

### One way out

1. 9:30 PM on a Saturday. You finally got to clock out of your 8-hour shift of work and are utterly exhausted. Your best friend was throwing a party that night, but you couldn't make it due to your work. You decided that you would still swing by to catch the end of the party. "I'm on my way" You text your friend this simple message to let him know that you really were going. You pull out of the damp parking lot and make your way to your friend's house. About half way there, you notice a thin beam of light shining from the passenger's seat. You realize that it's your phone getting a text message. It might be important, so do you check the phone or do you ignore it? (Go to paragraph 2 if you check the phone, or paragraph 7 if you ignore it)
2. You pick up the phone from your passenger's seat, and flip it over to see what message you received. "Where are you?" Your friend was just wondering where you were. You were just a couple miles away, it wouldn't take that long to text back. There are barely any people on the road anyway, so do you respond to his text message (3), or do you ignore it (4)?
3. You decide to quickly respond to the text message with, "I'm still on my way." A simple enough message that took a little extra longer to type with one hand. You gently put the phone back on the seat and move your vision back to the road. It had only been 7 seconds. In that time, you have shifted to the other side of the road and were head on with another vehicle. Their lights were glaring into your pupils. Time seemed to stop. You saw the terrified expression of the two people in the car in front of you. It felt difficult to even move a muscle, but you had to act quick. Assessing the situation, you realize that there

are only two options. To brake and slow the crash (5) or to swerve into a ditch and dodge the oncoming vehicle altogether (6).

4. You decide not to answer the message. You were only a couple minutes away anyways, you would be at the party soon. You drop the phone back onto the seat and move your vision back to the road. You notice that you are in the wrong lane and head on with another vehicle. Thanks to your quick reflexes, you slam on your brakes and swerve back into your lane, narrowly avoiding the vehicle. You sit there in a shocked state wondering what would've happened if you had been looking away any longer. You ultimately decided against going to the party, since you had too much on your mind. Laying in bed, you receive another text message. "Are you still coming?" (END)
5. You forced down the brake pedal as hard as you possibly could, and braced yourself for impact. Time seemed to stop once again. There was a loud noise and a lot of glass once again. A faint ringing was the only thing you could hear as the night sky drifted by above you. Suddenly, you heard a single high-pitched shriek from the opposite vehicle. You tried to get up to assess the situation, but your legs were in too much pain to get up. You close your eyes and just want the night to be over. After waking in the emergency room just hours later, you are joined by your parents who are extremely glad you're alive. You learn that you have broken both of your legs, and killed a man and injured his wife on their way to the airport. Nothing felt the same after that. The guilt was like a boulder crushing you in every waking moment of your life, the shrieks of the accident echoing through your head as you tried the sleep. The pain and damage of your legs utterly ended your soccer season. You arrived alive, but at what cost? (END)

6. You quickly jerk the wheel to the left and fall straight into a small ditch. After a loud noise, you instantly wake up in the emergency room. There are enormous bandages around your two legs, and your parents are over your bed crying. *How could this happen...* you thought. You learned that you had lost all movement in your legs and would never be able to walk again. Your dream of becoming a professional soccer player was destroyed all over a single text. You were now always accompanied by a wheelchair, and couldn't feel more hollow. Nothing seemed worth doing. You had never realized how much could disappear in a matter of seconds. (END)
7. Even if it was an important notification, it could wait. You decide to ignore the message and continue driving to the party. You drive past the first car you've seen on your way back home. *I wonder where they are headed so late at night...* you wondered. After a long and quiet pause. You hear a faint ring and vibration coming from your phone. You were wondering why someone would text and call you consecutively. Since they are calling you, it may actually be important. Do you answer the phone call (8) or do you ignore it once again (9)?
8. You pick up the phone and notice that it's your friend who called and texted you. You answer the phone and let your friend know that you're only a couple of minutes away from his house. After a short conversation, you see flashing lights behind you. A police officer saw you on your phone and was now pulling you over. You thought of how angry your parents were going to be, and the fact that you probably wouldn't be able to make it to the party. The police officer tells you about how dangerous it is to use your phone while driving, and hands you a \$250 fine. You were now grounded, broke and missing a party all because of a useless phone call. (END)

9. After ignoring the phone call, you pull into your friend's packed driveway. You are greeted at the front door and have a great time at the end of the party. Your friend asked you, "Why didn't you respond to me man?" You told him you were driving of course. You get home that night happy and exhausted. Both of your parents are asleep, so you decide to crawl into bed. You set an alarm for morning soccer practice and fall asleep. You arrived alive. (END)