

MY PROM DATE IS A CHATBOT

By Jerry Rabushka

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MY PROM DATE IS A CHATBOT*A Ten Minute Comedic Monologue***By Jerry Rabushka**

SYNOPSIS: When Coletta finds out the boy she likes asked someone else to the prom, she's devastated! In her despair, she creates a chatbot who says he will go with her instead. So with her phone in her pocket, she walks into the dance hall while the chatbot eggs her on to take revenge on the people who slighted her. Will she come to her senses before it's too late?

TIME: Before, during and after the prom

SETTING: In Coletta's bedroom/At the prom

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(1 female)*

COLETTA (f)..... A high school girl who is unhappy that the boy she liked asked someone else to the prom. She also plays other characters as indicated. (The performer can use her own name, if desired.)

COSTUMING: Modern day.

SET: Bare stage.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: Coletta is often ruled by her emotions, and while she's usually aware of it, looking back at this event, she's not afraid to call herself out. This can allow her to do some over-the-top mood swings as she remembers how deeply affected she was over something that she laughs at now. The success and humor of the play can be amplified by changing seamlessly from one character to another and making sure their delivery and speech patterns are unique.

COLETTA: (*Pretending to respond, overly surprised and happy, to someone asking her on a date.*) Me? Of course, I'd love to! I can't believe it!

(*Back to normal, but we can see she had played out this whole scenario in her head over and over.*) That was me practicing for when Thomas Jamison was going to ask me to the prom. He was gonna be all scared and stumbling...

(*As Thomas.*) Uh... you know, I was wondering, I was thinking, I was... I don't know what I was doing, but if you have nothing to do, I mean I'm sure you're busy, but... do you...?

(*Interrupting, as herself.*) Want to go to the prom with you? (*With the same rehearsed enthusiasm as before.*) Of course, I'd love to! I can't believe it!

My mother was secretly hoping no one would ask me because people at our school were dropping \$1,500 for a limo, a dress and a corsage. (*As MOTHER.*) "When I was your age, we just put on shorts and danced to a record player!"

"No, you did not, Mom. Record players were phased out long before you were my age, and shorts weren't allowed."

(*As Mother.*) "A CD Player. A cassette recorder. Spotify, YouTube! Whatever it was, we danced to it— (*Insistent.*) in shorts. So, you can do the same."

(*Defiant.*) No—I was going to the prom in a floor length evening gown. Finally, Thomas Jamison came up to me, and I was ready.

(*As Thomas.*) Uh... you know, I was wondering, I was thinking, I was... I don't know what I was doing, but if you have nothing to do, I mean, I'm sure you're too busy but... do you...?

And I'm waiting... finally... to burst forth with my acceptance speech, when he said...

(As Thomas, finally getting his question out.) Do you think you could help me with some math homework?

(Short pause.) And I heard what I heard, so I was all like, "Of course, I'd love to! I can't believe it!"

And he was all like... *(Thomas is a little shocked by her overzealous reaction.)* "O... kay... can we do it tomorrow?"

And I said, "The prom isn't for six weeks!"

And he said *(Again, still confused.)* "I guess you didn't hear me, but... we're just talking math. I asked Alice Bonneville to the prom."

(COLETTA gives a look of shocked dismay.) You didn't!

(Thomas responds with a shrug, totally not realizing he's crushed COLETTA'S dream.) "Uh... sorry."

And I was all like, Alice? Of course, maybe she was prettier than me, or friendlier than me, or better at algebra than me, but that's no excuse. Or it was the only excuse. *(To Thomas.)* "Just because she's prettier than me? Which she isn't!"

And he said... "Well... it's your face, do the math."

Something didn't add up. I was devastated, and what did Alice do but rub it in.

(As Alice, mockingly snotty.) "Hey, guess who I'm going to the prom with? I know you had your hopes up, but... I guess *(With a little laugh and a wave of the hand.)* hopes are down."

I was humiliated, and I knew everyone would laugh at me. Even if they had no idea what was going on, I knew that they were all talking about me behind my back. Because well, what would be more important to anyone at school other than me being stiffed on a prom date? And if it was my face, I was not going to do this kind of math.

So, I did the next best thing. I created a chatbot. His name was... Jamison Thomas. I had things a little backwards. He was good looking, ran track, spoke three languages, including English, and best of all, was an expert in algebra. Oh, and he really, really liked... me.

(Speaking as the Chatbot, so the voice is a little stilted, caring and menacing at the same time.) Hi, Coletta! I really, really like... you!

(Responding.) "That's so good to hear. *(Full of self-pity.)* I feel lonely, and I wanted someone to ask me to the prom, and now I'll never get to go."

(As Chatbot.) Well... would you like to go to the prom with me?

(Gives us the same look that opened the monologue.) Me? Of course, I'd love to! I can't believe it!

(Shouting to the real Thomas, who of course, is nowhere near.) See, Thomas Jamison, was that so hard? "Would you like to go to the prom with me?" Ten words that can change a life, yet you thought they would be better used on someone else. Sure, it's one day out of our lives that we'll forget about in a week, except my parents, who will have to borrow from Grandpa to pay the bill. But... now, Thomas Jamison. I'm not going to the prom with you, I'm going with a better you. A "you" that did the math and likes my face.

My mom came in at this point and asked who I was screaming at with no one in the room. I was obviously talking to someone. She was always worried about me *meeting* strangers on the internet, but she hadn't the slightest idea about me *creating* strangers on the internet.

I'm texting!

(As Mother.) It sounds like you're talking.

(In response.) I'm talking my text. This isn't new. Why don't you go put on a record?

My mom then demanded to see my phone, so I was caught. So, I showed her the chatbot and explained it away. "He's my prom date. Since I can't go with who I want, I'm going to have prom right here at home."

And she looked at him and said, "Well, he is cute. But don't get carried away. He's not real."

Oh, so she thought! Over time we talked, and I unloaded everything about how horrifyingly miserable my life was because I couldn't get a date with Thomas Jamison.

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