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Sommario/riassunto	Seventy years ago, Erwin Schrodinger posed a simple, yet profound, question: 'What is life?'. How could the very existence of such extraordinary chemical systems be understood? This problem has puzzled biologists and physical scientists both before, and ever since. Living things are hugely complex and have unique properties, such as self-maintenance and apparently purposeful behaviour which we do not see in inert matter. So how does chemistry give rise to biology? Did life begin with replicating molecules, and, if so, what could have led the first replicating molecules up such a path? Now, deve