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The Sun Dial

Mary Graham Bonner

"Without you," said the sun-dial to the sun, "I am nothing. You cast your shadow across my face, and people know what hour it is. I exist only because of you." The sun-dial paused. "And now let me tell you how many things have been named in your honour.

"The sunflower — golden and large and always turning toward you. The marigold and the morning glory, which open when you rise and close when you go to bed. The sunfish, round and fat, supposed to resemble you in shape."

"I had never heard that," said the sun, pleased.

"The sun-gem — that's the hummingbird, you know, all glittering colours in the light. Sun opals. Sun perch. Sun ferns."

"Extraordinary," beamed the sun.

"And sun-shades," continued the sun-dial.

"Ah," said the sun, less warmly. "People use those to keep me out of their eyes."

"Yes. I shouldn't have mentioned those. And — " the sun-dial hesitated — "there is also sun fever. And sunstroke."

The sun went quite red.

"Those are horrible things," he said tightly. "People suffer dreadfully."

"I am so sorry," said the sun-dial. "I grew careless."

"Yes," said the sun. "You did." But after a moment his colour softened. "No matter. I shall sleep and forget about it."

And the great red sun sank behind the hill. The sun-dial resolved, very firmly, never to make that mistake again.



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