

Sun Needs a Holiday

by Zaina Lee



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Hi, my name is Raaji. I have a very active imagination and I just can't seem to stop making up stories, even though I get in big trouble every time I do.

Like the time that our classroom rabbit, Booster, disappeared. Our entire class looked everywhere and we finally found Booster in one of our cubby holes. Booster had chewed his way through everyone's sweaters and jackets. The clothes looked like Swiss cheese!

When Mrs. Wumble found out that I was the one who had let Booster out of his cage, I had to sit in detention until Mom came to pick me up. My parents said that I might pay for all of Booster's damage out of my allowances until I am at least seventeen years old! But did that stop me from making up even more stories? No, Siree!



One day Mom was home sick with the flu. I yelled to her, “Hey, Mom! Oprah Winfrey and her filming crew are on our porch!” Mom quickly jumped up and got dressed in record time! I sure never saw Mom move that fast.



Mom ran to our front door and flung it wide open saying, “Oprah, I am so sorry to have kept you waiting!” but only Pockets, our cat, was on our front porch.

I guess Mom was really angry, because I was immediately put in time out!



Dad is good at fixing cars. There is a hole up in the top corner of the garage that squirrels used to come in through. They destroyed some of Dad's paints, and Mom's plants, too. One day when Dad had his head under the hood of a car, I called out, "Oh, no, Dad! Those squirrels are coming back into that hole again!"

My Dad jumped up from underneath the car's hood so fast that he dropped a large can of thick black oil inside of the car's engine and all over his face and clothes. I didn't have time to laugh because Dad was chasing me out of the garage and screaming my name! Whew, thank goodness I can run much faster than my dad!

The funniest one I can remember is the time I told my sister that her old boyfriend was on the telephone when they had not spoken to each other in over a month.

My sister Marquitta's face lit up like Fourth of July fireworks, with a grin so wide that I thought her face would break in half. Running to the telephone in the hallway "Yes, yes! Hello, Greg? Hellooooo?" But there was no one on the other end of the phone.

I couldn't hold it in any longer and roared loudly with laughter, clutching my stomach as I rolled around on the living room floor. Realizing that she had been fooled, Quitta slammed down the telephone's receiver so hard you probably could hear the loud banging sound on planet Mars. Can you believe that she still won't speak to me!?



No one believes a word I say anymore, and that's why I really do not want to tell my parents what happened to me on my way home from school.



Hey, I know, I can practice by telling **YOU** first!

It all started when I brought my pet lizard, Sebastian, to school. When no one was watching, I put Sebastian in Mrs. Bailey's white lunch-lady hat. Mrs. Bailey put on her hat, and Sebastian crawled down into her shirt. She fell over some chairs while running and trying to get Sebastian out of her clothes. The entire cafeteria was laughing, including me, of course.

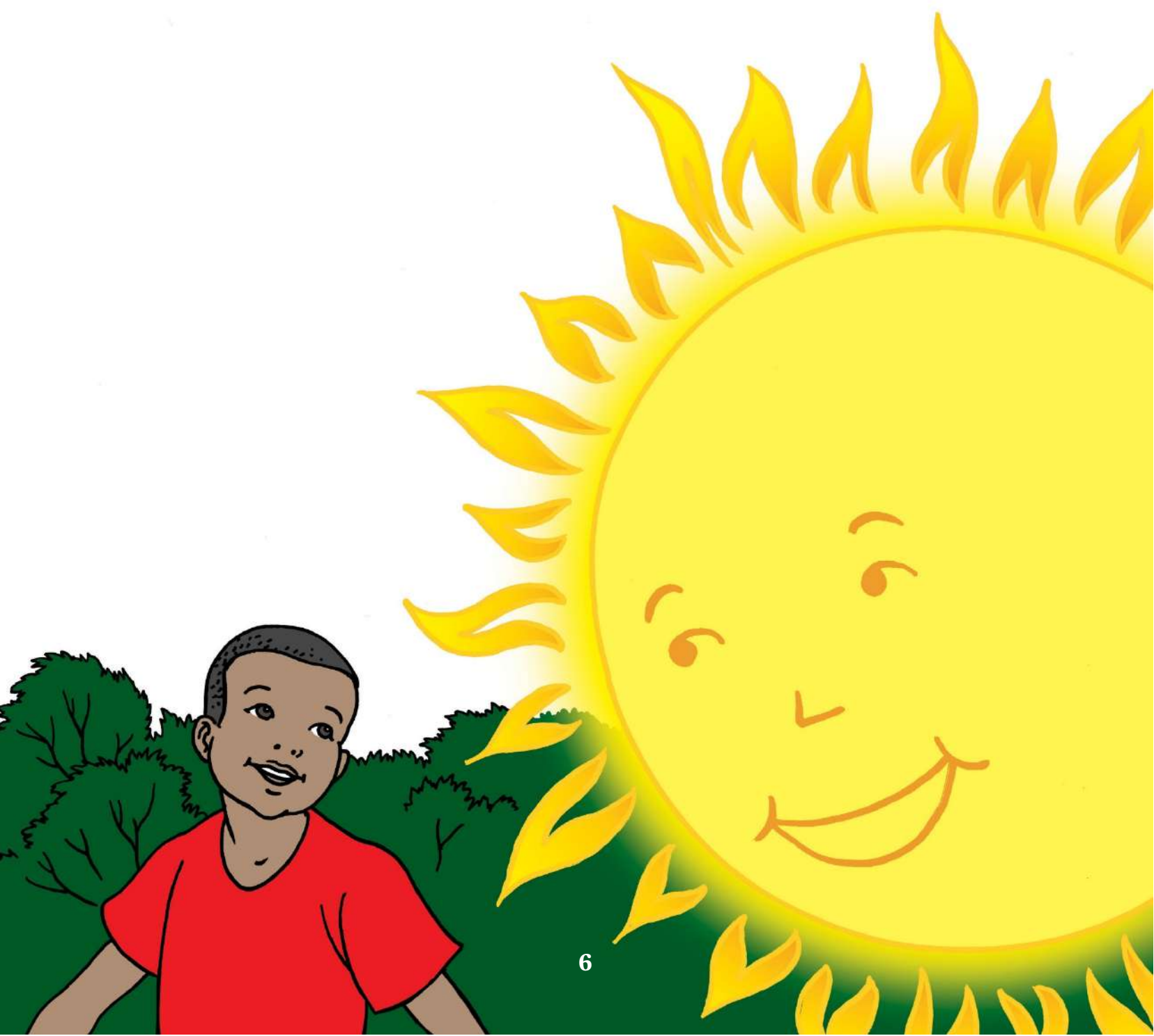
Our lower school Principal Mr. Johnson did not laugh. Mr. Johnson was cafeteria monitor that day and he told me I had to stay after school for detention.



Because I had to stay for detention, I missed my bus. Afterwards, I walked home, listening to music. Then I heard someone say my name.

I looked around me and saw only the trees and the pavement and a few birds flying high above. That's when I heard a voice say, "Raaji, look up... up... *waaaaaaaay UP!*"

So, I did. I looked *waaaaay* up at the sky and I saw a few clouds and the sun blazing. "Hi there, Raaji! Please allow me to introduce myself. It's me... THE SUN!"



"H-H-Hi Sun?" I said.

"Sorry if I startled you, Raaji, been trying to get your attention for the longest time! I was finally able to tap into your iPod via this satellite dish here outside your atmosphere."

"Why have you been trying to get *my* attention, Sun?" I asked.

"Well, first of all, don't call me Sun. I have a name, and it's *Rayer*. Sun is only a title. It is what I do—it's my job, not my name. It's like if I called you 'student' or 'kid' or something like that. I wanted to talk to you because you love the solar system as much as I do."

I grinned. "I love everything about the solar system. When I grow up, I'm going to be an astronaut!"

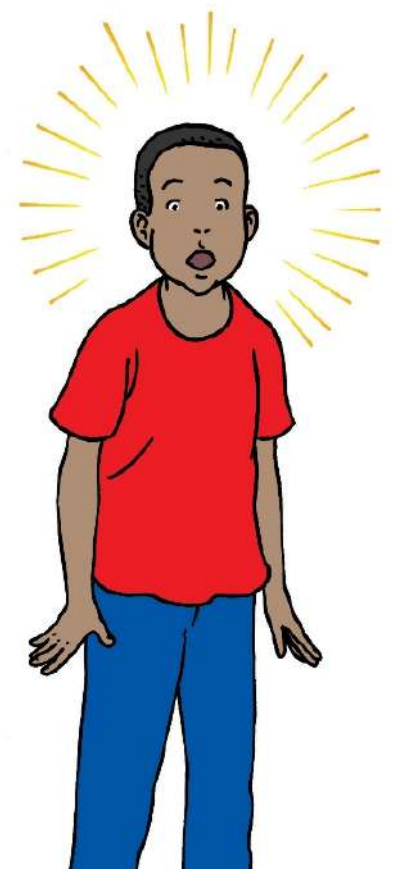
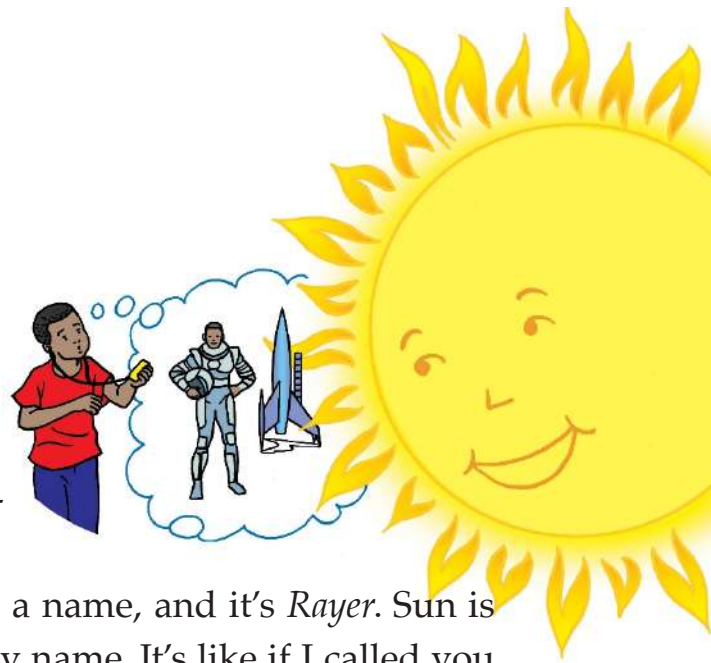
"An astronaut? I've met a couple of those guys before. But for now, Raaji, I really need your help."

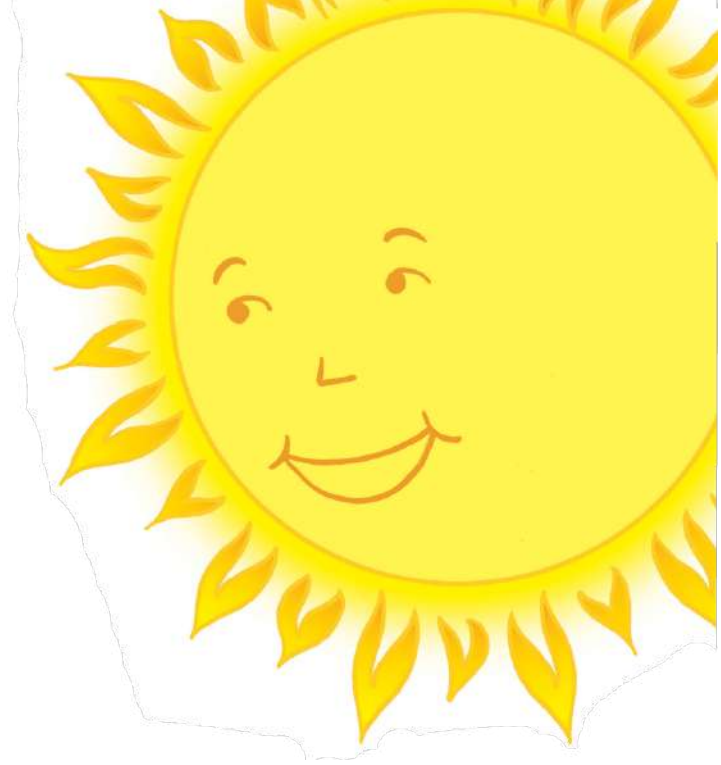
"How can I help you? I'm only seven years old."

"You can help me by talking to your parents for me."

I was puzzled. "Why? What about? I mean, what for?"

"Raaji, I am very, very tired *and* very, very old. I am sixty-six trillion, two-hundred and thirty-five billion, six hundred and forty-six million, four-hundred and forty-four thousand, nine-hundred and eighty-nine years old."





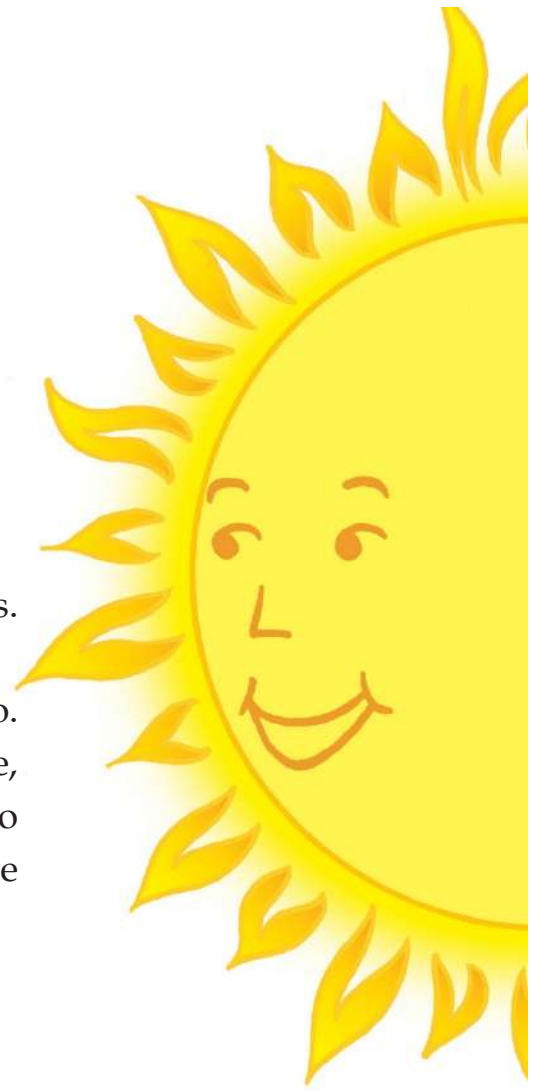
"Woah! That's a lot! I can't even count that far yet!"

"Well, it certainly has been a very long time since I have counted my age, and even longer than that since I have had any break at all. I desperately need a holiday. I want to relax and put my feet up."

"You mean you have feet?" I asked Rayer, trying not to giggle.

"I most certainly do!" answered Rayer. "I can actually make myself into whatever I want. It has taken me many long, long years to learn about being the Sun. It is not an easy job. Being the Sun is hard work."

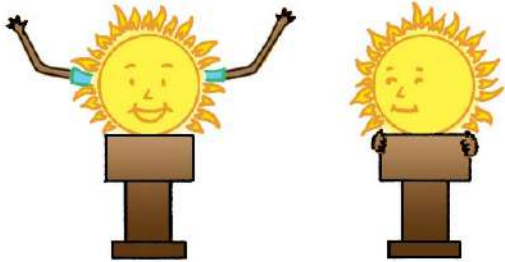




I scratched my chin as I thought over Rayer's words. "Don't the moon, clouds, or stars talk to you?"

The Sun looked sad as he replied, "Sometimes they do. Yet they do not understand my wanting a break. Trust me, I have been trying for millions and millions of years to explain it to them. I am ever so grateful, though, that the flowers understand me perfectly!"

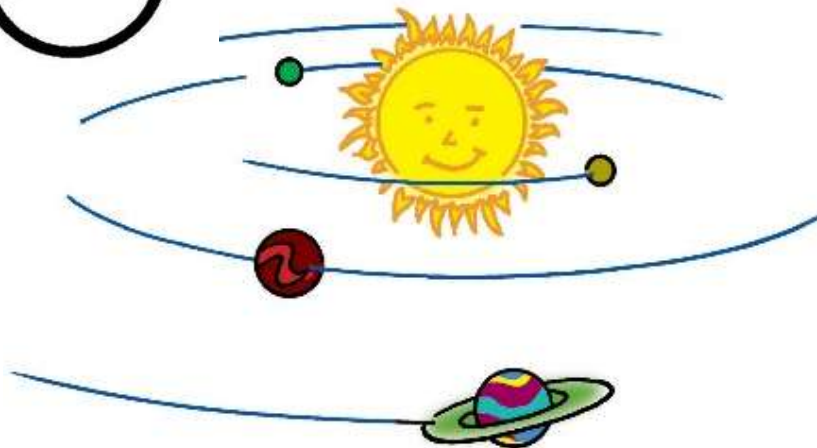


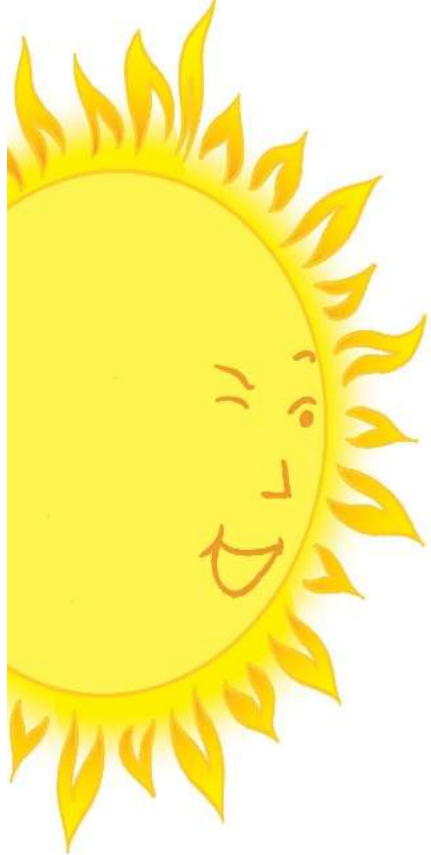


“You know, Raaji, my mom told me it was my destiny to be famous one day. When I was a baby, my rays were so bright that often she and my dad had to wear sunglasses in the house.

Everyone wanted me on their debating team at school because I was the smartest and brightest.

One day I was out riding my bike, I guess I was about three or four hundred years old at the time. One of my best friends wanted me to meet him in the Star Light Galaxy. I must have somehow made a wrong turn, and that is how I ended up in this solar system.





"Rayer, you are truly incredible and the Earth and the entire solar system are lucky to have you on the job.

But convincing my parents about you is not going to be fun. Maybe you picked the wrong kid."

"How about if you let your parents listen to me on your iPod and I can explain everything to them?"



Yep, that's exactly how it all happened. See what I'm in for? This is not going to be easy. Wish me luck, folks.



At the dinner table, Mom was retelling a story that had happened at work several weeks ago. I was sort of listening to Mom as I picked at my food. I wasn't very hungry. I was dreading what was to come, since I knew that they would not believe me.



When Mom was finally done, Dad turned to me and asked me how school was. I replied, "Fine."

"Uh-oh. What did you do now, Raaji?" Mom said. She chewed on her bottom lip, looking worried.

I stared down at my plate and replied, "I found out that our Sun wants a holiday."

Mom's eyebrows seemed to cross together when I said that. "What did you just say?"

Dad had an amused look on his face. "Well, is that so?"

I looked at Dad first and then at Mom, trying to look as honest as I could, which is not easy for a seven-year-old boy.

And.....I told them everything.





Did they believe me? Nope!

Dad leaned backward in his chair, threw his head back, and roared loudly with laughter.

Mom began to giggle. Suddenly she was laughing just as hard as Dad.

I was mad. I looked at them both and stormed from the room. When I reached my bedroom, I grabbed my iPod.

"Hey, Rayer? Rayer, are you there?"

"Yes, Raaji. What happened? Did you get to talk to your parents yet?"

"I did, but they only laughed.

Go ahead. Give them the iPod," said Rayer.

I headed back downstairs. Mom was wiping her eyes. She kept saying, "S-S-Sun wants a-a-a a holiday!" and bellowing again into laughter.

Dad was nodding his head, "Evidently he deserves it, honey. He's been at it for centuries!"



I cleared my throat.

"Rayer is the Sun's name, and he wants to talk to you guys."

"Here," I said handing Dad the iPod. "Just listen to him, okay?"



Dad inserted the headphones into his ears as I held my breath, and waited. Dad's expression changed from amusement to shock. "Well, I'll be!" He removed one of the iPod's earbuds and shared it with Mom. "I don't believe it!"

Dad said, "Well, we will certainly do everything in our power to help you, too, Rayer. I understand perfectly."





Mom told me, "I'm sorry we laughed like we did." She grabbed me and hugged me tightly.



I looked up at Mom. "What do we do now?"

"Well, I suppose we start by contacting the media and letting them know Rayer's wishes."

"Don't forget to tell them that he's been on the job for like a bazillion years and really needs the break," I said.



I had trouble falling asleep that night. I could not sleep, thinking about how we were going to help Rayer.

Rayer was all I could think about at school the next day, too. "Are you feeling okay today, Raaji?" asked Mrs. Wumble.

"Yeah," I replied. "I'm fine."

Mrs. Wumble reached out anyway and checked the temperature on my forehead.

School lasted forever.

I rushed into the house.

"When are the media getting here?" I asked.



"They're not," Mom said.

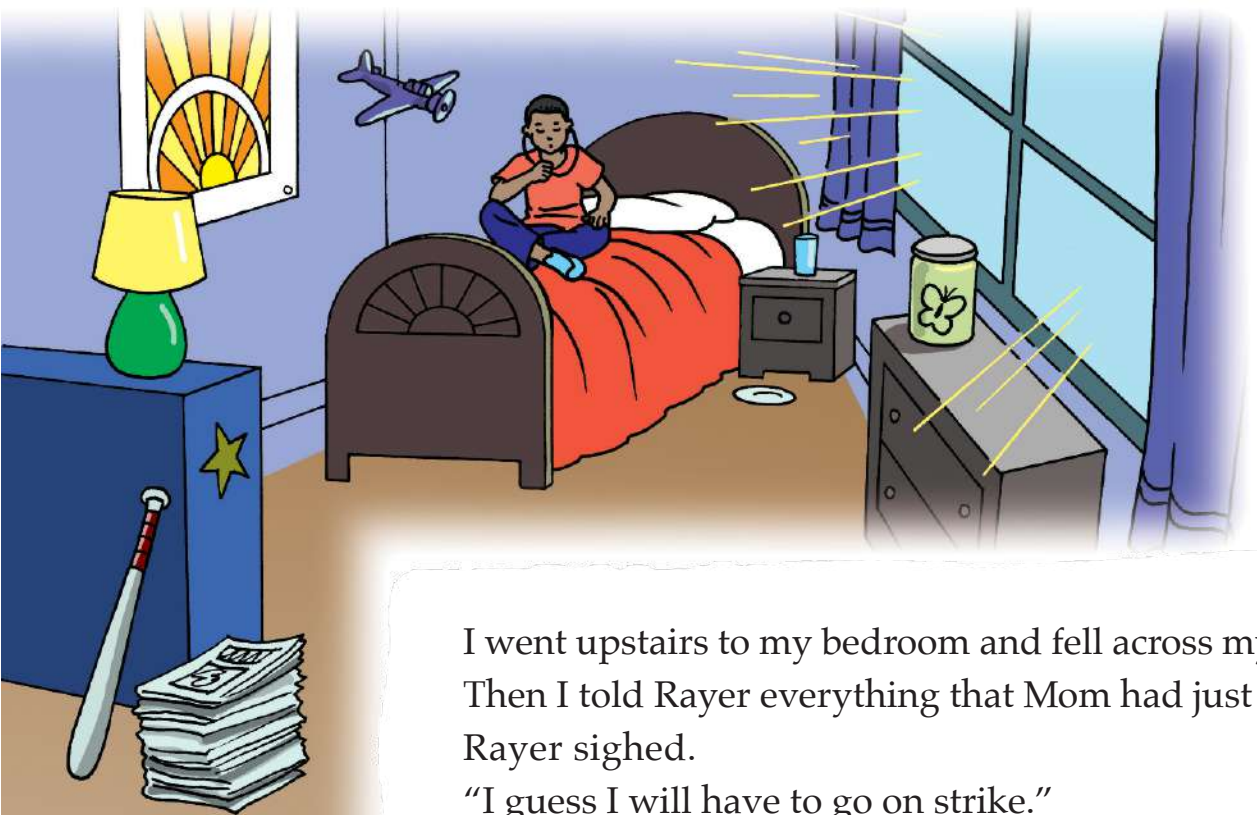
"Then they're coming tomorrow?" I asked.

"No," replied Mom. "They're not coming at all."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because, honey, they don't believe us. Everyone I spoke to thinks it's all a prank. I called channel 7, channel 32, channels 2, 5, 4, 9, and even channel 11. They all turned me down flat. No one wants to take the story."

"No way!" I yelled. "Now what do we do, Mom? We have to help Rayer!"



I went upstairs to my bedroom and fell across my bed. Then I told Rayer everything that Mom had just told me. Rayer sighed.

"I guess I will have to go on strike."



"When will you strike?" I asked Rayer.

"I will strike in the next day or two. I have more thinking to do."

"Good luck!" I said. "If you ask me, you deserve a vacation *and* a holiday *and* a break all at the same time!"

At dinnertime, I went downstairs to dinner and told my parents. Mom said that she did not blame Rayer in the least.



That night I had trouble falling asleep again. I was worried about Rayer.

But I was even more worried about the planet Earth and the rest of the solar system.

I fell asleep and had a bad dream that the Earth was dark and cold. Everyone and everything froze solid when Rayer went on strike.



At school the next day, Mrs. Wumble did not ask me if I was okay, but I could tell she was thinking about it. She kept her eyes glued to me all day.



"Well?" I asked Mom as I reached for my after-school sandwich. "Did you come up with any ideas while I was at school?"

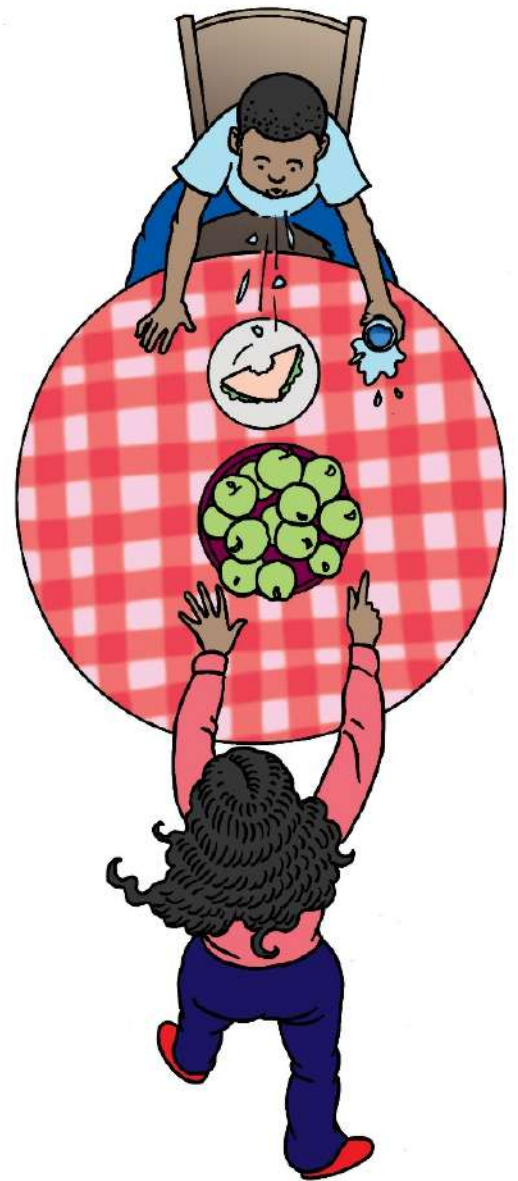
"I didn't have to. Mrs. Petia Perez from Channel 5 News is on the way over here right now."

My mouth fell open and a piece of bread slipped out. "I thought no one wanted to take up the story."

"So did I," said Mom. "Mrs. Perez called me back today and told me to stop joking. She was about to hang up on me."

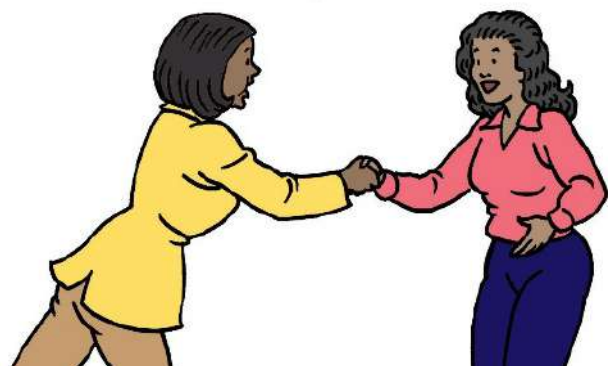
"I told her that if the story were true, this could be the story of the century! In the end she agreed to come talk to Rayer."

I ran upstairs to my bedroom to tell Rayer.





Rayer was so happy and relieved not to have to go on strike. He was going to get a long-awaited and much-deserved and very needed *holiday*!



A few minutes later, Mrs. Perez and her crew rang our doorbell. We sat down and I told Mrs. Perez to please listen to Rayer, the Sun, on my iPod. Mrs. Perez grinned nervously.

A few minutes later, she was scribbling notes on her Apple Tablet.

"Come on, let's get outside for some film."

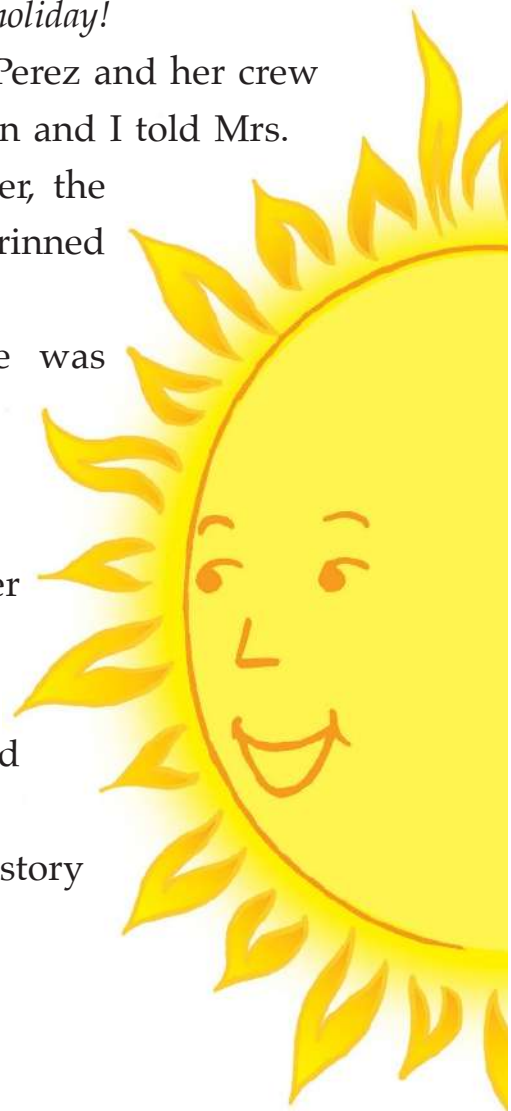
The crew followed Mrs. Perez outside.

Mrs. Perez turned toward Mom and grabbed her hand as she pumped it up and down.

"I think you actually saved my career!"

When Dad got home, I jumped onto his back and told him about what had happened.

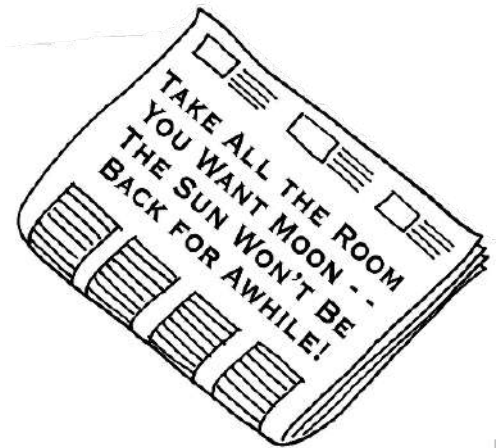
That evening, all of us watched Rayer's story break on Channel 5 News.



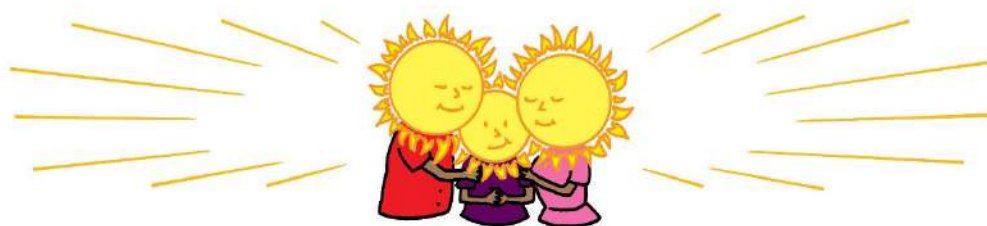
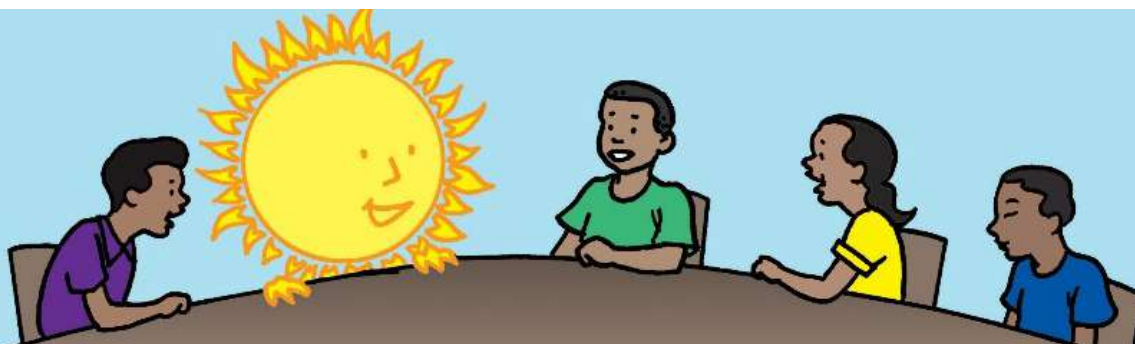
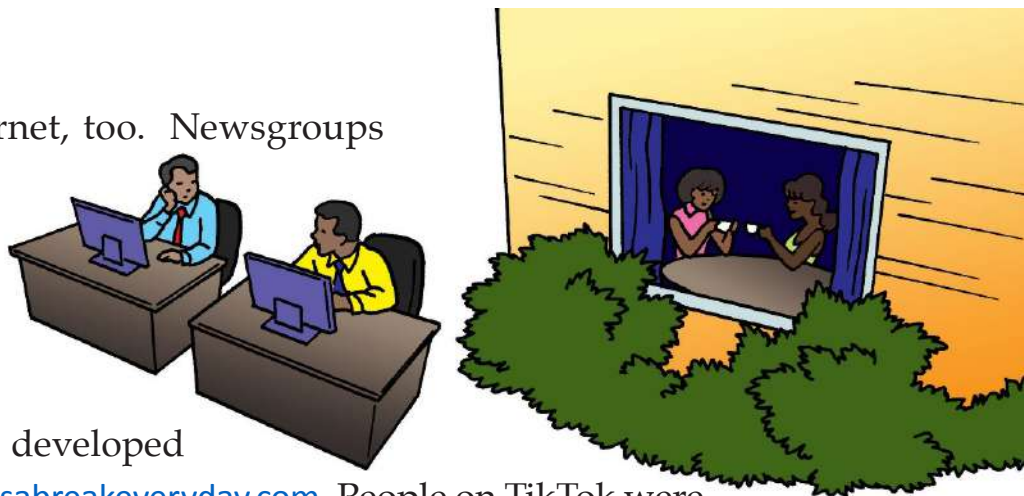


By the next morning it was on every channel and in every newspaper around the world. Everyone from the local paper to the *New York Times* reported on Rayer's hopes for a holiday.

The coverage went on like this for weeks and weeks.



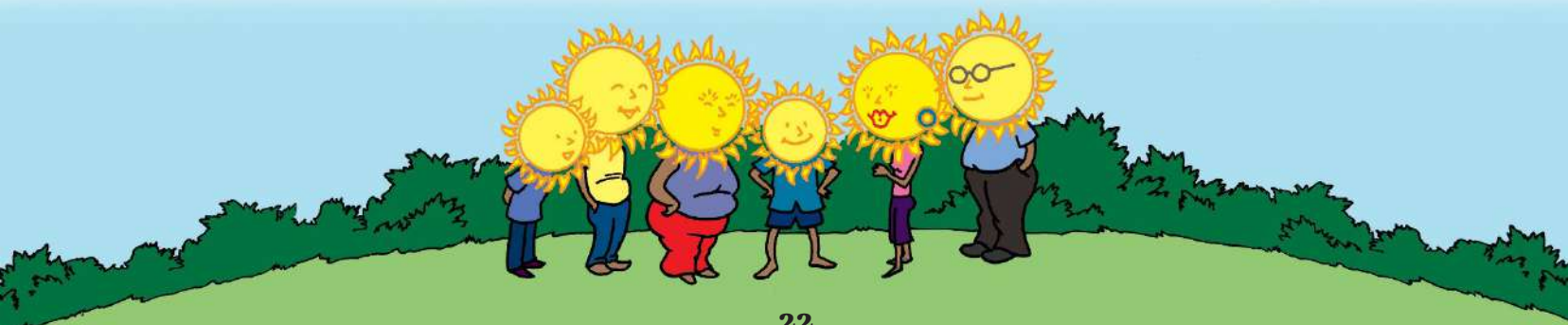
Rayer was all over the Internet, too. Newsgroups popped up everywhere in every language about Sun. Someone created a Facebook account, Instagram, and Twitter for Sun, which really made him happy. Someone else developed a website called www.sundeservesabreakeveryday.com. People on TikTok were making up dance moves with hip-hop song lyrics about Sun! There were even some country songs about Rayer's upcoming long-deserved holiday.



Mrs. Wumble invited Rayer to visit our classroom. He was very shy at first, but then he had a great time telling stories to my class.

Meanwhile, Rayer visited his parents. According to Rayer, stars live a very long time.

All Sun's family members were very happy Rayer was finally able to get away from his famous, busy job.

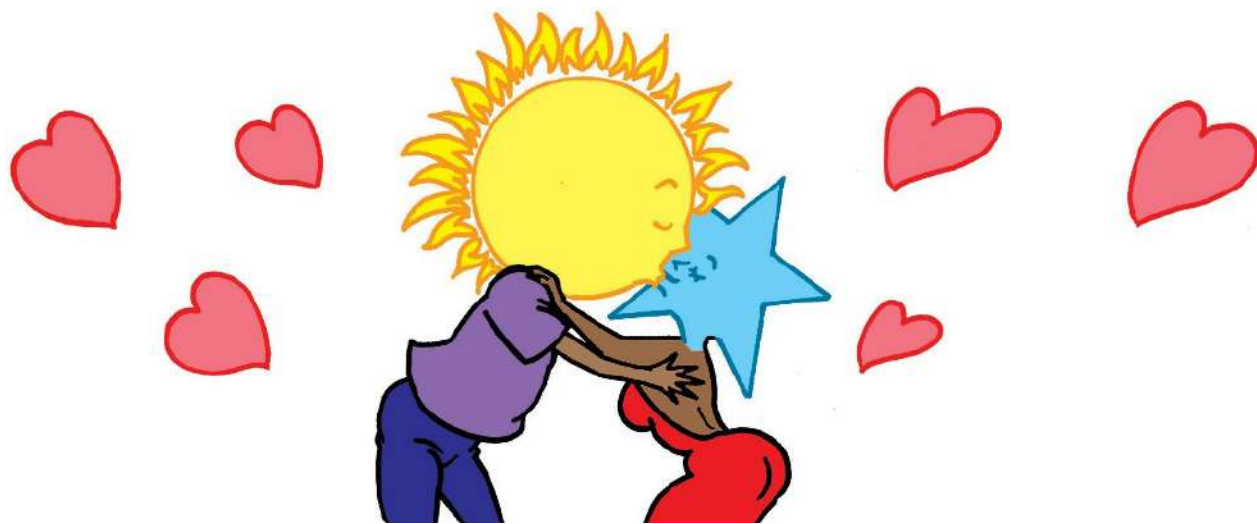


Rayer was also thrilled to visit all of the many places that he had only previously been able to see from high up in the sky. Sun visited San Francisco's famous Golden Gate Bridge and New York's fabulous Brooklyn Bridge. Rayer also visited the Taj Mahal, the pyramids of Egypt, and the Great Wall of China. Rayer was even able to take in a few movies and get in some exercise at a popular gym.

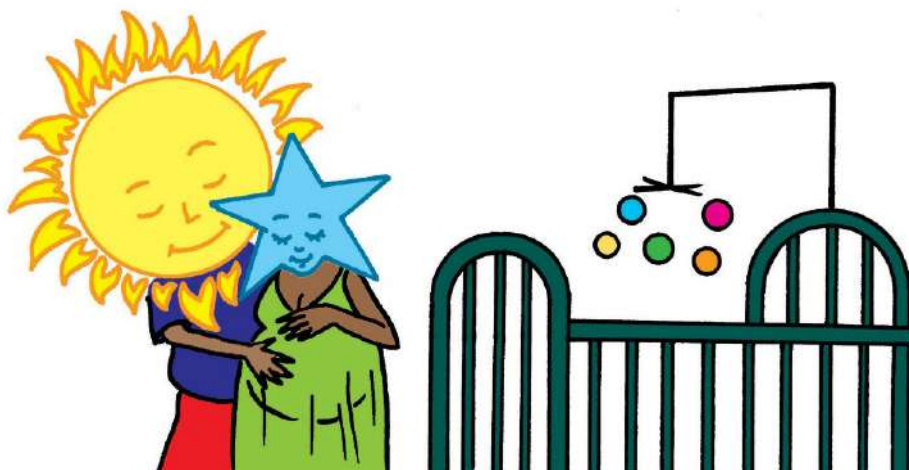
Mostly on his vacations, Rayer just kicked back and relaxed. Sun loved going to the beach. Sun really loved just being able to sleep in very, very late.



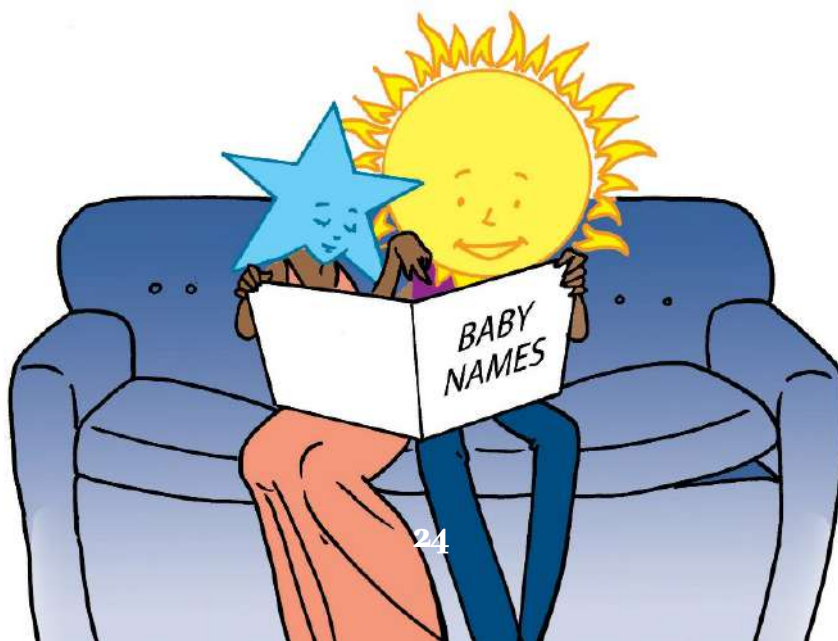
Once when Rayer was home visiting with his parents, they introduced him to some starlet named Ramira. The two had so much in common that Rayer and Ramira began spending his vacations together.

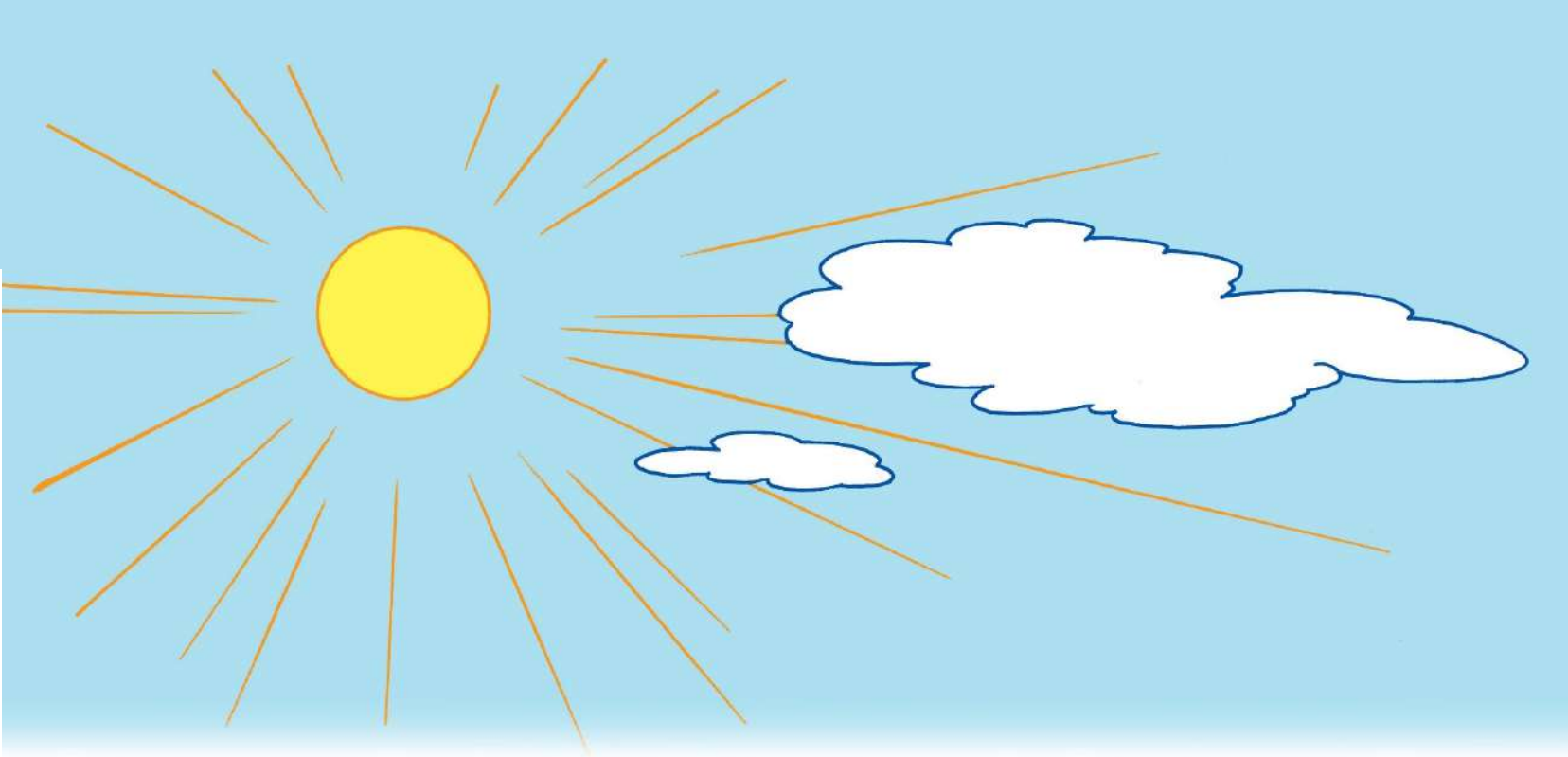


Rayer and Ramira decided to get married and are soon expecting their first star-child. Rayer told me that he and Ramira have decided to name their kid Raaji if it is a boy. They don't have a name yet if it is a girl.



I am so, so happy for Rayer and so relieved I could help him get his **holiday**.





Did you enjoy my story?
SORRY. Not one single word of it is true.
Wait. You *really*, thought our Sun requested a HOLIDAY?

