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Discovery

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Discovery

Author Bio

Aubrey Link is a senior English Major with a Writing Concentration and a Philosophy Minor. She has been published in *The New Southern Fugitives Magazine* and is working on her first novel. She lives in Huntingdon Valley, PA with her four dachshunds.

Discovery

AUBREY LINK

Scan. Print. Print. Print. Jam... Print. Every file must have two copies. There are stacks of them, filling that whole collapsible table. Fifteen stacks at least. Sorted by date and not alphabetical order. Yes, all of them must be copied. Who will copy them? Well, me of course. But it's not a job just anyone can do.

Copiers are temperamental; they won't work for just anybody. First the settings have to be changed to two copies and then if it's under fifty pages, the automatic stapler can be selected. Over fifty, the copies have to be wrapped in rubber bands. More than four hours of straight copying and the machine will overheat. A blinking yellow square on the screen means it's out of paper. There are new boxes under the table.

Every day I walk from the table to the copier for four hours. Just those five steps. Back and forth. I've never dropped a file, but sometimes it makes me dizzy taking that walk. Sometimes my vision goes blurry as page after page pours hot from the slot.

I read the files sometimes. That's my favorite part. In between refilling the tray and walking to pick up a new file I have to do something. I watch each sheet as it comes out. Most feature domestic abuse. If I'm lucky, there's a murder. Those are far more exciting than the DUIs. If there are pictures, you have to scan them first, before you can copy them.

Sometimes there are text messages. Those are the easiest to read because they are usually nice and big. Once I read a woman Facebook messaged a friend to call the police because her boyfriend came at her with a knife. It's essential to make sure the order does not change when flipping through the pages. Everything has to be in order.

I get a lot of paper cuts. It's not until I'm driving home that I notice the little stings when I grip the steering wheel. I never know I have them when I'm working.

When the copier overheats, it smells like it's burning. It's hot to the touch and it jams continually, trying to receive a respite from my persecution. No one is allowed breaks. Not even me. The smell lingers all day, not enough to set off the alarms, but enough that it sticks in your nostrils. I've smelled it for hours after my shift. I wonder if it lives in my clothes.

Sometimes the interns or attorneys need my copier. I have to step aside. It irks me. Attorneys always have urgent printing that needs to be done

immediately. My precious discovery can wait. No matter what, I know who really controls the machine. That's me.

I despise cutting off a file right in the middle of a copy because someone else needs the copier. It's just rude. That's how I came to be here. It was last Thursday past when I was in the middle of a job and a female attorney came right over. I had been going for two hours, fading into that state where all that matters is the next file. She took the pages of the file right from the scanner. From the table to the copier, those pages are mine. No one else touches them. Not even the attorneys.

Everything was going along, her pages flinging themselves into another tray while mine sat incomplete. I tried to be patient. I was listening to the pages. Scan. Print. Print. Print. Jam... Print. I'm not quite sure how my hand wrapped itself into her hair, but there it was slamming her skull into the edge of the machine to the rhythm of fresh copies being created. Scan. Slam. Slam. Slam. Jam. Slam.

I don't see why it's such a big deal. Her blood didn't even splatter on the pages. She didn't damage the copier. I just let her slide to the floor and took out her copies, keeping them together with a paper clip. The file I worked on was completed and I bound it together in rubber bands. I was quite confused when I was taken away from my work and placed in handcuffs. Like I said, nobody is allowed touch the files but me.