

Shrieks of howling laughter and muffled singing emanate out of the crowded grey house. Water splashes out of a large pool as boys belly flop in. Bright colorful lights stream out of the windows onto trees and cars passing by. The smell of vomit barely masked by the overpowering clouds of marijuana. It's 12:30 AM, and the party's just getting started. Anyone who is anyone is here, football players, theater kids, cheerleaders, soccer players, goths and emos, nerds—everyone.

Inside people are having a good time. Music is blasting out of the giant speakers, making conversation nearly inaudible. Guys are flirting with girls without much luck. Some poor guy is passed out on the couch with a crooked mustache drawn on him with pink Sharpie. Everyone's holding a red Solo cup, containing some concoction of alcohol and juice. Except for me, I'm drinking Sprite.

When my group of friends got invited to the party, we were so excited. The five of us had never been to a big house party like this before. Unfortunately, I drew the shortest straw and now I have to be the DD. It's tough watching everyone else having so much fun drinking, but at least I'm at the party.

I watch as my friends do a round of shots, and then another. They're pretty tipsy, but compared to everyone else at the party they're practically sober. I walk outside to get some air. The pool has been abandoned, except for the giant flamingo floatie. I walk across the deck to see a group of couples in the hot tub chatting. They have beers in their hands, with a few empty on a wooden railing behind them. I feel out of place, and head back inside.

It's nearly 2:00 AM now, the party has been going on for four hours. I'm getting a little tired, so I go to try to find my friends to see if they want to leave soon. Justin and Chris are still sitting on stools at the counter, out cold. Thomas and Eli are playing beer pong with two cheerleaders. Thomas has lost his shirt, on purpose I'm guessing. Eli is wearing his sunglasses, despite being inside at night.

I yell over to them, asking if they want to leave soon. I interpret their slurred responses to mean, "After this round, we're about to win!" I go over to Justin and Chris and try to wake them up. Chris gets up and goes to the bathroom, but Justin refuses to budge. I promise him that we can stop at his favorite late night fast food place, Taco Bell, if he gets ready to leave. Fortunately he agrees to that, and tries to find his shoes.

Now that I have all the guys together and pointed in the general direction of the door, I say thank you and goodbye to Amber, who's house it is. She drunkenly mumbles "You're welcome, drive safe."

We head outside to my car, Justin trips over his own feet a couple times. I successfully get Thomas, Eli, and Justin into the back seat, with the help of Chris who seems like he's sobering up. I get in the front seat and put on my driving playlist. Stairway to Heaven comes on and I turn the music up. It's fifteen minutes from the party back to Eli's house, which is where we're staying the night. We had told our parents that we were seeing a late drive in movie about a zombie apocalypse.

I pull out into the road, as the verse begins. I hear the boys singing in the back. They can't carry a tune to save their drunken lives. I think to myself how despite not drinking, it had still been a pretty fun night for me. And how all these guys owe me one for being the designated

driver. I think about the other people at the party, and hoped that they had all made plans on a safe way to get home.

I'm driving 45 in a 40, around a corner and up a hill. I'd driven this road many times, it was the same way that I drove to my first job at the hardware store. I passed over the train tracks and see the blinking yellow light at the end of the road.

I enter the intersection. There's a blur of light on my left, followed by an explosion of sound and pain on my left side. My airbag smashes my face as I'm thrown forward in my seat. The seatbelt chokes me, I can't breathe. I manage to open my eyes to see the horrific wreck that used to be my car. My window is gone, and the windshield is cracked. I look over to Chris. His face is a bloody mess. He's not moving.

I faintly hear a car door open and close. I can see someone slowly walking over to us. When he finally gets close enough, I recognized him. A junior from our school, he was just at the party. "Oh no man, oh no no no." He says in a drunken, sorrowful way. "I didn't mean to... I... I'm sorry". He starts sobbing uncontrollably. I try to yell to get his attention, but no sound can come out of me. I reach out for my phone, but it's smashed beyond repair. I don't know what to do. My breathing is getting more and more painful. I feel dizzy, and confused. I did everything right, I didn't drink, I didn't get high, how did this happen?

I'm so tired, I just want to sleep. The world begins to get darker, and darker. I pray to god that my friends are alive, and that an ambulance is on the way. I start to drift into sleep. I hear voices, and feel like I'm being carried. Then, nothing.