

“All Summer in a Day,” by Ray Bradbury

The following passage is from a short story about a group of children whose families have moved to Venus to live in an underground colony. It is always raining on Venus -- except for one hour every seven years, when the sun comes out.

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.

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

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.

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

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

"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

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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.	30
"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"	
Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.	35
"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"	
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.	40
"Nothing, nothing!"	
"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they know, the sun..."	43

Questions:

- 1) How would you describe Margot's personality to someone who has never met her? Explain in two to three sentences, using examples from the text.

- 2) Refer back to lines 1 - 4, reproduced for you here: *"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."*

How does the author use language or word choice to give the reader a sense that Margot has changed since she came to Venus? Explain in three to four sentences.

- 3) Refer back to lines 40-41, reproduced for you here: *"They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. 'Nothing, nothing!' "*

What do these characters understand now? What has changed? Explain in two to three sentences.

- 4) In a clear, well-written, formal paragraph, connect what Margot has experienced in this passage to something that has happened to you in your life **or** to something others are experiencing in the world today. Be specific in making connections to your life/others/the world.