

It's a plant, it's a lizard, it's an alien, nah, it's just Gayle.

by Gayle Haarr

I have decided to let you all in on the office secret, I am actually not a regular human being like the rest of you. My life actually revolves around the amount of sun that is shining and the heat it creates. The sun has control over my every emotion and thought. Everybody in my family is controlled by the sunshine except my father, so we believe that my mother passed this unexplainable disorder to her children. The giant mystery is that we do not know what has happened that makes us uncontrollable sun worshipers. Cajun and Andrew have come up with their own theories about me and my relationship with the sun. I'll share those with you, but first let me give you some background on the problem.

My mother, sister, and I get very depressed and blah during the Winter months because of the extreme lack of sunshine. My brother seems to deal better through the Winter months, but he has the same problem that we have with the sun. When the sunshine appears in the Spring, we have the need to be outside. The first day that it was sunny but still cool this year, I spent the entire day at the park walking my dog. I continued this on a daily basis to try and get some sun to deal better with the depression. The dog has been a great diversion because people do not suspect that I have a problem, a true sun obsession. They just believe that I walk my dog a lot to exercise her.

Last week, we had our first warm sunny, Spring day and it drove me crazy for the few hours that I was stuck inside. I jumped up and down all morning long in the office yelling, "I want to be outside in the sun." Cajun and Andrew will happily confirm the jumping and yelling. The need for sun got worse and worse by the minute. I was feeling like a caged animal inside, I needed to be outside and fast. All I could think about was how I could possibly get outside.

That is when I had the brilliant plan to try and persuade Andrew that we should have a corporate lunch. Desperately, I called all around town to find a restaurant that was serving outside on a deck. Then, I had to convince Andrew that this was a wise decision and quick. The prime sun hours were

fading quickly. It took some persuasion, whining, and quick thinking before I succeeded. We were off to an outside lunch and I was feeling much better about everything. Now, my brain was trying to come up with a way to stay outside for the majority of the afternoon. Luckily, office errands needed to be run and some other stuff needed to be taken care of. The day was a giant success, after work I went home and took my dog for a walk in the sunshine.

Well, Rochester's "sunny days per year" statistic better improve soon. I'm going to have to try and relocate Ambrosia down South if it gets too bad. Aside from this, my officemates are rather baffled, and both have formulated their own theories as to the source of this obsession.

Andrew has a theory that somewhere along the line my mother's family acquired the same type of gene that lizards have. Therefore, we feel the need to lay outside and bask under the sun, especially on those bright, sunny Summer days. He believes that we are of cold blood and we need to keep our cold blood warm. I have not told Andrew this yet, but this is a real possibility.

My Grandfather worked in the Brookfield zoo outside of Chicago when my mother was a small child. One night, he had forgotten to sign in when he entered the zoo, so when everybody had signed out they locked up the zoo with my Grandfather inside. He thought that he was sleeping in the employees' lounge away from the animals, but a baby lizard of a rare breed escaped without anyone noticing. It slept on his stomach under a bright lamp. My mother was at the zoo in the morning when they found my Grandfather. She discovered the baby lizard and brought it home in her pocket. My grandparents discovered her new pet a few days later, after she had been bit. They quickly returned it to the zoo. Was there something in that lizard venom?

Cajun's theory is that I have some plant characteristics. He believes that I need to photosynthesize. This is also a possibility because my mother has been a vegetarian since before she met my father. She has always experimented with breeding different types of vegetation to come up with new types of fruits and vegetables. Some of her experiments have gone a little crazy and she has come up with some mutants. However, she has a personal rule that whatever she comes up with she must try. We are wondering if maybe one of these genetic experiments had some crazy side effects on her.

The last theory is mine, we are part alien. My Grandmother is a little wacky, no a lot wacky. Well, she has always told us that when she was a young child, one Summer day she was abducted by aliens. She said that while she was with these aliens, they studied her because she didn't live and act as

they did. These aliens were completely controlled by the sun. She said that in one of their studies, they took some of her blood and gave her a shot of something. She never found exactly what was in the shot because they had to send her back to earth before the sun went down for the night. Otherwise, they would have been powerless and my grandmother could have ruled their world. Maybe they sent her back with a little bit of their blood and genes to see if they should take over our the earth. Just maybe my Grandmother is not so wacky after all, and she is telling the truth.

I know all this seems hard to believe, but our need for sun is not normal. We have visited experts to see if they can explain it. They tell us that we need abnormal amounts of sunshine to survive, but they don't know why. We are doing everything in our power to cope with this and live normal and productive lives. However since this Winter was so long and harsh, I was having a hard time keeping the family secret. The pressure of an abnormally cold Spring has finally gotten to me and I had to confess. I feel much better now that everyone knows my addiction. I live for sunshine and warmth. Now, you all know the truth about my family and our bizarre and unexplainable sun obsession.

Ed Note - When not lying on her heat rock or photosynthesizing, Gayle concentrates on her many hobbies. Lately, she has been working with nuclear fission (or is it fusion). She hopes to create a "mini sun." We wonder where she got all of this knowledge.