

Chloe Blanchard

If Only You Could See From My Perspective

Encompassed by the depth of seventeen-year-old Tessa's warm sweatpants pocket, I am embraced, struck by unforeseen light, and tossed in the crumb-filled passenger seat. As she turns the car on, it sends a vibrating sensation through my software before I intuitively connect to the Apple Carplay for her convenience. Upon her putting the car in drive, I play music, but it is quickly apparent she is unsatisfied as she reaches for me across the upholstery to change it. Tessa repeatedly hits the “skip” button present on the lock screen before eventually coming across a song that instantly makes her sing along. She places me back in the adjacent seat and continues driving.

For some time, she is content until she becomes disinterested in the long, steady strip of road ahead. Habitually reaching for me, she swipes past the “Driving Mode” pop-up, indicating that she is not engaging in distracting driving. Deactivating my warning, she opens Snapchat to pass the time, frequently looking from me to the road. In between glances, I can sense the fear rush over Tessa after she notices her encroachment on the ditch to her right. She jerked the car back between the lines.

Relieved but slightly embarrassed, she checks her rearview mirror to ensure no one saw before returning her attention back to me, taking a snap of herself and sending it to her best friend. Still, as she continued, my attention was drawn to the back camera, where I could see that the driver of the oncoming car was just as distracted as Tessa. I lack the power to alert her that

both she and the oncoming driver are drifting over the centerline. In an instant, her hold on me tightens, and a scream erupts from her diaphragm.

Intense impact followed her speaker-piercing screams, and I found myself spinning in a sea of blood, parts of two totaled cars, and memories. I couldn't help but recall my notifications insisting that she update her storage due to the overwhelming amount of photos in her camera roll. I had captured her bowling with her friends, smiles glued on their faces. Tessa being embraced by her admiring younger siblings. She and her boyfriend on their first date being giddy. These moments faded into the iCloud as she clung to me, her hands tattered and shaking. She managed to navigate to her phone's keypad to dial 9-1-1. In minutes, I could detect the faint sounds of sirens in the distance, but my database indicated it was too late. My technology grew cold as Tessa's pulse slowed, her whimpers quieted, her hold on me loosened, and her hand went limp.