



Ray Bradbury

Born in 1920 to Esther and Leonard Bradbury, Ray spent his formative teen years in Los Angeles. There he graduated from high school, and the rest of his education came from public libraries and the streets of Hollywood. At twelve years old, Bradbury began writing daily. He sold a few plays before publishing his first short story collection, *Dark Carnival*, in 1947. Quick on its heels came *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) and *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), which is Bradbury's most celebrated novel to date. He continued to write for decades and became one of America's most celebrated authors of the 20th century. While most literary critics consider Bradbury to be a science fiction writer, Bradbury resisted that blanket description of his work. He mixed fantasy, horror, comedy, memoir, and occasionally science fiction to craft stories that are one-of-a-kind. Bradbury attributed much of his creativity to the fact that

he never attended college, since he thought institutions of higher education confine one's development. Bradbury was a great supporter of public libraries throughout his life, praising them as places for free thought and exploration. This self-made artist also resisted many of the comforts of technology, including hand-held radios, e-books, and even cars. Throughout his life, Bradbury never got a driver's license, preferring to rely on bikes and public transportation. Much of Bradbury's writing predicts new technology and speaks out against the anti-social behavior it encourages. In his personal life, Bradbury enjoyed a marriage of 56 years with Marguerite McClure. Together they raised four daughters and many cats. Ray Bradbury died on June 5, 2012. He donated his personal library to the Waukegan Public Library.

Historical Context

During Ray Bradbury's childhood in Waukegan, Illinois—which later served as the inspiration for Bradbury's fictional "Green Town"—the small frontier town, like many in 1920s America, underwent a significant transformation. The arrival of new, industrialized technology like mass transit seemed to erase the old character of the quaint semi-rural town. This kind of rapid modernization, which rearranged communities and signaled a further remove from life close to nature, was a source of anxiety for many writers of Bradbury's era. Similarly, the 1950s were an era of rapid suburban development that made it easier than ever for people to live surrounded by modern conveniences but far removed from nature. The end of World War II and beginning of the Cold War also brought significant advances in rocket science. Rockets had great potential for use—and misuse—as both weapons and tools of exploration. The possibility of space travel was closer than ever before—as was the specter of a nuclear conflict that could drive humans into underground shelters.



Key Facts about *All Summer in a Day*

- **Full Title:** All Summer in a Day
- **When Published:** March 1954
- **Literary Period:** Post-war/science fiction
- **Genre:** Science fiction
- **Setting:** A classroom on the planet Venus
- **Climax:** The sun comes out while Margot is locked inside a closet
- **Antagonist:** William and classmates
- **Point of View:** Third person

• #5: From what point of view is this story told, and why is that particular perspective important to the work as a whole? Also, explain how the story might be different if told from a different point of view (be specific about which p.o.v. you mean)?

The short story "All Summer in a Day" by Ray Bradbury is told in a third person point of view. Third person is important to this story as a whole because it explains and shows what each character is thinking and feels without them having to say it through dialog. The story would be different in a first person point of view because we would only know the narrator's thoughts and feelings by using pronouns such as "I".



Summary and Analysis

A group of children press against the window of their underground classroom on the planet Venus, watching as the rain outside begins to slow. It has been raining ceaselessly for years—on Venus, the sun comes out once every seven years, but only for an hour, and today is the day when scientists predict that the sun will appear. The world outside is awash with tidal waves and a perpetually growing and collapsing jungle. These children are the first to grow up on the planet, which was colonized by rockets from Earth the generation before. In their eagerness, the children are tumbled together like unruly weeds.

Bradbury quickly establishes the extreme setting he will use as a backdrop for the nonetheless relatable drama in the story. The overwhelming rain on Venus has created a harsh, inhospitable environment, suggesting a sense of displacement from the natural world on Earth. Meanwhile, the anticipated arrival of the sun has generated a slightly chaotic sense of excitement among the children. Their anticipation has an edge of anxiety to it, foreshadowing the conflict and disappointment of the day to come.

One child, Margot, stands apart. Like all the children, she is nine years old. This means that most of the children can't remember when the sun last came out, even though they dream about what it was like and long to feel its warmth.

All children on Venus long intensely for the sun, but Margot is isolated by her vivid memories. Somewhat intentionally, it seems, she holds herself apart, demonstrating the extent to which she is fixated by these memories. This also highlights her

privilege—she has memories that the other children lack and covet—and sets up the jealousy that will drive the other children's bullying.

The day before, the schoolchildren had read about the sun and written short stories or poems about it. When Margot quietly read her poem comparing the sun to a flower aloud to the class, another boy, William, exclaimed that she didn't actually write it. Their teacher reprimanded him.

The other students pick on Margot in ways that seem initially not to make much sense: in this scene, for example, Margot is simply participating in a class activity. But William's actions are motivated not by Margot's actions, but by the fact that Margot has special knowledge of the sun that allows her to write poems and share detailed memories. The children are jealous that Margot has had such experiences and use her as a scapegoat for their own feelings of deprivation about the sun. Claiming that Margot is lying when she speaks about the sun is one way for William to gain power over her, and, by extension, the imbalance in their situations. In this scene, we also see the power that the sun continues to hold for Margot. She romanticizes her memories of it and briefly comes out of her shell only when she is able to express her interest in the sun.

But back in the classroom, the children are unsupervised as they wait feverishly by the windows. They worry that their teacher won't return in time, and that this will cause them to miss the sun. Margot continues to watch and listen to the rain by herself. She is very frail and pale, as if all of the color has been drained from her.

Here we see that anticipation for the sun has made the children anxious and chaotic. The extent to which they have built up this day has made it impossible for them to enjoy the moment without also fearing what will happen if it doesn't meet expectations. We also see that life away from the sun seems to have had a physically draining effect on Margot. Deprivation from the sun has made her a shadow of her former self—almost physically less than human—while it has also made the other children seemingly less civil. The sun has power to make humans both physically and mentally stronger, while its lack has the opposite effect.

William asks Margot what she's looking at. When she doesn't respond, he shoves her, but she still doesn't react and the other children edge away. Margot herself usually eschews the company of other children, refusing to play games or sing songs unless they are about the sun.

Again, William tries to engage Margot in conflict even though her behavior is inoffensive. This is another example of William venting his sense of jealousy and deprivation on Margot, showing that these feelings can be strong motivators of bullying. But we also see that Margot herself may have exacerbated her isolation: she makes no secret of the fact that she looks down on life on Venus, emphasizing the privileged life she led on Earth. Another perspective on Margot's isolation here is that she continues to be obsessed by memories of the past, to the extent that she cannot enjoy the present. This shows that strong nostalgia, like the nostalgia that Margot experiences for the sun, can prevent those who experience it from finding happiness in the present.

Margot arrived on Venus from Earth five years ago, so, unlike the other children, she remembers the sun and the sky very well from her childhood. Sometimes she describes the sun, but William and the other children claim she is lying. For the most part, she keeps to herself and avoids the touch of water. Her parents may move the family back to Earth, since Margot is suffering so much. All of these things make William and the other children jealous and angry.

When the other children attempt to discredit Margot's memories, it is because they are jealous of her experiences and frustrated by circumstances over which they have no control. We also learn that Margot is privileged not just because she remembers the sun, but also because her parents are wealthy enough that they may be able to move the family back to Earth, providing more fodder for the children's jealousy. And again, Margot closes herself off from others because her memories are so important to her that she would rather focus on them.

In the classroom, William pushes Margot again. Then, he tells her the sun won't actually come out—it was all a joke. The other children join in, laughing and saying the sun won't come out. Margot protests weakly.

In this scene of bullying, William and the other children torment Margot by introducing a threat to the thing she cares about most. The thought that the long-anticipated day won't come to

pass is extremely difficult to bear, showing how intense this anticipation is.

At William's urging, all the children surge around Margot and push her into a closet in the hallway as she pleads and cries. As Margot throws herself against the locked door, the children smile at each other and return to their classroom just as their teacher reappears.

Perhaps because of the intensity of the setting, the scene of teasing quickly escalates to violent bullying. In a mob, the children exact their revenge on Margot's perceived privilege, depriving her of the very thing of which they feel deprived—time in the sun. The specific nature of this bullying shows just how much the children are motivated by their sense of jealousy and longing.

Glancing at her watch, the teacher makes sure everyone is ready and accounted for. She does not notice that Margot isn't there. The children crowd around the classroom door as the rain slows and then finally stops. Outside, it is shockingly quiet and still. The children wonder at this as the door slides open.

As the big moment arrives, the children feel overwhelmed that all their waiting and anticipation has culminated in a moment that seems to surpass their expectations. The sudden stillness and quiet emphasizes how violent and intolerable Venus' usual weather is. The experience of nature brings a sudden sense of peace.

Finally, the sun comes out, turning the sky bright blue and sending the children bursting out into the sunlight. Their teacher warns them not to go too far, since they only have two hours, but the children are already peeling off their jackets to feel the sun. They remark that it is far better than sunlamps.

The sun has an immediately pleasurable effect, seeming to physically revive the children. The long-anticipated moment is better than they could possibly have imagined—but, because of the teacher's warning, we know that this brief moment of happiness will be fleeting.

The sunlight has revealed the massive jungle outside to be full of tumultuous, fleshy grey weeds, overgrown and bleached by the rain. In this strange environment, the children run and play among the trees, shouting and laughing. They stare up at the sun and the world around, attempting to savor everything.

The absence of sunlight had turned Venus into a tangled and inhospitable wasteland—just as it seemed to have made the children unruly and cruel. Now, outside, they are joyful and energized, suggesting the power of the sun to bring physical and mental health.

Suddenly, a girl wails, bringing the festivities to a halt. She holds out her palm to reveal a single raindrop. She begins to cry as the children stare up at the sky and the first cold drops fall on their faces. The sun fades and the wind begins to rise as the children turn and begin to trudge back to the underground classroom, smiles vanished.

The very moment that the brief period of happiness ends, the children revert to a deeper sadness than they even felt before. In this abrupt transition, we see that building high hopes and investing so much emotional importance in fleeting experiences can be very harmful.

Suddenly, the rain returns in force and the sky darkens with thunder. The children run back to the classroom, where they peer out at the deafening rain that seems as if it will continue falling everywhere and forever. They ask if it will really be seven more years before they see the sun again.

Now that they have such a bright memory to compare it to, the normal day-to-day conditions of life on Venus seem unbearable. A moment of intense happiness can make everyday life seem comparatively painful, especially when the moment has been anticipated for so long. The return to waiting brings with it renewed awareness of how painful drawn-out anticipation can be. Already, the children seem transfixed by their brief memory of the sun, just as Margot is. It seems likely that they, too, will succumb to the kind of nostalgia that hindered Margot.

Suddenly, one of the children remembers Margot. The children realize she is still locked in the closet, and they stand frozen in place, unable to meet each other's eyes. After a few moments, they begin to walk slowly down the hall as the rain and lightning rage outside.

Perhaps because they now share this emotional understanding of Margot's painful nostalgia, the children suddenly remember her. Experiencing the sun has not only made them feel happy and healthy but given them the experience and maturity to realize the magnitude of their actions and to feel guilt. This is

another way that the importance of nature is emphasized. Now that they can relate to Margot, the motivations for their bullying have been taken away.

The children stand for a moment before the closet, which is now silent. Slowly, they unlock the door and let Margot out.

Bradbury does not show us the aftermath of this episode, but it is clear that the day has ended in difficult feelings all around. The children, like Margot, are now armed with a powerful memory of happiness which will likely make it far more difficult for them to enjoy everyday life and endure the long wait for another such day. Meanwhile, Margot has experienced the shattering disappointment of expectations for a day that had become all-important in her mind, demonstrating the danger of relying on such fleeting moments. A day that should have brought joy to all has instead brought a powerful sense of loss.



Themes



Jealousy, Bullying, and Isolation

“All Summer in a Day” tells the story of a group of children ostracizing and bullying a child who doesn’t fit in. Margot, who moved to Venus from Earth several years before, has real memories of the sun, unlike her classmates who have seen only Venus’ constant rain. As sunlight is the experience that the children on Venus cherish the most, Margot becomes a scapegoat for the children’s frustration and longing. Their jealousy of her experiences leads them to a profound act of cruelty, which suggests that jealousy and deprivation, rather than outright hatred, are the engines of bullying.

The children are jealous of Margot because, while they can only speculate about what sunlight is like, Margot spent her early childhood on Earth. As the classroom prepares for Venus’ short period of sunlight, Margot writes a clever poem about the sun. Because only Margot remembers the sun, her poem and recollections are the most true to life. In order to undercut this advantage, William tries to discredit Margot, saying, “Aw, you didn’t write that!” Similarly, when Margot recalls that the sun is “like a penny,” the other children, led by William, say that she is wrong or lying. They act as if they have more knowledge of the sun than her, when the opposite is true.

Just before the sun is set to come out, the children, again led by William, torment Margot by telling her that the predictions are wrong and the sun won’t appear. Then, they shut her in a closet to keep her from going outside—while the sun appears, she will be trapped in the dark. In this way, they deprive her of experiencing the sun, just as they felt they had been deprived. The nature of these specific acts of bullying shows that the children are motivated by jealousy. Margot has been able to experience what they desired but were denied, and now they have the power to turn the tables. Bullying, therefore, is an expression of the children’s own sense of misfortune, as well as a twisted way attempt to fix a perceived injustice.

Though their cruelty is reprehensible, their jealousy is understandable—not only did Margot live on Earth for years before moving to Venus, but she also may return one day, as her family can afford the “thousands of dollars” it would cost to move back. Therefore, Margot has opportunities that the others don’t, and perhaps her sour attitude towards Venus doubly wounds them in light of her privilege. As the children prepare for the sun to come out, Margot shows off her superior memory of the sun, telling the other children that the sun is “like a penny,” or “a fire...in the stove.” To the other children, this is a reminder that Margot’s experiences have given her special knowledge of the sun, which they can only imagine. In addition, Margot refuses to participate when the other children try to include her in activities like playing tag and singing. In fact, when William begins to bully Margot, she is intentionally standing apart from the other children. Margot makes it clear that she thinks life on Earth is better than life on Venus, and that making friends with the children there is pointless. Margot has a “waiting silence” and a “possible future,” so it is clear to the other children that she does not value life on Venus and, unlike them, she has the option to leave. In both her behavior and her circumstances, Margot shows that she comes from a better world and that she is uninterested in Venus or its inhabitants. In this way, the children are made repeatedly aware that they are suffering from the sun’s absence, and, unlike Margot, can do little about it. In the face of this powerlessness and inequity, the children direct their frustration towards Margot.

Although Margot’s behavior intensifies the children’s animosity towards her, their decision to lock her in the closet is more about the children’s own anxieties and desires than it is a retaliation against Margot’s personality. This is clear because, in the moments leading up to Margot’s relegation to the closet, she is simply standing quietly, looking out the window with the rest of the children. William and the others attempt to taunt her, but she remains unengaged even when physically pushed. Their actions, then, seem broadly cathartic rather than directed at Margot herself. The children who inflict great harm on Margot do so not because they personally hate her, but because of a very real sense of deprivation. Margot is unjustly tormented for having seen

the sun, but the children are also intensely aware that she has access to the thing that is most scarce and desirable to them. Ultimately, the story shows that even extremely cruel bullying is driven by more complicated motives than hatred alone.

The Power of Nature

“All Summer in a Day” imagines a world in which humans have left Earth for Venus, an inhospitable planet where they must live completely indoors and can only dream about the pleasures of being outside. This estrangement from nature changes humanity, both physically and emotionally, by draining people of color, vitality, and even empathy. In this way, Bradbury shows how central nature—and particularly the sun—is to humankind.

The strongest example of this is the story’s protagonist, Margot, a little girl who moved to Venus from Earth several years before and is therefore alone among her classmates in remembering the sun. Bradbury’s descriptions of Margot reveal that her life on Venus has left her much diminished from her days on Earth. For example, Bradbury’s physical description of Margot suggests that Venus has weakened her body—Margot is “frail” and her color has drained away to the extent that she looks like “an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost.” She also seems so demoralized by her surroundings that she has become uninterested in the typical pleasures of children. “If they tagged her and ran,” Bradbury writes, “she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.” Therefore, Bradbury depicts Margot as a child so heartbroken and diminished by the loss of nature that she has become nearly inhuman.

While Margot reels from the loss of nature, her classmates have never even known the sun. Their upbringing on Venus, in an environment hostile to human life, seems to have shaped them to be meaner than their counterparts on Earth. The constant rains and lightning are dangerous and depressing, and

the lush vegetation—which Bradbury describes as a “nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of flesh like weed”—is the color of “rubber and ash,” making even the natural elements of Venus seem dead and hazardous. Because of this, and because the sun comes out only once every seven years, humans must live in underground tunnels to survive. Just like this environment, Margot’s classmates behave hostilely towards her. They taunt her, mock her, and they ultimately leave her locked in a closet during the only two hours of sunlight they will see for seven years—an act that is particularly cruel since Margot longs so fervently for the sun. In this way, Bradbury strongly ties the children’s behavior to their environment. After the sunlight has passed, the children remember Margot and seem, for the first time, remorseful for how they treated her. Seeing the sun has either imbued them with a warmth and empathy they had lacked beforehand, or their experience of seeing and losing sunlight has made them finally sympathetic to her grief.

The power that nature and sunlight have over all of the children suggests that humanity is, at least in part, defined by its relationship to nature. Without the sun, human beings in this story do not seem whole—they lack physical vitality and emotional warmth. Perhaps in recognition of the sun’s centrality to human life, the people in the story practically worship it, making the sun an object of fascination and longing. This dystopian fetishization of nature by people who are acutely affected by its absence can be read as a parable of technological progress and urbanization. Published in 1954, the story appeared in the midst of the postwar boom of suburban development and aerospace technology. In light of this, Bradbury seems to suggest that human beings are better off living in landscapes that keep them alongside the natural world, and that technologies that estrange people from nature—like the rocket that transported earthlings to Venus—can diminish humanity rather than further its progress. By depicting both characters who long for the nature of Earth and characters who suffer from never having known it, Bradbury suggests that contact with nature and the sun are centrally important to human health and wellbeing. Without this contact, humans seem to lose an important piece of themselves.

Nostalgia and Discontent

“All Summer in a Day” depicts a world in which the sun, though absent, has tremendous power over people’s lives. Characters are obsessed with their memories of the sun; Margot is sustained by her detailed memories, while her classmates—whose memories of the sun are either distant and brief or altogether nonexistent—are anxious and insecure that they can’t remember it better. Through his depiction of a society obsessed with memory and absence, Bradbury demonstrates that nostalgia leads to social unrest and personal dissatisfaction.

Unchecked nostalgia is a social sickness that prevents people from appreciating the present. This is clear on Venus. Since the sun appears only once every seven years, inhabitants spend much of their time recalling these brief moments of summer. Most children are too young to remember the last appearance of the sun, so they dream about it and long to experience it firsthand. The sun has such mythological and emotional importance in their society that the children’s lack of coherent memories of the sun (or lack of firsthand experience with it) makes them feel insecure and anxious, disconnected from an important source of cultural meaning. In addition, since seeing the sun is such an important cultural experience, memories of the sun are a source of conflict on Venus. Margot “stands apart” from the other children because she knows that her memories of the sun are more recent, detailed, and reliable than theirs. The other children are frustrated by this imbalance, which makes Margot vulnerable to bullying. In these ways, Bradbury shows that living in a place in which sunlight is simultaneously so scarce and so valued makes both the ability and inability to remember the sun socially fraught.

In addition to the social ramifications of remembering the sun, these memories have profound personal effects. Characters who focus too much on their memories have a hard time enjoying the present, which shows the detrimental effects of a society so consumed with nostalgia. Margot is the most extreme example of this phenomenon, as she experiences nostalgia so

strong that the present is intolerable to her. Instead of joining the other children in games of tag or songs about life on Venus, Margot only participates in activities relating to the sun. She refuses to experience even the more pleasant parts of life on Venus, instead focusing solely on her memories of life on Earth. This fixation isolates her from her peers and even affects her health: she is pale, thin, and occasionally overwhelmed by the constant rain on Venus. Her parents consider moving her back to Earth to spare her from her anguish. And, after the other children have experienced the sun, they, too, feel dissatisfied with the normal state of things on Venus. The sound of the rain has become “gigantic,” and already they cannot wait for the return of the sun. It seems as if their memories of this day will make them more like Margot—their delight in the sun will eclipse their enjoyment of everyday life.

When considering the role of nostalgia in the story, it's important to also consider that, for those living on Venus, the sun is a relic of an earlier time before humans colonized Venus. In this way, the planet's obsession with the sun is not simply about the one hour of sunlight they receive every seven years, but rather about a deeper nostalgia for an era when all humans lived on Earth. Therefore, nostalgia for the sun has several levels of meaning—in the more immediate sense, nostalgia prevents characters from enjoying their everyday lives, and in a larger sense, nostalgia for the sun indicates a broad social pathology in which nobody is able to accept Venus as human reality. Instead of creating new values, myths, and expectations that fit their reality, humans on Venus remain nostalgically obsessed with the sunlight that defined a bygone era of human life on Earth.

Anticipation and Disappointment

As its title suggests, “All Summer in a Day” is about a single day of great importance, one that the inhabitants of Venus have anticipated eagerly for seven years. While great anticipation often leads to dashed expectations, Bradbury's story shows that there is an even worse fate than unmet expectation: the brief moment of sunlight on Venus brings more joy than the children could ever have imagined, which leaves them with a demoralizing

longing for the future, an anticipation that prevents them from enjoying their lives.

At the beginning of the story, anticipation of the sun's arrival puts the children in a heightened, anxious state that ultimately breaks into hostility. Leading up to the sun's appearance, they worry that something will go wrong—the sun won't appear, or their teacher will let them outside too late. These mixed emotions leave the children tense and volatile, which ultimately spills over into violence. At most times, the children avoid Margot, but on this day, William tries to start a fight with her for staring out the window. He and the other children are so agitated with their own anticipation that they inflict on Margot the very outcome that they themselves most fear: they prevent her from seeing the sun. Margot is distraught. She attempts to escape by “protesting, and then pleading, and then crying,” and then throwing herself against the closet door. For Margot, this day marked the return of the thing she most loved and missed, and her dashed anticipation feels catastrophic.

For the children who do see the sun, it doesn't disappoint. Despite their high expectations, they experience more joy than they thought possible. However, this means that, when the sun finally vanishes, the children are devastated. As a result, the close of the brief summer is a tragedy. When one student catches the first returning raindrop in her palm, she begins to cry. As the rains roll in, the children lose their cheer immediately, “their smiles vanishing away” as they return to the underground classroom. Their anticipation for the summer and the brief joy it brought has been suddenly replaced by an overwhelming sense of sadness and loss. After such a long wait, it's difficult to accept that their period of great happiness is already over. Even worse, now that the children realize what they're missing, their anticipation of the next summer is more bitter and fervent than before.

In the end, the day seems to have brought far more sadness than joy, as instead of imagining the sun, they now miss something they have personally experienced. For the first time, the children truly understand Margot's longing for the sun and seem to become aware of the magnitude of what they have done to her. After they return inside, they are frozen with this realization, and

feel too guilty to meet one another's eyes. Like Margot, they are now "solemn and pale." In the wake of the wonderful afternoon, the reality of the seven years they will have to wait to experience it again is difficult to bear. When the children return inside, they are more aware of the misery of their conditions: they "heard the gigantic sound of rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever." This newfound sense of loss, impatience, and guilt will forever be bound up with the children's anticipation, as well as with their experience of their everyday reality. For Bradbury, then, having anticipation rewarded with brief, unmitigated pleasure is a greater curse than never knowing such pleasure at all.

Symbols



The Sun

The sun, the most important symbol in “All Summer in a Day,” embodies all of nature, and its effects on people demonstrate the inextricable connection between humans and the natural world. On Venus, the sun only comes out once every seven years, and for the remainder of the time people live underground in the darkness hiding from the pelting rain. Venus, therefore, is a society that is entirely removed from nature, something both caused by and symbolized by the absence of sun. Margot is the only character who can remember the sun, and in its absence, she has become not only sad and subdued, but also physically less healthy: she is “frail” and “washed out” like “an old photograph.” The other children initially seem healthy enough, but when they finally get to play outside in the sun, its revitalizing effects are immediately apparent: the children tumble and play with newfound energy, laughing and wondering at how nice the sun feels and looks. Clearly, the sun has made them physically and emotionally stronger, just as its absence weakened Margot. In addition, after this period in the sunlight, the children are suddenly awash with regret for locking Margot inside, as if the sun has made them more self-aware and empathetic. With its power to restore health

as well as inspire empathy, the sun represents renewal, vitality, and the power of nature. Without sunlight, the people on Venus seem slightly less than human.



Weeds

Weeds and unruly plants appear multiple times in this story, sometimes unexpectedly. They are used to emphasize the damaging effects of deprivation from the sun: both the physical environment and the inhabitants of Venus have become cruel and inhospitable in the absence of sunlight. Because of the constant rains, Venus is covered in sickly pale, overgrown vegetation, a jungle that “grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it.” The jungle is described in vivid, uncanny detail as a “nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of flesh-like weed.” Venus is an untamed, inhospitable environment which the constant rains have covered in tangled grey weeds. Just as the rains have created this hostile environment, they also seem to have fostered hostility among the people of Venus: the unruly children are described in the opening of the story as “so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed,” pressed close together as they peer out the window. In the absence of the sun and in their feverish anticipation, the children have become themselves like uncontrolled weeds. Just as the lack of sunlight has turned the surface of Venus into a frightening jungle, it has also turned the children into an unruly mob. Weeds symbolize the ugly behaviors that have proliferated unchecked in this harsh environment.

Stay Safe!