

Once upon a time there was a cold, dark
world, where a child dreamt of sunlight.

Once Upon a Time

A story by Marli Mesibov
Written for you



Are you wondering if this is a true story? All the best true stories begin this way, with once upon a time. And with a dream.

The child was 11. She could have been younger or older – she might have been just the age you are now.



She was brave, though sometimes, lying in her bed at night, she didn't think so. And she was talented and kind. She was a lot like you.



One day, as she pondered how to bring sunlight to the cold and dark, she saw another girl being bullied. Without thinking twice, she forgot how shy she felt and stood up to the bully.

Leave Her Alone!

she shouted!

...and he did. Just like that, the girl had a new friend.



Soon the girl had a few friends. She loved them very much, and they loved her. They loved her adventurous nature. They loved hiking with her and sharing books with her. They loved how she left a note for them if they were sad, and she made them special gifts on their birthdays.

When they were together, the girls saw the sun come out more often. Her friends were rays of sunshine in her life. Still, there were dark days. Days too cold to run and play outside, too dark to read or draw.



Everyone has days like this. And although God was with her and her friends and family were near, the girl was not happy on these days.

There is a world where the sun shines bright and hot, and snow is unheard of. Do you know this world? It's where you were born. You were born 16 years after this story began. (Or perhaps it only began a moment ago. It's hard to tell with stories.)



The girl we were talking about moved to this world, and made her dream come true. Every day was filled with sunshine, and she met wonderful people, who were rays of sunshine themselves.

One day, while walking in the light, the girl met a sphinx.

Sphinxes are tricky creatures. Not only do they ask riddles, they *are* riddles. They may look like your friend or teacher or a stranger on the street, but they are secretly a part of something greater, as you will soon see.





“Why are you so happy?” asked the Sphinx

“Because I am in a land of sunshine,” said the girl.

“Would you be happy in a desert?”

The girl thought for a moment. “No.”

“Ah,” said the sphinx, “then perhaps you misheard my question.”

“You asked why I was happy.”

“No, my child. I asked why you were in a land of sunshine.”

Then the girl understood. Sunshine, light, and happiness don’t live in one world or another. We are all in our own sunshine lands when we let ourselves be happy and make our dreams come true. The people we love are always rays of sunshine in our lives.

You are a ray of sunlight.

