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Ms. Swift

English 1

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### Ignorance

Ignorance is bliss. This is a metaphor I'm sure you've all heard before. It's the feeling that in order to be happy, you must rid yourself of all the problems in the world. It is a saying many people take to heart. However, just because this is said so often, doesn't necessarily make it true. Ignorance never lasts, and reality will always catch up with you. When it does, it will hit you like a bullet.

Back in 2002, there was a middle-aged man; we'll call him John Doe, living in a small house in eastern Virginia. His wife had divorced him a few years earlier, and his son had dropped out of high school three months ago to join the military. He had a dead-end job, no money, and no self-confidence whatsoever. One day, he decided he had had enough of this miserable life. He sold his house, bought a cheap log cabin in the middle of nowhere, and took with him nothing but his truck, basic survival gear, and a picture of his son. Here he stayed for almost seven years, leading a rural and local life, and not knowing what was happening in the outside world. He later claimed that those were the undisputedly best years of his life.

After spending those seven years in exile, John finally felt that his confidence and self-esteem were great enough for him to merge back into society. He decided to celebrate this momentous occasion by taking a short trip to Washington D.C. and visiting one of his favorite locations, Arlington National Cemetery. As he was proudly walking along the yards, thinking about what he would do now that he was ready to face the real world, he noticed a small funeral service going on by a freshly dug grave. At first, he paid it no mind, but then he noticed a familiar face in the minute crowd gathered around the black-clad priest. It was one his good friends from his old job, the one he would always golf with. John approached him, and tapped him on the shoulder. The man turned around, and stared at him with a mixture of shock, relief, and something he couldn't discern. They asked each other how'd they been, and talked about news like they did before he left. After around five minutes of chat, John worked up the courage to inquire why his friend was at a funeral. He sighed, and looked down at his feet. He started to tell him twice, before cutting himself off and trying to think off a more merciful way of saying it. But he could not, so he just told him it outright. John's son was dead. He had been shipped out to the Middle East a mere month after he had gone into isolation, and was killed in action half a year before he'd come back to society. His body had only recently been brought back over, and they were giving him a proper burial.

The Army had tried to contact John about it, but nobody knew where he had gone. John had no idea about his son's fate until that very moment, and as he collapsed to the ground in a sobbing mess, he wished he could do it all over. He would've kept his dead-end job. He would've kept his dilapidated house. He would've dealt with his low confidence. He would've done all of this if it meant he could have at least known about his own boy's perishing! His friend tried to comfort him, but to no avail. It wouldn't bring all that he loved back, and neither would anything else.

Ignorance may be bliss, but that is not all it is. Ignorance is blindness, cowardice, fear. Do your best to stay in the know, for knowledge is power. Lastly, keep yourself ignorant for too long, and when reality comes calling, it is going to knock you into the grave you've been so happily digging yourself.