

December

1) Make a list of 6 things that are connected with December.

2) When does winter begin in your country?

3) What festivals do people celebrate in your country in December?

4) Do you know any other festivals/holidays that are celebrated in December?

5) Read the article and compare your answers.

TOTALLY

INAPPROPRIATE

VIDEO

ACTIVITIES

PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

December Solstice

The December solstice marks the shortest day in the Northern Hemisphere and the longest day in the Southern. Typically it happens on the 21st of December. On this day the Sun is at its lowest point in the sky.

In the Northern Hemisphere winter starts. In the Southern Hemisphere it is the beginning of summer.

Some people think that change in the seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter) is caused by the changing distance from the sun. That's not true for our planet.

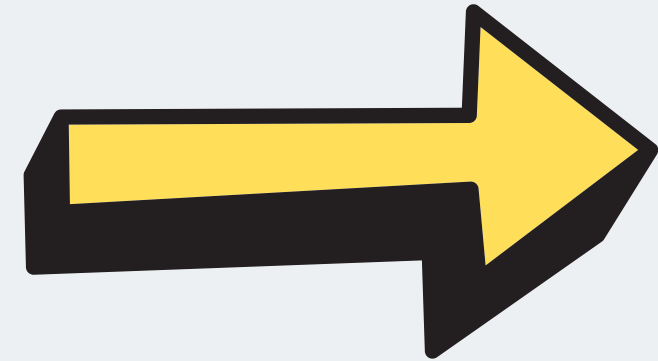
Earth has seasons because our planet's axis of rotation is tilted at an angle of 23.4 degrees relative to our orbital plane, that is, the plane of Earth's orbit around the Sun.



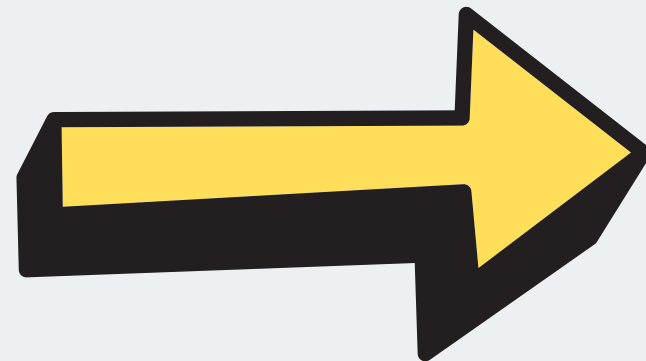
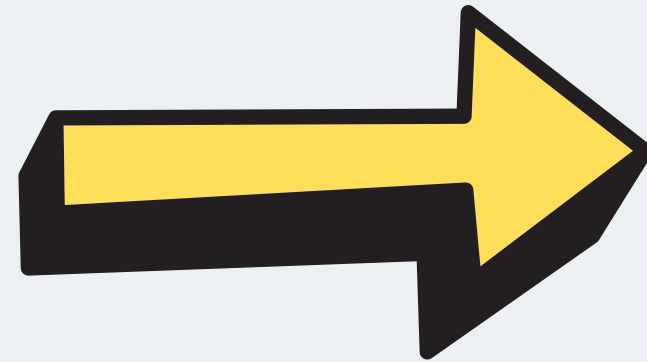
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December Solstice

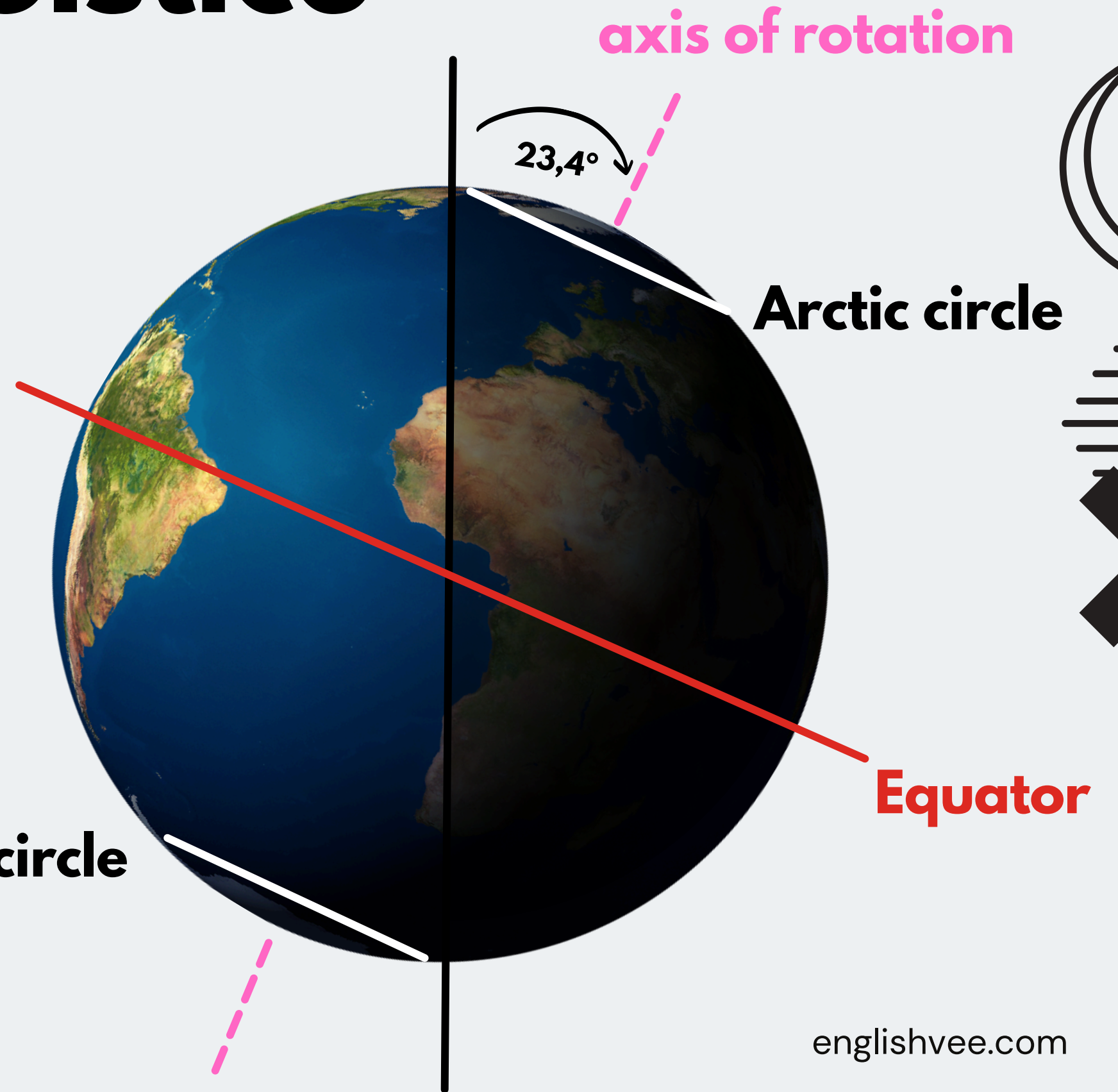
Sun



The Sun's rays



Antarctic circle



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Try to complete the text using the words from the article.

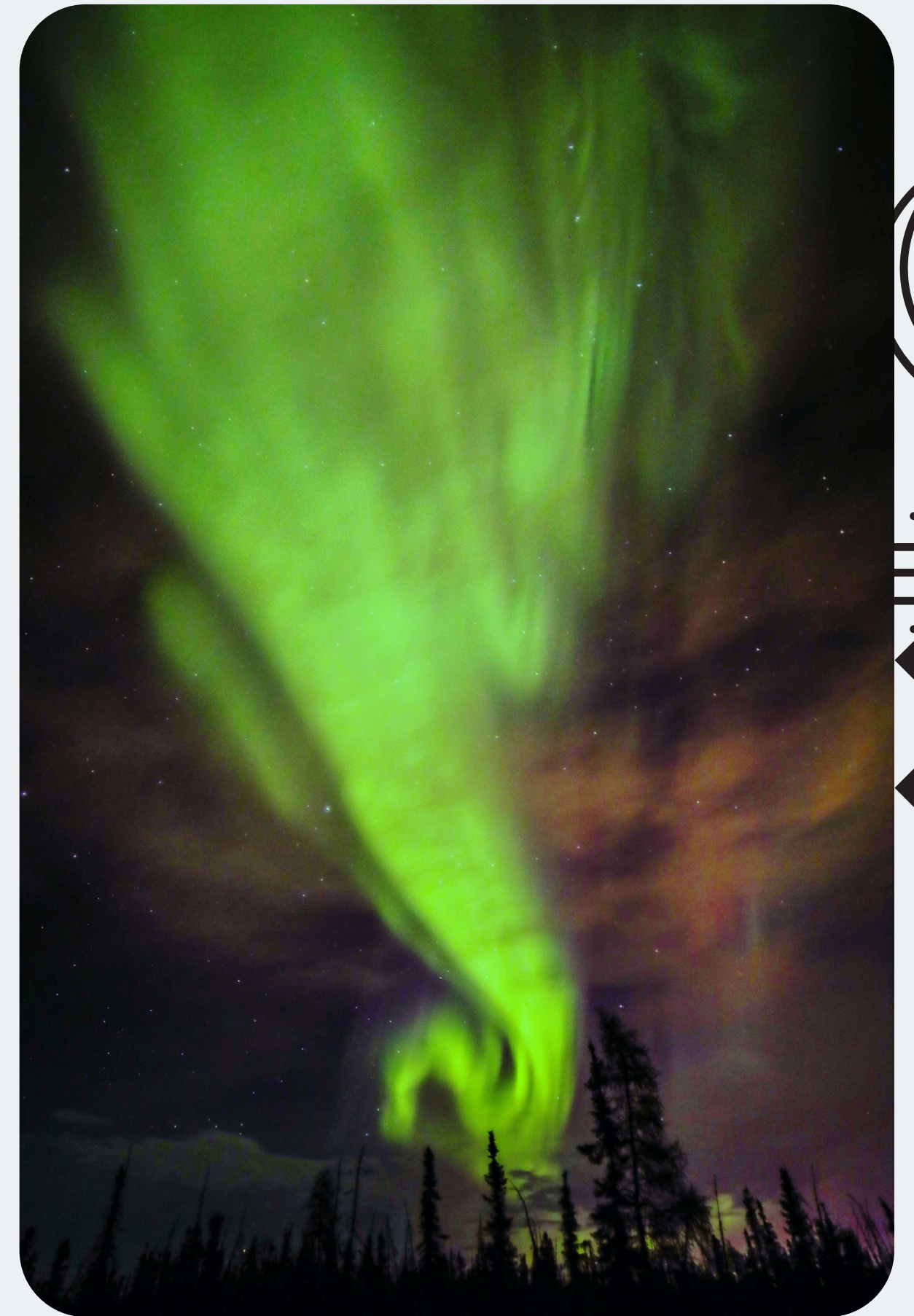
Earth's tilted (1) _____ causes the seasons. During the year, different parts of Earth get more light and heat from (2) _____ than others.

When the North Pole tilts toward the Sun, it's summer in the (3) _____. When the South Pole tilts toward the Sun, it's winter in the Northern Hemisphere.

The area around the North Pole called the (4) _____ doesn't get any sunlight for some time close to December solstice. This time is called the polar night.

(5) _____ is an imaginary line that divides Earth into the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

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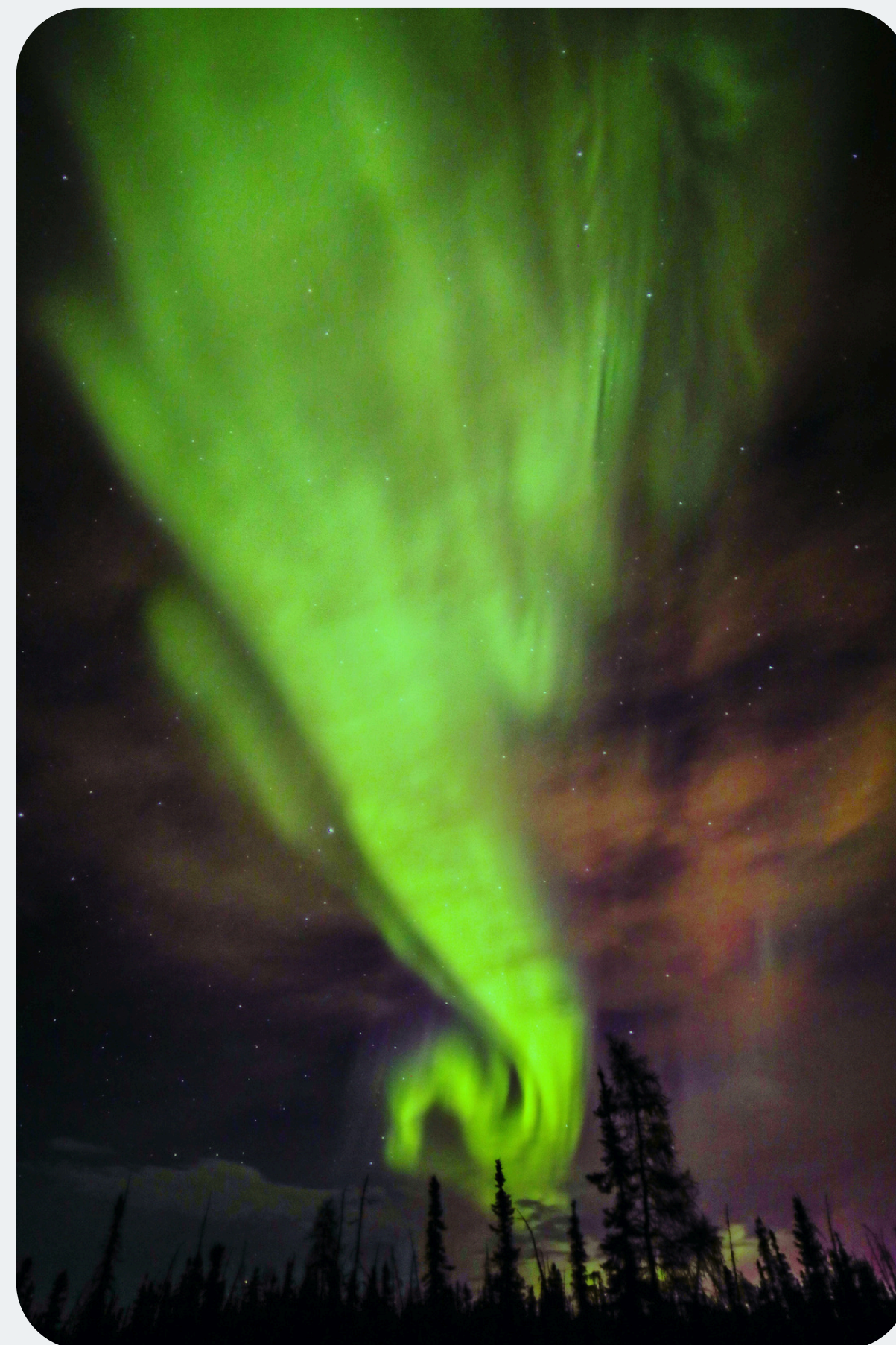
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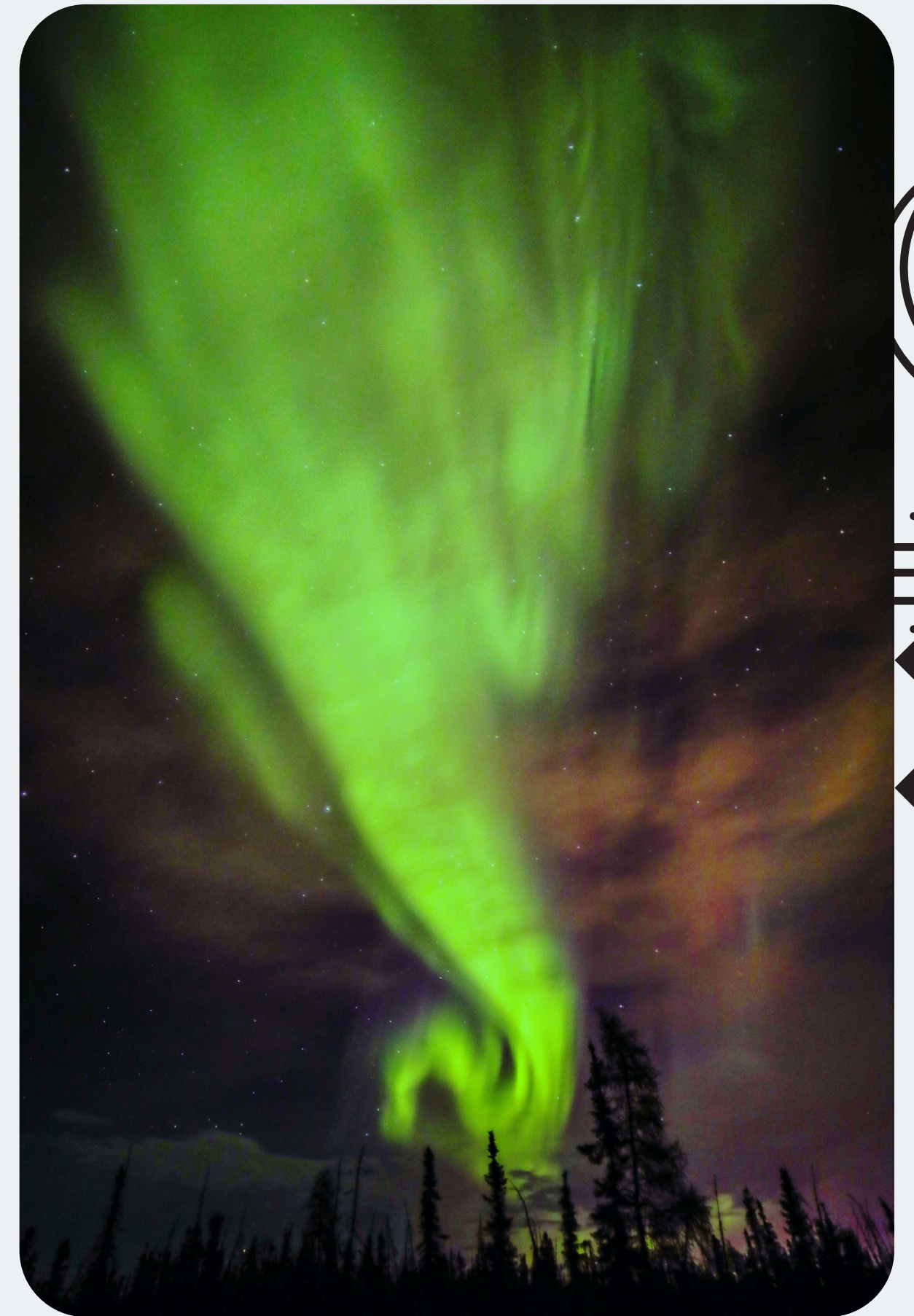
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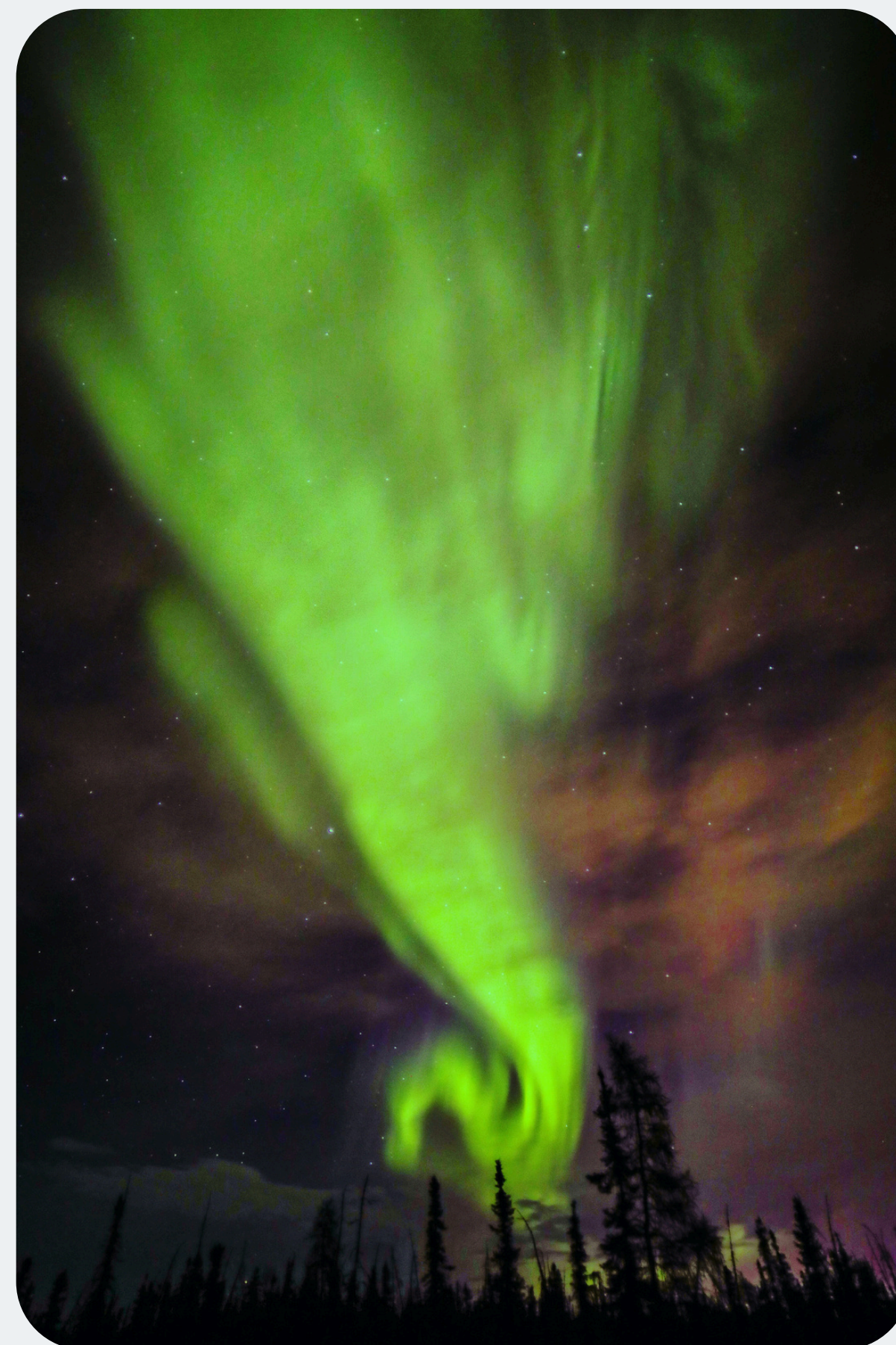
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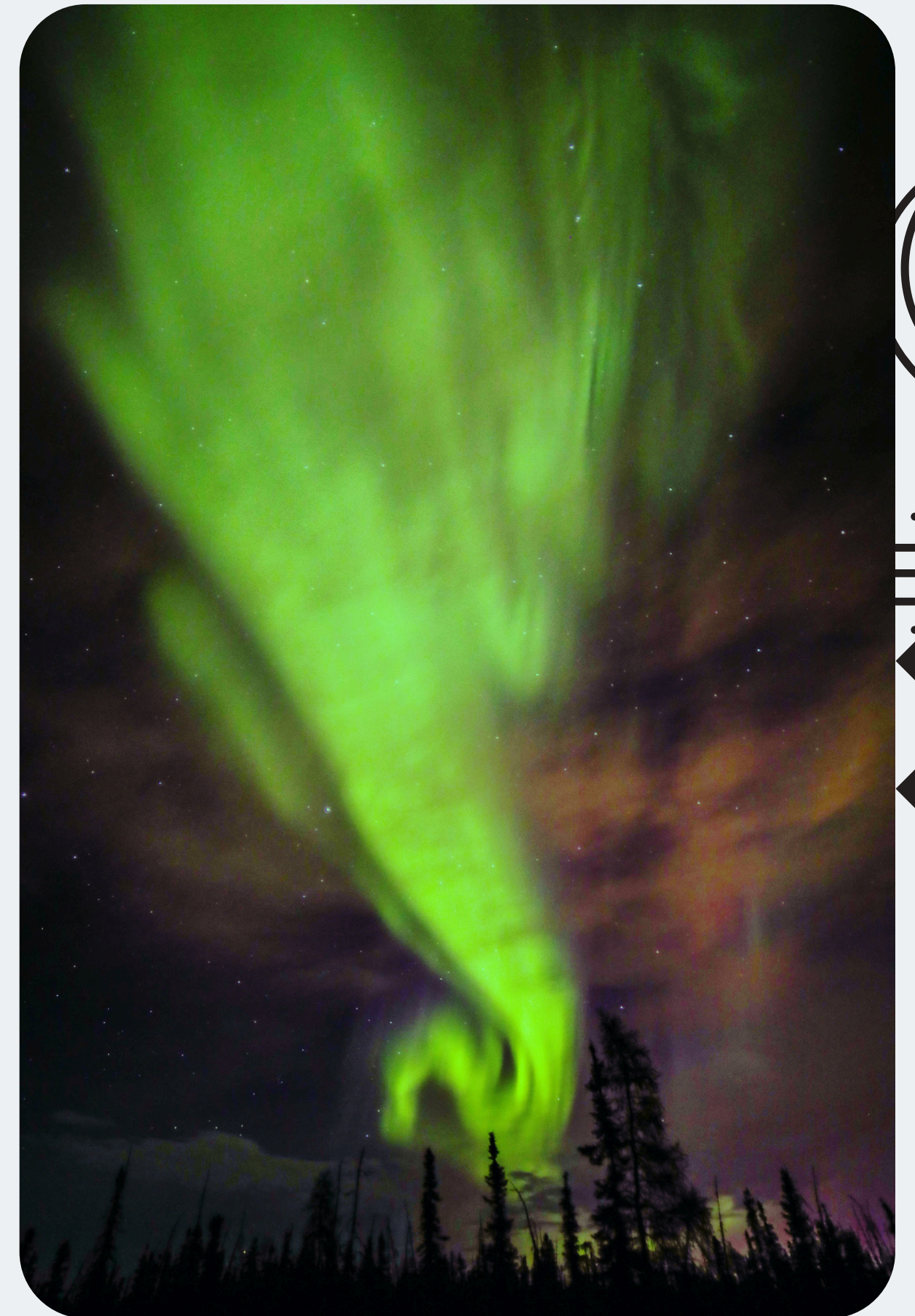
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The area around the North Pole called the (4) **Arctic circle** doesn't get any sunlight for some time close to December solstice. This time is called the polar night.

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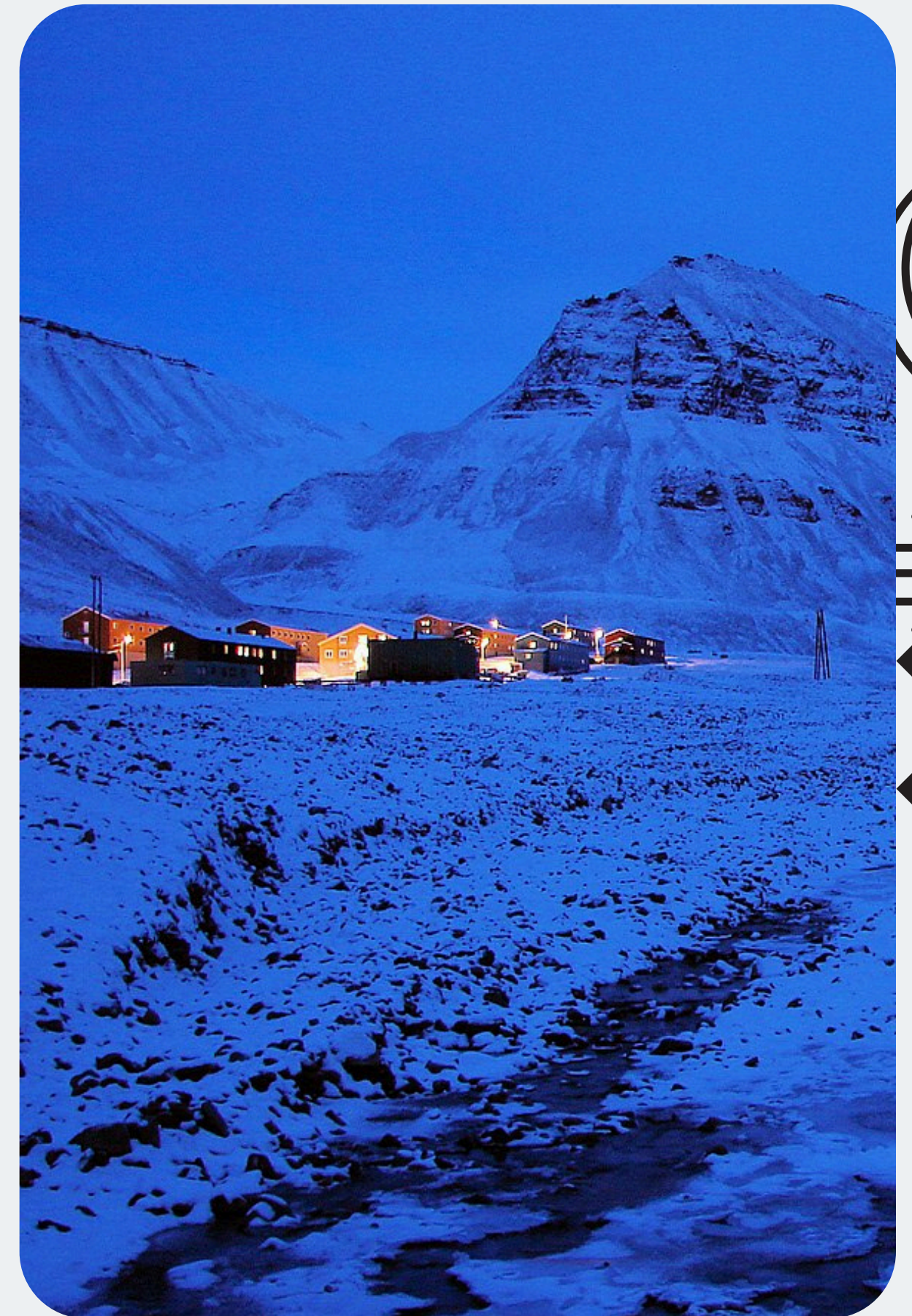
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(5) **The Equator** is an imaginary line that divides Earth into the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

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December Solstice Celebrations

Since ancient times, people all over the world have celebrated the longest night and the “return” of the Sun in many different ways.

Old solstice traditions have influenced holidays we celebrate now, such as Christmas and Hanukkah.

Here are some less popular solstice traditions from different parts of the world.

Make notes:

- 1) What do people do during December festivals?**
- 2) What do people eat during December festivals?**
- 3) Which festival do you like best?**



Dongzhi

China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea

Traditionally, the Dongzhi Festival is a time for the families to get together. People are making and eating of tangyuan (湯圓) balls of rice, which symbolize reunion.

Each family member gets at least one large tangyuan and a few small ones. The balls are occasionally pink or green.

They are cooked in a sweet or salty soup with both the ball and the soup served in one bowl.

They are sometimes served with rice wine .



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Chaomos

Pakistan

Chaomos or Chatarmas is the winter solstice festival celebrated for two weeks at winter solstice (Dec. 7-22) by the tiny Kalash tribe who live in Pakistan close to the Afghan border.

It is celebrated by young boys and girls having bonfires, eating dried fruits and dancing a lot.

Hogmanay

Scotland

Hogmanay is the Scots word for the last day of the old year.

There are many customs and celebrations connected with it. One of the most important is first-footing. It begins at midnight and involves being the first person to cross the doorstep of a friend or neighbour.

People often bring symbolic gifts such as salt, coal, shortbread, whisky, and black bun, a rich fruit cake. These gifts are believed to bring different kinds of good luck to the household.



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Yalda

**Azerbaijan
Afghanistan
Iraqi Kurdistan
Tajikistan
Turkey**

The longest and darkest night of the year is a time when friends and family get together to eat, drink and read poetry until after midnight in Yalda festival.

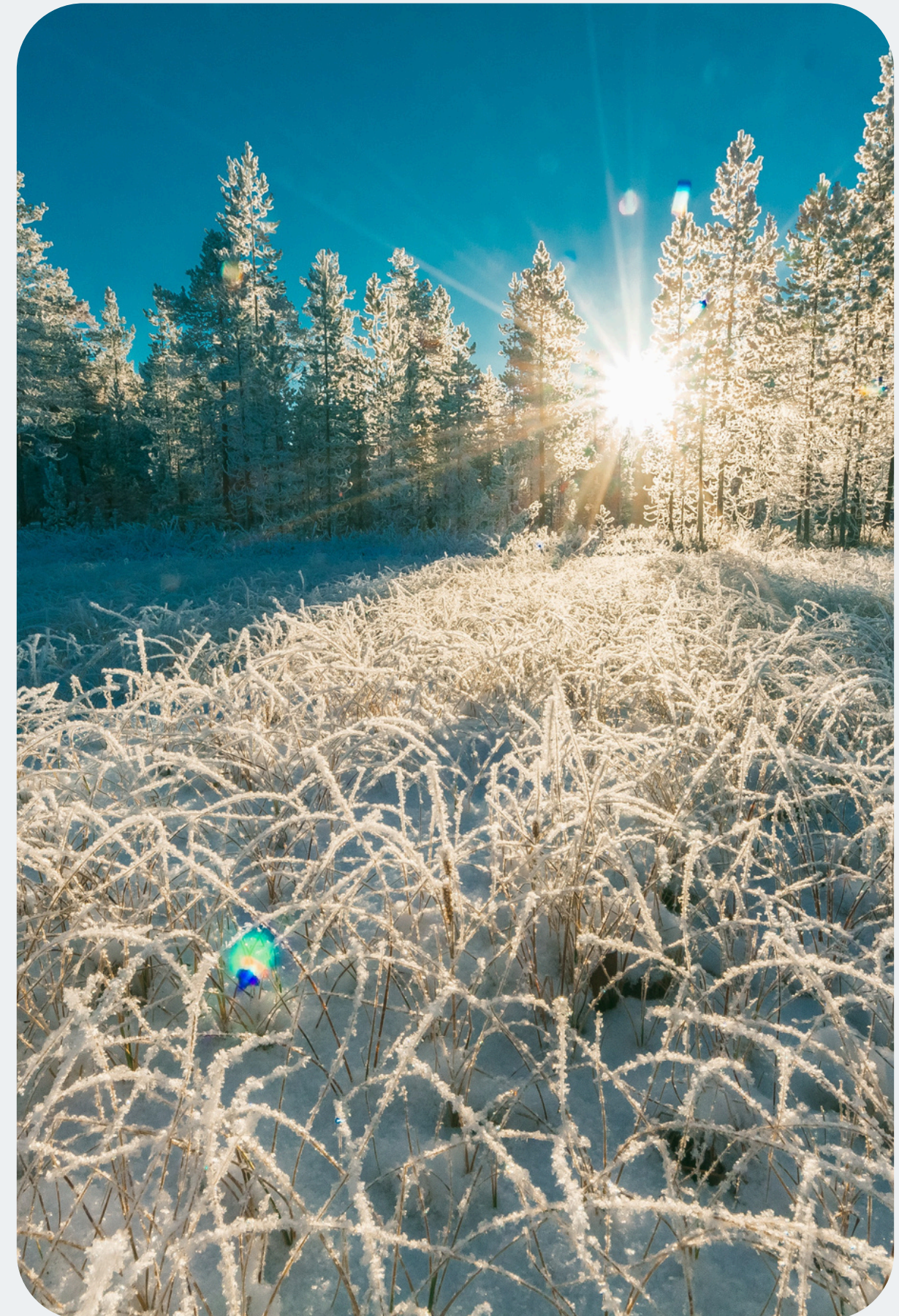
People eat fruits and nuts.

Pomegranates and watermelons are important. The red color in these fruits symbolizes life.

Find words that mean the following.

- 1. very old**
- 2. a sloping position or movement**
- 3. light and heat from the sun**
- 4. to affect**
- 5. coming back together**
- 6. 12 o'clock at night**
- 7. things you give to someone as a present**
- 8. a black substance used to make fires**
- 9. spring, summer, fall, winter**
- 10. the line between two countries**

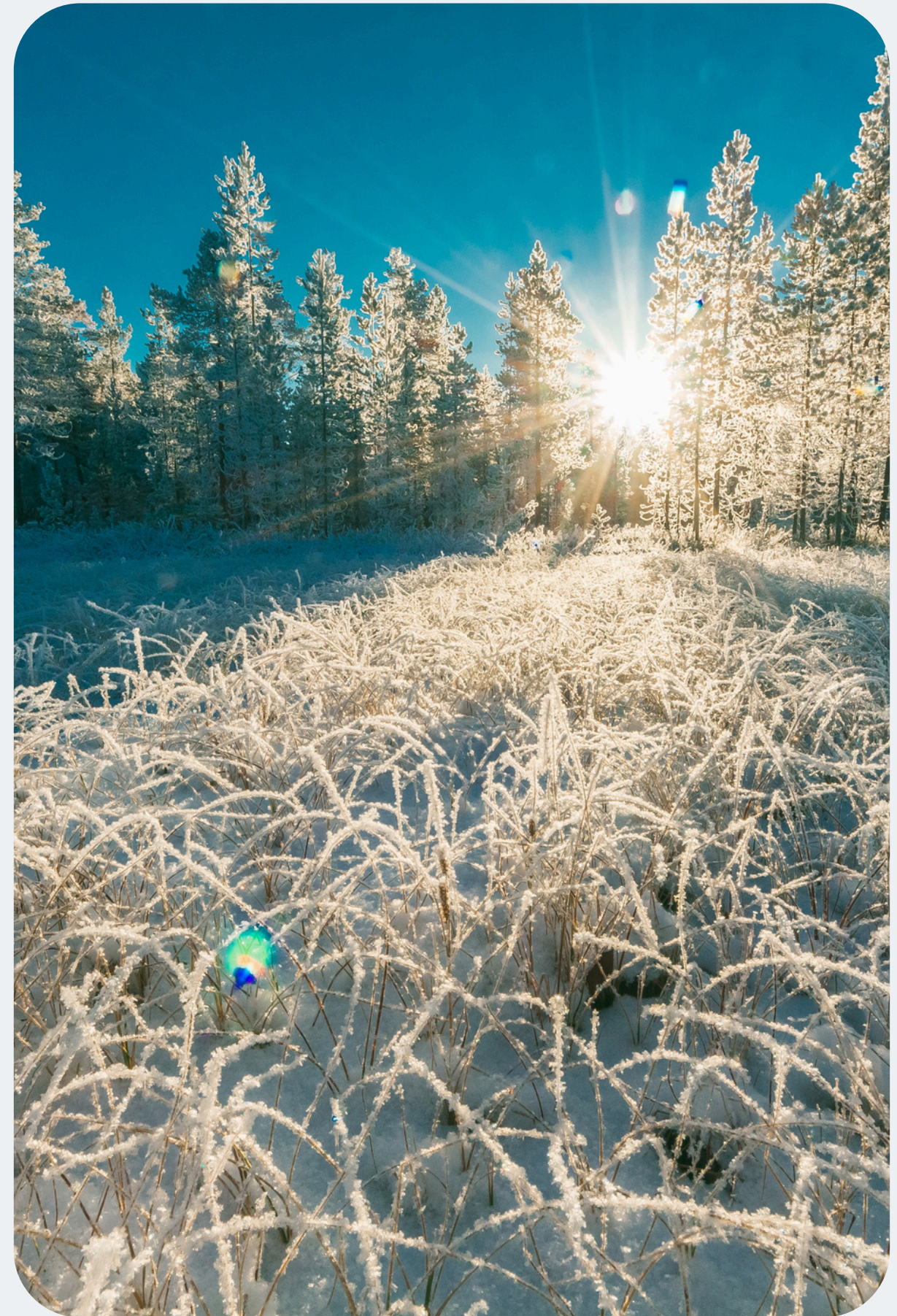
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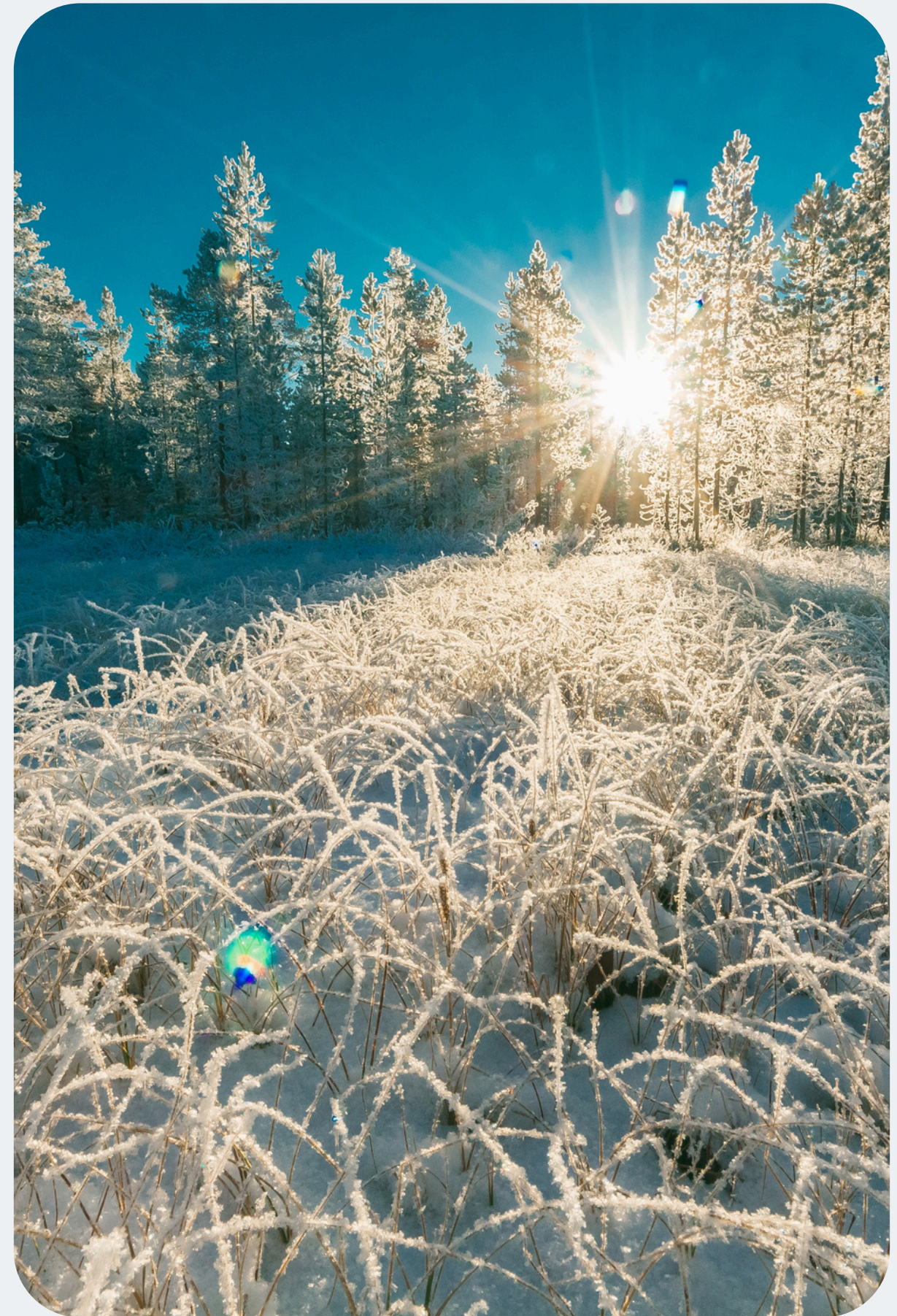
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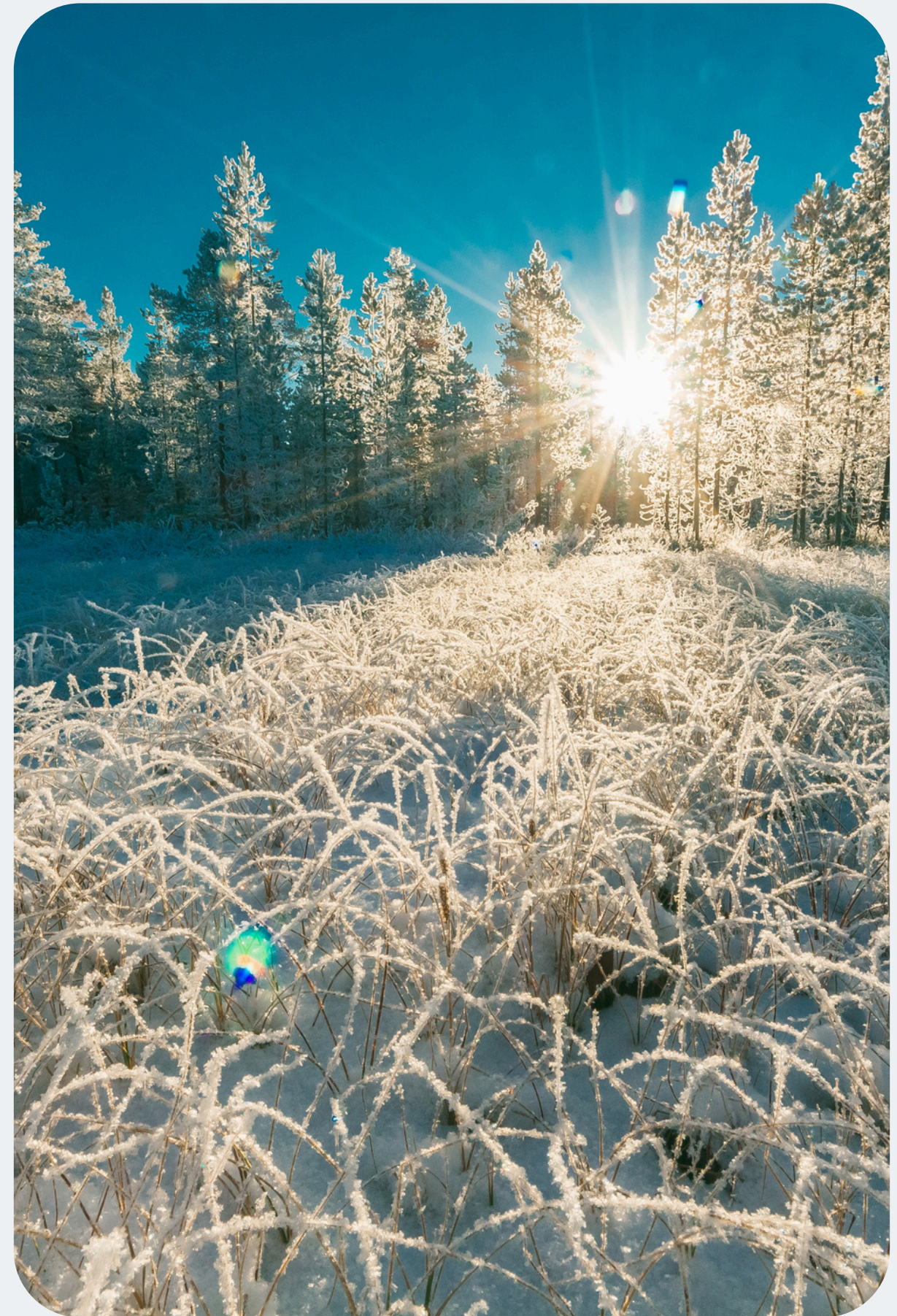
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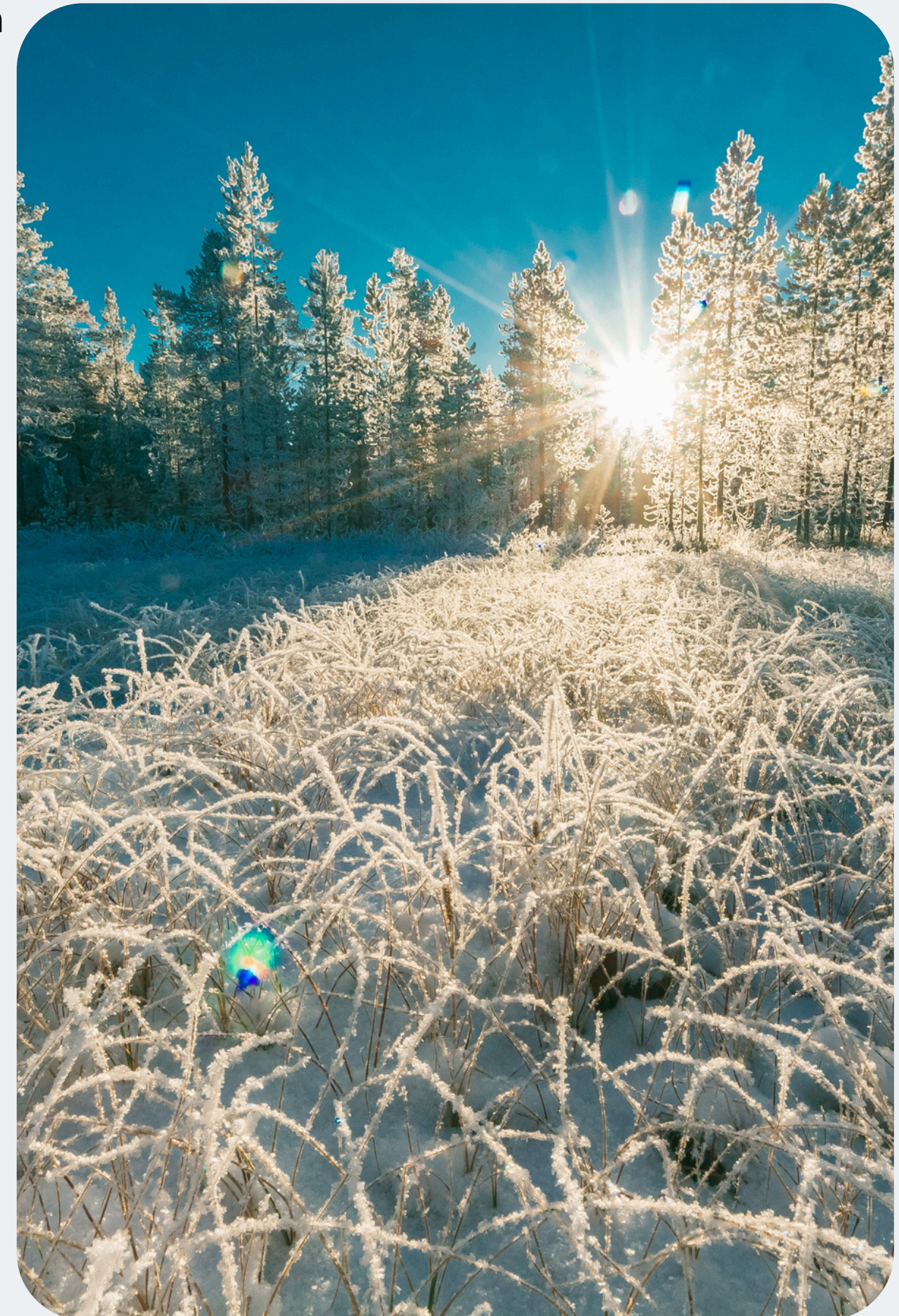
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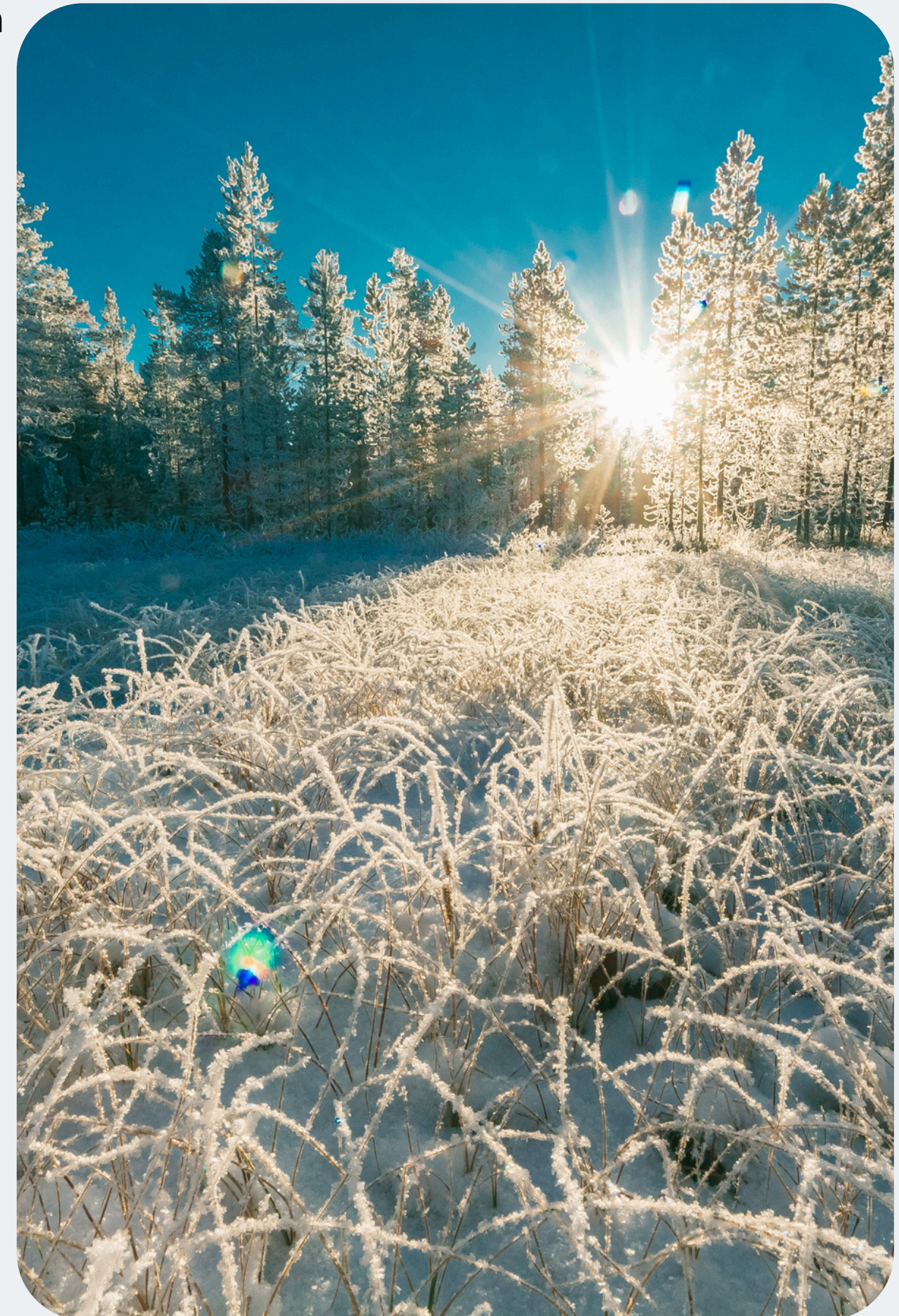
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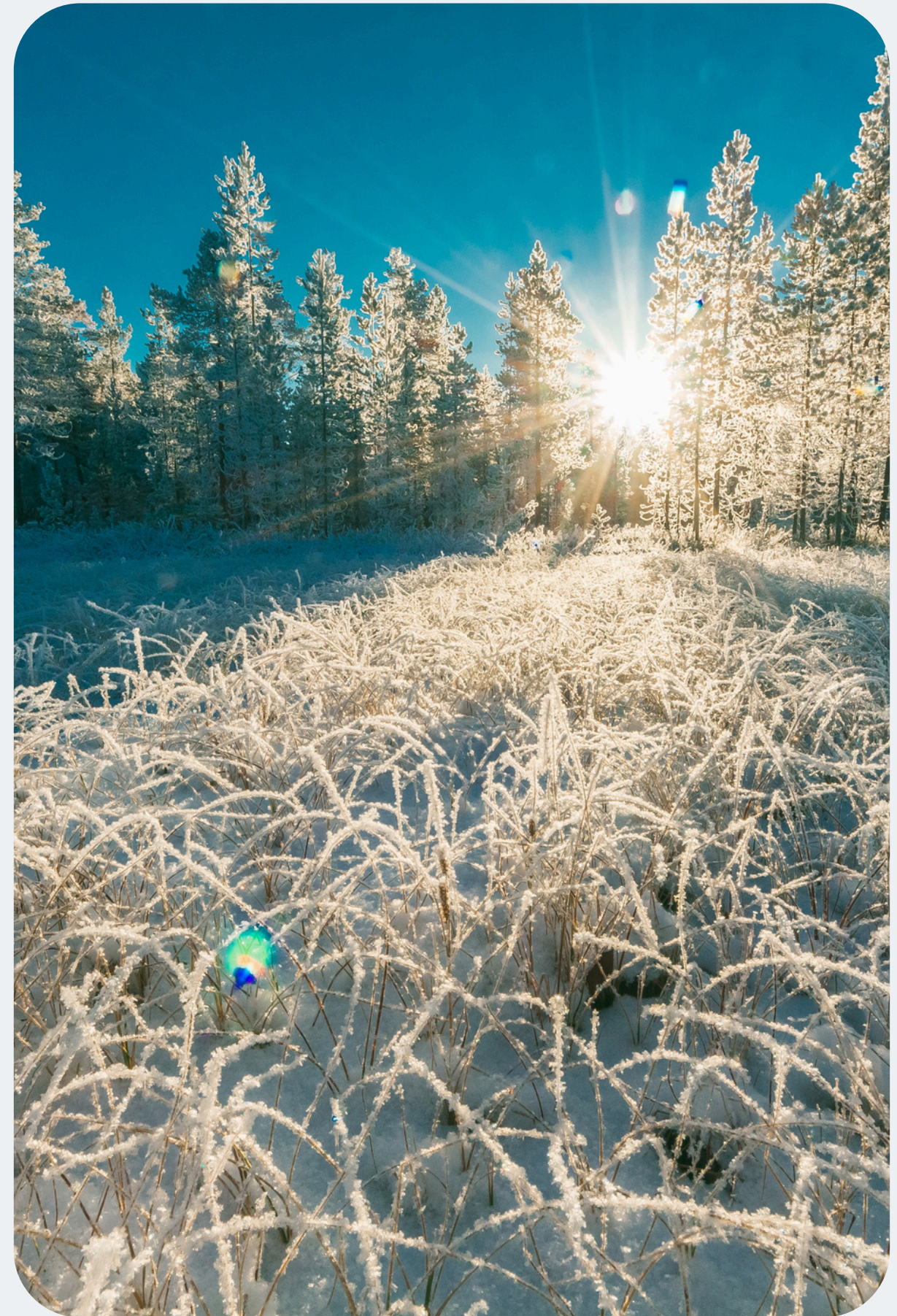
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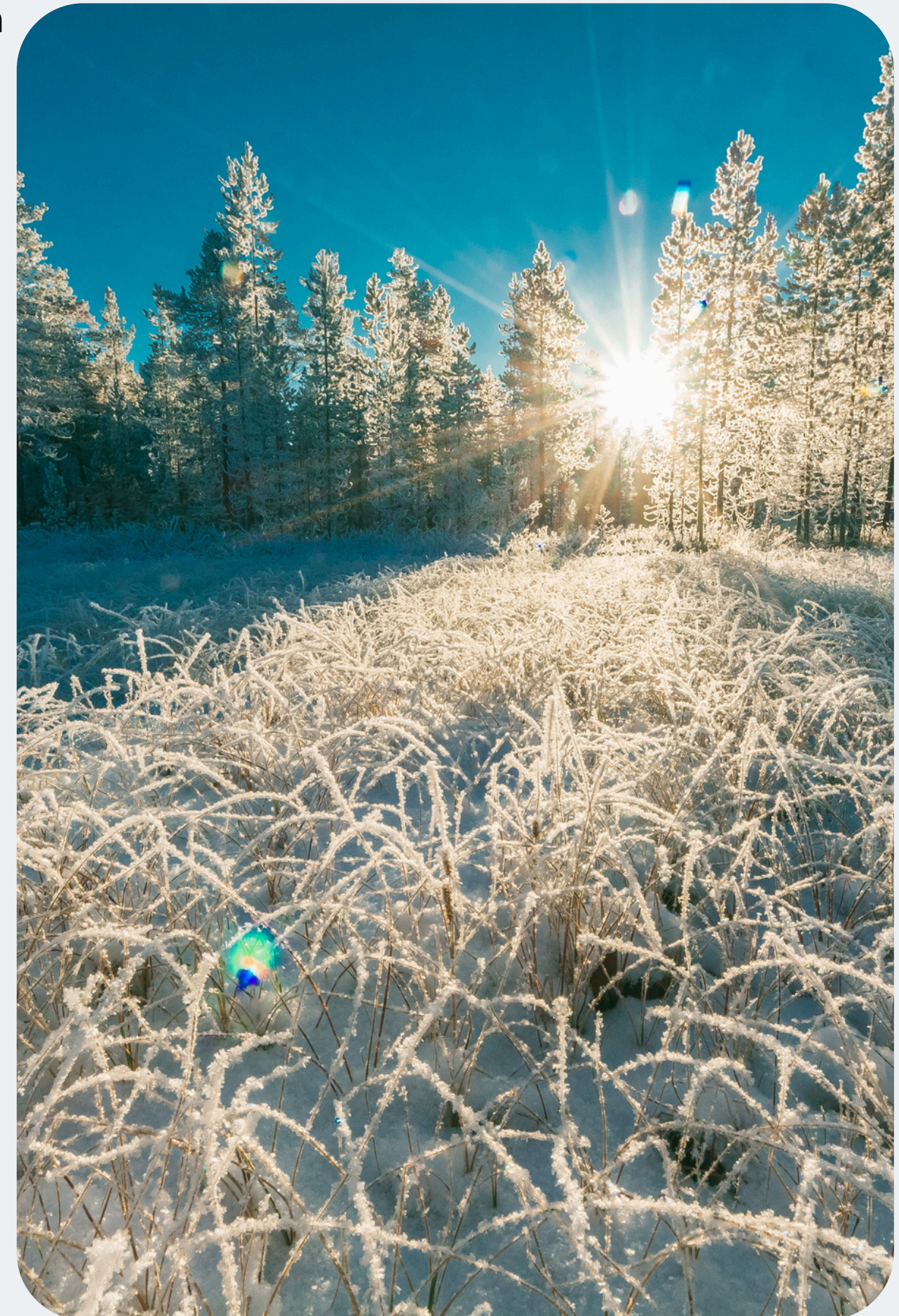
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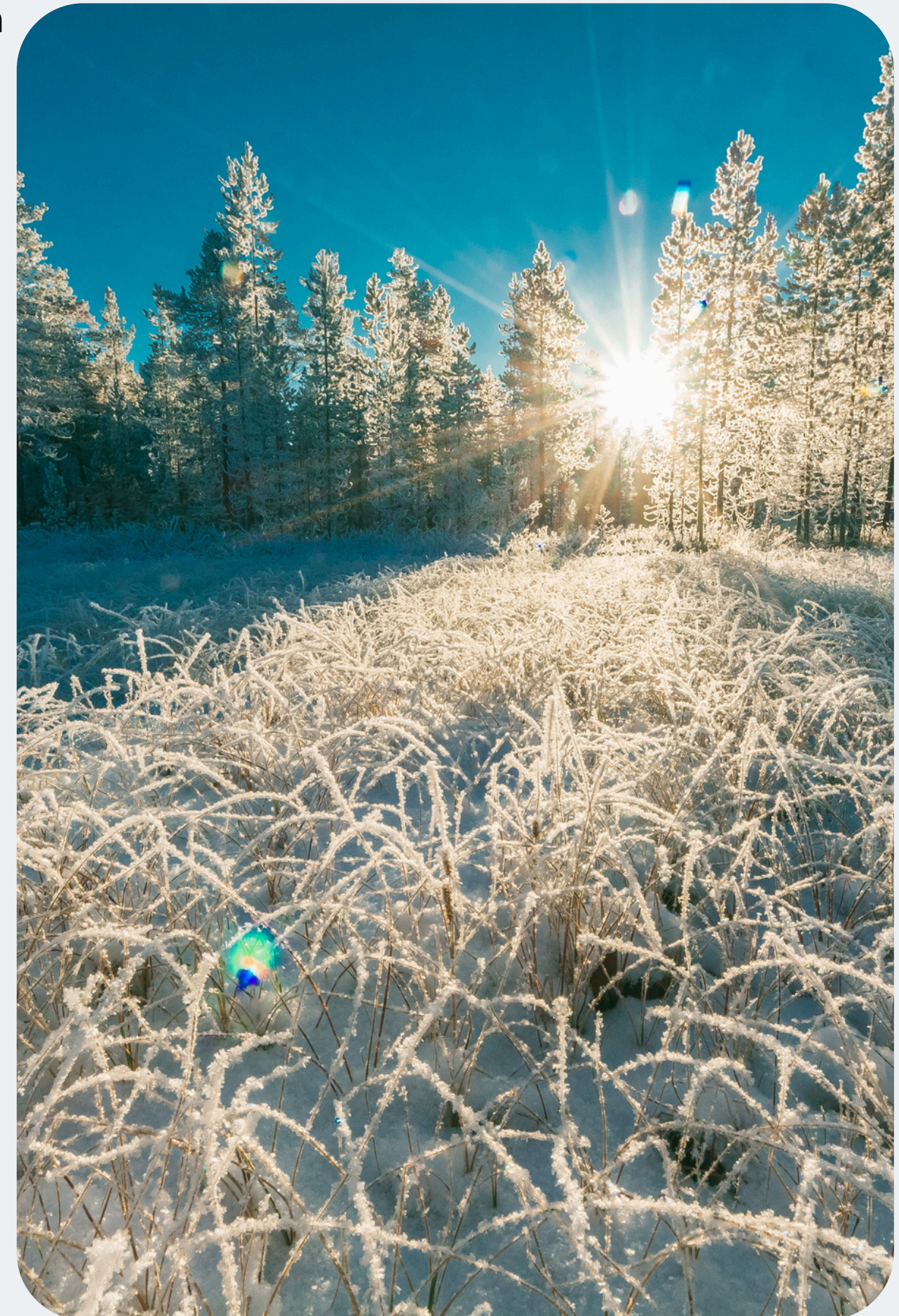
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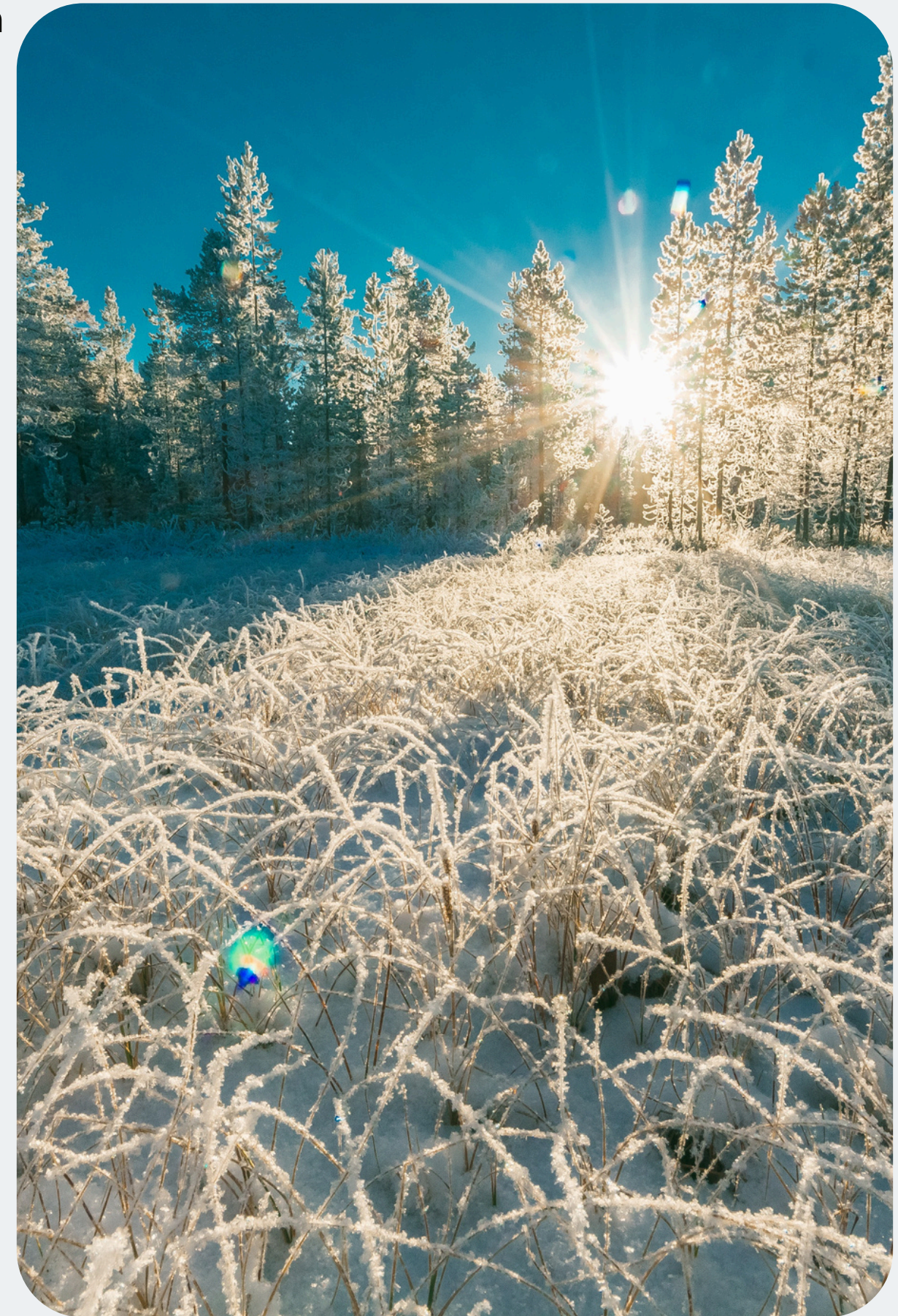
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7. things you give to someone as a present - **gift**
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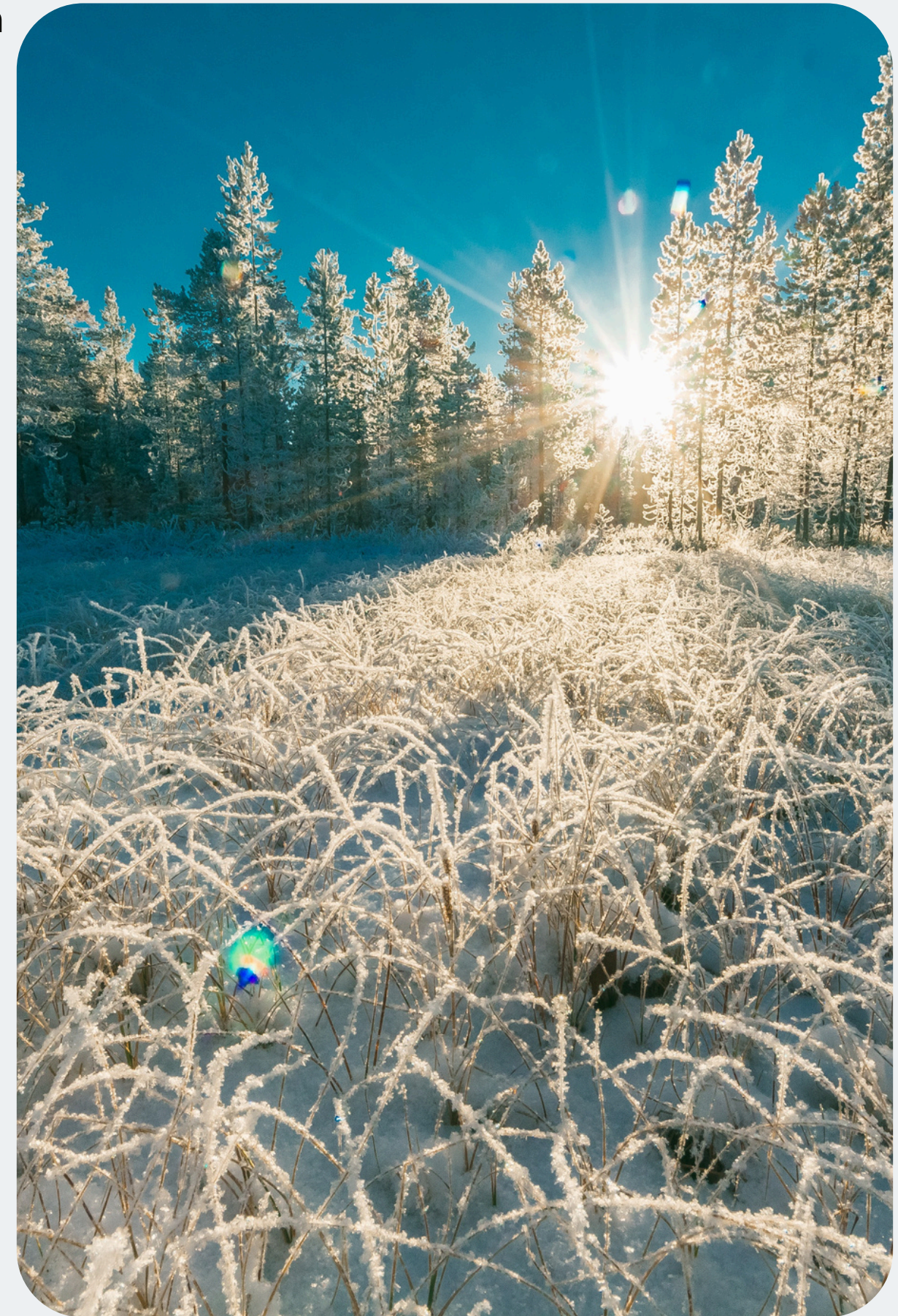
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9. spring, summer, fall, winter - **seasons**
10. the line between two countries - **border**





Hanukkah

Israel

Hanukkah lasts eight nights and days. It may occur at any time from late November to late December.

The most important part of the celebration is lighting menorah. It has nine lights.

People eat foods fried in oil. Potato pancakes with applesauce or sour cream or jelly doughnut.

Kids play with a “dreidel” (a four-sided spinning toy). You can win a pot of coins, nuts, or other stuff in the game.

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This is a dreidel

Watch the video. Learn about the history of Hanukkah and find out why menorah has got nine lights.

Discussion:

- 1)) What do you celebrate in December?
- 2) What food do you eat?
- 3) Do you exchange gifts with you friends and family?

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