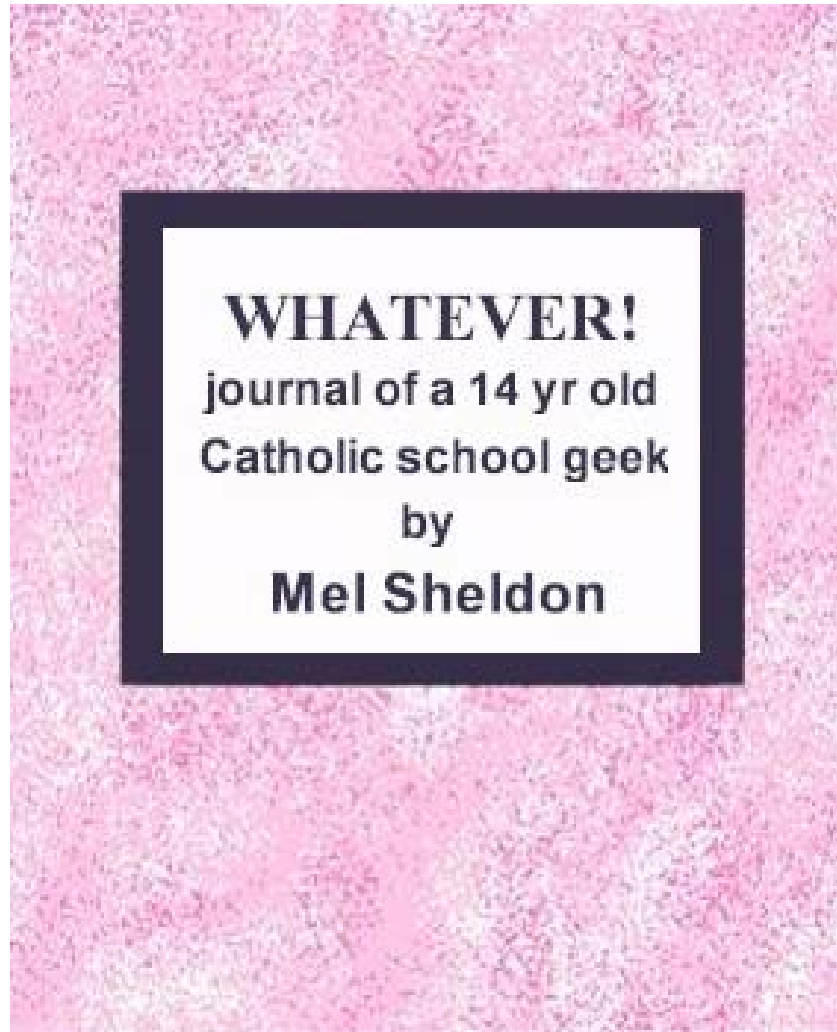


Free excerpt from “Whatever!” by Mel Sheldon



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Whatever

Journal of a 14 yr old catholic school Geek
By Guillermina Rosa Kimberly Cardoza
(most heinous name ever.)

Aug.31st, 2004

Dear Journal, (I feel stupid writing that)

Can you believe it? Guillermina Rosa Kimberly Cardoza does not have a cell phone! I like totally need one. Redd Oyima, my best friend has one. Weird name huh? Uck, I hate my name. Everyone calls me Geri anyway. The only reason my name is this is because of my Grandma Mary (Guillermina is her first name but she uses her middle name-see she even hates it!) thought she was dying when my mother was busy laboring away with me and my brother. Turns out it was just a panic attack. She always thinks she'd dying, especially after three shots of tequila. The panic attack because we were born on Halloween and my mom was dressed like a nun 'cause the family was having a dress up party.

I cannot believe I got this assignment and I want to call Redd, but my stupid brother is on the phone. My first English class of freshman year and I get this assignment: What if you won the lottery?

Normally, I'd have fun with this one, I like to write but I'm so totally stumped. It was like the biggest news story of the summer. The California mega millions was at an all time high of 800 million. There was only one winning ticket. People were going nuts! I saw it on the KBRQ news, the one with the cute sports anchor guy (but no Ashton Kutcher) and the lady with the evil leprechaun chin. Anyway, the big thing was, there was only one winning ticket and nobody had claimed it yet. My Dad, who buys tickets, once a week, even though Mama told him it was a major waste of money, puts them in a drawer in the kitchen and doesn't look at them. Then one day after me and Mama come home, me from summer school math class and Mama from work, to find Dad and Rob (my dorky sports-nut twin brother), with funny looks on their faces.

WE WON THE LOTTERY!

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WE WON THE LOTTERY!

Sorry, I just like writing that.

We did the usual things: went shopping, shopping and more shopping. We gave money to our relatives on the strict promise that they would not say a word to anyone, like the media. My parents didn't want to be bothered a whole bunch and I don't blame them. I saw Oprah when she had those lottery winners on. Oh my God, it was like a disaster! Being hounded by all these people they had to move and get new friends. Only bummer thing about this was it happened two weeks before school started. I told Mama I didn't need to go to school that they could just give me this unlimited account to travel the world and I could get a small dog like Paris Hilton. I was only half kidding; I really didn't want the dog.

She said no, I had to finish my summer school class and go to school. I tried then for a cell phone, because that's what I really wanted, but that didn't work either. I swear I'm the last girl alive who doesn't have one. They won't let Rob have one so I feel better.

So here I am in Advanced Algebra 202 writing in this journal my mother gave me. It's pink leather on the outside and has gold edging. The only reason I took the math summer school class was

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because I was afraid that I would be behind everyone else. Which is a total joke, because I was offered to be bumped two grades up in elementary school but Mama said no. I just needed to be kept busy. She said it important for my social skills that I stay with the same kids my age. Whatever. The only social skills I have is geek.

But I was nervous about doing well in high school and Mama also said that I would have drove her nuts if I didn't have something to do over the summer.

Mama runs a cleaning service called Mrs. Clean-Up with employees and everything. Dad is the manager of the apartment building we live in, which totally explains why we haven't bought a house yet. Dad has to find a replacement and keeps getting all these freaks, like the guy who reeked of cigarettes and had boobs (not joking, this is California). Mama said she hasn't had time to even look at a house with all the stuff she's been doing for her business. Rob asked them why don't they retire now, but Dad said, “What, then we just sit around? Boring.”

But Dad hasn't said what he's going to do when he finds a replacement and we move. We weren't rich before, just doing okay, and the only reason we (me and Rob) had been going to private school was because I wasn't doing well grade wise (I was bored and hated homework) and now here we are. My parents could barely afford it but...I don't know. Whatever.

So I get this assignment on my first day at Five Wounds Catholic Girls High School (why the hell would you name your high school that?). It's in downtown San Jose about four blocks from my brother's school, (all boy) Warren-Dahl Catholic High School. We live six blocks away on Eighth Street, so we walk home. Usually I have to wait for Rob, since it's easier for him to walk to my school, then we walk home. Redd lives in the condo building across the street from mine and she walks with us. I asked Mama what I should write and she said, “Be creative.” Yeah, that helps. I need to ask Redd! Rob is still on the phone! Maybe Mama will let me go over. I'll ask.

Bye! G.

Sept. 1

I hate Senora Klepperstein; this is not a good way to start out my freshman year. No normal woman plucks her eyebrows that much and re-draws them on! Oh! Here she comes!

Later, Art class....

Dude, I have so much homework it's not even funny. The reason I hate Senora Klepperstein is because she refuses to allow us to speak English at all. Um, isn't it Spanish 101? Aren't we going to need explanations on why things are the way they are? And, like, she expects me to know Spanish because I'm Mexican. My parents don't even speak it! Only Grandma Mary and a couple of my aunts. I'm so dead. Redd is taking Japanese. The big cheater...she already does it at home. I totally thought her mom's name was Mama-san for an entire year when I met her. Gotta go, the teacher is staring.

G.