



TITLE: BRIDGING WORLDS: A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE

ONYINYE PRECIOUS MABIA

Onyinye stood at the airport terminal, clutching her one-way ticket to Vancouver, Canada. She had booked air France flight, which will make a stop in France before proceeding to Vancouver. The bustling surroundings filled with lightning-fast technology and advanced infrastructure, were a stark contrast to the serene, technology-bare environment of her hometown in rural Bamuze. Back home, technology was a luxury, reserved for the urban dwellers, the wealthy, and the elite. She had grown up in a place where the whistling of the morning breeze and the rustling sounds triggered by the movement of school children running to queue up at the community tap to fetch water, snapped her out of her dream world. These natural rhymes are a sharp contrast to the hum of machines and loud sounds of high-performance vehicles which graced the city of Vancouver where she currently found herself.

Arriving in Canada was like stepping into a different world. The streets were filled with people walking briskly to do their daily activities, the beeping of gadgets was ever-present and obvious. Digital billboards flashed vibrant notifications, and people walked with eyes glued to their smartphones, oblivious to those around them. There was also the SkyTrain which moved at lightning speed, and the comfortable buses boarded with just a tap of the compass card. Onyinye's heart pounded with a mix of excitement and trepidation. She was here to pursue her dream of studying Environmental Science. As an advocate of environmental conservation, her unwavering interest in the field brought her here, but first, she had to find a way to navigate this brave and beautiful new world of technology.

The first challenge was communication. Back home in Bamuze, it was common practice for most conversations to be held face-to-face. Here, everyone uses messaging apps, faxes, and emails which could be done anywhere using a smart phone. Onyinye's first attempt to email her professor took her an hour of commuting to school, where she sought assistance from her Douglas College

school Library. Following an orientation session, she learned that she could get computer-based assistance from the library. At the Library the keyboard felt strange, and each letter typed felt like a tiny victory. She persevered, driven by the belief that understanding technology was key to her success.

In her classes, she faced another daunting hurdle. Her peers effortlessly took notes on sleek tablets and laptops, their fingers dancing over the keys with the precision of seasoned pianists and the speed of an aircraft. She felt a deep pang of insecurity. Onyinye clutched her pen and notebook, her precious familiar tools that now seemed almost antiquated in this high-tech world. The clatter of the keyboards around her made her feel like an outsider, her traditional ways contrasting sharply with the digital world and flexibility around her. However, Onyinye had a driving force; her secret weapon in navigating life's circumstances: resilience. The first time she tried to use a computer in the school library to complete her online assignment, her hands trembled with anxiety, in her brain was a wealth of knowledge of what to write but her limited computer skill was a great challenge. Each missed tap on a wrong letter of a word felt like a failure to her. Tears of frustration welled up in her eyes occasionally running down her cheeks, determined not to be weak she wiped them away and kept learning.

Her resilience became her anchor. Onyinye spent countless hours in the library, determined to master the school's computer system and typing skills. The library staff, who were always cheerful, saw her resilience and encouraged her by providing assistance when needed. She started sending mails and completing her online assignments with a little bit of ease. Eventually, she borrowed a laptop from the school library. The act of bringing the laptop home was symbolic, a step towards merging her old life with her new one. In the quiet confines of her small but beautiful apartment, she practiced typing and navigating the internet, she would always call her family back home to

celebrate each milestone. The struggle was not over but with every stroke on the keyboard and every additional improvement in typing speed, she felt a rush of emotion and a growing sense of accomplishment in this brave new world.

What made Onyinye's experience in 2024 unique was the blend of the non-tech savvy world and the new extremely tech savvy world. She carried the wisdom of her ancestors, who lived in harmony with nature, and now she was learning the tools of the future. She was getting accustomed to the use of technology while enjoying the ease and flexibility it provided. This juxtaposition and synergy were challenging, but it also gave her a unique view and approach. She saw technology not just as a tool but as a bridge between worlds.

Onyinye's struggle wasn't just about mastering the use of gadgets; it was also about cultural integration. Canada is notorious for its cultural diversity, which is reflected in institutions like Douglas College. This cultural diversity introduced a beautiful blend of people from different races, cultures, and backgrounds. She joined a student club that focused on sustainability. At first, she felt out of place among her tech-savvy peers, but soon, they began to appreciate her deep understanding of natural ecosystems. She brought a fresh, holistic perspective that balanced their data-driven approaches. Everyone took interest in her because her unique insights sparked engaging discussions and fostered a deeper understanding and collaboration among her classmates.

One pivotal moment came during a group project. The team was tasked with developing a sustainable urban garden. Onyinye suggested using her traditional Bamuza farming techniques alongside modern technology. Her idea was met with mixed feelings and skepticism. At the organising phase of the project, one of the group members voiced fears about the project's potential failure if Onyinye's ideas are adopted. However, Onyinye demonstrated how the two approaches

she suggested could coexist. They used sensors to monitor soil moisture and traditional composting methods to enrich the soil. The project was a success, and Onyinye earned the respect of her classmates.

Outside the classroom, Onyinye found solace in the city's parks, especially Coquilam Park near one of her school campuses. She will occasionally take long strolls around the park while absorbing the beautiful blend of nature and technology epitomised by the water fountain constructed right in the middle of the Coquilam lake. The tranquility of nature's beauty and its comforting presence provided a glaring contrast to the fast-paced, technologically driven world she was navigating. She often video-called her family, marveling at how technology could bridge vast distances with just a few taps on her phone. She imagined the pride her late parents would have felt, seeing her adapt and thrive, in this tech savvy, beautiful world while fulfilling her dream of studying environmental science. The support and love from her family resounded in her heart, fueling her determination to succeed and fulfill her dream. Each step she took in the park was a testament of her resilience and the bridge she was building between her past and her future.

As the year progressed, Onyinye's initial struggles fueled her resilience and transformed into strengths. She became a bridge herself, connecting the wisdom of her past with the innovations of the present. She started a facebook page, "Precious Mabilia," to share her journey, writing and talking about her experiences and the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern technology. She spoke about her challenges and the need to be focused, resilient, and open to change. Her words resonated with many, gaining a following from people who were also navigating change. Many reached out to her to share their experiences and how her talks and writings helped them navigate through them.

In 2024, the world and the experiences it held for humans were filled with extraordinary change, which could be navigated by finding a balance between the past and the present. Onyinye's journey was a testament to this. She proved that even in a rapidly evolving world, there is space for the old and the new to coexist and enrich each other. Her story was one of resilience, adaptation, and the unique human ability to bridge worlds.

As Onyinye walked across the stage to receive her diploma in Environmental Science with distinction, she looked out at the diverse faces in the audience, reminiscing in a flash about all her experiences over the past two years. She had not only earned a degree but had also created a path that others could follow. In 2024, a time of extraordinary change, Onyinye had carved a niche for herself, blending perfectly into a new world, while staying true to her roots. This balance made her journey and experiences truly unique.

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