

FIG. 17-1 “Helping Ruby” by Miriam

Ruby has been my best friend since we were in diapers, as my mom would say. She is the most tenderhearted person you could ever know, and is scared of many things: spiders, disappointing anyone in any way shape or form, and Ms. Gulch.

Ms. Gulch was our science teacher. Even her name was terrible. Ms. Gulch has eyes like a vulture waiting for someone to give the wrong answer, fingers like an eagle, waiting to give out detention slips, and feet the size of snowshoes, ready to crush anyone who does or even implies they did something wrong.

“Come on. Get in. I don’t have all day!” she snapped at me.

“Could you get any slower?” she yelled at Ruby.

“Why are you staring at my forehead?!” she bellowed at our two closest, but not best, friends.

What a kind person.

She yelled at the whole class for dropping stuff, going slowly and even looking in the wrong direction. She even scares out principal. She’s taller than him too!

Once we had checked the agenda board, we knew we were done for; we had a test the next day! I think the clock broke during that period, seconds turned into days, minutes turned into centuries, and 45 minutes turned into a millennium.

But right before the bell rang Ms. Gulch called out “Ruby, after class, five minutes!” We all exchanged nervous glances, when Ms. Gulch called you after school

she meant business. Then the bell rang and Luna, and me, May dutifully waited at the end of the hallway for Ruby.

When she finally came out the room the tears were spilling out of her eyes already. “What happened?” we all said in unison.

“Ms Gulch told me that if I don’t get above a ninety-five on the test, my average will stay below a 65 and this is the last time I can raise my grade before the end of the semester,” she cried out in a sad, choked, miserable voice.

We put our arms around her. We told her it was going to be okay. It wasn’t No one gets above a 89 on Ms. Gulch’s tests. When we got to the corner of the block we went our different ways all thinking, “What can we do to help?”

Later that afternoon, after being greeted at home by two younger twin sisters fighting over a Bitty Baby™, a mom who was still at work and a dad who was cleaning his glasses with lemon juice like it was a normal thing to do. I felt so bad for Ruby, I mean, she tries so hard, works her butt off in every subject, and is such a kid person. So I sat there and did my favorite thing to do, make a list

How to Help Ruby
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Fail the test, so she doesn’t feel bad○ Help her cheat on the test○ Help her study

The last one was definitely the one I was going to do, so I called Luna and May. We devised our plan and met outside Ruby’s house at 6:43pm sharp.

We has already told Rose (Ruby's mom) of our plan so we tiptoed up to Ruby's room where apparently she had been sitting since she got home. We barged into Ruby's room and she gasped, "What are you doing?"

I have to admit we may have been a strange sight. I was wearing all yellow with cutout paper neutrons and electrons taped all over me. "I am neutrons and electrons," I said.

Luna was wearing all red with different elements taped all over her. "I am all the elements on the periodic table," Luna said.

May was in all blue on one half and all orange on the other. "I am showing the differences between ionic and covalent bonds," May said.

Then, as she realized what we were and why we were here, after all of the explanations had been made she was so happy. She shone like the sun. We helped her study for three hours. Boy was it hard.

At 9:21, we broke out the caffeine and consumed over 3 chocolate bars a piece. That night we ended up staying up till 10:57 and then having a sleepover at Ruby's house. In the morning we tramped to the bus together, talking science all the way.

We got through first. Second. Third. Lunch. We talked science all the way through fifth period. Then around rolled sixth period. Ms. Gulch held her pencil like it was an axe as she told us all the 1,000,000,000 ways we could lose points. Then the test began, I didn't falter on a single question, teaching people really teaches you too! Even the bonus question was easy, I hope Ruby felt so too. At the end of the period we all

grouped at the end of the hallway as usual and re-grouped. “It wasn’t that bad!” Ruby cried and we all had a cheesy group hug.

One Week Later

Have you ever seen a shiny sticker? Because I have. The one that rested on the top right hand corner of Ruby’s test in the hallway, signifying she had gotten the highest grade anyone had ever gotten on Mr. Gulch’s test, a 96!