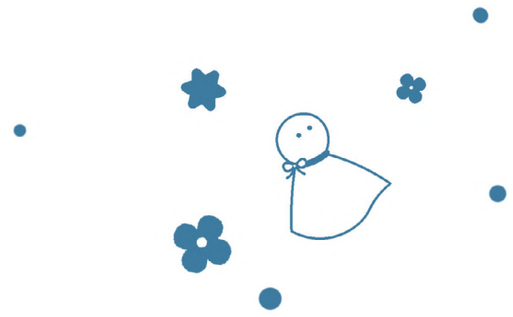
When the Stars Fall





* When the Stars Fall









It was raining outside.
As always, Rabbit sat in their usual spot, reading a book.

A book about sunny days.
It said that sunshine was one of the most wonderful things in the world - warm light, crisp air, and every living thing smiling beneath it.

But Rabbit and Cat still didn't quite understand why everyone thought so.
So, they decided to go outside.

It was raining.
They opened a bright red umbrella.

Because the umbrella was so eye-catching, everyone seemed to steal curious glances at them.

"Why are they carrying an umbrella when the sun is shining?"

They walked and walked, meeting many animals along the way.Piece by piece, Rabbit and Cat tried to imagine what a sunny day must feel like.



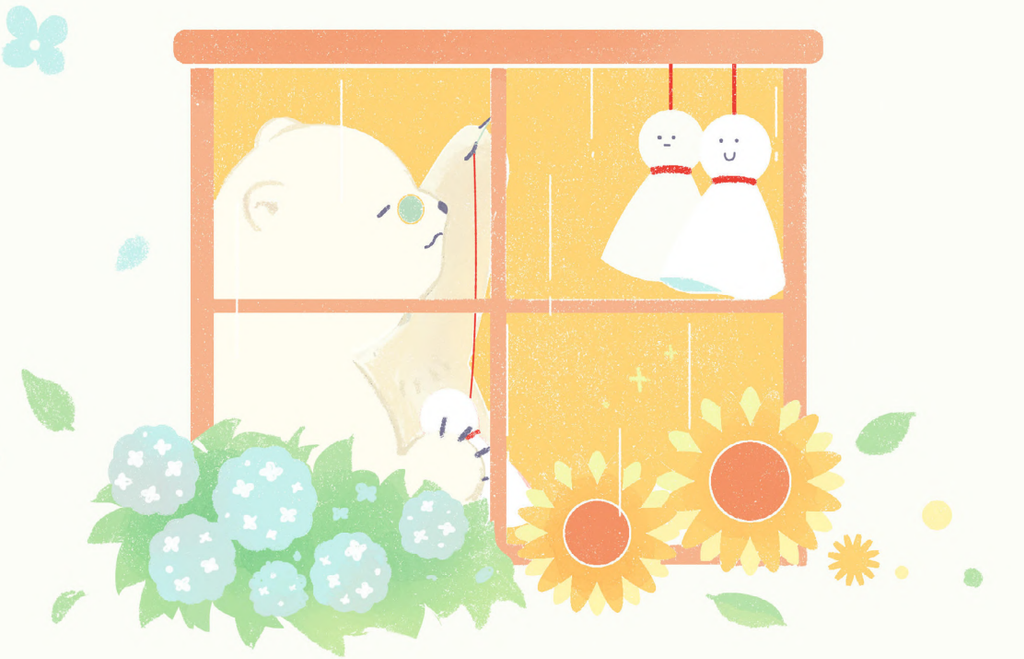
Then, they met an enthusiastic Dog.
"Maybe it's because you're always carrying an umbrella," he said, "that you can't see the sun at all!"

That... sounded like it made sense.

So, they kept walking - but this time, they put their umbrella away.
Raindrops fell on their fur - cold and sticky. The rain grew heavier and heavier, until they could barely see the way ahead.

But if this was what it took to find the sunshine, then that was okay.

A kind-hearted Bear shopkeeper welcomed them inside and handed them towels to dry off. Then came soft blankets and a mug of warm hot chocolate.



Oh... This was a shop that sold sunny dolls.
Every day, the kind-hearted Bear made new ones to place on the shelves.

Outside, the rain fell, drip-drop, drip-drop.

It was time for Rabbit and Cat to leave.
The soft blankets, the warm hot chocolate...
they wished they could stay just a little longer.

Bear placed a freshly made doll into their hands.



'Thank you,' they said.
'We won't forget you.'

This was where all the animals gathered to bask in the sunlight. And now, Rabbit and Cat felt like they belonged, too!



But... something still didn't feel right.

The sun was warm on their fur, but their hearts didn't feel as bright as they had imagined.

This wasn't quite like what everyone had described.

Strangely, they found themselves missing the feeling of holding an umbrella.



"If you have any questions, just ask!"
The animals welcomed their two new friends warmly.



"How can we enjoy the sunshine the way you do?"

"Why ask that? Why not just be yourself?"




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They were back where they had started.

Rabbit no longer felt like reading about sunny days. Instead, they walked into a dusty old room and rummaged through old boxes from the past.

Memories swirled like a snow globe, shimmering in their mind.



They saw their past self, curled up beneath the covers, trembling in the storm. They saw the moment they had stepped outside, umbrella in hand, searching for answers.

And they saw the warmth - however fleeting - of a moment of sunshine brought by the White Bear.



The sky began to rain stars.

So this is how far we've come.











Night had fallen.

The rain outside still hadn't stopped.

But now, that was okay.

