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English 100

Formal Assignment #1: Narrative Project

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Broken Dreams

It was a breezy fall afternoon, the sky was blue and trees blossomed in various shades of orange and red. I stepped outside my front door and grabbed the mail out of the gold mailbox hanging on the brick wall. It was my senior year and I had just returned home from school. I flipped through the pile of mail until a purple and gold pamphlet caught my attention, it read “Apply Now to Join the Herd of Golden Rams.” The smiling students on the pamphlet made me excited because I already knew I wanted to apply to this school early that year, to West Chester University. All three of my brothers attended, along with my mother and older sister. The campus was basically engraved in me; how could I not go there?

With the pamphlet in my hand, I raced up the stairs to my mom’s room to discuss the possibility to my future. “Mom, look what came in the mail”, I exclaimed while waving around the West Chester pamphlet.

“I see; could you get your sister? I need to talk to the both of you.” My mom seemed uneasy and upset. “Okay”, I said slowly a little confused. I ran down the steps to receive my twin sister, sitting on the top bunk of our bunk bed in our room.

“Ana, mom needs us.”

“Ugh why?” She asked with an attitude. I was interrupting her from watching YouTube on her phone.

“I don’t know, let’s find out.” We walked back up the stairs to meet our mom for our little meeting. My mom was sitting on her bed, laying out various blue sheets of paper from an envelope she had opened. Ana and I looked at each other, puzzled on what she was doing.

“Girls, sit down”, my mom finally said. She pushed back her curly hair and paused for a moment, her voice was a little shaky. “I want you to look at this graph”, she said as she held up a blue sheet with two graphs, avoiding our eye contact. “As you can see, there is a difference in the cost of tuition of community college compared to a four-year university.” Immediately, a wave of disappointment filled my mind. I knew where this conversation was going. Holding back tears, I was crushed. My mom continued, “Unfortunately, I am unable to send the both of you to a four-year school. I’m only able to afford to send you to community college.”

I was upset and angry. Just several months ago in the summer, she had taken us to visit West Chester University, her beloved school. Ana knew it was the perfect school for her because of the Early Education program. I was skeptical of the school at first only because everyone in my family went there. But after visiting the art department, I fell in love with it. She proceeded, “You’re still able to attend West Chester, but in order to do so you must do two years of community college at Delaware County Community College.”

Ana and I just nodded in agreement because we knew how hard this was for her. We didn’t fight back like we usually did. Although my mom made this conclusion to send us to community college, it was made due to the financial decisions my dad had caused for my family several years earlier. My parents had divorced when I was younger because of the financial decisions my dad had created for my mom. He destroyed her credit, and it caused her to become self-supportive.

My family and I lived in a beautiful home, with a pool and a giant backyard. Friends and family regularly visited and we hosted many gatherings and parties. In 2012, we discovered that we had to move, and eventually found a smaller house nearby to move into. My dad's choices made me depressed. I saw a therapist which made me feel a little better, but it didn't bring back my old life. Eventually I recovered as it matured me, but I am still faced with the remnants of the financial choices my dad had produced.

I began to think of how my life would've been like if my dad didn't make this decision. Moving in 2012 would have made sense in order to save money. All of my brothers moved out of the house so a smaller house was reasonable. But what if he didn't ruin my mother's credit. He could have worked constantly to fix his mistakes and this wouldn't have happened. But this thought just angered me because I knew it wasn't my reality.

My dreams of attending a four-year university was ruined. I felt embarrassed and was always nervous whenever a classmate at school would ask, "What school are you going to next year?" I would pause, biting my lip and unable to answer. Everyone passing in the hallway at school was wearing a school t-shirt or sweatshirt. I felt so out of place, wearing my simple white sweater. At Strath Haven, my high school, everyone was so intellectually competitive. After years of hard work and good grades, I knew I could have been accepted to West Chester.

I still love my dad but I regularly question, "Why would he do this to us?" All of my life, I have lived with my mom. Occasionally, Ana and I would visit our dad on the weekends. For some reason, I can't help but feel resentment towards my mom. I couldn't take my anger out on my dad because he wasn't around as often. I was aware that community college is still a great place to receive an education and great for saving money, but I knew it wasn't the right choice

for me. I was finally ready to move on to a new chapter in my life. After receiving that news, I knew I would be at a loss of experiences and independence I desperately crave at that moment in my life.

“Is it a coincidence that everyone is wearing a school shirt today?” I questioned a classmate sitting next to me. Friends and classmates everywhere were taking pictures together.

“No, today is college decision day” she exclaimed, wearing an oversized red Temple hoodie.

Sitting at my desk, I sank into my blue metal chair. It was cold to the touch. I didn't continue our conversation because it would lead to asking where I was going. I felt like I was a failure. I couldn't show off the achievement of being accepted to a school I wanted to go to. I could've worn my favorite grey West Chester University sweatshirt my brother gifted to me, but instead it was sitting in a box, in the bottom of my closet.