

“The Sun Who Became Human”

By: Lauren Foster

The Sun. Oh, where would we be without The Sun? The essential source for our warmth and the uncaster of rainy days. The symbolism of both hope and clarity. Showing us that life thrives. When there is not one cloud in the sky, The Sun becomes its clearest. A permission granted from Unknown to frolic and play. Little boys stomping and playing on basketball courts. Little girls sitting in the grass fiddling with the flowers. Oh, how The Sun loved flowers. Especially the specific yellow one from a little girl.

Sunflower Girl wore a yellow dress identical to the flower, and the smile beaming on her face was louder than The Sun itself. The little girl was always accompanied by a boy older than her. Someone who was a guardian of some type. He and she would plant the flower in the ground, which allowed The Sun to use its abilities to help it grow. The two of them would show up every two weeks to plant another flower, similar to its counterpart, until they created a small field of sunflowers.

“Oh! And we can put another one there, and another one over there, and then a bunch over here until we have a bajillion all over the place!” Sunflower Girl exclaimed, pointing in various directions. Her guardian laughed in mirth from her big dreams.

“I guess soon you’ll want to go on a journey all over the globe and plant sunflowers.” He raised his eyebrows and stroked his chin in exaggerated thought.

Sunflower Girl gasped as her eyes sparkled in child wonder and glee, “Could we really?!”

He chortled, “We’ll see. Now, come on! We have to get going.”

“Okay,” she dragged out, slouching herself wanting to stay longer. However, before she and her guardian would leave, she would turn to The Sun and say, “Thank you for growing my beautiful sunflowers, and thank you for being bright and beautiful. Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

Oh, how this made The Sun smile. Oh, how this made The Sun shine brighter. And the brighter The Sun became, the hungrier its desire got: to one day, for one singular day, be able touch down on Earth and be...human.

Then, The Sun would rest and sit in the vacuum of space until morning. The humans it watched every day would rest as well and an overwhelming sense of loneliness became inevitable. Oh, how The Sun dreaded the night. It left it wanting, more so craving for, its time to rise and alert its beloved humans to awaken. An alert for Unknown to approve for the day's activities that the humans hunger for. Hunger...could Unknown ease The Sun's hunger to be human? To somehow feel what humans feel? To walk like humans walk? To live the way humans live? Unknown sees and knows all...but to what extent? Is the line drawn when it comes to its planets and cosmos?

Am I just a star amongst the billions of stars? The Sun thought.

It thought and thought until it could not do anything else but cease the pondering.

While The Moon illuminated the world with Night, The Sun summoned Unknown.

“What is it that you have summoned me for, Sun?” Unknown asked in its godly voice.

“Oh, how I love the human world. Their vibrant energy mimicking mine, the children, the workers, the ones protecting Mother Nature. It is simply mesmerizing and beautiful.” The Sun smiled and radiated, yet there is a hint of a dark undertone within its speech.

“Yet you hold back a sense of want,” Unknown exposed. The Sun sighed and looked back down on Earth, “what is your want, Sun?”

“I want a life like those beneath me. I bring them warmth and light, and they are all so happy to see my presence, and yet I could not be more alone. My want is to become them, experience the wonders of their world. To experience their human ways. Why give warmth and life if I cannot feel it for myself?” The Sun ranted to Unknown. It stood still, building suspense in the blank atmosphere.

“So be it. I acquire all of my creations to be content and satisfied. Just know this, everything is not what it seems down there. There is life, and there is tragedy. You must control your human emotions when I show their true ways. Heed my warning, and you shall be granted with this wish.”

The Sun looked down dreamily at Earth, and when it tried to look back to Unknown, loneliness enveloped the vacuum slightly.

Minutes can seem like hours in space, which is why it was undetermined *when* the miracle happened. Nonetheless, *how* it happened lacked a surprise. The Sun felt its ball form alter as it began to descend towards Earth. Starlights and asteroids united for the creation of a beautiful moment, and The Sun was soon a meteorite. Or maybe something more extravagant than a meteorite: a fusion of love, passion, want, anticipation, and most importantly...joy. Joy that would grace Earth with her first human touch. Her first human smile. Her first true feeling of human joy.

Earth at night was still, quiet, and at peace. Small night creatures, both hidden in bushes and moving in cars, were the only ones making noise. Beside that, the quiet was eerily calming. Nonetheless, a rambunctiously luminous orb in the form of a shell broke Earth's silence. The meteorite The Sun became had formed into that orb and inside, she slept. She slept alongside the rest of the Earth, waiting to awaken in this familiar yet new world. Earth, the inhibitor of The Sun's beloved humans, sensed her and instantaneously broke her out, eager to witness her journey on its terrain. The orb shattered, but not in a way to disrupt Earth's meditation; in a way where when it shattered, it formed small specks of golden glitter. Now a feminine human being, she stepped out of her orb naked and free as she pressed her human feet onto something damp with gravel. Something her humans called a street. She outstretched her arms as her eyes fluttered open. She could always see, but the vision that changed from blurry to clarity was something that made her smile. She felt her fingers touch her face as she gasped with awe. Her light, soft chuckle rose into a crescendo, continuing to discover her new shape, until joyful squeals and laughter erupted out of her.

"I'M HUMAN!" She cheered, "I'M HUMAN, I'M HUMAN, I'M HUMAN!"

Although her current naked body was new to her, she danced with bliss. She hopped around in celebration. Celebration of humanity, life, and freedom.

Morning arrived, and clouds forged the once blue sky. They clumped together to make an awful gray to make Earth's appearance murky. Sun's humans were not bothered by the change in weather, so they proceeded hustling through the day. Predicting the weather, her humans crowded under the metallic shade structures attached to different buildings. I believe they called it a pavilion. While the world was still asleep, Sun ventured more of the world she had been watching for years. Yet, in doing so, she concluded she would need to cover herself in order to blend in. As much as she adored humans, she wasn't sure how they would react to her in her true form, so she found herself in a off-white shirt and blue jeans. She bounced happily yet walked simultaneously with the masses headed towards various destinations.

Just then, the clumped clouds released cathartic tears while others would just call it rain. Sun stood out by stopping in the crowd and stepping into the empty street to admire her former home up above. She was finally able to thoroughly enjoy this rain from Earth. The crowd adapted to Sun's abruptness as they continued to march forward robotically. Similar to the sky's release of rain, Sun laughed up kindred liquid from her eyes she was not aware of the name. Nonetheless, it brought her joy as she began to laugh and dance in the rain.

The rain poured heavier as if responding to Sun's frivolous laughter. The crowd proceeded walking while others stared, quietly judged her. Regardless and blissfully, Sun bathed herself in the rain and embraced her humanity more and more. She giggled like an innocent child, but her naivety got the better of her. The headlights of an incoming car and its blaring horn both startled and excited Sun, but before she could exude her reaction, a fast force pushed her out of the way onto the adjacent sidewalk. Sun panted with relief and exhilaration before turning to see who saved her.

"Man, you should really be careful. Standing in the street like that. The weather has been so inconsistent these days." His voice reminded her of Jupiter's buttery calm voice amongst the stars. Although it was a couple of planets away from her, Jupiter always had a strong magnetic field that would captivate. This man reminded her of Jupiter if it were human alongside her. The man's crisp yet messy hair was like Jupiter's spiral design, and his solitary figure brought out by the jacket he was currently wearing was like Jupiter's sturdy mass of ten earths. His slightly tinted complexion reminded her of Jupiter's primary look of brown, white, yellow, and orange. However, in Sun's eyes, this man was different yet all too familiar.

“Do I know you?” Sun asked softly, unable to look away from his luminous eyes. The man eyed her with confusion as Sun looked harder for recognition. Then, it hit her. The guardian with Sunflower Girl. The girl who shined brighter than Sun ever could. She could not help but burst into a big smile.

“I don’t believe so, but it seems as if you do.” He chuckled before standing up. He then extended his hand to prop Sun up. Her smile caused Sunflower Girl’s guardian to smile as well.

“Are you okay? Is everything okay?” He asked with concern.

“Everything is perfect. It’s just...such a beautiful day.” Sun smiled and faced the sky as the rain lightened up.

“Despite the rain I’m guessing.”

“Actually, the rain makes the world all the more beautiful and wondrous. It’s amazing how you see things differently through it. How, even though the clouds cry, it seems relieving for them to share their emotions to us on Earth. And the fact that humans accept that unquestionably is simply amazing.” Sun continued to look at the sky as he stared at her with amazement.

“What’s your name?” He asked.

Sun looked back at him with a soft glow in her eyes. “I’m not too sure yet.”

“What does that mean?” He said with a chortle.

“It means...what is your name?”

He stared into Sun’s eyes, enjoying standing in the rain with her. He never blinked the whole time looking at her as he was deeply intrigued with the mystery of this strange yet beautiful girl.

“Timothy. My name is Timothy.” The way he introduced his name caused Sun to melt.

“Timothy.” Sun repeated in a voice that reciprocated her shivers down his spine. Timothy awkwardly laughed off the shivers before prompting an idea.

“Come on, let’s go find some place dry.” Timothy smiled as he covered Sun with his jacket and guided her to an inside place.

Timothy guided Sun to what humans call a coffee shop. She held onto his jacket for comfort as she was dumbfounded and amazed at one of the prime examples of what humans can make into a business. Although she had seen coffee trees from above, she had no idea they were desired

amongst humans. Sun stood in the middle of the shop as Timothy gently swayed her beside him towards the counter.

“Let’s get you a coffee to warm you up.” Timothy said, oblivious to the irony.

“I’ve never had coffee before!” Sun smiled and jumped with child-like joy. Timothy didn’t understand, but he was smiling too. He couldn’t help it. He knew he should be interrogating this strange yet beautiful woman as to who she was and where she came from, but he believed in doing so, it would crush her joyous spirit.

“Well there’s always a first for everything.” Timothy tittered as the barista handed him two coffees. He and Sun walked to a table by the window while Sun stared out of it in awe. Vaguely, despite the muggy atmosphere outside, she was able to see her first ever reflection.

Is that...me? Sun thought.

Answering her own question, she straightened her back, so she could see her full reflection. Simultaneously, her heart filled with indescribable joyfulness and broke out into another wide smile.

“Hey, do you wanna sit?” Timothy noticed her hesitance, but his suggestion alerted her as she prompted herself to awkwardly sit down. Her squirmish feet kicking accidentally touched Timothy’s ankle, sending a small yet uncontrollable sensation all over his body.

“So...um...where are you from?” Timothy asked. Sun stopped fiddling around in her seat to fully focus on him. She remained silent as she messed with her coffee cup, observant of Timothy’s curious face. She had to think of a human-like answer.

“I’m from here.” Sun looked into Timothy’s eyes and improvised. He looked at her in disbelief.

“I’m new around here, but I’m from here.” Sun animated with her hands, believing it would make her story more believable... it didn’t.

Nonetheless, Timothy was already inexplicably charmed by this stranger and oddly wanted to remain in her shining presence. Simply thinking about the unnaturally elated feeling he had been feeling with this woman for a single hour made him release a small chuckle. Sun chuckled along with him although not fully understanding.

“You remind me of my sister,” Timothy confessed, causing Sun to give him her undivided attention, “Her name is Leila. She’s 8 years old and she loves flowers. Her favorite flower is a sunflower. Something about how each petal was reminiscent of the sun made her smile. So, one

day, she came and asked me if I could help her plant a field of sunflowers in a place where the sun would hit them just right. And help them grow. So we did for a few months now and haven't stopped since."

This was all Sun needed to know in order to confirm the put pieces together. Timothy went on to explain Leila to Sun, but all she could think about is that she could actually meet Sunflower Girl. Or Leila. She was within arms reach of granting Leila something she had always wanted to give to her. A hug and a thank you.

"Your sister sounds amazing," Sun responded, "I would love to meet her."

Timothy fell eerily quiet, and his content face changed into slight discomfort. His hands hurriedly ran into his pant pockets, and his right leg started to discreetly jump. Little did Sun know that Timothy was uncomfortable.

"Um...I'm not too sure about that." Timothy answered.

"Why not?" Sun asked.

"It's a little complicated to understand."

Sun tilted her head in confusion to Timothy's vagueness, but he was sticking to it.

"Why does it have to be complicated?" Sun asked again.

Timothy shifted in his chair not giving an answer as he looked at Sun with subtle sadness. She picked up on his expression and mimicked it, even though she did not have a full grasp on it. Seeing her shine dim in the slightest, Timothy initiated an idea:

"Hey, why don't we get out of here and go somewhere else. I can show you somewhere in this city that has a special place in my heart."

Sun's shine returned almost immediately as she vigorously nodded her head with the biggest grin. Timothy then stood up and extended his hand as an offer. He looked at her with kindness and with an intention that she was in good hands. A wave of small shivers vibrated down Sun's spine as she grabbed Timothy's hand.

"Lead the way then, Timothy." Sun replied with a toothy smile. Timothy released a soft laugh, vowing to never let her hand go.

The clouds kept being colored gray while a calming unnoticeable rumble crossed the sky. A sign of maybe more rain and even a thunderstorm. Timothy and Sun continued holding hands palm-to-palm without even realizing it as he led her to an area where the pathway led to a brick church with colorful stained glass doors and windows. From the front of the church to where they were standing, white tents stood side by side one across from the other. The area was busy with people in bright purple shirts with the words “Pentacle Baptist Church” on them carrying boxes with the wind pushing them and the tents. There were also little kids with identical shirts running and playing around aimlessly, releasing giddy laughter and fresh sweat. Sun watched in amazement and flecks of her very sunlight sparkled in her eyes.

“What is this place?” Sun asked lively, letting go of Timothy’s hand to explore. Timothy shoved his hands in his pockets walking up beside Sun.

“This is an event my church’s having today. Obviously, the weather tried to get them to reschedule, but these people are a special kind of stubborn. But also very passionate.” Timothy explained with a defeated smile shaking off his nerves.

Sun looked at Timothy and then back at the activity happening before her very eyes. She could not help but feel full delight as she was being showcased the beauty and unity of humanity. The boisterous laughs of men heavy lifting and finishing setting up, ladies resting and fanning themselves while simultaneously exchanging gossip, and the children continuing their imaginative adventures and chalk-drawn games. Sun could no longer contain her excitement as she ran to join a group of kids playing hopscotch.

Timothy lifted his arm to stop her, but once he noticed the children fully accepting Sun and saw them playing together, his heart melted as his arm lowered back to his side. Parents of the children walked up to investigate and question this strange kiddy woman playing alongside their children. Nonetheless, judgment did not lead to begrudgement; in fact, Sun brought over the parents one by one to play with their children as each one began to reminisce about themselves when they were young. Once all of the parents were playing with their kids, Sun bounced back over to Timothy whose mouth was wide open releasing a voluminous laugh of jubilation. Sun joined in as a beautiful dueted laugh exuded between her and Timothy. He then stopped laughing but continued smiling at the parents and children playing together while Sun did the same but instead of looking back, she kept looking at Timothy. She continued to study him as something similar to her warmth had begun to flap its wings inside her. Just then, before she could figure

out what she was feeling, a calm but alarm-like ring chimed from the church. The children skipped on to the building with their parents following them. More and more of the other church people flooded in to blend with the following crowd going to the church.

“What’s happening?” Sun asked, turning back toward Timothy.

“It’s time for our church service.” Timothy replied and immediately grabbed Sun’s hand again, both making their way towards the brick building.

“I have never been to a church service before!” Sun gleamed brighter and smiled wider once more. Timothy laughed.

“Just when I think that smile couldn’t get any bigger.” Timothy said with an even bigger smile. Sun felt the warmth inside flapping again. Was this what humans called love? Suddenly nothing else mattered, and whatever was in front of her and Timothy, she refused to look away from him.

Inside the church, the pews were packed with people in the purple shirts from young to old, but Timothy managed to find an open seat near the front. Sun explored this foreign yet sacred place as her eyes swelled with marvel. She embodied the essence of an incessant toddler refusing stillness as she veered over from the focal point. Timothy laughed silently at Sun’s impatience and gained control of the hyperactive ball of fire keeping him company, veering her the right way. Casual murmurs filled the church as more people flooded in. Regular church goers approached Timothy with a warm welcome while he simultaneously introduced Sun. She was on the edge of her seat nearly bouncing as she jumped and hugged the church goers. They stumbled back in surprise but returned her direct affection before taking their seats. Timothy looked at Sun’s luminous spirit shining even on a cloudy day and refused to look away from her.

The service began, and the choir was singing yet another song giving honor and glory to the most high. Unknown was a being with many names because of the many religious practices the humans performed to show worship. Soon after the last choir selection, the pastor stood tall in the pulpit and began his sermon. Sun felt something different in this worship; it was personal, honest, joyful, and tearful. And it all ended with a strange sense of relief. Although Unknown

brought her into existence, and she is aware of its presence, Sun never knew it was something of an experience or connection like this.

The congregation continued their praises to Unknown. Their unified hands reached up to the imitation of light from the sun through the stained glass. Although she had not been human for a long time, she had grown to love who she was becoming and had grown to understand that love. She believed she was beautiful inside and out but mainly because of the human world she had surrounded herself in. Looking up at the stained glass depicting the humans' ideation of Unknown, Sun felt small droplets of water welling in her eyes. Were these what the humans called tears? Weren't tears only for sadness and depressions? *No*, Sun thought, *these are for emotions. Beautiful, human emotions.* She did not need a reflection to know she was beautiful. She smiled through the tears as she slowly lifted her hands along with the rest of the church. The light from the stained glass windows shined in the church despite the clouds. Timothy faced Sun who was fully immersed in the service, and he grinned in full amazement and wonder.

Weeks went by, and Sun and Timothy would go to church every Sunday and even stay a little after to speak with the pastor. She has learned so much about Unknown's vastness and greatness that it evoked fear and excitement in her. Human fear and excitement. Timothy would look at Sun's radiant engagement and smile. The way she would actively listen to every word, every syllable that escaped Pastor's mouth whether it was a sermon or not. The way she shined against the stained glass windows. In Timothy's eyes, it was indeed a marvelous sight to behold.

Timothy continued to show Sun the world, including his own. Although the rain persisted, they still saw the beauty in the world glistening from the cracked streets to the dew-brimmed trees. In Timothy's eyes, that's when she truly sparkled. He stole mystical moments to just hold her hand and admire her, looking deeply into her eyes. Capturing her. Sun didn't fully understand the evolving human emotion that was growing within her, but she reveled in it. Felt it wholly within her pores. Because she, too, knew in sharing each other's worlds, what they had was real. At least, the good parts of their worlds.

One Sunday afternoon, something was weighing on Sun. She had a request but began grasping that it was a sensitive topic. As they walked side-by-side out of the church, Timothy acknowledged the shift in her energy.

“What’s on your mind?” Timothy stood in front of her. Sun was intrigued by his sharp intuition. If he could be honest with his feelings, then Sun concluded she should follow suit.

“Well, I know this might be an insensitive, outlandish request, but...I would like to finally meet your sister.”

Timothy stilled as an invisible shiver Sun couldn’t catch went down his spine, “You want to meet Leila?”

“If it’s not any trouble,” Sun squirmed, “I mean, I hear you talk about her with Pastor and your family briefly before you change the subject. Just from bits and pieces I heard, she sounds wonderful. A true ray of sunshine.” Sun caught herself from rambling on when she saw Timothy fidget in subtlety. She shrunk and dimmed, unknowingly breaking Timothy’s heart. He let out a small huff of air through his nostrils.

“She definitely is...and more. If only you knew.” He trailed off at the end. His back was turned away from Sun, and she immediately stood beside him, waiting for an answer.

Her heart pulsed with a shock wave again, but this time, she fixated on his hand. She wanted his palm pasted to hers, exchanging raw and ethereal solar energy. Ironic, isn’t it? As if reading her mind, he grabbed her hand.

“Okay.” Timothy was looking directly at the Sun.

“Okay?” Sun gleamed so bright a small light peeked through rain clouds. Timothy looked up at the sky and softly chuckled, leading the way to Sunflower Girl. However, little did Sun know, the radiant ball of walking sunshine would sadly be succumbed by dark clouds too.

The building they walked into was frigid and white. The women were in white buttoned smocks with matching white hats with a red plus. The men wore long white robes that stopped just above the knee for the taller ones. The Sun almost hypothesized if this was what they called...Antarctica? There were no penguins or polar bears seen except for the smiling animal stickers on the wall leading to the rooms in the children’s area. Sun was in awe of all the new

discoveries. Oh, how it fascinated her! Yet, she couldn't help but feel Timothy's energy shift. Something was off. He walked slower and faster at the same time, seemingly eager but withholding.

Finally, they stopped at a wide glass window peering into a child's room. All it took was a glance at the child to make Sun's vibrant, awestruck smile drop.

"This...is my sister." Timothy looked down, digging his hands in his pockets. An announcement of Leila's identity wasn't even needed. Even if she had no relation to Timothy, Sun would've known who Leila the Sunflower Girl was in a heartbeat. Sun always felt deeply connected to Sunflower Girl not only for her gifts and her flowers but for *her*. Her smile would shine brighter than the Sun some days, and she was never jealous. In fact, she admired it. She admired Leila, which is why seeing her unconscious with tubes in her body made the world freeze.

There was a nurse in the room checking vitals when she noticed Timothy and an extra visitor she hadn't seen before. *Probably his girlfriend*, she thought. *Bummer, another good one taken*. Timothy decided to face Sun's reaction, and when he did, he could almost hear both of their hearts breaking. All instinct, he held onto Sun's hand.

"Take all the time you need to process. I know, it's still a lot for me too," Timothy squeezed her hand tighter, "It's something I'll never get used to."

Sun remained silent and still as Timothy walked into the room.

"Hey Vanessa," he solemnly greeted the nurse, "how is she today?"

"Hey, Tim. Unfortunately, the same as before. The tumor is really aggressive and doesn't show signs of slowing down. Not even a little..." Vanessa sighed looking at Leila.

As she continued explaining and updating, Sun had finally entered, eyes only on Leila. All of the voices around her were muffled as she walked closer. For the first time since she'd been human, her steps were heavy. Her hands clenched to the hospital bed rail as her pupils scattered back and forth. What could have happened for this sweet little girl to be like this? *Why* did it have to happen to her?

"So we're just trying to see what happens after tonight, and—"

"What happened?" The Sun darkened simultaneously with the outside. Lightning and thunder rumbled softly across the sky. Vanessa and Timothy eyed the tense back of Sun with

concern. Even Vanessa caught on that Sun had changed from the moment she came in the hospital with wonder to now. Vanessa went to speak, but Timothy stopped her.

“It’s better if she heard it from me.” He whispered. He walked to Sun and silently stood beside her. He couldn’t help but look with his peripheral at Sun, and when he did, he recognized the look well: Worried. Confused. Devastated. Heartbroken. Angry.

“She, uh, was diagnosed with cancer two years ago and the tumor is very aggressive. The doctors and my family have been fighting like hell for her, but at this point, we’re stretching out the inevitable.” Timothy choked up some tears but coughed it out to compose his strength. Sun could feel his body tense, and without looking at him, her eyes started to water. She was crying like how she was at church. However, this was different. A storm of overwhelming emotions festered within her. All she kept asking is...why?

“But, she’s going to be okay, right?” Sun tried to speak in optimism, but her face couldn’t express it. She was being weighed down by the reality of emotions. How complex, how brain-scrambling...how painful.

“I really wish she could, but sometimes, life hands us cards we’re forced to play, even if it isn’t us directly.” Timothy attempted to grab her hand, but Sun jerked it away insulted.

“How could you say that? Why would you say that?!” Sun’s voice rose. The incoming storm outside and inside of her started merging into one. Her heart and insides were set ablaze, much more fiery than her core ever could be. So much ablaze she dashed out of the hospital room until eventually, she was out of the hospital.

She wandered aimlessly through the storm, visions unclear. Hail drops stung her skin like acid and blurred her tears. The lightning and thunder grew more tumultuous as she held her head from starting a fire. Yet, there was no need for that. In the midst of the storm, there were car accidents resulting in totaled cars, masked bandits breaking glass windows of stores, and all kinds of mayhem. The world was going mad in the darkness. A world without light. Some scattered debris pierced Sun’s skin, and the cut made her drip out drops of red liquid.

What was this red liquid complimenting the red-orange flames? The dominating emotions and chaos Sun was experiencing was something she wouldn’t wish on her worst enemy. And yet, this red liquid had awakened something else within her. Something sinister. Something vengeful. Was this how humans truly lived? In war, calamity, and mayhem? Is this what they decided to become with free will? I guess, she thought, life seemed simpler and clearer from above. Life on

Earth seemed like a dream, especially meeting Sunflower Girl, but upon touching the scorched concrete, the wrecked rear view vision zoomed in high definition unlike any of the galaxies Sun witnessed. Her chest began heaving with an unfamiliar dreading umbrage making her unfocused eyes that more foggy. Finally, after the rollercoaster of emotions and uncertainty stilled for a moment, her seething eyes landed on the church. She remembered Pastor usually stayed late on Sundays. Suddenly, all of those unpleasant feelings returned in full force.

Timothy rushed out of the hospital intent on finding her. He knew this would all be overwhelming to take in and he knew he didn't make it any better. Regardless, he wanted to make right with her and tell her the truth. The whole truth. He searched vicariously through the simmering fires and protests that grew violent ending in tear gas. Timothy couldn't believe it himself. No matter how desensitized he was to it, the way the world currently stood and how people act in it still broke his heart. He could only imagine the mental turmoil she was in.

Suddenly, when a lightning bolt trekked the sky, his eyes landed on the church. Something unknown called him to go there, and he listened. He got to the church doors and before entering, he saw her through the small window holding something up at the altar. However, the longer he looked, Timothy realized it wasn't something; it was someone.

"Stop!" Timothy burst through the doors. Sun faced him, eyes and hair burning with crackling flames made from the depths of her soul. She held Pastor up in the air by his tie, unbothered by his quiet fight to live. Once he caught the searing look in her eyes, Timothy stopped in the middle of the aisle yet held his gaze, standing his ground.

"He lied to me. He lies to everyone who comes here every week to hear the gospel!" Sun barked, "You say all we have to do is believe and have faith, and we are gifted eternal life. You said all we have to do is be good. Yet, there is unforgiving devastation in the world. War, murder, sickness. You made me believe this world was a beautiful place, but you lied!" She held up Pastor higher and tighter, choking him more relentlessly.

"Look," Timothy stepped up one inch, talking with ease and gentleness, "I understand your frustration. I know it didn't seem like it, but I get frustrated too. It's all so overwhelming and complicated that it's become so normal."

“What about your sister? You call what she’s going through normal? She doesn’t deserve that! A sweet, innocent girl like her doesn’t deserve that. It’s not fair!” Sun’s flames were beginning to die from incoming tears.

“You’re right. It’s not fair. But sometimes, life is unfair and we aren’t the ones in control. We’re messy and flawed, and nine times out of ten, the good suffers more than the bad.” Timothy said.

“It’s not right. None of this is right. And you have people like *him*,” Sun hissed towards Pastor, “who give folks a false sense of security, protection, and hope. Who is protecting them now? What is protecting them?!” Sun’s face was drenched in tears while looking up at the ceiling toward Unknown. She cried out, “Why have you done this to me?!”

“Because you asked for it,” Timothy blurted. Sun shot him a bewildered look and froze, loosening her grip on Pastor’s tie. Timothy was planted in his stillness, “You so desperately wanted to experience life on earth and be amongst the humans you give light and warmth to everyday. You loved us so much you wanted to be us. You sacrificed being a celestial, pivotal element in the universe for something as menial yet complex as humanity.”

“You knew? All this time?” Sun was in utter shock.

“I always knew. From the very moment you came out of that orb. I heard how joyous you were being human and although I couldn’t fathom the literal Sun talking and dancing, I knew who you were. I knew it when I saved you from that car that day. Every moment I held your hand. Every time you lit up the stained glass on these very windows in the midst of it raining for 40 days and nights. I knew it from the start, Sun.” Timothy smiled, stepping closer and closer to the altar at each sentence. Sun went to speak, but rusted words drying out her throat inhibited her.

“And the thing about Pastor,” Timothy pointed in his direction, “he is meant to teach and enlighten us. Even though he teaches us the way to eternal life as well as the way to remain at peace, he still doesn’t have all the answers to this messed up world.”

“It’s true.” Pastor croaked out. Sun didn’t even realize how much of her grip had loosened after Timothy’s reveal. Then out of nowhere, Timothy giggled.

“Of course you don’t have a name. It’s because you never needed one. You are beyond this trivial world, and your greatness has no need to be dulled down for anything or anyone. Being human isn’t what it’s cracked up to be, and I can only imagine being envious from the outside looking in.”

“It’s just...I was so lonely. And yet, I’m succumbed with all these...feelings,” Sun sniffed, “I never knew it would be anything like this. So perplexing. So limitless yet limited at the same time.”

Timothy was at the base of the small stairs leading to the front of the pulpit, still holding his unblinking gaze.

“I think...I just wanted to be with Leila...and you.” Sun’s expression was soft and sad. Timothy let out a quiet sigh of relief with a small, solemn smile. Finally, she fully released Pastor, and after the blistering storm she endured, she broke down.

Pastor passed by Timothy with a shoulder touch, signaling that he didn’t need to worry and he was okay. With that confirmation, Timothy ran to Sun and held her in his arms. Somehow, his presence in the midst of her vulnerability made her weep even more.

“It was so much easier in the sky,” Sun blubbered, sinking deeper into Timothy’s chest, face flushed with heat, “It was much simpler looking down and admiring. Both in want and envy. But I never thought...Sunflower Girl...Leila-”

“I know, I know.” Timothy whispered into her frizzy hair as he held back his own tears. Yet, a single drop managed to fall.

After a while, Sun finally lifted her head, and the world’s saturation darkened significantly. Maybe it was only as bright as she believed it was. Maybe she was the only one who could bring the brightness back into the world. To shine on the things that get lost in the darkness. To shine in ways humans can’t. She looked up at the ceiling once more, but this time, she could see the sky, space, the plants that circled her, and even Unknown. God. Such a sight of vastness would scare anyone who was small-minded enough, but as she looked upward, Timothy followed her gaze and stared in awe. As if, he too could see the true world through her eyes. How it should be.

The clouds departed, and the sky was a light gray with hints of blue. Despite the ferocious storm, the tree guarding the field of sunflowers stood just as tall, if not taller, than before. Timothy held onto the stem of a sunflower with both hands and climbed up the top of the hillside. He beheld the mighty tree protecting the field he and Leila had planted together, expressing his gratitude with a head bow and a smile.

“This is for you, Leila.” Timothy dug out a perfect spot in the middle of the field and planted the sunflower, which was the biggest one of all. He got the news a few days ago that Leila had passed, and the first thing he did was buy a sunflower. Once it was in the ground, it slightly drooped in shyness. That’s when The Sun began to rise, beaming with more radiance than before and returning a ray of colors in the sky. He knew he couldn’t look at The Sun directly, but he swore he could see her face and hear her smile in the rays.

The hillside with morning dew sparkled, changing from a dull green to a bright emerald. The tree leaves stretched open after a long slumber, and the tree and sunflowers swayed in rhythm with the wind. Leila’s sunflower rose up in boldness and pride, petals fluttering in Sun’s kisses.

“Well, I’ll be,” Timothy gleamed, letting out an awe-filled giddy laugh. He was now looking directly at The Sun, “you’ve really outdone yourself, Sun. Or should I say...Dawn.”

Dawn? The Sun thought, was that to be a name? My name?

As if he heard her, he winked and began walking off.

“Oh, and by the way,” Timothy halted and turned back to The Sun, “Make sure you take care of Leila for me, okay? She’s in a much happier place now.”

Oh I will Timothy! I promise I will keep her safe, The Sun exclaimed in thought as she watched his back descend from the hillside, and I promise to give you and everyone my light and warmth. For now I know what it is like to be you. But I wouldn’t trade my true self for anything. I love being able to give in a world that loves to take. So let me be your daily giver of light, happiness, and hope.

The Sun was fully in the sky as she watched the humans come out to play, work, and whatever else they decided to do. For it was their choice, and she knew a lot more about choices than the other stars. Yet, at the same time, she still knew nothing at all. All she knew for certain was that her heart, whether it be in the middle of the solar system or on the only planet with life, was pure and full of love to give.

She looked into Unknown. She could’ve asked so many questions about its aliases God, Bubba, Allah, and more. She could’ve cursed him for granting humans free will and allowing horrid things to happen. Or she could’ve simply asked why? Why was it so all-knowing, and wasn’t that even lonelier than she could’ve ever been? Why direct everyone and everything in riddles? Why was it so trusting that those who believe will blindly follow its instructions? Why did it grant her wish?

Yet all Dawn could say was, “Thank you.”