

PRIMARY READERS

THE UGLY DUCKLING



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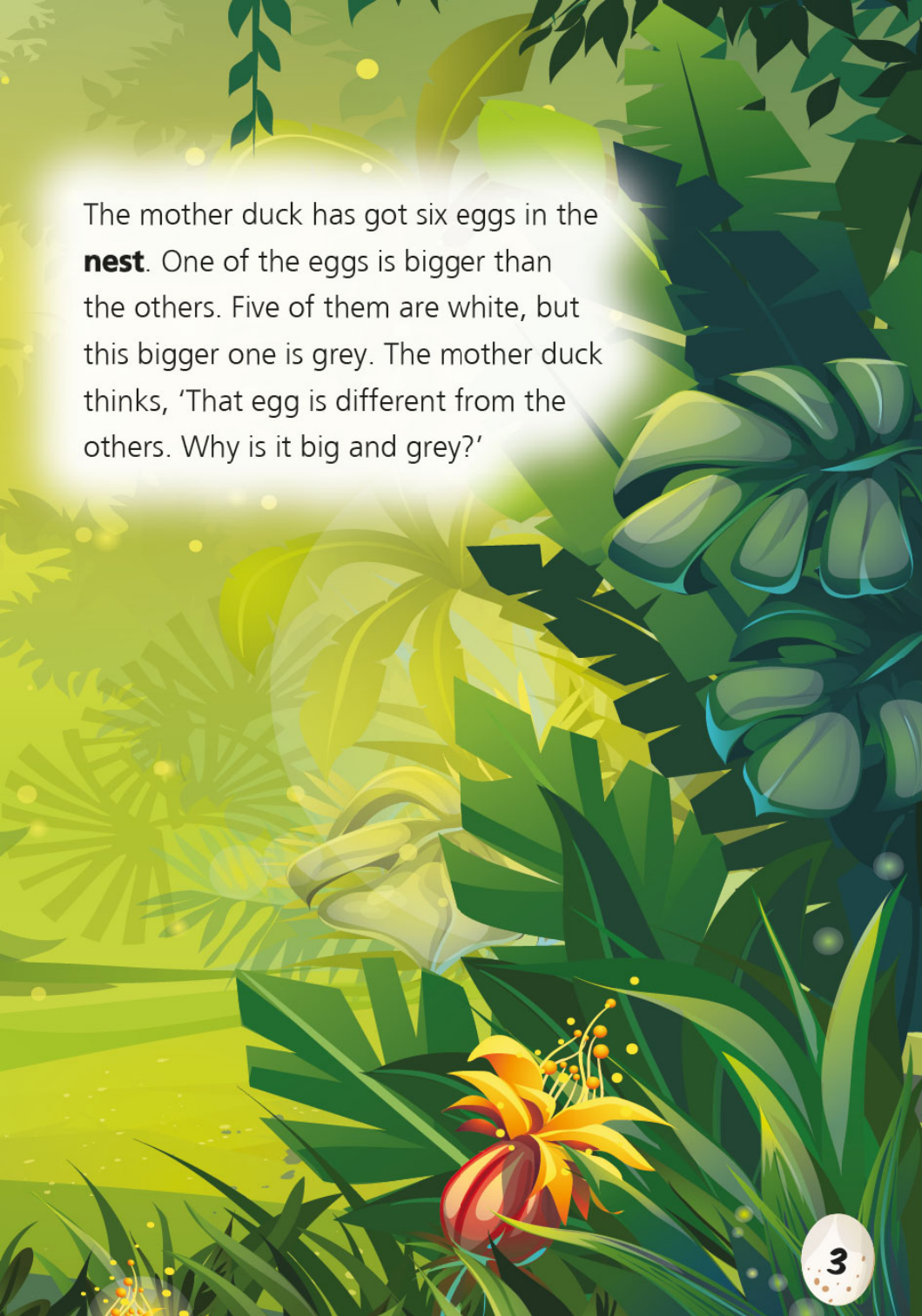
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It is a beautiful summer day in the forest, and the weather is hot and sunny.

The mother duck is sitting and looking at her eggs. 'They take so long to **hatch**. I wonder when my babies will come out,' she thinks.





The mother duck has got six eggs in the **nest**. One of the eggs is bigger than the others. Five of them are white, but this bigger one is grey. The mother duck thinks, 'That egg is different from the others. Why is it big and grey?'

The mother duck doesn't have to wait for her babies too long. Soon, the eggs start **cracking**. The little yellow heads **appear**. The mother duck feels very excited. Five little yellow ducks start taking small **steps** out of the shells. 'Oh, my ducklings are so beautiful,' says the mother duck. 'Now come and line up all of you here,' she says. 'One... Two... Three... Four... Five... Hey, there should be one more,' she says. She sees that one of the eggs is still in the nest.

She sits on the egg at night and waits for it to hatch.



The next morning, the big grey egg hatches too. Finally, the last duckling comes out of the egg. The mother duck is **surprised** when she sees the duckling. 'He doesn't look like his brothers and sisters,' she says. 'It is huge, grey and ugly. He is bigger because he was in the egg for a longer time than the other five. It isn't a problem,' she thinks. She hugs her ducklings. She is very happy because all her ducklings are with her now.



The five yellow ducklings play games together every day. The ugly duckling wants to play with them, but his brothers and sisters say, 'Go away! You are ugly!' They **make fun of** the ugly duckling. 'Ha! Ha! You look funny! You can't play with us!' they say. The ugly duckling is very sad.



One day, the mother duck takes her ducklings to the **lake**. They all jump in the water with a splash. They swim behind their mother and have fun. The ugly duckling is in the lake too. He swims with his brothers and sisters. The mother duck sees her friend, the old duck. 'Hello, Old Duck!' she says. 'What a beautiful day to swim!' The old duck is happy to see the mother duck. She looks at the ducklings in the lake. 'Hi, Mother Duck! Your ducklings are so cute!' she says.



Then, she sees the ugly duckling, and she **screams**,
'Look at that ugly thing! He has got grey **feathers** and a
long neck! He has got big feet! What is that?'

The mother duck is angry. 'Stop this nonsense. That's not
a nice thing to say. He is my child. He can be ugly, but he
is very kind, and I love him!' she says. She takes all her
ducklings and swims away.



Days pass by. The ugly duckling is not happy with his life. Everyone is **rude** to him. He **cries** all the time. 'Why doesn't anyone like me?' he thinks. He sits by the lake and looks down in the water. He sees the **reflection** of his face and says to himself, 'Oh, no! Look at me! I'm very ugly! Nobody wants to talk to me or play with me. I will **run away** from this place.'

He leaves his family and goes away into the forest.



The ugly duckling walks in the forest. He feels hungry and tired. Then, he sees a **cottage**. There is an old woman in front of it. She has got a cat and a hen. The woman sees the ugly duckling and says, 'Hello! Come here, please! Are you hungry?'

'Yes, I am!' answers the ugly duckling.

