

Alec Compare and Contrast Essay

In our modern world, almost every step you take from birth to death is watched. You progress and grow to bigger and better things throughout your lifetime, thus becoming better with each of those little steps you take. Those small steps lead to bigger steps and eventually, you will have left a path behind for your successors to follow. What sets some people apart from others is that those who don't decide to follow that path forge a new one and thus change everything. Without people who were different, and who kept striving for greatness even though they were told they couldn't or shouldn't do it, our world would be nowhere near as advanced as it is today. People like Martin Luther King Jr., The Wright Brothers, Nelson Mandela, and countless others throughout time who chose to lead a different path. To quote the great poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Only you can decide what lies ahead and by "forging" your own path, you control where that path will lead. In other words, you should not let others control who you are or what you are going to do rather you are the ultimate authority in your own world. In the books Champion and The Name of the Star, several characters lead their own paths, make their own decisions, and change everything.

In Champion by Marie Lu, the main character Day has lost everything. His mother, father, and one of his brothers are all dead and he can't love his "girlfriend" June because she is a constant reminder of his family. He also has a disease in which he was told by the doctors is going to kill him in the next month or two. His brother, Eden, is the only thing he has left and he constantly struggles to watch and protect him at every cost. Long story short, it is about 100 years in the future and America as we know it has split into two combatting nations, The Republic, and The Colonies. An epidemic is spreading like mad throughout the colonies and they will attack The Republic if they do not provide a cure. The only catch is that The Republic doesn't have a cure. Eden does have a disease that is similar to the colonies' current outbreak and The Republic wants to get Eden from Day so they can run tests on him, find a cure, and save the world. These tests can't guarantee Eden's complete safety though and this hurts Day more than anything. He can't bear to

lose the one thing he has left that he loves in Eden. So being the protective brother that he is, Day says no and keeps the Republic away from Eden. Day even threatens to have the people revolt if they try to take Eden. Everyone, from Day to the government has a say in this except for Eden himself. Finally, when Day tells Eden about the whole ordeal, to his surprise, Eden agrees to go through with the tests. In the book, Eden says this to Day "I remember what the Republic did to us. Of course I do. But the colonies are invading. I want to help... it's my decision to make. Not yours." Eden shows here that he wants to help the Republic by putting his life at risk. He went against everything that Day said to him but in the end, Eden made his own decision and did not let others sway that decision. He set an example of courage and bravery by making his own choices while forging that new path. All while displaying exemplary character which you must put forth in order to achieve such success. This theme is also on display in The Name of the Star by Maureen Johnson and can thus be compared to Champion.

In The Name of the Star, Rory discovers that she can see ghosts. A string of murders pop up near her location in London that are just like the Ripper murders from over 100 years ago. In addition, Rory thinks that the killer is a ghost who is after her. An example of when Rory forges her own path is when she is going to face the Ripper once and for all with her ghost seeing/fighting friends Calum and Stephen. In the book, it says "I have to go with you," I said... "Not a chance," Stephen said quickly. "We're hiding you somewhere along the way. You don't have a choice," I countered. "Neither do I. He wants me. He's going to come after me. And if you fail, he's going to get me eventually..." "Let me put this another way," I said. "I'm coming. I'm not asking permission. I can't live like this. I can't live not knowing how this ends." Rory shows here how she is forging

her own path. She went against everything Stephen said to her knowing that she may not come back alive. Just like Eden, Rory shows bravery and courage in her own way by facing her problem head on. Just as Eden sacrificed everything for his nation and himself, Rory does the same for herself. She took control of the situation, made her own decision, and took a risk by choosing the hard way out. All actions do have consequences though and Rory was lucky that her sacrifice paid off in the end. Clearly, these two books have this same theme about forging your own path running through them and their characters share many similar traits. While these two books are very relatable, they are also very different when comparing them to this theme.

In both Champion and The Name of the Star, the characters often lead their own paths. What makes those journeys different though is the way in which they forge those paths. Even though Eden and Rory each have their own individual storylines and problems that they solve, they address those problems in different ways. Eden does not know the situation he is in until Rory tells him. He then makes the decision to go through with the surgery and claimed that he had been thinking about it. Since he is young, Eden doesn't get told everything, especially things that are very important. He is "shaded" from the world in a sense, especially because of his illness and that definitely gives Eden the rebellious courage to go through with the surgery. It's almost reverse psychology in the sense, Eden is younger and was unaware that he may have been forced to take the tests, that made him want to take the tests even more and prove everyone wrong. Rory on the other hand knew the full background regarding her situation and she knew every little detail about the killer she had to eventually face. In addition, Eden is doing this to help his country while Rory is doing this to save the city of London where the story is set. They are both doing this to help themselves as well.

In life, there is always a choice. Always a path. You can either follow the paths already made by your predecessors, or you can choose to create your own path. Even our everyday lives, for example, do you get the same piece of candy as your friend to look cool or do you get the one you really want? Do you choose to smoke because others around you are too? Your path is one that only you can make and over the course of your life, you will either follow the path of others, or forge one that is your very own. In both of the books previously mentioned, the characters had to deal with a problem and faced it head on. They both displayed tremendous amounts of courage and bravery while clearly forging their own paths.