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Period 4  
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Arrive Alive Contest

My regular weekday consists of school, morning to afternoon, letting the dogs out for a burst of energy and a bathroom break, working my retail job, and coming home to decompress. I enjoy the routined life. School and work prepare me for my future of college and graduate school, as I hope to achieve my dream career. I also enjoy laughing which is mostly caused by friends, and by what I see scrolling down the newsfeeds of Twitter and Snapchat.

Finally out of work; no more frustrated ladies upset about their size not being in stock. I can go home to shower and eat. These few minor acts are the highlights of my day. I begin driving the car, and feel impatient and fatigued. I turn on my music playlist and open an app. Snapchat first, to see what everyone is doing. My sister posts her daily dog that she has groomed—today it's a poodle. I pass random pictures of sunsets and selfies. My friend is on a college trip, a school I am interested in too. The green light appears, so I go. As I carry on scrolling, the news flashes, "Breaking" yet again. More tragic acts and heated politics. Switch apps.

Twitter now, to lighten the mood. I turn my phone's brightness down in case there are any cops nearby, I do not need to get pulled over. An icon alerts me that a video has been sent by Kate. It's a meme that subtly connects to our inside joke. I notice the red stoplight approaching and roll to a halt. I continue to scroll, giggling to myself at the funny posts. I see two dogs dressed up as their eccentric owners and send it to Kate. She responds, "Lol." Then again, realizing I've just left work she adds, "Don't use your phone while driving!" I smile and reply, "It's not *that* hard." Green light, go. She sends more tweets my way, jokes about college kid

problems, and some about TV shows we both watch. Now it's a text from Mom, "Coming home yet? Chicken for dinner." Now even more excited to return home, I tailgate the driver in front of me. They finally turn, and with them out of the way, I zoom down the hilly road. Meanwhile, I text my brother to ask if he bought the shoes he was talking about earlier that day. He doesn't respond, he is probably busy.

The long drive has me bored, and my feet throb in their ill-supporting Converse, I wish I could just prop them up in bed. My eyelids get heavy so I allow them to shut for just a second—a mini nap behind the wheel. At least this road has no curves. There is a stop ahead, I recall. This time though, on the road I travel down many times a week, I peek at today's reminders: "Phone bill" and "Water plants." Distracted, I don't notice the glowing red light above, signaling me to stop. I glance up and see cars speeding to my left and to my right. Without a thought, the phone drops, my hands grasp the wheel, both feet frantically push the brake. I feel my deep, quick heartbeat as time slows, cars honk nervously, and I realize this is bad. My eyes swell and I push myself back into the seat, attempting to escape. A massive clash of metal erupts in the intersection, I feel the car spinning, shards of glass swipe by my face and neck. Screeches resonate in my ears, but my senses are diminishing. The sound of engines and metal hitting the ground fade into silence, the orange hue from old street lights grow dim. Time feels frozen.

I will not make it home, see my family for dinner, share another laugh with a friend, or experience my future. Not only had I endangered myself, I had jeopardized multiple lives of strangers. Parents heading home to their families, kids sitting in their car seats, dogs laying in the back. My ignorant necessity to check social media and to fulfill my boredom had resulted in tragedy. Pay attention, because nothing is worth a life. Arrive Alive.