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Instructor's Name

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Date

Godspeed, Youthful Adventurer!

Youth is an impetuous fire that burns away the irrelevancies, leaving a pure product: a stalwart, resolute adult ready to take on all that life can mobilize against him. All too often, however, the newly minted currency is irrevocably flawed. As age and experience are gained, small imperfections in the code of personality appear that fester and grow like a cancer, killing incentive and fortitude until the individual is so weakened that he will fall for anything. Must this be? Can parental and environmental influence mitigate against life's pitfalls? My classmate, John Doe, is a case in point.

Regarding his physical characteristics, John is a strapping young man, six feet tall and weighing in at 210 pounds. Celtic ancestry is reflected in his facial features and sturdy build, and he has auburn-brown hair and beard as well as hazel eyes, which burn with intensity when he discusses his passions. John exhibits little, if any, artifice. He looks directly into the eyes of those he is speaking to and gives straight answers to straight questions. The tone of his voice is sonorous but has a mischievous quality to it. He is also quite fastidious about his grooming and hygiene, and he has been known to travel as far as fifty miles in search of a suitable hair stylist.

From all indications during our interview, John had a good childhood provided by a close-knit and loving family. His parents, who are of Irish ancestry, were married in Honolulu, Hawaii, and later moved to Arkansas, where John has spent his entire life in a small town. However, despite his small-town upbringing, John is comparatively well traveled and has

traveled to Hawaii and Jamaica on family vacations. He will also celebrate his twenty-first birthday in Dublin, Ireland, a generous gift from his parents to acquaint him with his heritage and to reconnect him with his origins and experience the people, customs, music, and political structure of the Emerald Isle. He already exhibits the friendly, gregarious manner for which the Celts are famous; the art of conversation seems to come easily to him, and he laughs readily and with sincerity. He also has a history of fortitude and longevity in his family, as his grandmother is 101 years old.

John appears focused and grounded in reality. He has lofty but realistic goals and has his immediate life after college already mapped out. He plans to marry his high school sweetheart after graduation, but he also recognizes that event is several years away. He is determined to be a marine biologist and has expressed interest in advancing undersea technology and has asserted that his resolve will not allow emotional issues to dissuade him from his destiny. He has also established a friendship with another Arkansas Tech student who is majoring in marine archaeology and has hopes that their professional paths will cross in the future.

Overall, John appears to be like most young people at the beginning of the great adventure called life—full of hope, confidence, and determination. He has yet to face the reversals and disappointments that fate hands out to everyone in unequal amounts; consequently, how he navigates through these rocks and ruts on the road of life will determine what kind of man he really is. Hopefully, these trials and tribulations of youth will not deter young John. Someday, God willing, he will be that Irish adventurer, collecting and categorizing the remaining species to be discovered way down in Davy Jones's Locker. So, hopefully, he will remember that old Irish proverb, "May the wind be always at your back," especially if he is downwind from a dead whale.