

The Final Text

Many years into the future... The old woman shuffled into the crowded coffee shop and sat down. She waited patiently, sadly staring into the distance, her aged hands wrapped around a small object. After ordering a hot tea, she looked up at the doorway as a younger woman hurried in.

"Ms. Austin... Tanya Austin?"

"Yes," the elderly woman answered. "You're the reporter?"

"Yes. Do you mind if I record this?"

"Not at all." The young woman sat down, took out a device and set it down on the table.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes. I'll start from the beginning."

The old woman took a deep breath and began. "I didn't always look like this. I worked for a bank, took classes at night and spent my weekends on South Beach. I met Jeremy during Spring Break. He was brilliant in so many ways, but absent-minded and not very good at doing more than one thing at a time. But he was a gentleman and handsome."

"Every day we spent together added a new dimension to our love. We had so much in common. We were married within a year and I was pregnant just a month later. One morning at work, my cell phone, which was what most people carried in those days, went off. Jeremy and I loved to text each other. It was how we could be together the whole day. Jeremy was late for work, but still took the time to text me the names he picked out for our unborn baby -

How about...Nate 4 a boy or Nadine 4 a girl

LOL... I luv u

I luv u 2

"I didn't know at the time that Jeremy was texting while driving on I-95. No one knows exactly what happened on that rainy morning. Somehow Jeremy's SUV ended up in the path of a speeding 18-wheeler and his car was crushed like an accordion."

The old woman choked back tears.

"Jeremy died instantly. My whole world crumbled in that wreck. I miscarried a week later from the trauma and I never got over Jeremy. No man could replace him. It's been decades and I still live alone." The old woman opened her hand to reveal a smashed cell phone.

"It was the last text he ever made," she said, her voice cracking. Silence fell over the coffee shop. Everyone had been listening to the old woman's story.

"I'm sorry," the reporter said, leaning forward to hold the old woman's hands. "What would you change, Ms. Austin? If you could go back and live your life differently?"

The old woman blinked tears from her eyes. "I would grab that cell phone from Jeremy and make him swear to never text and drive. I would do it every morning before work and every evening before bed. And I would tell everyone I knew to demand the same from their loved ones. Make them take a vow to not text while driving!"

This story was a fictionalized account of a situation that could really happen. It serves as a reminder that no message, no phone call, nothing is worth driving while distracted. Next time you're behind the wheel, just **PUT IT DOWN. For more information please visit us online at www.distraction.gov.**



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