



Chemistry

Kate Hellman

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First published on FictionPress in June of 2006, *Chemistry* is the story of Travis McCall, a seventeen-year-old track star and straight-A student who is battling depression in the years after a failed suicide attempt. When he meets Garen Anderson, the charming, musician son of Bill, Travis' mother's boyfriend, everything changes. The two fall in love and attempt to navigate a relationship that faces a long line of threats--the necessity of secrecy from everyone they know; Travis' struggles with mental illness and self-injury; Garen's reckless, hard-partying lifestyle that borders on addiction. Travis quickly realizes that, while nothing in the world seemed as easy as falling in love with Garen, finding a way to stay together might be impossible.

Status: Complete

Word Count: approx. 168,000

Author's Note: I was fourteen years old when I began this novel, and as such, some of the earlier chapters dabble in cliches, melodrama, and generally poor writing. I am currently in the process of rewriting this novel now, with an additional decade of writing experience under my belt, and it is my sincere hope that anyone who was disappointed by the quality of the original version will someday have a chance to read a much better version of it.

Chemistry Details

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Author : Kate Hellman

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Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Young Adult

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Sannah says

Gah! Angsty to the max. A lot of ridiculously complicated relationships and even though it's supposedly completed it didn't give closure.

It was good, if you like angst...

The format was odd in places and i had to keep going back to the contents page to get the next chapter.

Valentine says

This book wasn't at all what I expected, there were so many unexpected turns. From the description, you expect the book to be about Travis and his struggles with depression/mental illness while falling in love. You expect to read about how messed up Travis is (and he is), but really this book is about how messed up Garen is. Nice bait and switch.

I took off a solid star for the contempt this book shows to women, something I am really getting tired of. More and more, I am getting sick of the slut shaming that happens in YA books, particularly when it is unwarranted. There is a girl in the book (can't be bothered to look up her name) who has a huge crush on Travis and is constantly maligned as a "slut" ...for no reason that I can see. She doesn't sleep with any guys (not that they mention anyway), she doesn't even make out with any other guys. She flirts with Travis, turns down invitations from other boys to go to a dance (hoping Travis will ask her out) and initiates a kiss with Travis, which he later describes as her "attacking" him. Yep. What a whorish slut.

Honest to god I am tired of this sort of thing.

The other women in the book are no better: there is the mother, who is the absolute worst fucking person you will ever meet. Then there is the best friend who sticks by Travis when he is forced out of the closet, then inexplicably turns her back on him coldly, with absolutely no reason given. All the women in this book are either horrible or "sluts". Funny, when it's only the men who are actually shown having sex.

Anyway...rant over. As for the story, it was very twisty and I appreciated that it wasn't predictable. I liked the fact that the author didn't allow (view spoiler). However, I didn't like that the ending seemed to imply (view spoiler)...it sort of defeated the purpose/message of the whole book.

Louan says

OMG I loved this story and can't wait to read the prequel and side stories, let alone the sequel. So much depth to all the characters not just the MC, so twists and turns it had everything. I wish I could give it more

stars, seriously, it held my attention; which is an minor miracle. myheartisinohio I'm totally hooked on your writing!

quesalgalosdragones says

started off enjoyably but there is only so much melodrama and wanton self-destructiveness i can deal with. also, a very good friend's parents were (recent) step siblings when she was born so that taboo was a non-issue. having said that maybe i don't like this cos the teenagers seem like real, annoying teenagers and since i mainly avoid those under 18 in real life...so props for that. also it is part of a WIP so maybe will check in later.

Evalangui says

"Chemistry" is a bit over the top and dramatic and after the initial first meeting of the main couple, banterous but actually surprisingly sexy surprisingly fast when one of them is claiming to be straight (and believes it). Strangely I could. not. stop. reading. The readability of Hellman's writing is unbelievable, the plots taken in isolation are nothing to write home about, twisty and hardcore but not particularly complex. The characters are interesting enough but one is never completely certain of anything with Travis, who is the narrator and clearly missing the big picture by a mile most of the time. BUT it has reads so easy, pulling you down and up and into the crazy rollercoaster their lives become when they meet.

I'm off to read book 2!

Aera says

I'm rating this four stars but with a warning tag of; first, it's basically a gay soap opera instead of a heterosexual one (where the characters make minimal character change and may struggle but they will always be setback because hey they series will end if it's not setback), and second, well it's entirely in first person. There were a lot of cliches that are hard to miss, but hey it works in this story. The repressed kid with the controlling parent meets the open and out and a person that should come with the tag "trouble" stamped to his back.

This book was like a train wreck and even though for me it was a predictable it was a suspenseful read and worthwhile. My viewpoint of the story has changed significantly after reading it's sequel "Reckless", which is not finished, in the fact I thought that one character was growing up, but when we get to the sequel I was extremely and sorely disappointed that my misconceptions were displaced. I'm pretty sure, no one ever grows up in this story, it's pretty hilarious because even though I know I said soap opera, I am kind of getting sick of the constant "I don't wanna grow up because of XXXX reason". It's so dumb.

SueM says

While I enjoyed this story for the most part, I admit there were a lot of stereotypes and clichès in it; nor does it help that it is incomplete (although it could be said that where it ends is enough, if you don't mind not

having a HEA/HFN ending).

The major issues for me were:

- * Mother is a bitch - selfish and cruel to her step-son

- * the utter horror of the pseudo incest was overdone IMHO

- * how after declaring eternal true love with one person, they fall in love again a mere one month later with another guy, simply because the first guy didn't answer a phone after being kicked out of his home by his father.

- *

A says

I'm obsessed with this book. Warning: it's not for the faint of heart. It is gut-wrenchingly angsty, but so addicting in it's passion and intensity. The MCs are fantastic, but it also includes a cast of supporting characters that are just as likeable. I loved Ben, Alex and James/Jamie, as well as Garen's dad. There is no HEA here, so if you need that to be happy with a book, you may want to avoid it. But the sequel is currently being written, and, while I know we're not in for an easy time, I'm hopeful we'll find some happiness for some of these guys, especially Garen, who has had one hell of a ride.
