Student Name

Mr. Harris

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One Obstacle at a Time

During my younger years, I remember dreaming of becoming an astronaut, but learning of all the dangers and risks of this occupation makes me change my thoughts. On the way to become who one yearns to be or where someone desires to go in life, many challenges will be encountered. Homer’s epic poem the Odyssey explains the troubles the Trojan War hero, Odysseus, finds himself in on his decade-long expedition home. In ten years, I imagine myself finishing medical school - my ultimate goal. To reach this, I need to be top of my class in high school and then choose a college. After, I should learn to manage my time when living independently. Although I will not face any mystical creatures, the obstacles and choices I will confront on my journey to becoming a doctor resemble those of Odysseus.

The first hardship I will face is doing well in high school. My class rank needs to be near the top because it will impress college recruiters; plus to be valedictorian is one minor goal of mine. But other students strive for this impressive position too. They give their all into their educations too - studying and trying their best. The fight for this title is similar to the “Test of the Bow” - the suitor to string Odysseus’ bow and fire an arrow through twelve axes will have Penelope’s, Odysseus’s wife, hand in marriage. Many desire one specific ambition, but they have to compete against others. However, there will not be any dueling involved in this competition. In the end, only one will be victorious - similar to Odysseus being the only person to be able to complete the test.

A difficult decision I will have to make following high school is choosing the college I will attend. Each college provides its own attractive advantages. One might be the best school since it has the best program for the career I wish to pursue. I could like another one more than the rest for its proximity to home. The college that is more affordable or offers me a scholarship would be hard to turn down also. Scylla and Charybdis also proves hard to choose from for Odysseus. Scylla, with its six heads, will devour six of his men, but Charybdis, a maelstrom, will completely destroy their ship, which includes its passengers. These villains provide equally bad situations. In my case, however, it is the opposite, and it is not a life and death decision. The possibles choices each has remarkable benefits that I will definitely take into consideration. I will most likely choose the college with the most propitious package, just like the hero deciding to sail closer to Scylla.

A problem that I have been dealing with and will continue to deal with is time management. When I live independently, I need to make the best use of extra or free time and not just waste them on fun activities. I cannot get tempted to go out always and party for assignments and studying are important in keeping my grades up. Without good marks, I will not be able to obtain my overall goal or even finish school successfully. Like my situation, Calypso tries to persuade Odysseus to stay on her island, which means he will not go back to Ithaca at all. She does this by offering immortality, the condition of never dying, but, in return, he could not leave her. So he has to choose between his mission or this once-in-a-lifetime proposal. He keeps his priorities clear and does not give in. The choice I will make, though, is not permanent; if I decide to go to a party, I could always change my mind then go home. This is a situation that will always come my way, and I will hopefully follow Odysseus’ footsteps of keeping focus on what is crucial in attaining my ambition.

My upcoming journey will come with struggles that attempt to hold me back from being a doctor, just like “monsters” tried to keep Odysseus from returning home. I want to be the best in high school, but so do almost every student. Different colleges offer even opportunities that will meet my criteria and benefit my life one way or another. Freedom and independence will be intriguing when I am finally on my own. Challenges are important because they teach vital lessons and help one mature as a person. The Odyssey has taught me that when I have reached my ambition, there will still be new obstacles, but it is about overcoming them one at a time.