

From Chemical Bonding

DANI, 18

BOB, 30-40s

DANI, 18, is arriving for a job interview at a chemical factory. BOB sets up his office to the side of the stage. There's a desk piled high with garbage, a small battered chair drowning in papers, books, and empty potato chip bags.)

BOB

Okay. Have a seat.

(DANI looks at the chair.)

Here.

(BOB sweeps everything off of it onto the floor, picks up the chair and shakes crumbs off it.)

There ya go. You want a water?

DANI

I'm good.

(She sits gingerly. BOB rifles through the stuff on his desk.)

BOB

Are you kidding me? Are you *kidding* me?

(he shouts)

HEY! WHO TOOK MY DOUGHNUTS!

(to DANI)

I'm sorry about this, we got a couple of jokers here who think it's funny to TAKE MY DOUGHNUTS! Nothing to worry about. Um... So. Let's talk. Are you a journalist? I saw you out there with your camera.

DANI

No I'm not a journalist.

BOB

Whew. I thought we were in trouble. Ha! Okay tell me about yourself.

DANI

Um... my name's Dani. And I'm a go-getter.

BOB

You're a go-getter?

DANI

That's what I've been told.

BOB

What are you gonna go get?

DANI

Anything you want me to go get.

BOB

Whoah! Don't say that while the cameras are rolling. I like you right off the bat. Tell me something else.

DANI

I was salutatorian at my high school.

BOB

What's that?

DANI

I was second in my class.

BOB

Who got first? I'm gonna hire her!
(He laughs at his own joke.)
I'm kidding ya. So... Sal-u-ta-

DANI

-torian.

BOB

Torian. Wow. So you got the book smarts.

DANI

Or I cheated really well.
(BOB's mood darkens.)
I'm kidding ya.

BOB

Oh that was a joke.

DANI

That was a joke.

BOB

Let me tell you something, Dani, I love jokes, but only when I tell `em.
(he laughs)
Seriously though we don't like cheaters.

DANI

I'm not a cheater.

BOB

Good. You sure?

DANI

Yes.

BOB

Okay, so I'm getting a picture of Dani – can I tell you something? I like to think of this job as a family, okay? A family that meets after the sun goes down and cleans plastics with chemical solvents. And then, you know, goes home and sleeps it off. So our family... there are moving parts to a family, right? You got your Mom, your Dad, your perverted Uncle, at least in my family, I'm kidding ya he's doing a lot better. So what part of the family unit are you?

DANI

I guess I'm the daughter.

BOB

The daughter. And what does the daughter do?

DANI

She uh...

BOB

She looks good in a dress, that's what she does! Ha ha ha. Better than the uncle anyway. Seriously he doesn't do that any more. Tell me more. What's going on inside?

DANI

I'm going to college in the fall.

BOB

Terrific.

DANI

In New York.

BOB

Hoo! In New York?! That is... wow. Wow. That is a long way from Mabel Minnesota.

DANI

And I'm a photographer.

BOB

That has no application to this job whatsoever.

DANI

But I just need a job for –

BOB

For the summertime, yeah? It's like I'm reading your thoughts now. Now you're thinking 'who is this guy and why is he so dang handsome!' I'm happily married though, so don't get your hopes up. Ha ha ha. I can tell right now you have a great sense of humor.

DANI

I've been told that.

BOB

That's just terrific. I like to joke with my employees, anybody who doesn't have a sense of humor, whoop! Out the door. Okay. So you're a girl, we have established that, you're a smart girl who's going to be here for three months... Wonderful. Before I hire you though, I want to put you to the test, you up for it?

DANI

Okay.

BOB

Here are my doughnuts! They were here the whole time! Oh for crying out loud – SORRY ABOUT YELLING ABOUT THE DOUGHNUTS! They don't even hear, the machines are so loud. Okay. Let's act out a crisis situation and see how you handle it. You want a doughnut first?

DANI

No I'm okay.

BOB

You're watching your weight, that's good. That's a good thing in a girl. You don't want to blimp up like the Goodyear man, ya know? You should see my wife she's got thighs like a lumberjack. Alrighty, let's say you're working the vertical cleanser and we have a level two spill due to operator error, someone down the line has made a mistake, the factory floor is flooded with benzene sulfate. It's bubbling, it's smoking, the roaches are fleeing for higher ground, some of them mutate, what is your role? And to make things more realistic, you have ten seconds.

(He takes out a stopwatch.)

Go.

DANI

I uh... run?

BOB

Ha ha ha! Yes. Good answer. Seriously though you can't outrun a level two spill, it's like a charging hippo, it'd kill ya.

DANI

Well what would I do in that situation?

BOB

Don't sue. Ha ha ha. Okay then. Dani, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our family. We're officially adopting you. I'm gonna hand you over to Edna, our trainer and she's gonna train you on the machines. Think of her like your crusty Aunt. I'm kidding ya she's mostly fine. I'm gonna use my intercom.

(BOB presses a button and shouts into the intercom. It goes over the loudspeakers.)

EDNA GET IN HERE!

(back to DANI)

She's deaf as a stump. So... while we're waiting for her, do you have any questions you'd like to ask me?

DANI

Have you ever had anyone be seriously injured on the job?

BOB

Ha ha ha good question.

DANI

What's the answer?

BOB

The answer is I'm not allowed to speak to that question right now. There's a lot of legal mumbo jumbo, it goes in one ear and out the other, let me tell ya. I hate lawyers, I really do. I wish everybody could be a photographer like you, that would make my life a lot easier.

DANI

Okay... um...

BOB

My favorite band is Foreigner if you're curious. You're probably not. You know Foreigner?

(singing badly)

Hot Blooded! Check it and see! I got a fever of a – No? How about Dirty White Boy! I'm a Dirty White Boy! You ever do that? You ever just sing?

To read the rest of this play, contact me at donzolidis@yahoo.com