

1. Write a story about making a difficult choice between two paths

She accepted the envelopes with immense gratitude, smiling and nodding as she'd been taught her entire life. Shaking hands with the prizegiver, she accepted the two envelopes with a blinding bright smile.

"Thank you, thank you..." she said to no one in particular. After all, who was there to thank except herself? *She'd* gotten herself there, to that stage, to that gorgeous \$20,000 prize.

"Ah, miss?" the prizegiver coughed. "You can't expect to walk away with *both* envelopes, now can you?"

Confusion twisted on her face. "But I-"

From the podium, the scholarship emcee decreed, "The amount given by the Monty Hall Scholarship Foundation shall be determined by Miss Sofia Elara Jones's actions in the coming moments."

Sofia Elara only stuttered her confusion. "This must be a mistake. I never-"

"You have been given these two indistinguishable envelopes," the emcee continued.

"One envelope contains the full scholarship prize of \$20,000. The other contains a meager sum in comparison, *yet still nice*," she added. "You will now pick one of the envelopes to keep at random."

Sophia Elara wanted to scream. *This is a scholarship, not a game show!* Instead, she took a deep breath. Why make a scene when she could still win?

"I'll keep this one," she said, smiling. She handed one envelope to the prize giver, who nodded in satisfaction. Brandishing the other in her left hand, she turned to the announcer. "May I open it now?"

"You now have the option to switch if you so please," the emcee replied. "Otherwise, you may."

Switch?! Sofia Elara's eyes darted from the envelope in her hand to the one held by the prize giver. Should she ought to switch? After all, she could never forgive herself if she had had the chance to take what was *-rightfully-* hers and didn't.

"Well?" said the announcer.

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"I'll switch," Sofia Elara exclaimed, and went forth to exchange envelopes. In seconds, she tore the second envelope apart without mercy.

She screamed.

Inside was a check... for \$2,000. The cheering crowd leapt to their feet. Two thousand dollars? Excellent!

Not excellent enough, it seemed.

"*SICK!*" Sofia Elara screamed, throwing the envelope. "*You people are sick!*"

"Sofia-" the prizegiver started. Sofia Elara snatched the microphone from the emcee.

"*I've fought, tooth and nail, for this scholarship!*" she screamed. "*We hired the best coaches for the interview, laboured over my essay...and all I get is-*"

"You *chose* to switch," the emcee barked, rescinding her envelope. She turned to the furious Sofia Elara. "And then you *chose* to throw a tantrum."

"Our foundation looks for and gives to *grateful* recipients." the prizegiver continued. "Judging by your behavior, I'm afraid you aren't one of them."

Sofia Elara's jaw dropped. *That* was the whole point of the stupid envelopes?

"You just made a huge mistake!" she screamed.

"And you need to leave," the emcee added, pointing offstage.

No one (Sophia Elara included) could doubt it: not even \$20,000 could ever pay back for her actions.