

The Worst That Could Happen

“What is the worst that could happen?” A question asked every day, every week, every month, every year, by almost everyone. For the vast majority of the time, the answer is not much. You may fall into a perilous death while bungee jumping, but how many people have died that way? You may slip while rock climbing, but with proper harness, clothing, and a helmet, people rarely get seriously hurt. And sure, sending a text message to update your friends on your ride home will only take a few seconds. People do it all the time! What is the worst that could happen?

Rounding a corner at 65 miles per hour, a red 1998 Toyota Corolla bumps along the road. The driver sets their phone down on the tan plastic dashboard and speeds up to make up for lost time. Their friends now wait because they got distracted at home earlier and they are now running behind. Hearing another buzz they grasp the steering wheel and try to not grab their phone, but temptation prevails. Their friends could be attempting to tell them where to park or if the group went to another location. It turned out to be just a notification from a mobile game, the alerts always buzzed at the worst times.

They looked up in time to see his car had drifted into the breakdown lane. The rumble strip had already sounded off without their notice. But dead ahead of their passenger side was a pedestrian walking on the pavement, clearly avoiding the muddy side banks of the road. There could only have been a second before impact. The pedestrian, struck by the car's low front

bumper, was launched upwards over the hood of the vehicle. The front bumper, short and thin, did a great job of preventing all the impact energy from going directly into the man. It launched him upwards with his head creating a solid dent in the windshield. The pedestrian finishes rolling over the top before landing behind the car with a thud and sickening crunch.

Not that the driver could hear that over their screaming, or the squeal of accidentally slamming on the gas instead of the brakes, their phone dropping to the car floor. The driver swerves one way, then another in a panic, before missing a turn and driving straight off the raised road. The car traveled straight across a few meters of muddy soil before slamming straight into a sturdy tree. The front of the car crumbles, windshield shattering into pieces with the impact. Crashes above 70 MPH are almost always fatal. An ambulance takes on average eight minutes to arrive at an accident site in ideal conditions. Even if this driver survives the impact, if they have any severe lacerations they would bleed out in less than three minutes. Assuming all of these facts stay true, death is the worst that could happen.

Every day hundreds of people ask, “What’s the worst that could happen?” Don’t be the person who finds out. Arrive to where you want to be alive, not in a body bag.