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Mr. Sun's Birthday

Mary Graham Bonner

The children had seen old Mr. Sun going to bed. He had been red as a coal and enormous, filling half the horizon—and they wondered what he was up to.

Daddy explained.

Mr. Sun, it turned out, had thrown a birthday party that afternoon, and he had invited the gnomes. He asked them to come just before his bedtime.

"Well," said Peter Gnome, a bit indignantly, "you don't suppose we'd come after you were already in bed, do you?"

"Oh no," said Mr. Sun, grinning. "But the party must begin and end at exactly the right moment. I have my reasons."

The gnomes climbed to the top of a high hill to wait.

Mr. Sun was already shining—but as they watched, he began to glow brighter and redder, by the second, until he blazed like a great lamp of fire.

"You're looking magnificent, Mr. Sun!" the gnomes called out.

"So glad to hear it," said Mr. Sun. "For this is my birthday!"

"Your birthday?" The gnomes stared. "We never knew you had a birthday!"



For a moment Mr. Sun disappeared behind a purple cloud. "Oh dear," came his voice from behind it, "these little gnomes never knew I had a birthday!" He sounded quite wounded. But the gnomes coaxed him back out again, and he explained.

"When I put on my red robe—then it's my birthday. Simple, isn't it? And I have more than one a year. I have one whenever I feel strong and well and ready to work hard the next day—to warm the people and help the gardens grow. When I feel like that, I think I ought to celebrate. So I give a party.

"And everyone who looks at me in this robe is wishing me many happy

returns—whether they know it or not. Because what they're really hoping is that I'll wear it again."

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