

English 12: Synthesis of Text

Scale: 6

Comment: This paper is awarded a 6. The use of examples and supporting evidence are well-chosen, and there is a sophisticated approach to synthesis throughout. This paper employs skilful control and effective writing.

Amid despair, hardship and poverty a shining glimmer of hope was envisioned through the eyes of little Jenny and the remarkable Chris Gardner. Optimism brought them each to place where life was better; allowing them to overcome dire circumstances despite the doubts of others. As the sole driving force for the unique way in which each of these characters achieved their goals, optimism was the key component to their individual successes.

From the era of the depression to a modern day struggle Jenny and Chris maintained a positive attitude. Throughout the depression, times were hard and poverty was a mere way of life for thousands of families across the country. Jenny, stuck in these times, a young girl destined to a life of “chickens and cows... [a] gawky know-nothing...” (Sinclair Ross, 2), used an optimistic outlook to imagine a joyful and rich moment in time. Chris Gardner on the other hand, lived through the depression and into a world of homelessness in which he was able to not only survive but eventually make something truly great of himself. While getting off the streets and providing for his son was an accomplishment in itself, Chris Gardner found much success in starting his own company and his fame with the media. “The Gardner gospel of persistence, progress, and faith...”(Jia Lynn Yang, 8), brought about a tangible success to which his entire life had been committed. In contrast, the inner greatness seen in those comparatively short moments of Jenny’s childhood were powered by the same optimism.

The power of maintaining an optimistic spirit had also enabled the characters to overcome the downfalls of those around them. Jenny was able to surpass the doubt and pity of her family as they continually spoke of her future as though she had no chance of success, no opportunity for a better existence. Finding hope in the magical daydreams of the circus Jenny’s spirit facilitated the fantasy against all odds. Chris Gardner also endured hardship in ways that he himself could not have avoided. With “his 20-month-old son, whom he “was raising alone”(6), Chris was forced to work twice as hard in his life as a single parent. The stereotypes accompanying his homelessness must have also been incredibly difficult. It was only with the blessing of the characters’ optimism that such surmounting power was achieved.

Invisioning a better life was the key to success for both of these characters in similar ways. An imagination with the power to bring life to the vision a circus with “a red-coated brass band, a clown, an elephant ripped through the middle.”(1) was Jenny’s mechanism of escape as “...the threats of what would happen next time failed to touch her.” (Sinclair Ross, 3). Just like Jenny, Chris Gardner also saw something greater in a vision, which combined with his optimism, brought him to the miraculous ending to his truly amazing life’s story. An example of symbolizing this vision was described in Chris Gardner’s story of the man with the Ferrari.

“One day he saw a red Ferrari and, ...asked the owner what he did for a living. Stockbroker the man replied. From that moment, Gardner determined to become one too.”(Jia Lynn Yang, 7)

His belief that such a task was even possible as he was literally homeless, goes to show how his optimism played such a leading role in his life.

These characters' abilities to overcome the hardships of their times was truly amazing. Whether it was the attempt to gain a small taste of the joys a childhood dream could bring, or a struggle to success in the harsh modern world of business and wealth, optimism paved the way for the happiness the characters found. With a vision and a positive attitude Jenny and Chris Gardner succeeded to find a better world in their own individual ways.