

CHEMICAL GIRLS

By Jerry Rabushka

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CAST: 1 Male

I hate to say it. But there's a lesson to be learned from this. Umm. . . this is so embarrassing. Uhhh. . . don't try to create a girl in the chemistry lab. Well, like I said. . . embarrassing.

Let's get the puns out of the way. Her reactions were unpredictable, she couldn't understand relationships, there was no chemistry between us, her personality was acidic. . .

She was clingy. "You didn't call!"

(in response to her) You don't have a phone

"You didn't write!"

You don't have e-mail

"You didn't come over!"

You don't have an address.

The first girl was just a lucky combo. Mr. Quiring, my chemistry teacher, told me I had to come into the lab after school to finish up an extra credit project. I was a good student, but for me, chemistry was the noxious gas on my class itinerary.

So, while he was gleefully grading exams from more enthusiastic students, I protested by pouring two types of acid and some very volatile powders into a beaker "just to see what would happen." I watched, helplessly, as a giant cloud of clay-red smoke formed near the ceiling, then turned into an oozy liquid that rained onto the floor to bubble and boil like a witches' brew without a newt.

Mr. Quiring came into the lab with a pained look on his face. "I don't think you're going to pass this course," he said.

I could barely understand him. We were both coughing under the cloud of smoke and trying to get out of the way of the galloping glop on the floor.

"How much did you put in?"

All of it, I said. I wanted to prove my initiative.

It was then that I saw her. Veronica. In a sparkling blue dress, red lips, blue eyes, blue prom shoes, sitting on the stool that was so recently obscured by a cloud of smoke and a puddle of ooze. She was beautiful.

(as Veronica) "Don't just stand there. Ask me out."

I looked at my teacher.

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“Don’t just stand there, ask her out.”

Well, she had no parents – *this* is cool! And she had no homework – that was even better, and for all while I was the envy of every boy at school.

Until. . .

“You didn’t call me!”

You don’t have a phone.

“You should have called me.”

You don’t have a phone.

“How can I get a phone, when I don’t have any parents to buy me one?”

So, you still don’t have a phone!

“You made me! You should call me.”

I went back to Mr. Quiring with my dilemma, Veronica tagging along with a host of complaints.

“Too much acid in the formula,” he analyzed. “How else could you account for her disposition?”

Can’t we just get her a phone?

“No,” he says. “Next it’ll be email. Next it’ll be ‘quit the track team’. Next it’ll be ‘we need to talk’. We need to try it again.”

I threw together a formula with a greater emphasis on alkalinity. Obviously, I needed a girlfriend with a higher pH.

This time? Bethany. Red dress. Blue lips. Green hair, spiky. Punky.

All I’m thinking is *no one in this high school wears a dress. Especially the girls.*

“Don’t just stand there. Ask me out.”

My professor suggested I wait on that. “We need to test your reactions first.”

(as Bethany) “I don’t understand why you’re being so mean to me!”

No rational explanation for that one. She was definitely a high school girl in love. With me.

So was Veronica.

“If you touch him I’ll tear out that stupid green hair.”

Bethany was all for a fight. “Blue shoes. . . are. . . out!” she said. The shot heard around the world.

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A flurry of red and blue exploded in the confines of the chemistry lab. I do mean exploded– these girls were made of some very volatile compounds.

We were hoping that the acidity that created Veronica would meld with Bethany's more alkaline properties to result in an even tempered, *neutral* young lady. That somehow, two would become one. Instead, they became four. Add to the mix Veronica's mother and Bethany's younger sister.

Where did these people come from?

Worse yet, how do we get rid of them?

(as Veronica's mother) "Veronica, we're going home!"

(as Veronica) "We can't motherrrrr since we don't have a place to live."

(to Veronica, as himself) "Well you're not coming with *me*." I had a mother of my own to contend with, a mother who was very annoyed that I was about to flunk chemistry.

I thought this type of creation deserved a better grade. **(to the teacher)** Since I've just produced four fully formed females out of a beaker, don't you think you should at least raise my grade to a C-plus?

Mr. Quiring was unmoved. And plenty aggravated. And the custodian? Really didn't want to clean up the glop.

"Do you know how you created this mess?" asked the teacher.

Not really.

"Exactly. You just mixed up some chemicals with a random outcome. That's not education, that's happenstance. If you can create another girl just like Veronica, you'll get an A. You have to show your work to get the credit."

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