

The background of the entire page is a dark, almost black, space. In the center, there is a brilliant, glowing sun. From the sun, numerous sharp, golden-yellow rays radiate outwards in all directions, creating a starburst effect. The rays are most intense near the sun and gradually fade as they extend towards the edges of the frame. The overall effect is one of intense light and energy.

# **SOLAR FLARES**

**BY ROBERT  
PRINS**

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Anita had heard many community discussions about global warming. Temperatures were rising and the number of deadly solar flares were increasing. Rumours were that someone had actually been killed by a solar flare. Others had felt the heat but had been able to escape its deadly rays as they fled indoors. Toni had been too slow. Her burned carcass had been discovered by a passerby a short time later.

Anita was working, but distracted. Looking out for solar flares, she wondered if the temperature around her was warming – or was it imagination? Would she recognise a solar flare if she saw one? Could she run fast enough to save herself? Or were they rumours without any truth?

Billy was having a marvellous time with his grandparents. Grandparents had food that his parents never let him have like sticky lollies that changed colour as they were sucked. Billy took the sweet out of his mouth to see the new colours and dropped it on the back path outside. He left it there. There were all sorts of things to explore and do. He discovered that the teeth on

his grandfather's wood saw went smooth and round when he tried to cut the steel legs off the dining room chair to fit under the coffee table. He made bright fluorescent shades on the television by pressing random buttons on the remote control. He discovered that the vivid marker pen in the pantry was perfect for sketching cars on the back of the couch.

Billy also learned that things looked bigger when you looked at them through the monocle his grandfather used to read his newspaper. Billy wandered around the house looking at things through the glass. It was fascinating! Outside he peered at everything he could see through the monocle. Ants had surrounded the sweet he had dropped earlier. They looked so big through the monocle!

Billy noticed a light on the ground near the ants. "What's that?" he wondered. As the monocle moved, the light moved. Slowly he twisted the monocle. The light shifted, focussed, and a small leaf suddenly burst into flame.

Billy had an idea. Adjusting the monocle, he made a wide beam of light and caught some ants in its beam. He slowly focussed the beam. The ants began to run.

Anita suddenly realised that it was not her imagination. She was caught in a solar flare without warning! The bright light was increasing, the heat was rising. She ran as fast as she could for the safety of home.

Billy chased the ant with the light from the monocle. The ant was staggering. He had almost caught it when it disappeared into a hole.

Anita dropped into the ant nest. Exhausted and overheated, she collapsed on the floor.

Above ground, an ant clamped its jaws on Billy's big toe. Billy shouted, the monocle dropped and smashed into tiny pieces, saving the world from more solar flares.

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While Anita worked and worried about global warming and solar flares, Billy ran rampant around his grandparent's house. Very soon their worlds would collide...

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