INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Drab classroom. Sounds of continuous rain. Ten(-ish) children (including MARGOT, WILLIAM, PAULA, MICHAEL, LISA) push each other to look out a window. TEACHER tries to calm them down.

    TEACHER
    No pushing!

Teacher tries to break them apart, unsuccessfully. Teacher goes back to their desk.

    TEACHER (CONT’D)
    Okay, who wants to go next?

The children walk back to their seats.

    TEACHER (CONT’D)
    Margot?

MARGOT, pale and weak, reads out of her notebook.

    MARGOT
    I think the sun is a flower,
    That blooms for just an hour--

    TEACHER
    That’s beautiful!

    WILLIAM
    Aw, you didn’t write that!

    MARGOT
    I did. I did!

    TEACHER
    William!

    WILLIAM
    But, just because she came here to Venus five years ago, doesn’t mean she remembers what the sun looks like--

    TEACHER
    We can all learn from each other, William. The last time the sun came out on here for an hour was seven years ago.
    (beat)
    Okay, who wants to go next?

    PAULA
    When will the rain stop?
TEACHER
Soon. Who wants to tell me the
difference between Earth and Venus?

PAULA
Is the sun really like a lemon?

LISA
No, the sun is hot.

MICHAEL
Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?

TEACHER
Look, look; see for yourself!
The teacher and the children huddle to look out the window.

Rain doesn’t stop.

TEACHER, a little dejected, comes back to their desk.

TEACHER (CONT’D)
Okay, I will be right back.

Teacher leaves. The children run up to the window again.

PAULA
It’s stopping, it’s stopping!

LISA
Yes, yes!

MICHAEL
Where’s the teacher?

LISA
She’ll be back.

PAULA
She’d better hurry, we’ll miss it!

WILLIAM notices MARGOT looking out the window.

WILLIAM
What are you looking at?

Margot doesn’t say anything.

WILLIAM (CONT’D)
Speak when you’re spoken to.
He shoves her on the way back to his desk. Frail, MARGOT almost falls over but PAULA catches her.

PAULA
What was it like in Ohio? Are you really going back next year?

Margot shrugs.

LISA
What’s the sun really like?

MARGOT
It’s like a penny.

MICHAEL
No, it’s not!

MARGOT
It’s like a fire, in the stove.

WILLIAM
You’re lying, you don’t remember!

WILLIAM storms back to the window, shoves Margot to make space for himself.

WILLIAM (CONT’D)
Get away! What are you waiting for?

MARGOT looks out the window hopefully.

WILLIAM (CONT’D)
Well, don’t wait around here! You won’t see nothing!

He pushes her again. The rest of class is stunned.

WILLIAM (CONT’D)
Nothing! It was all a joke, wasn’t it?

He turns to the rest of the class. Some of them agree.

WILLIAM (CONT’D)
Nothing’s happening today, is it?

The rest of the class come to a realization and eventually agree with him.

MICHAEL
Nothing, nothing!
MARGOT
Oh, but-- but this is the day, the
scientists predict, they say, they
know, the sun--

WILLIAM
All a joke!

William grabs her by the arm

WILLIAM (CONT’D)
Hey, everyone, let’s put her in a
closet before the teacher comes!

MARGOT
No!

William, followed by Michael and Lisa and the rest of the
class pick Margot up and drag her to a closet. Paula tries to
protest. Michael and Lisa pushes Margot in and William slams
the door shut.

MARGOT (CONT’D)
Let me out!

PAULA
Let her out!

WILLIAM
This will teach her.

Margot bangs the door-

MARGOT
Let me out, William! Let me out.

Paula tries to open the door. Lisa blocks the way

LISA
It’s only for a few minutes.

MICHAEL
It’s just a little bit of fun.

WILLIAM
The sun isn’t really coming out and
she really needs to learn to stop
showing off.

PAULA
Guys, come on!

Margot’s banging dies down.
MARGOT
William, please let me out.

WILLIAM
Not until you’ve learned your lesson.

Margot stop banging. Sudden silence.

PAULA
Listen!

MICHAEL
What?

PAULA
No, listen.

The children realize that the rain has stopped. They stare out the window.

TEACHER rushes in and looks at their watch.

TEACHER
Ready, children?

CHILDREN
Yes!

TEACHER
Are we all here?

CHILDREN
Yes!

Teacher opens the door and the Children run out out.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM - DAY

The children run into the garden. It’s the color of rubber and ash.

The sun shines bright. The children take it in.

TEACHER
Now, don’t go too far. You’ve only two hours, you know. You wouldn’t want to get caught out!

TEACHER puts their arms out to take in the sun.
MICHAEL
Oh, it’s better that the sun lamps, isn’t it?

LISA
Much, much better!

Some children roll around on the “grass”. Some laugh. Some collect flowers.
Some take in a deep breath.
Teacher “bathes” in the sun.

Moments later---
Paula feels a drop of rain on her face.
Soon the others notice the rain.
Thunder startles everybody.

TEACHER
Okay, children, it’s time to go back in.

The children huddle to go back in.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY
The children wipe their feet. Sounds of rain.

LISA
Will it be seven more years?

TEACHER
Yes. Seven.

Paula cries out.

PAULA
Margot!

TEACHER
What?

PAULA
She’s still in the closet where we locked her.

TEACHER
(realizing)
Margot.
The children hang their heads in shame. Teacher, appalled at their own ignorance.

    WILLIAM
    Margot.

    TEACHER
    Well...?

No one moves.

    TEACHER (CONT'D)
    Go on...

William, followed by the rest of the class, walks slowly to the closet. The rain gets louder.

William slowly lifts up the latch. Only sounds of rain.

William unlocks the door and even more slowly lets Margot out.