

Intern In Turn

Rachel Dunnahoe

My name is Mary Golde and 87% of the people I tell that to don't believe me the first time around. I suppose being born without a middle name is something akin to being born without an appendix: nobody really knows what it's there for, anyway, but you're still considered a little weird if you didn't start out with one. And I guess most people who do have a middle name end up losing it to appendicitis somewhere along the line, anyway. I don't have much of a practical sense of loss because I lack one, but at the same time just knowing it's not there can be very disheartening. The middle name, I mean. Of course, someday some really important people might discover it does have a purpose, after all, and anyone without one will die of some kind of radioactive flesh-eating disease. The appendix, I mean. All this to say, my name is Mary Golde but I generally go by Marigold because for some reason having two names instead of three is deplorable yet having one name instead of two is the sign of a legend.

You could say my life is as interesting as my name. That is to say—it isn't. Although, considering my name is unique, it can be mistaken for interesting at any given time and therefore is an illusory attempt at making you think I am an intriguing person. So let me disillusion you by stating I spend most of my time outside of class working as an intern for a publishing company down the street from my campus. This means for the better part of the day, every other day, I shred papers and file folders and answer emails and make paperclip necklaces and hole-punch documents and wish I had an iPod. I know there are supposed to be a lot more commas in that sentence, but since I don't want to type them and you don't want to read them I felt it was not only acceptable but necessary to leave them out.

Since it is the end of the fall semester, I am now assigned the wonderful task of moving all of the files from one cabinet to another. Needless to say, there are thousands of papers for each year alone. That means I get to take all of the documents from five years ago and shred them, making room for the jobs that will be handled starting after the New Year. This is my favorite time of year because, not only do I get to play Christmas music at my desk without the rest of the office getting mad at me, but I also get to spend ample time with my best friend—the shredder. You would think I would get tired of it after spending my last two winter holidays shredding the living daylight out of everything, but that is not the case. I think what pretty much keeps me in good spirits about this task is that I was knighted during November of '05 as The Shredder. Technically I should be The Feeder of The Shredder, since I am not the actual machine, but if Cashiers get to be named after their tools, then by golly, I should be too! Last year I received a framed photo of The Shredder (as seen in the first *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movie) as a Christmas gift from one of the editors. I kept it on my desk for five months, but it was stolen sometime between May 19th and May 23rd of 2006. I have a few suspicions as to who the culprit is, but it's best to keep such accusations to myself. All I know is, after the picture went missing the guy who used to pick up my bountiful trash bags filled with shredded paper stopped coming to work. The new guy was much more helpful in that he came to take the bags away before the room was lined wall-to-wall with them.

My life can be defined by the immortal phrase, "She was gone but not missed, like the period after Dr. on a Dr Pepper can." This is how I was able to slip past my parents' Make-Sure-Whatever-You-Do-She-Doesn't-Meet-Boys Radar; this is how I was able to get through the majority of my secondary education without turning in more than three

assignments a semester or showing up for more than three classes a week. It's amazing how much you can get done in life if you just don't get noticed. Before I had even graduated high school I was the author of 17 plays, nine collections of poems and short stories, and was editing the second draft of my first novel. Not that everything I produced was quality. Or that I even thought about letting anyone read what I had written. It was just what I did to pass the time. And when you don't show up for more than three classes a week, you have a lot of time on your hands.

I suppose the internship at the publishing company attracts me so much because of my background as a writer. But I'm not deluded enough to think I would ever be published. I'm pretty sure no one at work even knows I do any creative writing. As far as they're concerned, I'm the awkward college student who shreds paper so she can afford a red Corolla she never really wanted in the first place. And that's just fine with me. I don't plan on staying in Orchid County much longer, and as long as I'm leaving I see no point in developing relationships of any kind. I mean, it's not like I'll see any of these people again. It's not like they would care, anyway. Like I said before, I'm usually gone but never missed. I wish I could say the same for that portrait of The Shredder. Unfortunately, it seems I have grown more attached to that ridiculous piece of junk than I would have ever expected. I guess that happens sometimes, though. Stuff happening when you least expect it. Like endings.