

About Author

Season BubbleGirl is a writer with the added challenge of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. A Doggy Diary was her first published book. At twenty-four, she is a rising, versatile author. She will impact the world with her large variety of unusual and perceptive books of fiction, poetry, articles, and word puzzles. At www.bubblegirl.net, her individuality shines.



The official autobiography of Season BubbleGirl, the writer who hasn't left her home since 1997. A chemical accident left her with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), changing her life forever. Romance, challenges, medical battles, near-death experiences, achievements, and relationships: she explains in detail with nothing hidden.

Learn how she turned a debilitating experience into a daily journey of hope. Find how she lives with MCS comfortably, while still achieving her goals. Read about the soul behind her harsh truth.

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Absolute Individual



Season BubbleGirl

Absolute Individual Life In a Bubble

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Absolute Individual

Life In a Bubble

by

Season BubbleGirl



Fultus™ Books



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*I would like to thank all my friends and family for relaying events
I was unconscious for. You all deserve wings and halos!
Thank you to Teresa Phillips, my writing buddy,
and Carol Hegberg, my devoted editor.
A special thank you to my mother, who is the real hero.
Mum, if I was a pair of pants, you'd be my elastic.
Without you, I'd fall down and lose my dignity.
You've done okay too, old man!
S. BG.*

Preface

MCS can start many ways. A woman can work in a factory; another could use a washing detergent. This is my story.

I've tried to write this book many ways. None pleased me. I was writing to everyone else's expectations, not my own. How can I write a book that captures my essence unless I write it my way?

Although the book may not compare to my literary heroes, V. C. Andrews or Booth Tarkington, it depicts who I am. I'd rather fail as myself than succeed as someone else.

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Chapter 2

The Accident

I started second term two days after my friends. What kept me from returning puzzled them. Why was I late? A stupid stunt we'd seen other students do without consequence.

The prior weekend my neighbor Joe, Patrick, and I played around, wrestling and fighting. Joe tried to spray Patrick with a deodorant can. I'd grabbed it to spray Joe. Joe and I struggled while Patrick cheered us on. I lost my balance and fell to the floor. Joe snatched the can and sprayed it at my face. I tried to get up but couldn't. Joe continued to expel the can's contents, and I had no choice but to swallow it.

The pressure in my chest and the overwhelming sweet fog stopped me from announcing our game was over. My mind felt hazy.

The two boys were still in the midst of the fun.

Mum had been outside hanging the laundry. When she'd left the house, I was on the computer with Pat and Joe close by. When she returned, she yelled in fright, seeing the neighbor's son spray chemicals down my throat.

"Joe!" she hollered. "What are you doing? Let her up now!"

She noticed Pat holding me, his hands pressing against my shoulders, securely pinning me to the ground.

"Let her up!" she cried again.

An hour later I had a dry cough. We hoped that would be the only effect and would soon subside.

"I feel dizzy," I said.

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"I'm not surprised with all the stuff you swallowed. The room was a mist! Go lay down," Mum said.

Patrick decided to join me. "I'll watch your TV, and you can have a rest."

After I laid down, I fell unconscious. Pat realized this when he talked to me about something on the television. He tried to wake me.

No response.

When he did awaken me, my voice was barely audible. Horror struck me the few moments I was awake.

"Get help!" I told him in a strained whisper. Then I blacked out.

I remember Mum begging me to speak, but my voice had completely gone; my words were mimed. I also could not rise or stay awake.

I awoke in the car. The coughs were now high-pitched from my tightened throat, and I was unable to breathe.

"We're nearly there," my father announced, noticing my head up for a brief moment.

The next time I awoke, someone was carrying me into the hospital emergency department.

Only brief clips return to me of what occurred in my cubicle between black-outs. Doctors rushed around. Pills, liquids, and masks being administered. A doctor asked to see the tin of deodorant to assess what I had inhaled.

"The can says this product contains Butane," he said. "I think that's what saved the product from hardening in her lungs. If it had, we would have had to remove it by surgery. Your daughter was lucky it wasn't another brand."

Medications were repeated until the medical staff gained positive results. My ability to breathe slowly increased along with my consciousness. I had to write everything on paper because I couldn't speak without coughing.

How long have we been here? I wrote.

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"Eight hours," my mum said. She had not left my side since finding me choking in my bedroom.

The doctor returned. "It was a once-off occurrence. Do you feel well enough to go home?"

I shook my head and wrote, I'm scared it'll happen overnight. I don't want to die.

After such an ordeal, nobody cared to argue.

Mum agreed, then left to yell at the two boys involved in the fight, who waited in the car. Their mucking around ended. Joe burst into tears, while Pat remained unaffected. Emptied of ferocity, she returned to me, helping to organize my overnight stay.

When I was settled in a room, Mum, Dad, and Patrick said their goodbyes. Mum and I mouthed, *I love you*, as we did every night before I got into bed.

A lovely nurse stayed with me and took her time asking questions to fill out my forms, waiting while I forced my voice. She was a wonderful woman who called me *Poppet* and made me feel cared for.

I was given pills and reassurance every few hours. My vitals were checked. My throat felt as if it were encased in barbed wire. I drank the entire two liter jug of water overnight in small sips.

Sleeping was impossible. The elderly lady, who shared my room, was asleep, so I used the radio for company. When a song I liked crooned through the speaker, I tapped my foot to it.

My roommate kept my mind active the next morning. I woke to her packing a suitcase. This wouldn't have struck me as worrying but for her constant wiping of her bloody nose on a pair of underwear.

My parents had taught me to mind my own business, so I didn't mention it to the hospital staff when they brought our breakfasts. My room companion was never formally introduced to me, although she thought my name was Dorian and we were related.

Suddenly I remembered the nurses telling me she was an Alzheimer's patient. Her memory problems didn't concern me. Her strange behavior of wanting to close our door did. She tried to make it a casual suggestion, but I could tell it was done out of fear. Her bruises made me wonder if she was a victim of a home invasion.

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The nurse told the old woman to leave the door open. She also explained to her she wasn't going home that day. "The doctor wants you here longer," the nurse told her.

I had another attack just as my parents and Patrick arrived at midday. Mum hustled out for a doctor. No doctors were at the desk, and I had already rung the buzzer three times.

Nobody had told me I was in an elderly ward because of lack of beds. Three buzzes meant cardiac arrest. All the medical staff were checking heart patients. My mum returned with the nurse, and calm was restored.

"We would have found you sooner if we hadn't had an emergency," the nurse told us. "One elderly gentleman outside received a head wound when he fell. Two nurses have attended to him since."

The attack didn't last long with drugs already in my system. Once again I was reassured it would never happen again.

"Do you know what caused it?" the nurse asked.

"No," I replied.

Back then I didn't understand the why, though I do now. While eating breakfast, which I ate too quickly, the cleaners had come in to freshen the facilities. They unpacked the sink disinfectant, the mop, and the bathroom cleaners.

I gave them a pleading look when I felt my throat narrow. I was unable to speak of the violent reaction to come. All I did was mimic to the cleaner. She didn't understand. Perhaps I should have pressed the buzzer then.

I was hesitant to press the buzzer. When I had been in the hospital at thirteen to remove a bone spur, I was humiliated because of the buzzer. I had been asked to shower. I couldn't find the hot water and wondered if the small red button would start it.

Pressing that little button did not bring the hot water. Instantly I realized it was the call button. In a panic, I stabbed at the button, trying to turn it off. Once it's pushed, the little red button stays on, even in errors.

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A male nurse entered the bathroom to see me covering my vital areas, trying to pretend I had planned his visit.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I was looking for the hot water tap."

"It's under the pink flannel," he said blandly, pointing with his finger.

"Thank you," I said politely.

He left me with a scarlet blush on my face while I finished my shower.

On exiting the shower, I found the entire children's ward laughing.

Melanie, a girl I had befriended, walked to me. "I'm so sorry!" she said. "I forgot my face-washer. The nurse said it hid the hot water tap from you. Is that why you pushed the button?"

"I thought the button WAS the hot water switch. When it wasn't, I tried to turn it off."

Melanie laughed. "I don't mean to laugh. You may have been trying to turn it off, but all we heard was a continual buzzing. When the nurse told us what happened, we couldn't help but laugh!"

From then, hospital buzzers, bells, and sirens made me nervous. Those contraptions were surely put on Earth to aid idiots in getting attention!

My allergy attack settled quickly, and I was released with an asthma spray from hospital at three o'clock. The doctor had prescribed it, saying I had a severe breathing problem to the propellant.

My roommate wasn't aware of what happened beyond the curtain. She knew I was to go home that afternoon. While I talked with my boyfriend, she crept up, kissed me on my cheek, saying *goodbye*. It surprised me! I didn't wipe my cheek to save her dignity.

Later when my mum and I readied to leave, she had called out, "Dorian!"

I stopped while she caught up to us.

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"Where will I meet you so we can go home?"

"The bus station," I said, remembering she had mentioned going home in a bus during her mumbling.

"When will I meet you?" she asked.

"At four o'clock," I said, pretending to look at a watch.

She agreed and then waved us off.

I felt bad for lying to her, yet I didn't want to break her heart and tell her I wasn't her relative. By her actions, I could tell she was confused. I thought it better to *play along* with her; she probably wouldn't remember the incident anyway.

I spent the next two days in bed; I could barely move. The attack had paralyzed my immune system. Most of the time I laid on the lounge, only moving to go to the bathroom or to roll over. I didn't even worry about schoolwork. I normally concentrated on that before anything else.

Fright of a repeat attack made me follow orders and use the asthma puffer, though it did nothing but keep my coughs alive. The only time I changed from my pajamas or got out of bed was when we had to rush Mutt, our German shepherd, to emergency. My parents were afraid to leave me home alone.

At three in the morning, Mum found Mutt red-eyed, breathing hard and rapidly. I'd forgotten to take the inhaler to my bedroom. Mum realized this when she found the damaged canister under the dining table, the common place Mutt left his gatherings. Mutt had stolen and punctured it. Mist had escaped the canister and gotten into his eyes and been inhaled.

By the time we arrived at the surgery, the veterinarian had already consulted several resources. Because the poison was known, the vet knew quickly how to treat him. She prescribed charcoal tablets and checked his eyes with a UV light and dye for damage. He was fine by the morning's dawn.

Needless to say, Mum always checked where I left my puffer after that.

Notes

How the public can help

Remember:

- People wearing respiratory masks may not be a threat. Watch for actions of guilt before calling the police. Not everyone with her face covered is a terrorist!
- Tell patients if you are wearing scented products and step away.
- Don't smoke around confessed MCS patients.
- When burning essential oils, warn chemical-sensitive neighbors so they can take steps to avoid sickness. This goes also for those with heart problems, epilepsy, or pregnant women.

Store Owners or Retail Assistants:

- Keep perfumed products in one area.
- Clean shops with mild cleaners.
- Be prepared to read ingredient lists to customers on the phone.
- Offer delivery to safe places for the MCS person if money orders are sent.
- Warn customers if store has been freshly painted. Offer to bring the products and collect money outside .
- If handling goods, rinse your hands of chemicals thoroughly with water.
- Make sure product bags, such as plasters, cements, soils, or fertilizers, have no punctures.

Bedding stores:

- Check you can order bedding without dust mite inhibitors. Give people a choice!

Pet sellers or breeders:

- Do not treat animals for fleas until the buyer agrees to it.

Doctors:

- If visiting allergic people's homes, offer the first appointment of the day and apply your personal products afterwards.

I'm allergic to . . .

Aftershave

Antiseptics

Asphalt (freshly laid)

Bacon

Baking soda

Bath bombs

Bathroom cleaners

Bleaches

Body rubs

Books

Bubble baths

Bug bombs

Bug spray

Candles

Car air-conditioning

Car cleaners

Car fumes

Chest rubs

Cigarettes

Cigars

Cleansers

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Clothes bleaches
Cologne
Computers
Condoms
Contraceptive pill
Cow's milk
Craft paint
Deodorants
Deodorizers
Detergents
Diaphragms
Diesel
Dishwasher detergents
Ducted air conditioners
Dust mite inhibitors
Essential oils
Exfoliants
Eyeliner
Eye shadow
Fabric softener
Fallopian coils
Female condoms
Fertilizers
Flannel
Flea collars
Flea products
Floor cleaners
Floor polishes
Fly sprays
Fragrance oils
Fungicides
Gap sealant

Glass/window cleaners
Glue (most brands)
Hair bleach
Hair colors
Hair conditioners
Hair gels
Hair spray
Herbicides
Herbs (hydroponically grown)
Incense
Injectable contraceptives
Insect repellents
Ironing starches
IUDs
Lacquers
Laser printers
Latex
Leather
Leather protectants
Lip balm
Lip gloss
Lip liner
Lipstick
Magazines
Mascara
Medicinal creams
Moisturizers
Mouthwashes
Nail polish
Newspapers
Notebooks (most brands)
Paint

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Pens (most brands)
Perfumes
Pesticides
Pet deodorants
Petrol
Posters (unlaminated)
Potting soil
Pregnancy
Pre-soaks
Printed letters
Pseudoephedrine
Raw wood
Recycled paper
Roll-on deodorant
Rouge
Rubber
Sanitary pads (most brands)
Scented candles
Shampoos
Shaving creams
Shoe polish
Shower cleaner
Soaps
Solvents
Spa baths
Spermicides
Spray-can propellants
Sunscreen
Swimming pools
Tap water (can't drink)
Tattoos (freshly done)
Teeth whitening treatments

Tile adhesive
Tile grouts
Toilet cleaner
Toners
Toothpaste
Towels (most brands)
Vinyl
Wallpaper
Wallpaper paste
Water paint
Watercolor
Wax (shave instead)
Wool
Wool rugs

I'm not allergic to . . .

Acrylic yarn (after weeks of soaking in soap and vinegar)
Aluminum foil
Beads (washed)
Bodily fluids
Buttons (washed)
Cat hair
CD players
CDs (washed)
Ceramic statues (coated)
Cooking fumes
Copy paper (aired)
Cutlery
Dog hair
Dust
E-books
Electric drill

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Electricity
Epilady (shaver that pulls hair from the root)
Foam mattresses (not treated with pesticides)
Glass
Goat's milk (some brands)
Gold jewelry
Kitchen utensils
Kitchen wrap (most brands)
Magnifying glass
Metal tools
Methylated spirits (sparingly)
Mirror
Mold
Natural gas
PDA storage cards (after a week of airing)
Pens (generic biros)
Plastic bags (particular brands)
Plastic plants (some brands)
Plastics (most aired)
Pocket PC parts (aired)
Pocket PCs (Toshiba's only, after a week of airing)
Razors (excluded if contain gels or creams)
Reading glasses (no polish)
Rock
Rust
Sewing cotton (first washed)
Silver jewelry (washed)
Soy milk (some brands)
Stainless steel
Staple gun
Steam cleaning (water only)
Stickers (some brands)

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Sticky tape (particular brand)
Stone
Stuffed toys (after soaking)
Styrofoam (some brands)
Sunbeam appliances (excluding non-stick items)
Tampons (most brands)
Teddy bear fur (soaked)
Telephones (some brands)
Tiles, Ceramic (without adhesive or grout)
Tinsel (some brands after washed)
Toilet paper (some non-fragranced brands)
TVs and stereos (particular brands)
Video cassette recorders
Videos (after three months airing)
Water-based lacquer (six months airing)
Yogurt (some brands)
Zippers

Sources

Most of the information comes from my trials, other patients, or random Internet articles. The listed books I read to understand basic anatomical principles.

Books

The Best Practical Folk Remedies, edited by Bookman Health Library.

Bush Medicine by Tim Low

Bush Tucker by Tim Low

Contraception: The Facts by Peter Bromwich and Tony Parsons

Your Skin From Acne To Zits by Jerome Z. Litt, M.D.

Overcoming Acne: The How and Why by Alvin, Robert, and Virginia Silverstein

Online

Assorted web pages on natural alternatives

Natural remedy web pages

www.danoz.com.au

www.lifeglo.com.au

About.com

Natural product web pages

Chemical Sensitivity newsletters from Australian Allergy Support and health food stores

Doctors

Respiratory specialists

Immunologists

General Practitioners

Counselors

Television

Stories on *A Current Affair* and *Today Tonight*.

Home-improvement shows

Self-improvement shows

Print media concerning health issues and food practices

Home-improvement TV shows (Australia): *Our Place, Better Homes and Gardens*, *Burke's Backyard*, *Ground Force*

Religion

King James Bible, aged public domain edition from www.olivetree.com

Other MCS Sufferers

Green Canary <http://groups.yahoo.com/greencanary>

MCS AUSTRALIA http://groups.yahoo.com/mcs_australia

MCS web pages and support groups