

## Late Again...

7:45 AM

My pulse raced as I glanced at the clock. Five minutes to make it to school. My hands gripped the steering wheel a bit tighter. I'd already come to a full stop at the stop sign, traffic flying, cars moving by seeming as nothing but blurry figures. I looked both ways, but didn't take the time to look more than once. My mind was steps ahead, focused on parking, running through the halls, and getting to class before that first bell.

I turned left quickly, my mind clouded at the thought of showing up late. And then, out of nowhere, a school bus. With a fraction of a second to react, I left myself in an inevitable situation.

The crash shocked me back into the present with terrifying force, pushing my car toward the side of the road. My door caved in on me. I was at a loss for words, and when I looked ahead I saw the school bus was full of kids, all of which with faces full of fear. Sitting, frozen, unable to move, my mind unable to process what has just happened. Everything was blank. Seconds after I was finally taken out of my daze by surrounding pedestrians, jumping to the face of my car asking me what seemed like a thousand questions, none of which I wanted to answer. "Are you okay?" I answered with a blank stare. "What happened?" Again, nothing. I wanted to scream, or cry, or just go home, yet I stayed quiet and expressionless.

The regrets and emotions started to pile up in my head. I was finally guided out of the car by a police officer asking me about the accident. After describing what happened it was evident there was no excuse. Moments later my parents arrived on the scene, talked to the cop and asked me the same questions before bringing me back home. I went straight to my room to cry. Regret, anger and sadness were the only things I could feel for the rest of the day.

The scariest wake up call I could have ever imagined, and all I could think about was why. For a tardy? Myself, the bus driver and the lives of countless kids were put at risk for 5 minutes I could've easily explained to the office. The only thing I could think, is what could've happened that day. How I could've waited 5 more seconds and have avoided the whole accident. Yet I didn't. I'll never stop thinking how lucky I was that day that nobody was hurt. The guilt I have when thinking about all the possible outcomes haunts me to this day.

I've made a promise to myself. There is not a single class, appointment, or place that's ever going to be worth me putting not only my own, but others lives In danger on the road. Driving is a privilege and oftentimes you don't see the truth of that fact until it's too late. Do your part and drive safely. Take your time no matter what, you don't know who you could hurt, help yourself and others arrive alive.