

THE RISING SUN

By Janine Bouyssounouse

Brian laughed out loud as Tommy realized there was gum on his seat and it was stuck to his pants. "I'll see you after school. As a sixth grader, you should know not to laugh at other people's misfortunes." Mrs. McNiel launched at Brian as she helped Tommy.

After school, Brian let his history book open to a random page, only to find a note. It read, "Why did you do that to Tommy? Why don't you try being nice to people for a change? Watch the rising sun." Brian crumpled up the note and threw it in the bushes on his way home from school.

The next morning, Brian came to class late, as usual. Mrs. McNiel glared at him and waited during his daily ritual of tossing his lunch in the closet, slamming his books on the table and scraping his chair on the floor as he sat down. Brian looked up as Mrs. McNiel started to erase the sun that was drawn on the lower right corner of the blackboard.

At lunchtime, Brian opened his lunch bag to see another note. It read, "Why do you always come to class late and make so much noise? The teacher has to wait for you until you get settled before continuing. It is so rude. You could be so nice, if you only tried, Watch the rising sun." Brian decided he needed to know who was writing these notes.

After lunch, Brian walked in the door just as Mrs. McNiel asked Sue to erase the board. The only thing on the board was another picture of a sun, but this time it was a little higher on the board.

Brian offered to collect the papers in the afternoon. As he picked them up he studied each and every one, including the paper belonging to Mary, the new girl, to see if it matched the writing on the note. But he couldn't tell, because the notes were printed and these papers were written in cursive.

At the end of the day, Brian took his books out of his desk. A folded piece of paper fell on the floor. He stuffed the note in his pocket and ran out of class. He went to the bushes where he had thrown the first note to find it was still there. He took the other two notes out of his pocket and read them all. The last note read, "That was nice of you to offer to pick up the papers in class today. Are you going to be on time in school tomorrow? Watch the rising sun." Brian ran all the way home.

The next morning, Brian heard the morning bell. He ran to class to see if he could see who was writing the suns on the board. He was too late, the sun was already on the board and it was just a little bit higher than the last one.

When it was time for lunch, Brian ran out to the playground, to a tree near the classroom, so he could keep a watch on the room. He opened his lunch before he sat down. He

reached in and pulled out another note. It read, "I was really happy to see you arrive to class on time this morning. I knew you could do it, if you tried. It sure would be nice to walk home from school with you today. Watch the rising sun." Brian tossed his lunch on the ground and threw his hands up in the air.

Brian was back in the classroom before the lunch bell rang. But the sun was already on the chalkboard and this time it was almost at the top of the board. Brian went to his desk and put his head down on top of his folded arms. Brian and his dad lived above his dad's store, downtown. Brian didn't think anyone else lived downtown.

At the end of the day, Brian sat still at his desk and watched everyone else pack up their books and he watched them all get their coats and he watched them all leave. Brian put his head back down on his desk again and sighed very loudly. The sound of chalk on the board jerked his head up fast enough to give him whiplash. It was Mary, drawing the sun in the upper right corner of the chalkboard.

Brian stared as Mary turned and walked over to him. She handed him another note. Brian unfolded the piece of paper and read, "I live in the basement of the Bakery Shop, downtown. I'm so glad you started being nice in school, I was afraid to talk to you because you were so mean to everyone. Kids made fun of me at the last school I went to because I am hard of hearing and they think I speak funny. I was hoping we could be friends, now that we watched the sun rise together."

That day was the first of many days Brian and Mary walked back and forth to school together.

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1. What did Brian do at the beginning of the story to let us know he wasn't always the nicest person?
2. Do you think sixth grade students should know better than to do what Brian did? Why or why not?
3. How many notes did Brian receive?
4. What is a possible reason for Brian being late to school in the mornings?
5. Do you think Brian wanted to walk back and forth to school with someone? Why or why not?
6. What time of year do you think the story took place?
7. Who wrote all of the notes?
8. Write a different ending to the story.
9. Based on the new ending you just wrote for the story, should there be a new title to the story?

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Follow Up Questions And Answers

1. What did Brian do at the beginning of the story to let us know he wasn't always the nicest person? *He laughed at Tommy because he had gum on his seat and pants*
2. Do you think sixth grade students should know better than to do what Brian did? Why or why not? *This is an open ended answer and should reflect some thought on the subject.*
3. How many notes did Brian receive? *He received five notes including the last one Mary handed him in person.*
4. What is a possible reason for Brian being late to school in the mornings? *There is more than one possible answer for this question. One possible answer could be that he lives in a different part of town and it is hard to get to school in time. Another reason could be he is in charge of getting himself up in the morning and he isn't very good at this. Another one is that he just doesn't like getting up in the morning and does not try to get to school on time. There are other possible reasons.*
5. Do you think Brian wanted to walk back and forth to school with someone? Why or why not? *There is more than one possible answer for this question. He could want to walk to school with someone since he lives in a different part of town and there aren't any other kids. He also might be a kid who likes to be alone.*
6. What time of year do you think the story took place? *It could be fall, winter or spring depending on what part of the country the story takes place since the kids have coats to wear.*
7. Who wrote all of the notes? *Mary, the new girl, wrote the notes.*
8. Write a different ending to the story. *This is open ended, but should be an ending that has something to do with the story.*
9. Based on the new ending you just wrote for the story, should there be a new title to the story? *The original title is based on something that happens throughout the story. But it is possible that a surprise or spectacular ending could need a new title to hint at the ending.*