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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

# O out of the Sun

By GRANVILLE S. HOSS

*Is there life in the swirling heat of the sun? This is the story  
of a scientist who determined to find out*

I PROPOSE to make public the most remarkable series of letters it has ever been my fortune to peruse. I can hardly expect them to be received without skepticism and in some quarters positive unbelief and even ridicule. It would be strange indeed should they meet with any other reception, as the incidents dealt with are so astounding and bizarre that I doubt even the boldest of our writers of fiction would have the temerity to use them in a tale of the imagination.

In spite of what I have just said, I ask that the letters be read with full belief, or at least with an open mind. I vouch for the truth of every word they contain. I knew the writer well and intimately for more than thirty years. He was never a man to juggle the truth and could have had no motive for such a course. And finally I journeyed to the scene of the tragedy and viewed the bodies. Thus I was able personally to verify many of the facts given in the letters.

I have arranged the letters according to date and added, as a sort of post scriptum, an extract from the weekly paper published at Mountain Top, Wyoming, where the events occurred. But first I had better state how the letters came to be written.

Christmas Eve, 1928, in Chicago was bitter cold. The city lay frozen under a heavy covering of snow and ice. This will explain why Baxter Bliss and I were loth to leave the genial warmth of the Michigan Boulevard restaurant where we

had finished a late supper and sat idly over our coffee and cigars, gazing at the hurrying stream of late Christmas shoppers and the heavy traffic of the wide boulevard. Our silence was suddenly ended by Bliss noisily exhaling a great cloud of smoke and exclaiming, "I wonder if all the planets and stars suffer the extreme climatic changes and differences we find here."

"I suppose they do," I replied without much interest, "unless some are supplied with several suns to maintain an even temperature over their whole surface."

"That might be," he agreed. "Some very likely enjoy a very hot climate, hotter than anything we know here, while others are perpetually cold. It would be interesting to note the variations of life on those distant balls, caused by the differing climatic and atmospheric conditions."

"But they are not all inhabited," I objected. "We at least know that some of them can not support life."

"We know nothing of the sort," Bliss retorted. "Had you never seen any of the myriad forms of life inhabiting our oceans, streams and puddles, you would say, basing your judgment on what is necessary to sustain your own life, that nothing could live under water, would you not?"

"I suppose so," I admitted.

"And you would be wrong, for life is found not only in the frozen Arctic seas, but even in the boiling springs of the West. I maintain that it is not only possible, but extremely probable, that the

moon and all the rest of the planets are teeming with life."

"Well," I laughed, "have it your own way. But I know of one place where there is surely no life. The sun."

"Don't be too sure of that," he retorted. "Lately I have considered it altogether probable that there is life on the sun."

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed. "The Christmas spirit or what goes with it seems to have gone to your head and disturbed your imagination."

"Oh, laugh on!" he cried half angrily.

"Did you ever hear of a photon? No, of course not. Bah! What is the use of argument? Come, it grows late and I must go."

By the time we struggled into our heavy wraps and stepped out into the cold December night, Bliss had regained his usual good temper. We parted at State and Madison Streets with a hearty handshake and Merry Christmas. His last words as he turned to board a north-bound bus were, "I'll prove my contention some day."

I never saw him again alive. He dis-



"The sun, peopled by beings like her, must be a lovely place."

appeared from Chicago and it was three years before I heard from him or knew where he had gone. In October, 1931, a letter dated from Mountain Top, Wyoming, explained his absence and stay in that distant place. This letter and those which followed can now speak for themselves, or rather for my friend who is gone. Let him tell his story in his own words.

Mountain Top, Wyoming,  
October 14, 1931.

**M**Y DEAR G——  
Who would ever have thought of me living contented in an out-of-the-way place like this? A few years ago I would have laughed to scorn the mere suggestion of such an existence. But here I am.

A short time after last seeing you, I was notified by an attorney here that I had inherited, through the death of a distant relative, a house and small tract of ground at this place. I did not need the property and did not want it, but having nothing better to do at the time, decided to go out and have a look at it. I liked all I found so well that I decided to stay, for a time at least. So I re-furnished the house, made some needed repairs and alterations and am likely to be right here for the rest of my days.

Do not get the idea that this place is perched on a high mountain top. The town is built on a hill or sort of plateau, but there are high mountains all around it. My place is a mile from town, overlooking the hillside sloping to the valley below and commanding an unobstructed view of the mountains in the near distance. An altogether delightful place.

When you write, remember I have been out of touch with everything happening in my old home. The only paper I ever see is the weekly published here.

Overlook and pardon my long silence.

Prove your good nature by letting me have a prompt reply with a resumé of all that has taken place there in our sphere since I left.

As ever yours,  
BLISS.

November 21, 1931.

**M**Y DEAR G——  
Thanks for your long and interesting letter. Am happy to hear of Mary's good fortune. She deserves it. Give her my affectionate regard and best wishes. It is too bad about Charley. Wish I could be of some use to him.

Oh, by the way, do you remember our last conversation, on Christmas Eve 1928? I have thought of it many times since and am more than ever convinced of the possibility of life existing on the sun, and am going to prove that it does. In my next letter I may be able to tell you something definite of my plans. They are still quite hazy, but taking form. I can see now it will be a big undertaking and a costly one.

Write me often. Your letters seem like a voice from another world.

As ever yours,  
BLISS.

December 24, 1931.

**D**EAR G——  
Glad to have your letter and the information it contains. You give me surprising intelligence of John Fortune. Who would have dreamed of him doing such a wild thing?

This is the third anniversary of our last meeting in Chicago and my plans for ascertaining if life exists on the sun are progressing. I have placed an order for a portion of my equipment with a distant steel foundry and when that part is received, will immediately engage workmen to set it up and construct the remainder of what I need.

To prove the existence of life on the sun does not seem to me such an impossible task as on first thought it would appear. Science has found that what we call sunlight is in reality small particles of the mass of that body, millions of tons of which are thrown off into space every second. The particles have been named photons.

Now why is it not likely, that among the countless billions of infinitesimal parts of the sun's mass reaching the earth each day there is dormant life? And why can it not be caught under such conditions that it will incubate? As I see it, the great difficulty will be to produce and maintain sufficient heat for the purpose. At any rate, this is my problem and the manner in which I am setting about to solve it. What think you of my chance of success?

As ever,

BLISS.

March 2, 1932.

DEAR G———  
Your last received a month ago and of course you would throw cold water. But just wait. Maybe time will show I am not quite so mad as you seem to think.

I am about ready for the test. I have had constructed a steel room with walls, ceiling and floor four feet thick. Around this is six feet of solid concrete work. An opening is left in the top to catch the sunlight and of course there is a door in one side which can be closed. As I told you before, I think my big problem will be heat, but feel that I have mastered it. I will soon know, as all will be completed within the next two weeks.

Even though you do not believe in what I am attempting, you can at least wish me luck.

As ever,

BLISS.

April 3, 1932.

DEAR G———  
The experiment is progressing. I have succeeded in producing an incredible heat. But is it enough? There is no sign of life in the steel room, which is a solid mass of fire. The skies have been clear, permitting a constant flow of sunlight into the fiery room. I could not have asked for more ideal conditions.

Your last letter was full of interest, but I am so filled with the great experiment I can not take time to comment on what you tell me.

As ever,

BLISS.

June 15, 1932.

MY DEAR G———  
Just a line to let you know I think I have succeeded. There is certainly something in the steel room which was not there when the fire was started. There are half a dozen lumps on the floor, but they are too small and unformed for me to distinguish through the flames what they are. But they move about. Do you get that? They move and change position.

More next time.

As ever,

BLISS.

August 1, 1932.

DEAR G———  
For the past six weeks I have suffered alternate fits of hope and despair, but now I know. There is life in the fiery room: six creatures, one of which has grown much faster than the others and is developing arms and legs and a head, though all members are too rudimentary for me to guess what the creature will be like if it lives and continues to grow. Another has a long neck and head and the body is elongating from its hitherto spherical shape. The rest re-

semble nothing but lumps continually moving about.

Congratulate me, my dear friend, for I have succeeded.

The experiment has been extravagantly costly, but I have plenty and can think of no better way to spend it.

Don't think because I do not answer your letters in formal manner and with any great regularity, that I am not glad to have them. I appreciate every one and wish you would write oftener.

As ever,

BLISS.

September 4, 1932.

**M**Y DEAR G———  
Bad fortune. Only one of my sun creatures is left. The rest have died and been reduced to nothing by the fires.

I hesitate to say so, but the survivor seems to be taking on a definite human form. It is about the size of the penny dolls children used to buy in our young days. It grows stronger and moves about over greater areas of the room each week. I have high hopes that it will not share the fate of the others, but will grow to maturity. Think what it will mean to scientific knowledge. How the savants will gasp when I invite them to Mountain Top to view an inhabitant of the sun!

Yes, you might send me the book you mention, though I will not promise to read it very soon, as my own days are more exciting right now than any fiction which can be imagined by the romanticists.

Thanks, and believe me, I appreciate your thoughtfulness.

As ever,

BLISS.

December 1, 1932.

**D**EAR G———  
Let me hasten to assure you that I am well and that your several letters during the past three months have reached me in due course. My neglect in answering is due to my having become a man with only one interest in life.

The sun creature has grown into a fully developed woman about eighteen inches high. She has flaming red hair, is slim and perfectly proportioned with a fairy-like beauty which grows more radiant with her increasing stature. Such perfect beauty was never before seen in this world.

I feel rather queer and sick when I look at her living and moving about comfortably in that fiery inferno. I have to remind myself she is in her natural element and just as much at home as I am in the outer air.

Of course I am unable to give her food, as anything I could offer her would be consumed by the flames in a few seconds. She does not seem to want for anything, but appears perfectly content and happy reclining upon the white-hot steel floor in her room of fire.

Do not be alarmed at my failure to write with any regularity. Why can you not come out here and see for yourself the wonder I have been writing of?

As ever,

BLISS.

March 8, 1933.

**D**EAR G———  
Instead of sitting in Chicago and writing letters full of questions and excuses, why don't you come on out here and observe at first hand what I can make you only dimly comprehend by writing?

The Sun Maiden has now attained a height of about three feet. Her beauty

increases each day. She is of a superlative loveliness impossible to portray adequately in words. Hers is an unearthly beauty such as we have all tried to imagine in the angels.

When I open the door of her fiery home, she smiles and holds out her hand in greeting, but needless to say, I do not attempt to grasp it. At first she resented my aloofness. Her eyes would flash angrily and her body glow like molten gold. Her anger was always of short duration and she would soon be smiling again, her body its normal pink color.

How has she managed to thrive and grow without food in that fiery furnace? I think I have found the answer. She draws sustenance from the sunlight. While the sunlight pours into her room, she is bright and active, tripping about and dancing much in the manner of a ballet girl. After sunset she droops, and on dark days lies on the floor with her head pillowed on her arm like one completely weary and worn out. Then when the sun breaks through the clouds what a change takes place! She sits up and smiles and is soon on her feet capering about the room.

As ever,

BLISS.

May 15, 1933.

**D**EAR G——  
As usual, more excuses in your last letter. Well, if you do not think the Sun Maiden is worth the paltry expense and time you would lose from your business, then stay where you are.

She is now all of four feet tall and I am sure fully grown. I did not think it possible, but she has become more and more beautiful with each passing day. I have not words to convey to you the haunting, ethereal quality of her beauty. It follows me waking or sleeping.

I spent most of yesterday examining

the apparatus which furnishes heat for her room. I shiver when I think of the possibility of it failing or getting out of order. A disaster of that sort would mean her death. And the death of the Sun Maiden would be the end for me. Yes, I mean it. Separated as we are by a raging fire which she can not leave and I can not enter, she has come to mean more to me than all the rest of the world. If you could see her I think you could understand.

The sun, peopled with beings like her, must be a lovely place. I wish she could speak and tell me of conditions there. But what nonsense! She can have no more knowledge of her home there than I have, for she was born right here on earth in the fiery room she now occupies.

As ever,

BLISS.

July 1, 1933.

**M**Y DEAR G——  
I think the Sun Maiden's method of communication is purely mental. At least, she has never made a sound, and two weeks ago as I was observing her through the doorway, she stood perfectly stationary and gazed hard into my eyes as though attempting to convey a message, but it would not register on my earthly brain. She seemed to realize this, for her efforts ceased, and smiling sadly she shook her head several times as though to imply that it was of no use.

The possibility of my fires failing worries me incessantly. Should this happen, the Sun Maiden would die as painful a death as you or I, should we be consumed by fire. I had proof of this just yesterday. When I approached the doorway of her dwelling, she stepped forward smiling with outstretched hands inviting me to enter, and as I came nearer, darted forward as if to seize and drag me inside. As one of her hands was

thrust outside the flames into the short passage leading from her door to the outer air, she stopped abruptly with an expression of intense pain on her face as she withdrew her hand into the flames again. She examined her hand and gazed at me so reproachfully that I caught myself in the very act of rushing in to console her.

As ever,

BLISS.

July 17, 1933.

DEAR G———  
I am in despair. How am I to guard against a breakdown in my heating apparatus? Only yesterday I found a defect just in time to repair it and avert disaster. Such a calamity will result in the death of my poor Sun Maiden. And how can I go on living without her? I just will not do it. I suppose you will at once decide I am crazy, but you will be wrong. How can I expect you to understand my feelings? You have not seen her as I have, grow and develop from a formless lump into the radiant and happy creature she now is.

I go carefully over every part of my heating machinery a dozen times during the day and night. The rest of my time, all I can spare from sleep, is spent in contemplation of the Sun Maiden. She always greets me with a smile, holding out her pretty little hands in welcome. She then dances gleefully about her room, while the billowing flames toss her long hair about like a strong wind. A sight so entrancing was never before seen by mortal man. I just can not lose her. I can not.

Yours,

BLISS.

November 15, 1933.

DEAR G———  
I am a wreck. You would not recognize me. Through incessant watching I have managed to keep the fires going in the Sun Maiden's room without a break. But now a new danger threatens her. The intense and unbroken heat I have been compelled to maintain in her room has caused the steel walls to crumble in spots, and these rotten areas are accumulating and growing in size each week. The six-foot thickness of concrete covering the steel room shows a number of cracks. These disasters can only mean that the end is not far off. Oh, why did I bring this radiant creature to life only to have her meet a miserable death in a few months? But no, I will not despair. I can not despair. I will save her.

Yours,

BLISS.

*Extract from the Mountain Top Herald of December 15, 1933:*

#### SHOCKING TRAGEDY DISCOVERED LAST MONDAY

The dead bodies of Barton Bliss and a nude woman were found in the grounds of his home west of town last Monday morning. Mr. Bliss had been terribly burned. There were no marks of any kind on the body of the woman, leaving the cause of her death a complete mystery.

The bodies were discovered by Asa Giles, who stopped at the house for water while on his way to Mountain Top. They were lying just outside a great square structure of cement and steel. The interior of the building showed signs of an intense heat having been maintained there over a long period but for what purpose is unknown.

On making his gruesome discovery, Mr. Giles hurried on to town, where he notified Joe Mills, our chief of police, who called the coroner and then hurried to the Bliss place.

Dr. Baymore at once pronounced the terrible burns to be the cause of the death of Mr. Bliss but would not commit himself in the case of the woman. While hazarding no opinion as to the cause of her death or when it occurred, he be-



lieves her body must have undergone some sort of mummifying process. Pink in color, her flesh was soft but solid, reacting to the touch not unlike rubber. Her hair, of a flaming red color, was of a different texture from any found on a human head. The body, perfect in its symmetry and beauty and showing not a mark of any sort, weighed only one and one-half pounds. Dr. Baymore states emphatically that he knows of no method of embalming which could produce these conditions and frankly admits he is completely puzzled.

Mr. Bliss was more or less of a recluse, having no intimate friends here and very few acquaintances, which will explain why the tragedy was not discovered for several days after its occurrence. A search of his house disclosed very little information, as all correspondence and even bills and business letters seem to have been destroyed by him. One letter was finally unearthed in the back of a bureau drawer. This was more than a year old and written by a Mr. G. S. Hall of Chicago, who has been notified by wire and who has signified his intention of coming at once.