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## REVENGE OF THE ALPHABETICALLY CHALLENGED

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After a lifetime of being last, Stephanie Yeldell turns the tables. She has a virtually infinite store of experiences to call upon, from getting the last (rickety) desk to being the last to get a diploma. The reader can't help but feel a twinge of outrage on her behalf, but Stephanie does not wallow in self-pity. Instead, she shares her determination to "live life loudly." In her words, "I actually modeled my essay after a rant I had had with a friend of mine over dinner. When I sat down to write, it just came to me to turn that into an essay."

### **"...and Stephanie Yeldell" by Stephanie Yeldell**

"...And finally, Stephanie Yeldell," is a phrase that I hear more than one could ever possibly imagine. One might ask "why, Stephanie? Why is this?" The answer is simple: Our world seems to deem it entirely necessary to list individuals in alphabetical order, and by last name. For those who are alphabetically challenged, this form of listing individuals, that seems to be unbelievably prevalent, is every single shade of irritating one could possibly experience. It's annoying. In class, I get the bent, rickety, and estranged desk that has been rejected to the very back corner of the room. My locker is always last in the row, usually next to a doorway, trashcan, stairwell,

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or a dirty couch that is constantly littered with random people. I am the last on every list. I am the last to receive anything, like parking stickers, important papers, letters from school, permission slips,

report cards, school pictures, tests, and exam schedules. I sit next to teachers on class trips and will be announced last when it comes to participation in chorus, A Cappella, and theatre. I was the last to

walk across the stage for National Honor Society, and I will be the last to graduate in my class. In short: fate has it that I am last.

The art of dealing with being last is an act that I have nearly perfected after eighteen years of trial and error. The solution I have come up with: live life loudly. By this, I do not mean vocally (though I tend to be), but I mean loudly in respect to presence, and character. I find that if I can pour all of my being into whatever I am doing, it shows. I try to milk every moment for all that it may contain. I speak with all the passion words I possess and sing every note I can hit with relish. I want my presence to be received the second I walk into a classroom as well as it is when I walk into light on stage. On stage, I am more than an actor. In any role, no matter how small, I am a story teller. I can affect people. I can entertain them. I can open their eyes. I can take them to places they have never even dreamed of imagining. I can bring them more joy and more sorrow than perceived possible. I have an impact, no matter how small; despite the fact that my name will be listed last on the play bill. This impact, this connection, is monumental. It is these loud desires that run through my alphabetically challenged veins, and drive me to embody such a loud charisma and character.

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Stephanie Yeldell attended Providence Day School in Charlotte, North Carolina.