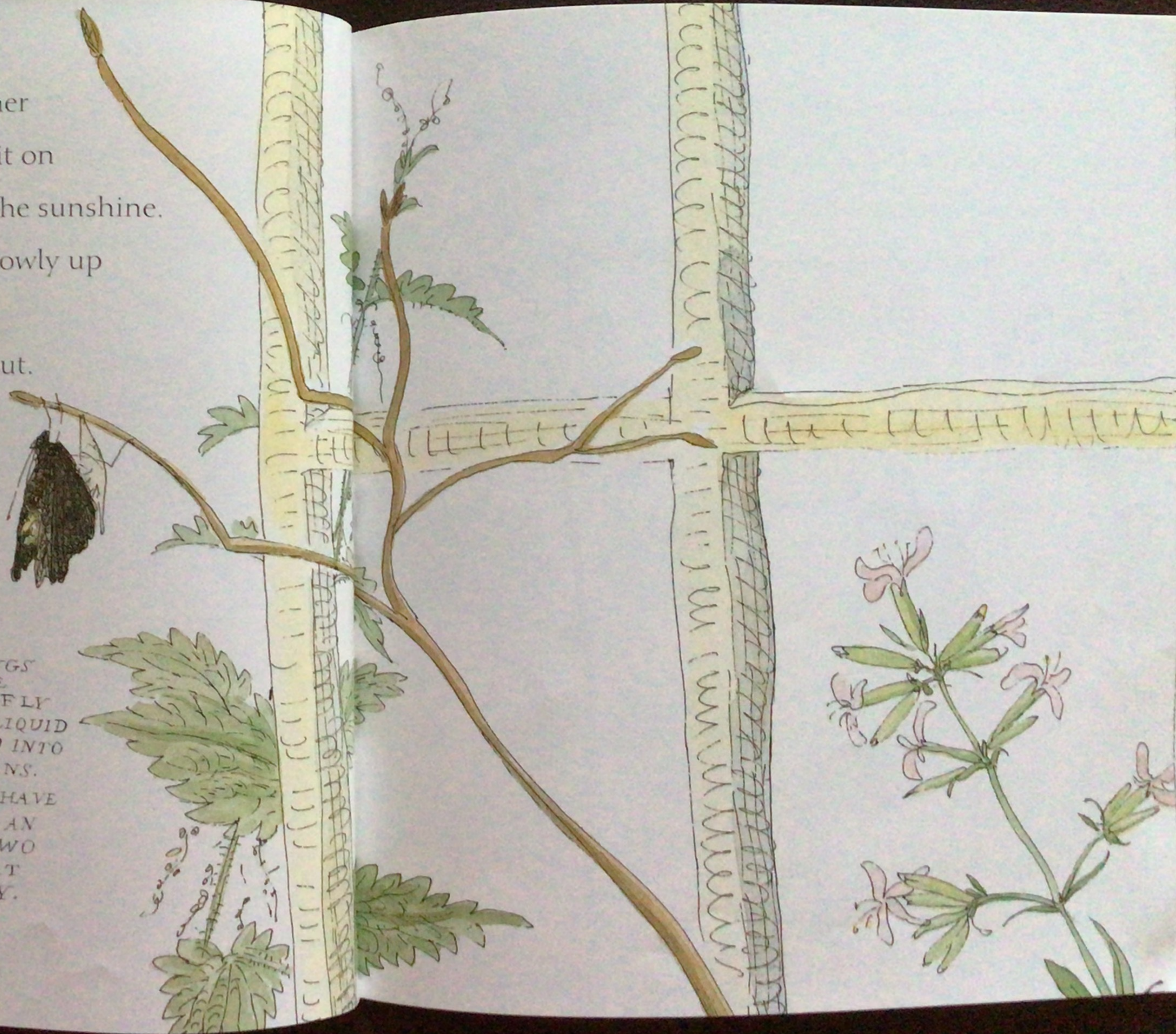




Very gently, my grandfather
lifted the stick and put it on
the window-ledge in the sunshine.
The creature crawled slowly up
the stick, and stopped.

Little by little it began to stretch out.
It was just like watching a flower
unfolding itself, only it had
wings instead of petals.

THE WINGS
OF THE
BUTTERFLY
UNFOLD AS LIQUID
IS PUMPED INTO
ITS VEINS.
THE WINGS HAVE
TO DRY FOR AN
HOUR OR TWO
BEFORE IT
CAN FLY.



And the wings began to tremble, and to shine in the sunlight, and then suddenly there it was – a real butterfly, with spidery legs and its wings spread wide open.

It was so lovely that I couldn't say anything at all. Then its wings fluttered and it flew off into the garden – the very newest butterfly there.





COMMA



COMMA

Index

- butterfly...28
- butterfly eggs...6, 9, 12
- caterpillar skins...19
- caterpillars eating...14-15
- nettles...6, 8, 14-15
- pupa...22-24
- wings...26

Look up the pages to find out about all these caterpillar and butterfly things. Don't forget to look at both kinds of words: this kind and **THIS KIND**.

PEACOCK



RED ADMIRAL



LARGE WHITE



ORANGE TIP

ORANGE TIP



COMMON BLUE



COMMON BLUE
CATERPILLAR

Nature Storybooks

Every wonderful word is true!

One summer, when she was small, Vivian French and her grandfather watched a family of tiny caterpillar eggs turn, stage by amazing stage, into beautiful butterflies!

"Charming and very informative natural history."

Books for Keeps

Shortlisted for the Kurt Maschler Award

Nature Storybooks support KS 1-2 Science

www.walker.co.uk

ISBN 978-1-4063-6543-6



£6.99 UK ONLY

