



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Sunshine and her siblings

Louise M. Alcott

There was a wise and old spirit named Mother Nature, who lived in a beautiful palace and had a multitude of children, whom she sometimes found difficult to control. As long as they obeyed her, everything went well, but when they misbehaved or bickered, everything was in chaos and problems arose.

Sunshine, the eldest girl, was a sweet creature, always good and a great comfort to her mother in all seasons. Southwind and Westwind were also kind girls, but Lightning, twin brother of Thunder, was very naughty and liked to play pranks. Snow, the fourth child, had a cold character.

Rain always cried and Eastwind was grumpy, Thunder and Hail grumbled and raged, and Northwind, the biggest of the boys, made so much noise and draft that everyone ran away from him, even though his healthy breath refreshed the world and blew away a lot of mischief.

"Dear children, I'm very tired and am going to take a nap, be good and do your work faithfully and wake me up in March," said Mother Nature one day in November, when she had finished her summer task and her resting time had come.

"Yes, Mama," said Sunshine, kissing her good night and tucking her in. "I will do my best to keep the girls busy and the boys calm. Sleep well, and I will call you for the spring work."

The old lady put on her nightcap and dozed off, while her brave daughter, after giving one last smile to the freezing world, began to spin diligently, to have an abundance of sunshine ready for the next summer.



"Now it's my turn, and I will cry as much as I want," said Rain, and streams of tears fell. His brother Eastwind started blowing, making everyone shiver with cold, and coughs, colds, fog, and mud made the world miserable. Sunshine begged them to stop and give her a chance now and then, but they wouldn't allow it, and everyone said that November was really acting up that year.

Fortunately, it was time for Northwind and his sister Snow to return from Iceland;

and from the moment the older brother let his harsh voice be heard, Eastwind and Rain fled, for they were a little afraid of him.

"What a mess they've made! We'll clean everything up nicely before Christmas arrives," said Northwind, drying up the mud, blowing away the mist, and preparing the world to be covered with Snow's beautiful downy blanket. Within a few days, the world looked beautiful, and Sunshine came out to perform her task, making the ice on the trees sparkle like diamonds, making the snowflakes shine like silver, and filling the blue sky with bright sunshine.



Then everyone was delighted; the bells rang cheerfully, the children rode on sleds and threw snowballs; Christmas trees had arrived, and all faces began to blush, as they do in no other time of the year.

"The Christmas holiday will be wonderful if I can keep those naughty boys in a good mood," said Sunshine. To prevent any danger from their misbehavior, she gave Rain and Eastwind pastries with poppy seeds, which put them to sleep like moles until the New Year came.

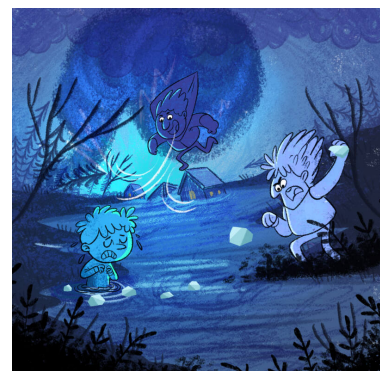
Snow played her pranks, but no one was annoyed because she looked so sweet; and Northwind remained so calm that the fresh air kept the cheeks rosy, the eyes sparkling, the lips smiling, and the hearts grateful and happy.

Sunshine was so happy that she came out to see the fun, and she smiled so warmly that a January thaw began.

Meanwhile, Rain and Eastwind had awakened and were very angry when they found out that they had been put to sleep with poppy seeds.

"We will make the Sun pay for this and turn everything upside down," they said. They asked Hail for help and got to work.

Rain emptied all his water buckets until the rivers swelled and the cities flooded. Snow on the hills melted and covered the fields with water, washing away railways, dragging houses, and drowning many poor people and animals. Hail threw his stones and East Wind howled and roared, making everything equally cold and bleak.



Poor Sun was at her wit's end; but she didn't want to wake her mother prematurely and tried to reign in her troublesome brothers on her own. West Wind helped her, because while Sun shone so sweetly that Rain had to stop pouring tears, West Wind pulled on the weather vanes until she overcame East Wind and he allowed her to blow for a while. He was out of breath and had to give in; so the "harsh weather" was now over. Sun remained faithfully shining and smiling until the ground was dry again. West Wind helped her with fresh breezes, and when March came around, everything looked much better.

"Now be sweet children, and let's get the spring cleaning done before Mother wakes up. I don't know what she'll say to those naughty boys, but I've done my best, and I hope she'll be satisfied," said Sun, when she finally sat down to rest.

All the siblings gathered around her and promised to be very sweet; for they loved her very much and regretted their misdeeds.

Each took turns to be of service to her. March was a very busy month, for all the winds blew in turn; even the gentle South Wind came home from afar to do her share of the work. Snow packed the rest of her downy blankets and carefully put them away. Rain only dropped a few soft showers, to make the buds swell and the grass green. Meanwhile, Sun spread out the golden light robes she had been spinning during the winter. Everyone worked so diligently that April found this part of the world beautiful. And when South Wind blew open the first hyacinths, Mother Nature smelled their scent and began to rub her eyes and wake up.



"Well, well! I must have been sleeping. Why didn't she wake me earlier? Oh, dearest child, I see that you tried to do my work and get everything in order for me," said the old lady, throwing her nightcap away and looking out the window at the budding spring world.

Then Sun came and sat on her mother's lap and told her all her trials. Some of them made Mother Nature laugh, while others made her frown.

"Darling, you did well. Come, call your brothers and sisters now, and we will celebrate our spring festival."

They all came and had a merry time; for, as everyone knows, April has all kinds of weather. So each of the children had their turn to show what they could do.

But all the children were happy now, because Spring had come. Mother Nature

had awakened again and now everything in the world would be alright!

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