

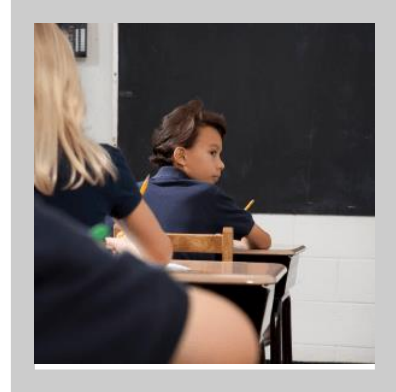
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Diligence and Perseverance

Elizabeth was brooding in her room. She had sought asylum there since spurious gossip about her began circulating at Seagrove Academy last week.

Not that Elizabeth had ever been considered a social butterfly; she had always had a rather reserved personality. Elizabeth preferred to live vicariously through the stories of her more brazen friends: late night partying, fraternizing with boys, childish pranks. Still, she had taken to being more by herself than usual since the allegations surfaced. You see, a student had given headmaster Billings an anonymous "tip" that Elizabeth had cheated on several tests this year. What made this allegation especially damaging was that Elizabeth had recently been nominated to receive the highly coveted Blauvelt Award, a scholarship recognizing "academic integrity and promise."



The accusations were laughable. Elizabeth had long been a stellar student at Seagrove. She lacked a natural intelligence—this was true. However, she compensated for this deficit through diligence and perseverance; she was very thorough in her studies and exhibited an almost relentless determination.

Still, the accusations had given the recommendation committee pause. On Friday Elizabeth had been called to Mr. Billings's office, where she was questioned about her performance on recent exams. The experience was quite traumatic.

Seagrove was an elite school; most of its students came from privileged backgrounds. But this was not the case for Elizabeth. Her family had little money. She attended Seagrove on a full scholarship. The Blauvelt Award would help Elizabeth's family pay for her college.

So it was with the same diligence that she applied to her studies that Elizabeth planned to expose her accuser. She opened the school directory on her bed and began combing through the names.

Seagrove was such a small and insular community. A mere twenty-one kids would be in her graduating class. Elizabeth knew it was inevitable that the person spreading rumors about her would come to light. It was just a matter of time.