

Name: _____

Class: _____

All Summer in a Day

By Ray Bradbury

1954

*Ray Bradbury is an American author best known for science fiction, specifically his classic novel Fahrenheit 451 and short stories which inspired multiple generations of writers and scientists. Bradbury also wrote memoirs, realistic fiction, plays, and screenplays. In this story, Bradbury explores the possible effects of living on another planet. **Purpose for Reading:** To understand how character interactions develop a theme and to build our understanding about how being part of a crowd affects our behavior.*

[1] "Ready?"

"Now?"

"Soon."

"Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?"



[5] "Look, look; see for yourself!"

"Rain" by Inge Maria is licensed under CC0.

The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.

It rained.

It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded¹ and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion² of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

1. **Compound** (*verb*) to combine or add together
2. **Concussion** (*noun*) a violent shock as from a heavy blow

[10] "Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it.

I think the sun is a flower

That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

[15] "Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot, "I did."

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

[20] "She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry; we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're you looking at?" said William.

[25] Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to." He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else. They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, 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.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

[30] "It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different, and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

[35] Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely.³ "You won't see nothing!"

3. **Savagely** (*adverb*) in an animal-like, violent way

Her lips moved.

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children. "Nothing's happening today. Is it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. "Nothing, nothing!"

[40] "Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they know, the sun..."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children?" She glanced at her watch.

[45] "Yes!" said everyone.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes!"

The rain slackened⁴ still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

[50] The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector⁵ and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide⁶ which did not

4. **Slacken (verb)** to slow down or lessen in intensity

5. Movies that are recorded on physical film must be shown using a projector, which shines

move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

- [55] But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

"Oh, it's better than the sunlamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously,⁷ even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of flesh-like weed, wavering, flowering this brief spring.

It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.

- [60] The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until the tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored⁸ everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles.

light through the film, allowing the image to be seen on a screen.

6. A slide is an individual image that can be displayed on a projector, similar to a slide in a PowerPoint presentation.
7. **Tumultuously** (*adverb*) in a confused, disorganized way
8. **Savor** (*verb*) to enjoy something completely

They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then —

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

[65] The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

“Oh, look, look,” she said trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm. In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.

She began to cry, looking at it.

They glanced quietly at the sky.

[70] “Oh. Oh.”

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

“Will it be seven more years?”

[75] “Yes. Seven.”

Then one of them gave a little cry.

“Margot!”

“What?”

“She’s still in the closet where we locked her.”

[80] “Margot.”

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn⁹ and pale.

They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well...?" No one moved.

[85] "Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

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9. **Solemn** (*adjective*) serious, without cheer

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. How do the other children regard Margot at the beginning of the story?
 - A. They admire Margot for being so unique.
 - B. They pity Margot for her sun-filled childhood.
 - C. They envy Margot for her unusual experiences.
 - D. They appreciate Margot for teaching them new things.

2. What does the phrase "like escaped animals from their caves" imply about the sun's impact on the children? (Paragraph 60)
 - A. The sun makes the children violent.
 - B. The sun makes the children feel free.
 - C. The sun turns the children against each other.
 - D. The sun causes the children to understand Margot.

3. Why does the author describe the color of the landscape in paragraph 59?
 - A. to illustrate the way sun is harming Venus's natural wonders
 - B. to illustrate the natural beauty that the rain creates on Venus \
 - C. to illustrate that the children were right to hide Margot from the sun
 - D. to illustrate how the sun revealed the truth of life on Venus to the children

4. What does the author's use of figurative language in paragraph 23 reveal about Margot?
 - A. Margot has become angry and violent from the lack of sun on Venus.
 - B. Margot has gained confidence and strength from her new home on Venus.
 - C. Margot has lost strength and energy because of the constant rain on Venus.
 - D. Margot has learned to overcome challenges and disappointments because of her life on Venus.

5. Which statement best expresses a theme of "All Summer in a Day"?
 - A. Following the crowd can lead to cruel actions that one will later regret.
 - B. Following the crowd can give people the courage to try new things.
 - C. Following the crowd can make people afraid to be independent.
 - D. Following the crowd can result in damage to the environment.

6. How does the author use character change, the resolution, or literary devices to reveal theme in "All Summer in a Day"?

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. Margot moved from Earth to Venus. How can major changes in people's lives affect their views and the way they think about the world? Discuss a time when you were influenced by a major change in your life.
2. Margot's perspective is different from all of the other children's perspectives. When have you expressed an opinion that your friends did not agree with? How did they respond to your unique way of thinking?
3. Why do people form opinions about unfamiliar people and places? How did the children form opinions about Margot based on her experiences? What are some prejudices you may have about unfamiliar people or places?
4. The children robbed Margot of a chance to experience the sun when they locked her in the closet. Were you ever prevented from having an amazing experience? If you could relive that moment, what would you do?

Name: _____

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Momentum

By Catherine Doty

2004

Catherine Doty is a poet, artist, and teacher from Paterson, New Jersey. Her first volume of poetry focuses on the moments in childhood that shape and eventually define our lives. Read the poem several times, taking notes on how the events of the poem create a tone.

[1] Your friends won't try to talk you out of
the barrel,

or your brag to go first, which has
nothing to do with bravery.

And you're so hungry to earn their love
you forget

to claim first your, perhaps, last look at
this mountain—



[5] crab apples hanging sour in the sun,
abandoned Buick,¹

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a favorite place to play, dismantled and weathered

and delicate as a voting booth. Instead you dive straight away

and headfirst into darkness, the steel drum that dusts you,

like a chicken part, with rust. Looking out, there's nothing

[10] to see of your friends but their calves, which are scabby,

and below them the filthy sneakers, shifting, shifting,

every foot aching to kick you off this cliff.

1. an American car brand

Their faces, you know, are blank with anticipation,
the look you see when they watch TV eating popcorn.

[15] They're already talking about you as if you're gone,
as if you boarded a bus and roared out of earshot,
when one foot flashes forward and launches you.

You know as you feel that first solid slam you are lost.

The barrel changes shape with each crash to earth,
[20] as you will later, assuming and losing lives, but this
is so true now: ankles flayed² to the bone, cracked ribs
and crushed mint, the brittle, pissy sumac.³ Right now
the pin oaks are popping in their sockets, the hillside
wears your shoes, clouds pleat and buck. You know, of course,
[25] that no one's going second, and friends who tell this story
will use the word idiot, rolling their hands in the air,
but you know you know what your life is for now and rise up,
and just about scalp yourself on that tree limb above you,
another thing you couldn't possibly know was coming,
[30] another which, like your first breath, was not your idea.

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2. **Flay (verb)** to strip off the skin or surface
 3. a type of tree, bush, or vine that has many small leaves and produces red or white berries

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Which statement best expresses a theme of the poem?
 - A. Taking risks is a normal part of growing up.
 - B. Being brave helps us earn respect from others.
 - C. It's important to have friends who support your decisions.
 - D. We can make poor decisions when we seek approval from our friends.

2. How does the structure of the poem's stanzas contribute to the text's meaning?
 - A. The stanza break divides the poem between what happens in the present and what has happened in the past.
 - B. The stanza break divides the poem between what happens before and after the barrel is kicked down the mountain.
 - C. The stanza break divides the poem between what the subject first thinks about their friends and what her or she will think of them later.
 - D. The stanza break divides the poem between how brave the subject feels while in the barrel and how scared they are once it begins to roll down the mountain.

3. Which line best describes the poem's point of view?
 - A. The speaker is talking directly to the subject in the poem (second-person perspective).
 - B. The speaker in the poem is describing their own experiences (first-person perspective).
 - C. The speaker is talking directly to the subject's friends in the poem (second-person perspective).
 - D. The speaker in the poem is talking to the reader about the subject's experience (third-person perspective).

4. Which of the following lines from the text provides the best evidence for the poem's point of view?
 - A. "crab apples hanging sour in the sun, abandoned Buick," (Line 5)
 - B. "You know as you feel that first solid slam you are lost." (Line 18)
 - C. "The barrel changes shape with each crash to earth," (Line 19)
 - D. "the pin oaks are popping in their sockets, the hillside" (Line 23)

5. What is the meaning of the phrase "the hillside wears your shoes" as it is used in lines 23-24?
- A. The kids stole the subject's shoes.
 - B. There were shoes littered across the hillside.
 - C. The sun made shadows of the shoes on the hillside.
 - D. The subject's shoes flew off and landed on the hillside.
6. How does the subject's relationship with their friends help develop the poem's theme?

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. Have you ever done something you weren't sure about to get people to like you? What was the end result? Would you do the same thing again?
2. Why do we try to impress others? Have you ever given someone a false impression of yourself in order to impress them? How did this make you feel?
3. In the context of the text, what does it mean to be a friend? Is the subject accurate when they refer to the people at the top of the mountain as friends? Why or why not?