**SCHOOL:** DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**NAME:** JANE MUTHONI NDUNG’U

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**QUESTION 2**

* An autobiographical essay of not less than twenty (20) pages and not more than thirty (30) pages.

My journey began on January 11, 2003, in the bustling town of Thika, Kenya. My name is Jane Muthoni Ndung'u, and as I pen down this story at the age of 21, I reflect on a life marked by resilience, curiosity, and an insatiable thirst for knowledge. From the serene countryside of Gatundu South to the vibrant streets of Thika, my life's path has been shaped by a series of relocations, challenges, and triumphs. This essay is an exploration of my life's journey, an odyssey that has seen me evolve from a curious child to a determined young adult, ready to carve out my place in the world.

My family was a close-knit unit, with both my parents working as civil servants for the government. While I wouldn't consider our early life as rich, it was comfortable and satisfactory. We had all the essentials, and my parents worked hard to provide for us. My father, who worked in a government office, was often away during the weekdays, but he made sure to be home on weekends. These weekends were cherished moments, as they allowed us to spend quality time together as a family. My mother, also a civil servant, managed to balance her professional duties with taking care of the household. I have one older sister, who was my constant companion and role model during my early years. Later on, my younger brother was born, adding more joy and dynamics to our family life. Weekends were special times when my father was home. We would go on family outings, explore nearby parks, and sometimes visit relatives in neighbouring towns. These excursions were filled with laughter, discovery, and a sense of togetherness that strengthened our family bonds.

When I was less than one year old, my family relocated from Thika to Gatundu South, a suburban area that was a small town at the time but showed much promise of development. The seven years I spent in this burgeoning town were filled with the joys and adventures of childhood. I remember the excitement of exploring new places, making friends, and witnessing the town's gradual transformation. Gatundu South offered a unique blend of suburban and rural life. There were open fields where we could play, yet the town was close-knit enough that everyone knew each other. It was in this environment that I made many friends, some of whom I still keep in touch with today. The simplicity and freedom of those days are memories I cherish deeply. One of the most significant aspects of my early childhood was my delayed speech development. I could barely speak until I was four years old, which concerned my parents and teachers. Despite this, I had already joined nursery school at a small private school by then. My teachers were patient and supportive, and gradually, with their encouragement and the interactions with my peers, I began to find my voice.

My early education began at the local nursery school in Gatundu South. The school, though modest, was a place where I discovered my love for learning. I excelled in my studies and was particularly drawn to subjects like mathematics and science. My teachers recognized my potential and often encouraged me to participate in various academic competitions .School was not just about academics; it was also a place where I formed lasting friendships and learned important social skills. The school was a nurturing environment where I learned the basics of reading, writing, and social interaction. The small class sizes meant that each child received individual attention, and the teachers could tailor their approach to suit each student's needs. This early educational experience laid a strong foundation for my future learning. My sister, being older, often helped me with my homework and guided me through the challenges of school life. Her support was invaluable, and she played a significant role in shaping my early academic success. One of my most vivid memories from Gatundu South is the storytelling sessions with my grandmother. Every evening, she would gather all the grandchildren and regale us with tales of bravery, wisdom, and magic. These stories not only entertained but also ignited my imagination and curiosity about the world. They taught me valuable lessons and instilled in me a sense of wonder and adventure.

At the age of ten, my family moved back to Thika. The transition from the tranquil countryside to the bustling town was both exciting and challenging. Thika offered more opportunities, but it also meant adapting to a faster pace of life and a new school environment. However, life in Thika was very difficult at first. We struggled to survive in our new home, which did not have electricity for almost half a year. This made simple daily tasks, such as cooking and studying, incredibly challenging. Without electricity, we relied on kerosene lamps for light, which were dim and often emitted smoke that irritated our eyes. Homework had to be done before nightfall, and evenings were spent in semi-darkness. Cooking was done using firewood, and we had to fetch water from a nearby well since we didn't have running water in the house initially. These conditions were a stark contrast to the relative comfort we had experienced in Gatundu South.

Adjusting to the new school environment was also challenging. The schools in Thika were larger and more competitive. I had to work hard to catch up with my peers and prove myself academically. The transition from a small private school to a larger public school was particularly difficult. The new school was not as comfortable; we had to clean our own classrooms, there were very different rules regarding things such as hairstyle and the food quality was poor and barely enough.. One particularly embarrassing incident occurred when I went to school with braided hair, unaware that it was against the school's regulations. I was publicly punished and told to remove the braids by the next day. The experience was humiliating and served as a harsh lesson about the school's strict rules and the need to adapt quickly to new environments. Despite these difficulties, I started venturing into sports such as football and volleyball. These activities provided a much-needed outlet and helped me integrate into the new school environment more smoothly

Despite these difficulties, my family remained resilient and supportive of each other. We shared our struggles and celebrated small victories together, which strengthened our bond. Gradually, life began to improve. After months of persistence, we finally got electricity installed in our home. This brought immense relief and significantly improved our quality of life. My parents continued to work hard to ensure we had a stable and supportive environment to grow up in. Relocating back to Thika marked a significant turning point in my life. It was a period of adversity that tested our resilience and adaptability. The challenges we faced taught me the value of perseverance, hard work, and the importance of family support. These experiences shaped my character and prepared me for future challenges, reinforcing my determination to succeed despite the odds.

During my adolescence, I faced several personal challenges that deeply affected me. Around the age of thirteen, my beloved grandmother passed away. Her death was a traumatic experience for me. She had been a constant source of love and wisdom, and losing her felt like losing a part of my foundation. The grief was overwhelming, especially as it coincided with the onset of puberty, a time when my emotions and body were already in turmoil. Puberty brought its own set of challenges. I developed a lot of pimples, which made me feel extremely self-conscious. My classmates often made fun of the number of pimples I had, and their teasing left me feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable in my own skin. This period was particularly difficult as I struggled with my self-image and confidence. My grandmother's passing was especially hard because she had been such an integral part of my life. Her stories, wisdom, and nurturing presence had provided a sense of security and continuity. Losing her was a profound loss that left a void in my life. I remember the days following her death as a blur of sadness and confusion. My family tried to support each other through the grief, but it was a challenging time for all of us.

In addition to dealing with grief, I started becoming very tall, much taller than most kids my age. This sudden growth spurt led to height-shaming, as I was frequently teased for being taller than everyone else especially the boys. The combination of acne and my unusual height made me feel out of place and contributed to a sense of isolation during my early teenage years. Academically, I was struggling as well. The loss of my grandmother, coupled with the physical and emotional changes of puberty, made it difficult to focus on my studies. I found myself falling behind in subjects that I had previously excelled in, and my grades began to suffer. This added to my stress and made life during this period feel very unstable. My parents were also very worried about me at the time.

Despite these challenges, I gradually learned to cope with the changes and pressures. My family was a constant source of support, helping me navigate through the difficulties. My parents encouraged me to focus on my strengths and to continue pursuing my interests in science and technology. I found solace in my participation in the science club and math contests. These activities allowed me to channel my energy into something positive and provided a sense of achievement. The support of my teachers and friends also played a crucial role in helping me regain my academic footing. Over time, I began to accept and embrace my height as a unique aspect of who I am. I also developed a skincare routine that helped manage my acne, which gradually improved my self-confidence. The hardships I faced during this period taught me valuable lessons about resilience, self-acceptance, and the importance of perseverance.

Despite the challenges, my adolescence was not all bad. I made some very good friends, whom I still consider to be family to this day. I met others in clubs and sports events, and all of them made my remaining years in primary school very enjoyable. We shared countless memories and supported each other through the ups and downs of school life. One of the highlights of my primary school years was the school trips. These trips were not only educational but also incredibly fun and memorable. In Class 5, we went to the national park to see wildlife, the museum, and the airport. It was a thrilling experience to see animals up close, learn about our country's history, and watch airplanes take off and land. Our first stop was the national park, which was a thrilling experience. It was my first time seeing wild animals up close. The excitement was palpable as we boarded the school bus early in the morning. As we entered the park, the sight of majestic lions, towering giraffes, and herds of elephants roaming freely in their natural habitat was awe-inspiring. We saw zebras grazing peacefully and watched in amazement as a group of cheetahs lounged under the shade of an acacia tree. Our guide taught us about the different species, their behaviours, and the importance of wildlife conservation. Seeing these magnificent creatures in their natural environment ignited a deep appreciation for wildlife and nature within me.

Next, we visited the national museum, which was an educational and eye-opening experience. The museum was a treasure trove of our country's rich history and cultural heritage. We explored various exhibits showcasing artefacts, traditional crafts, and historical items that narrated the story of Kenya's past. There was a fascinating display of fossils, including those of early human ancestors, which sparked my interest in anthropology and the history of human evolution. We learned about the diverse cultures and traditions of different Kenyan communities through interactive displays and dioramas. The museum visit was not only informative but also a journey through time, helping us understand our roots and the significance of preserving our heritage. The final stop of the trip was the airport, which was an exhilarating experience. For many of us, it was the first time being so close to airplanes. As we arrived, we watched in awe as planes took off and landed, their sheer size and power leaving us mesmerized. We toured the airport facilities, including the check-in counters, baggage claim areas, and security checkpoints. The highlight of the visit was when we were taken to the observation deck, where we could see the runway and watch the planes up close. The airport staff explained the various processes involved in air travel, from ticketing to boarding to flight operations. We even got to see the inside of a stationary aircraft, exploring the cockpit and learning about the roles of the pilots and flight attendants. The airport visit was both educational and exciting, opening our eyes to the world of aviation and the complex operations behind air travel.

In Class 7, we had an even more exciting trip to Nakuru. We visited Lake Nakuru, famous for its stunning flamingos and diverse wildlife. The sight of thousands of pink flamingos lining the shores of the lake was breath-taking. We also explored other natural places in Nakuru, learning about the unique ecosystems and the importance of conservation. One of the most memorable stops was Lake Bogoria, known for its hot water springs and geysers. We marvelled at the natural hot water steam rising from the ground and even boiled some eggs in the hot springs. The eggs cooked perfectly, and we enjoyed them right there by the lakeside, making it an unforgettable experience. Our adventures didn't stop there. We also went to Kisumu and visited Lake Victoria. This trip was particularly memorable because I got to eat a whole fish, a local delicacy, and we went rafting on the lake. The thrill of being on a boat and navigating the waters of Lake Victoria was an experience I will never forget. We visited the Kisumu Museum, where we learned about the rich cultural heritage of the Luo community and saw various artefacts and exhibits. The trip to Kisumu also included a visit to Impala Sanctuary, where we saw different animals like impalas, zebras, and cheetahs in a semi-wild environment. It was during these trips that I truly appreciated the beauty and diversity of Kenya.

The most unforgettable trip, however, was in my final year of primary school when we went to the Mombasa coast. This trip was the pinnacle of my primary school experiences. We visited the beautiful beaches, where we swam in the warm, sandy waters and played beach games. We ate fresh coconuts and drank madafu, savouring the unique flavours of the coast. In Mombasa, we visited Haller Park, where we saw a variety of animals and learned about conservation efforts. The park was a haven for wildlife, and we got to see giraffes, hippos, and even a giant tortoise up close. We also explored the ruins of Gedi, an ancient Swahili town, which was both educational and fascinating. Walking through the ruins and imagining life in that historical period was an eye-opening experience. Seeing the Vasco da Gama Pillar, a historical landmark, was another highlight of the trip. This iconic structure commemorates the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama's journey to India and stands as a testament to Mombasa's rich history.

The trip to Mombasa was not complete without a visit to Fort Jesus, a historic fort built by the Portuguese in the 16th century. We learned about the fort's strategic importance in controlling trade routes and its role in various battles throughout history. The architecture and the stories associated with Fort Jesus left a lasting impression on all of us. We also had the chance to explore the vibrant Old Town of Mombasa, with its narrow streets, Swahili architecture, and bustling markets. The sights, sounds, and smells of Old Town were unlike anything I had experienced before. We visited local shops and bought souvenirs, and tasted various coastal delicacies. One evening, we took a dhow cruise along the coast, watching the sunset over the Indian Ocean. It was a magical experience, with the cool sea breeze and the beautiful view of the coastline. The trip to the Mombasa coast was a perfect blend of education, adventure, and fun, making it an experience I will always cherish. These school trips not only broadened my horizons but also brought me closer to my classmates. We bonded over shared experiences and created memories that have lasted a lifetime. They were a welcome break from the routine of schoolwork and provided a sense of adventure and excitement that made my adolescence years special.

My primary school years were a formative period marked by both challenges and unforgettable adventures. Moving from the countryside to Thika and adjusting to a new school environment taught me resilience and adaptability. Despite initial struggles, I built lasting friendships and enjoyed enriching experiences, especially through school trips that opened my eyes to the wonders of our natural and cultural heritage. These years laid a strong foundation for my personal growth, igniting my curiosity and preparing me for the journey ahead.

I joined high school at the age of 14 in 2017 after excelling in my KCPE exams. I enrolled in St. Anne's Lioki, a girls' boarding school. It was my first time in a boarding school, and the experience was both exciting and nerve-wracking. I was worried about being homesick, meeting strangers, and adjusting to life in high school. The thought of being away from home and family for extended periods was daunting. I vividly remember the anxiety I felt as I packed my belongings and prepared for the new chapter in my life. However, once I settled in, high school became an enriching journey. High school was not just about academics; it was also about building friendships and discovering my social identity. I formed close bonds with my classmates, and we often spent our weekends exploring the school, watching movies, or simply hanging out at local towns. These friendships provided a support system that was invaluable during the stressful periods of exams and assignments.

My interest in computer science blossomed as I delved into programming. Learning to code opened up a new world of possibilities, and I spent countless hours experimenting with different programming languages and creating simple projects. The thrill of solving coding challenges and the satisfaction of seeing my programs run successfully were unparalleled. This newfound passion for technology set the stage for my future aspirations in the field of computer science. In addition to pursuing computer studies as a subject in high school, I actively sought opportunities to further explore my interest. I joined the computer science club, where I engaged in discussions, participated in coding competitions, and collaborated on innovative projects with like-minded peers. This club not only enhanced my technical skills but also fostered a deep sense of camaraderie and collaboration within the field.

Furthermore, my enthusiasm for STEM subjects led me to join maths and science clubs, where I actively engaged in scientific exploration and challenging competitions. In the maths club, I participated in inter-school maths contests, applying my problem-solving skills to competitive scenarios and earning several certificates of merit for outstanding performance. These contests not only tested my mathematical prowess but also instilled in me a drive for continuous improvement and excellence. Similarly, in the science club, I delved into impactful scientific projects and discussions. I had the opportunity to participate in science contests where I contributed original innovations, particularly in the field of physics. These projects were a testament to my curiosity and innovative spirit, and they allowed me to showcase my knowledge and creativity to a broader audience. Through these club activities, I not only expanded my understanding of STEM concepts but also honed crucial skills in teamwork, research, and presentation. They were pivotal in shaping my academic and personal growth, fostering a deep-seated passion for scientific inquiry and innovation.

In addition to my academic pursuits, I actively engaged in a variety of extracurricular activities that enriched my high school experience. Joining the school's science club was a pivotal moment for me. Through the club, I had the opportunity to conduct experiments, present at science fairs, and participate in thought-provoking discussions on cutting-edge scientific discoveries. This hands-on experience not only deepened my understanding of science but also ignited my passion for exploring technology and innovation. Beyond the realm of science, I sought diverse interests by joining the school choir, where I eagerly participated in inter-school music festivals, embracing the joy of performance and collaboration in musical expression. Joining the school choir was a deeply meaningful choice for me. It was not just about singing; it was about embracing the joy of musical expression and the camaraderie of collaboration. I eagerly participated in inter-school music festivals, where our collective dedication and passion for music shone brightly. The pinnacle of this journey was when we earned the opportunity to compete at the national level. It was a moment of immense pride and accomplishment, where every note sung echoed our commitment and love for music.

Furthermore, I became an active member of the Rotary Club, where I engaged in meaningful charity work and participated in various team-building activities. These activities ranged from fun games to outdoor adventures like biking and hiking, fostering strong bonds among club members. Additionally, I had the privilege of attending conferences and meetings with other schools, where we exchanged ideas and collaborated on community service initiatives. This experience not only strengthened my leadership skills but also instilled in me a deep sense of responsibility towards serving others. We received participation certificates, badges, and t-shirts, symbols of our shared commitment and camaraderie within the club. Moreover, we had our own anthem, which further united us in our dedication to service and community. Additionally, we organized charity projects where we visited orphanages, cooked, cleaned for small children, and spent quality time having fun with them, leaving a lasting impact on both us and the children.

I actively participated in fundraising events such as the Matter Heart Run and diabetes walks during my high school years. These events were not just about physical activity; they were powerful initiatives aimed at raising awareness and funds for people suffering from heart conditions and diabetes, respectively. Through my involvement, I contributed to meaningful causes that directly impacted the lives of individuals facing these health challenges. Participating in these events taught me the importance of community service and empathy towards those in need. I engaged in outreach efforts to educate others about these health conditions and promote healthier lifestyles. These experiences not only deepened my understanding of health issues but also instilled in me a sense of responsibility to give back to the community. They reinforced the values of compassion and solidarity, shaping my perspective on service and contributing to my personal growth.

While high school was a time of growth and achievement, it also came with its share of challenges. Adjusting to newfound independence was a significant learning curve, as I navigated responsibilities and consequences for my actions for the first time. The environment was not without its pressures; severe peer pressure and mob mentality sometimes distracted from the primary reasons for being in school. Severe peer pressure often fuelled a mob mentality where bad decisions were made simply because they were supported by the majority. This mob mentality sometimes led to negative outcomes, with students ganging up on others or following along with behaviours that weren't in their best interest. Witnessing these dynamics taught me about the power of peer influence and the importance of standing firm in one's values, even when it's challenging.

One of the notable challenges was witnessing incidents of theft, where personal belongings such as food, clothes, and books were sometimes stolen. The diverse backgrounds of students often influenced their behaviours, leading to varying responses to these pressures and challenges. For some, these actions stemmed from socio-economic disparities or personal struggles, highlighting the complexities within the school community. Bullying, especially from seniors, was another significant hurdle. The courage to report such incidents often meant risking one's own well-being and enduring potential retaliation, which could turn life into a living hell for those involved. These experiences taught me empathy and the importance of standing up against injustice, even in the face of personal risk.

One of the most cherished memories of my high school years was the day our Rotary Club visited the orphanage. It was a profound experience that left a lasting impact on me. Interacting with the children, cooking and cleaning together as a team, and engaging in games and dancing filled the day with joy and laughter. Despite their circumstances, the children exuded resilience and positivity that touched my heart deeply. That day made me appreciate everything I had—my family, my home, and the privileges that many take for granted. It was a humbling experience that reinforced the value of compassion and giving back to the community. Seeing the smiles on the children's faces and hearing their stories taught me invaluable lessons about empathy and gratitude. Participating in activities like this with my peers from the Rotary Club created bonds and memories that I will always treasure. It was a reminder of the power of collective action in making a positive impact on the lives of others.

After working hard and passing my final high school exams, known as KCSE, with flying colours, I achieved my dream of studying computer science. This milestone marked the culmination of years of dedication to academics and active participation in extracurricular activities. The journey through high school, despite its challenges, enriched my character and prepared me for the next chapter of my life. High school served as a towering cliff face, its challenges and triumphs carving intricate paths on my journey towards an unknown yet promising future. Each foothold, whether in academics or extracurricular, became a step of growth and self-discovery. Amidst the rugged terrain, I forged enduring friendships, gained profound insights, and honed the resilience needed to navigate the complexities of life. Reflecting on those transformative years, I treasure the moments of overcoming adversity and celebrating achievements, both big and small. They instilled in me a deep appreciation for the supportive community of teachers, peers, and mentors who guided me along the way. High school was not just a period of academic learning, but a time of personal development and preparation for the boundless opportunities that lie ahead.

As I embarked on the next phase of my academic journey in life, I carried with me the lessons learned and memories forged during my high school years. Grateful for the support of my teachers, peers, and mentors who guided me along the way, I could only hope for the best, as I didn't know what life had in store for me later on. With enthusiasm and determination, I have been pursuing my passion for technology, contributing to meaningful advancements in the field, and continuing to grow professionally and personally.

After high school, I applied to my dream university, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DKUT), and eagerly awaited the results. During this period of anticipation, I decided to take a well-deserved break and savour life’s simple pleasures. To reward myself for the hard work and dedication that paid off in my high school exams, I embarked on a series of adventures. I indulged in the freedom of the open road, setting out on road trips that took me through breath-taking landscapes and charming towns. Each journey was a new discovery, filled with spontaneous moments and memorable encounters. Hiking became another passion, allowing me to connect with nature and challenge myself physically while finding peace and inspiration in the great outdoors. In addition to road trips and hikes, I embraced the thrill of bike riding, exploring new trails and enjoying the rush of wind against my face. These rides provided a sense of liberation and excitement, further enhancing my sense of adventure. Family picnics became cherished moments, where we gathered in scenic spots to enjoy delicious meals and each other's company. These outings strengthened our bonds and created lasting memories, reminding me of the importance of family and togetherness. Parties with friends added another layer of joy and celebration to this period. We came together to share laughter, stories, and dreams for the future, revealing in our achievements and the possibilities that lay ahead. These gatherings were a testament to the strong friendships forged during high school and the shared journey we were all embarking on.

These experiences not only provided a much-needed respite but also enriched my perspective on life. They reminded me of the importance of balance and the joy of exploration, reinforcing the belief that hard work should be paired with moments of celebration and reflection.

Later on, the placement results were announced, and I had gotten into my dream school, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DKUT), to pursue my dream course, computer science. The moment I saw the acceptance letter, an overwhelming wave of excitement and relief washed over me. It felt like all the hard work, late nights, and perseverance had finally paid off. My family shared in my joy, their faces lighting up with pride and happiness. They had been my rock throughout my high school years, and seeing their elation was incredibly fulfilling. My parents congratulated me warmly, their voices brimming with pride. They showered me with presents, tokens of their love and appreciation for my dedication and achievement. Each gift, whether big or small, held a special place in my heart, symbolizing their unwavering support and belief in my potential. I felt an immense sense of fulfilment and gratitude, knowing that I had made them proud.

As I looked forward to starting my new journey as a university student, I was filled with anticipation and hope. The prospect of delving deeper into my passion for technology and exploring new horizons was exhilarating. With my family's support and the lessons from my high school years, I was ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead at DKUT. This new chapter promised growth, learning, and countless possibilities, and I was eager to embark on it with enthusiasm and determination.

Before joining university, we were called back to our high school for a prize-giving day to celebrate our success in the KCSE exams. The ceremony was a grand affair, filled with anticipation and excitement. The school's auditorium was decorated with colourful banners, and the atmosphere was charged with pride and joy. As I walked onto the stage to receive my awards, I felt an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. The principal, teachers, and fellow students applauded, and their cheers resonated with recognition and respect. Being acknowledged for my hard work and dedication was deeply fulfilling. Receiving these awards wasn’t just about the accolades; it was about the journey and the countless hours of studying, the perseverance through challenges, and the unwavering support from my family and friends. Each award was a testament to the commitment and effort put into achieving my goals. What made the day even more enriching was the way we were viewed by the other students. We were seen as role models, examples of what could be achieved through determination and hard work. This recognition brought a sense of responsibility and purpose, knowing that we had inspired others to strive for excellence. The prize-giving day was a celebration of our achievements and a moment of reflection on the journey that brought us there. It reinforced the values of perseverance, dedication, and the importance of setting and achieving goals. As I stood there, holding my awards, I felt proud not just for myself, but for everyone who had supported and believed in me.

This enriching experience added to my sense of readiness and excitement as I prepared to embark on my new journey at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology. It was a powerful reminder of what could be achieved with hard work and determination, and it fuelled my enthusiasm for the future.

Before joining university, I reunited with some of my closest high school classmates. We had formed strong bonds of friendship during our school years, supporting each other through the highs and lows of adolescence. Our reunion was a celebration of our collective achievements, as we had all been accepted into our dream universities to pursue our dream courses. The atmosphere was filled with joy and excitement as we shared stories of our journeys and aspirations. Seeing my friends achieve their dreams made me feel immensely happy and proud, not just for myself, but for all of us. It was a moment of mutual empowerment, a testament to our hard work and determination. We celebrated by feasting on delicious meat and drinking our favourite beverages, toasting to the memories we cherished from our high school days. Each bite and sip was a reminder of the bond we shared, the struggles we overcame, and the dreams we were about to chase. The laughter, the camaraderie, and the shared sense of accomplishment created an unforgettable evening. This celebration was more than just a gathering; it was a heartfelt acknowledgment of our collective journey. It reinforced the importance of friendship, support, and perseverance. As we parted ways to embark on our new adventures, I felt a profound sense of gratitude and anticipation for the future, knowing that the bonds we had formed would continue to inspire and sustain us.

Finally, the day I had long awaited arrived—I was going to join my new university. The excitement was so intense that I could barely sleep the night before. I had meticulously packed my bags, and at the crack of dawn, we left home. Every moment of the journey was filled with anticipation and joy. As we approached Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, my heart was a whirlwind of emotions. Seeing the campus for the first time was nothing short of magical. The university was enormous, with beautiful, sprawling grounds and stunning architecture that spoke of endless possibilities. It felt like stepping into a dream, a place where I could see my future unfolding. The campus was alive with activity. There were so many students, all as eager and hopeful as I was. The energy was infectious. Seeing other young people like me, their faces lit with the same mix of excitement and nervousness, made me feel a part of something much bigger. We were all on the brink of new beginnings, ready to write the next chapters of our lives. Walking through the gates of DKUT, I was overwhelmed with a sense of awe and gratitude. The beauty of the campus, the vibrancy of the student life, and the realization that I was finally here—it was almost too much to take in. My heart swelled with pride and happiness, knowing that my hard work had brought me to this moment. At least, I had achieved one great goal in my life.

This was more than just the start of my university education; it was the start of a new life, a new me. I felt an incredible sense of hope and possibilities. As I took my first steps into this new world, I was filled with determination and excitement for the future. I knew that with the support of my family, the lessons from high school, and my unwavering passion, I was ready to embrace whatever lay ahead. The wise teachings from my parents and the ancient text that withstood time—the Bible, would guide me through. The journey had just begun, and I was ready to make the most of every moment.

After joining the university and settling in, the first year’s orientation was a whirlwind of excitement and discovery. I was eager to make new friends, not just within my course but across various fields of study. The thought of meeting people with diverse interests and backgrounds was thrilling. The orientation itself was an enlightening experience. Seeing my peers, all equally enthusiastic and curious, created an immediate sense of camaraderie. We explored the campus together, learning about its rich history and the opportunities it held. The university's resources and facilities, the vast library, the state-of-the-art labs, and the bustling student centre, all left me in awe. As we were guided through the orientation sessions, I absorbed everything about the school’s traditions, values, and the academic journey ahead. It was a time of learning and preparation, setting the stage for our future classes and activities. The speakers and mentors shared their experiences and advice, which was both inspiring and grounding.

This new chapter however, came with a profound sense of freedom. The independence was exhilarating; the ability to make my own decisions and carve my own path was both empowering and daunting. With this freedom, however, came a lot more responsibility. I realized that every choice I made would shape my future. As my family left me at school, I watched them drive away with mixed emotions. I felt a pang of sadness, knowing I would miss their constant presence and support. But alongside that sadness was a fierce determination. I understood then that my future's fate was in my own hands. The realization was both sobering and motivating. Standing on the threshold of this new journey, I felt a deep sense of responsibility towards myself and my dreams. It was a moment of profound growth, a realization that every step I took would bring me closer to my goals. With a heart full of hope and a mind ready to embrace the challenges ahead, I knew that this was the beginning of an incredible adventure.

Coming to Dedan Kimathi University of Technology was my very first time in Nyeri County, and it awakened a spirit of adventure and exploration within me. Nyeri, with its unique charm and vibrant atmosphere, quickly became my new playground. On most weekends, I would venture out to explore the sprawling town of Nyeri, discovering its hidden gems and immersing myself in the local culture. The town itself was a blend of modernity and tradition. The bustling markets, with their colourful displays of fresh produce and local crafts, were a feast for the senses. The cafes and eateries offered a taste of the local cuisine, each dish telling a story of the region’s rich culinary heritage. The people of Nery were warm and welcoming, always ready to share a smile and a story.

But what made Nyeri County truly special was its proximity to one of Kenya's greatest landmarks—Mount Kenya. The majestic peak, standing tall and proud, was a constant reminder of nature's grandeur. I often found myself gazing at the mountain, its snow-capped summit gleaming in the sunlight, dreaming of the adventures that awaited. Mount Kenya, with its lush forests, diverse wildlife, and challenging trails, became a symbol of my own journey. The thought of hiking its slopes and reaching its peaks was both daunting and exhilarating. It inspired a sense of awe and determination, much like my own academic and personal journey. Exploring Nyeri and its surroundings added a new dimension to my university life. It was more than just a place to study; it was a place to grow, to learn, and to discover. Every weekend adventure was a step towards understanding more about myself and the world around me. The beauty of Nyeri, combined with the thrill of new experiences, made my time there truly unforgettable.

After we started classes, I gradually adapted to the university way of life. Initially, navigating the vast campus was a challenge; I often found myself lost in the maze of massive buildings and sprawling infrastructure. Every day felt like an adventure as I tried to find my way to lecture halls and seminar rooms, relying on maps and the kindness of fellow students to guide me. Once I got the hang of the campus layout, a sense of familiarity and comfort began to set in. The routine of university life started to flow more smoothly. The classes, though sometimes long and occasionally monotonous, were always rich with knowledge. Each lecture was an opportunity to delve deeper into subjects I was passionate about and to challenge myself intellectually. Sitting in those classrooms, surrounded by peers who shared my enthusiasm for learning, felt like an achievement in itself.

The coursework was demanding, pushing me to think critically and apply myself fully. The professors, with their vast expertise and engaging teaching methods, made even the most complex topics accessible and intriguing. The thrill of solving coding problems, conducting experiments, and participating in discussions kept me motivated and eager to learn more. Beyond academics, I began to appreciate the broader aspects of university life. The independence and responsibility that came with this new chapter taught me valuable life skills. Managing my time, balancing studies with social activities, and taking care of everyday tasks were all part of the learning experience. The freedom to make my own decisions and the accountability for those choices made me more self-reliant and confident.

As the weeks passed, I found myself becoming more integrated into the university community. I made new friends, joined clubs and societies, and participated in various events. The social interactions and extracurricular activities enriched my university experience, providing a well-rounded education that extended beyond the classroom. In this new environment, I felt a sense of belonging and purpose. The initial challenges of adapting to university life transformed into opportunities for growth and self-discovery. My horizons were expanding, and with each passing day, I was becoming more comfortable and confident in my new home. The journey was just beginning, and I was ready to embrace all the experiences and knowledge that university life had to offer.

Joining new clubs at university opened up a new chapter of personal growth and exploration for me. One of the most impactful clubs I joined was Rotaract, where I immersed myself in activities centred around charity, team-building, and social events. Rotaract, affiliated with Rotary International, focused on community service projects aimed at making a positive impact locally and globally. We organized fundraising events, volunteered in community outreach programs, and participated in initiatives like environmental conservation efforts and literacy campaigns. These experiences instilled in me a deep sense of responsibility towards society and taught me the importance of teamwork and leadership in effecting meaningful change.

Another club that shaped my university experience was Data Science. Here, I delved into the world of data analysis, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. The club provided a platform to explore innovations and inventions in the field of computer science. Through workshops, seminars, and hands-on projects, I learned to apply data-driven approaches to solve real-world problems. Collaborating with peers and industry professionals exposed me to cutting-edge technologies and fuelled my passion for leveraging data for impactful solutions. It was through Data Science that I honed my analytical skills and developed a keen interest in advancing technological innovations that could drive positive societal change.

Additionally, joining ADA (Anti-Drugs Association) was a transformative experience that broadened my perspective on mental health, self-awareness, and guidance skills. ADA focused on raising awareness about substance abuse and promoting mental health well-being among students. Through workshops, seminars, and peer counselling sessions, I learned about the challenges individuals face with addiction and mental health issues. The club provided a supportive environment where I gained valuable insights into counselling techniques, empathy, and the importance of promoting mental health awareness in educational institutions. Engaging with ADA not only enhanced my understanding of these critical issues but also inspired me to advocate for mental health initiatives within the university community.

Joining the university football team was another exciting chapter of my university life. I played primarily as a left back and occasionally as a right winger. Making it to the first eleven was quite challenging, given the competitive nature of the team. However, my unique talent, dedication, passion, and outstanding football skills eventually secured me a spot in the starting line-up. The camaraderie and teamwork on the football field were unparalleled. Training sessions were intense, and the competition was fierce, but each practice honed my abilities and strengthened my resolve. The sense of unity and shared goal among my teammates made every effort worthwhile. We pushed each other to be better, both on and off the pitch. One of the most iconic and cherished memories of my time on the football team was scoring a screamer goal from a free-kick about 100 yards from the opponent's goal. The moment was surreal; the ball soared through the air, curving perfectly before crashing into the net. The roar of the crowd, the elation of my teammates, and the sheer thrill of the goal are memories I hold dear. It was a glorious highlight that epitomized my hard work and passion for the game. Being part of the football team taught me valuable lessons in perseverance, teamwork, and leadership. It was not just about playing the game but also about the discipline, strategy, and dedication required to excel. The experience enriched my university life, providing a balance to my academic pursuits and contributing to my overall growth.

During my university years, I had the opportunity to go on numerous hikes with friends and club members, each one an adventure in its own right. However, one of the most memorable and cherished experiences was our three-day hike to climb Mount Kenya. We embarked on this challenging journey equipped with all the necessary camping gear, prepared for the cold nights and rugged terrain. The camaraderie among us was palpable as we set off, spirits high and hearts filled with anticipation. The climb was gruelling, with each step demanding strength and endurance. The nights were especially cold, and we huddled together to keep warm, sharing stories and laughter under the starlit sky. Camping on the mountain was an adventure in itself. We pitched our tents on rocky outcrops and in sheltered valleys, cooking meals over portable stoves and marvelling at the breath-taking vistas that surrounded us. The sense of teamwork and mutual support made every hardship bearable and every moment precious. We encouraged each other, shared the load, and celebrated each small victory as we ascended higher and higher.

The final push to the summit was the most challenging part of the journey. The air was thin, the temperature frigid, and the path steep and treacherous. Yet, the thought of reaching the highest peak kept us going. When we finally stood atop Mount Kenya, gazing out at the endless horizon, the feeling of accomplishment was indescribable. It was a moment of pure triumph, a testament to our perseverance and unity. Standing at the highest peak, I felt an overwhelming sense of achievement and gratitude. The journey had tested our limits and brought us closer together, forging bonds that would last a lifetime. Climbing Mount Kenya was not just a physical feat; it was a profound and heartfelt experience that deepened my appreciation for nature, friendship, and the power of collective effort.

University life has brought its fair share of challenges, each testing my resolve and character in different ways. Peer pressure here is far more tempting and insidious than it was in high school. The freedom that comes with university life can sometimes feel overwhelming, and the lure of fitting in can lead one down dangerous paths. Temptations to start abusing drugs, skipping classes, and making poor emotional decisions are all too common. These choices, if not carefully navigated, can result in failing courses or even getting discontinued from the program. In addition to these temptations, university students often face financial pressures. Balancing the cost of tuition, textbooks, and living expenses can be a significant burden. Many students take on part-time jobs, which, while necessary, can detract from study time and lead to exhaustion. The academic workload is another formidable challenge. The expectations are higher, the deadlines tighter, and the material more complex. The pressure to perform well and maintain good grades can be intense, often leading to stress and anxiety. Managing time effectively, prioritizing tasks, and maintaining a healthy study-life balance are essential yet difficult to achieve.

Social dynamics also pose challenges. Forming new friendships, navigating relationships, and finding a sense of belonging in a vast and diverse student body can be daunting. The fear of isolation or not fitting in can add to the emotional strain. Mental health issues are prevalent among university students. The combination of academic pressure, financial stress, and social challenges can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Accessing mental health resources and finding the courage to seek help can be critical steps in maintaining well-being. Additionally, living away from home for the first time has presented its own set of difficulties. Learning to manage my time effectively, cook for myself, do laundry, and handle other daily responsibilities without the immediate support of family has been a steep learning curve. There were moments of homesickness, especially during the initial weeks, when adjusting to this new level of independence felt particularly challenging.

The competitive atmosphere at university can also be daunting. Surrounded by so many talented and ambitious peers, it's easy to fall into the trap of comparing oneself to others. This comparison can sometimes lead to self-doubt and a fear of not measuring up. Overcoming these feelings and maintaining a healthy sense of self-worth has been an ongoing process.

Despite these challenges, university life is also a period of immense growth and self-discovery. Each obstacle presents an opportunity to learn, adapt, and develop resilience. By facing these difficulties head-on, I have become more determined and focused on my goals. The journey is not easy, but it is shaping me into a stronger, more capable individual, ready to take on the future with confidence and hope.

Despite these challenges, I have managed to reach my final year of university, where I am currently at. This journey, though fraught with obstacles, has been transformative. I have grown in ways I never imagined, learning to balance academic rigors with personal development and social engagement. Each hurdle overcome has fortified my determination and resilience. Now, standing on the brink of completing my university education, I reflect on the path I have travelled. The late-night study sessions, the moments of doubt and perseverance, the friendships forged, and the invaluable lessons learned – all have shaped me into who I am today. The support of my family, friends, and mentors has been unwavering, and for that, I am deeply grateful. As I approach the end of this chapter, the anticipation of graduation fills me with a mix of excitement and nostalgia. The dream of passing with flying colours, of donning the graduation gown and cap, feels within reach. Yet, this milestone is not just an endpoint but a gateway to a future brimming with endless opportunities.

I look forward to stepping into the professional world, armed with the knowledge and experiences gained during my university years. The field of computer science holds boundless potential, and I am eager to contribute to its advancements, to innovate, and to solve real-world problems. The foundation laid in university will serve as a Launchpad for my aspirations. With hope and optimism, I embrace the unknown that lies ahead. The journey has been arduous but rewarding, and I am ready to face the challenges and seize the opportunities that come my way. The future is a blank canvas, and I am excited to paint it with the colours of my dreams and aspirations.

Reflecting on my journey from birth to the brink of university graduation, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and accomplishment. Each step along the way, from the challenges faced to the triumphs celebrated, has been a crucial part of my growth. High school taught me resilience and the importance of pursuing my passions, while university has further honed my skills and broadened my horizons. From my early years, where curiosity and wonder first sparked my interest in the world around me, to my high school days filled with discovery and resilience, every experience has been a building block in my life's journey. The support of my family, teachers, and friends has been a constant source of strength, guiding me through the ups and downs.

As I stand on the threshold of a new chapter, ready to embrace the opportunities that the future holds, I carry with me the invaluable lessons learned and the cherished memories made. My academic and extracurricular experiences have not only shaped my professional aspirations but also moulded me into a compassionate and driven individual. With a heart full of hope and determination, I look forward to making meaningful contributions to the field of computer science and beyond. The journey continues, and I am excited to see where it will lead, knowing that I am equipped with the knowledge, support, and passion to make a positive impact in the world. The path ahead is filled with endless possibilities, and I am ready to seize each one with enthusiasm and dedication. As the African proverb goes, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." I am ready to go far, with the support and guidance of those who have been with me on this incredible journey.

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