

The Saviours

Heroes- Persons who are admired by many for their noble quality or their bravery.

I dashed between the grass green reeds in pursuit of my prey. I hurried over ash grey pebbles kicking up clouds of muddy brown dust from the floor. As I draw ever closer the thought kept crossing my mind. This is the last time I will hunt this prey before the change. The adrenalin pumped through my veins giving me the energy to push harder and faster. Then, with the swiftness of the silver, fast-flowing water of the Great Rapids, I sprang up snatching my prey from the surface.

The mosquito was just what I needed: I swam over to reed and started to climb. Up and up, taking the last gulps of fresh, cold, crystal water through my gills. What would it be like? I sliced through the water's surface for the last time and emerged on an emerald green reed, basking in a glorious golden light. Before, the sun's elegant rays had been muffled and deformed by the water's sapphire blue wavelet barriers, which left where I had swam in a perpetual dusk. But I reached the place. The top of a meadow green reed. And it began.

CRACK! A slit cracked into existence across my back. And then... Black. Utter blackness. All I saw, smelt, heard, tasted and felt was black. Until a new sensation, paper ruffling in a slight breeze. A long gem green tail, pointed at the tip, emerged in quick succession. And finally my head came out from my old, dry skin. My six matchstick legs clasped onto the green reed as fiery rays burn the retinas of my new compound eyes and removed the moist fluid from my four paper thin, vein stricken wings of blazing white. I had emerged.

The sun was at its highest point so my wings dried quickly, and for the first time I beat my wings. Thirty times a second my four wings beat, bringing me upwards. I could see all around the wonderful lake thanks to the 30,000 lenses embedded in my eyes and I could feel and taste the freshness in the air. A sweet, reassuring freshness. This was my home, for over sixty moons the water had been my dwelling, but then the sky became my domain!

I found flying easy, natural. I was swimming through air. Up, down, side to side, everywhere and anywhere! I loved it. However I was hungry. So I flew slowly scanning the area and... There! A huge butterfly, a feast! I dipped my head and at 30 miles an hour I snatched the sweet-scented, multi-coloured butterfly from the air and feasted.

For day I fed on mosquitos and butterflies but never once did I see another emerald body skipping across the water or feasting on a reed. Until that day.

Here I sat on my reed drying fluid from my wings. My eyes had already adjusted to the burning gold rays and my six legs could feel the slight ridges on my chosen reed. I tasted the freshness of the Time of Long Sun in the air and of course I could hear the male hovering above me. I could tell he wanted me as a mate but who wouldn't? My beautiful pink and white body would attract any emerald male for miles around. But was he so naïve to think he could just have me? I had to test him!

I took off and flew towards the setting sun, my strong but elegant wings took me high into the sky and cleared the highest tree tops with ease. And then I dived.

I plunged vertically down toward the lake was able to pull up; I would be taken by the deep blue. Body lengths away from what I had called home my elegant and graceful body turned

up and swerved and glided between blades of green. Easy! This was also true for the male- he was only a reed length from me now. Fast and agile. A good flyer. A great mate!

Many silver moons had passed and I had laid our eggs, the next generation, at the base of a reed close to the shore. At this point we should have left. Our duties were fulfilled. We should have spent the last moons of our lives free, out in the wild. But we didn't. We realised we were the only ones left. Both of us remembered many of us there were over our sixty moons in the water. So where were they?

One day we were returning from a mosquito hunt in the nearby musky woods and as we skimmed over the silver water and dashed between the reeds we noticed something... Wrong. Some of the reeds seemed to be connected. By what, we couldn't see. But we followed it any way, then we realised. Our eggs!

With lightning speed we sped toward our reed. And there it was. The murderer. A large, black, hairy eight legged monster crossing a bridge of air, a bridge to our eggs.

Little nymphs were emerging from the precious white parcels but for many it would be too late. Unless we acted. I spun down distracting the monster whilst my mate soared to the shore to pick up a pebble twice his weight. With skill and precision he manoeuvred through the duck-egg sky and dropped the jagged grey rock square on the creature's head. At that moment I plunged my stinger into its back. However, it was not enough. We both ascended high into the sky, joined legs and dived.

At full speed we crashed into the monster, knocking it off its bridge and plunging it into the water. We provided food for our children the last time. As we lay in the water we embraced its cold hands once again as it had begun. We had sacrificed ourselves to save our species. *Indothemis carnatica*. We were Dragonflies. We were heroes.

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