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2nd Period

Kaplan

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What was supposed to be a fun, relaxing trip turned into one of the most stressful 48 hours I have ever experienced. At the time, I felt frustration beyond words. Today, however, the story serves as a funny memory and a valuable lesson. Every family vacation since those infamously traumatic two days plagues us with the memory of the incident. Our plan to take a family trip to Cancun, Mexico, felt like the type of comedy movie where everything goes wrong.

The vacation started out in the usual way; my family and I had just finished packing our suitcases, and we were about to leave for Memphis in order to catch our flight to Cancun early the next morning. As we gathered our bags to load them into the car, my dad, a gastroenterologist, received a phone call from the hospital. The call informed him that someone had lodged a fishbone in their esophagus; therefore, he needed to leave for the hospital immediately to perform an extraction. My siblings and I groaned in unison. I felt upset because I knew how long those emergency procedures could take. I hoped that this turn of events would not affect our plans. It was past midnight when my dad returned; as a result, my family collectively decided to leave in the morning and drive directly to the airport instead of staying overnight in Memphis. I felt slightly relieved because I thought it would be unsafe for my dad to drive while tired anyway. Despite our frustration about the situation, we managed to overcome this obstacle. We were blissfully unaware that more challenges awaited us.

The next morning, I could hardly contain my excitement as I waited in the car, regardless of the early hour. As my sister finished storing her suitcase in the trunk, my mom suddenly gasped in surprise. She had decided to double-check the contents of her purse, and she accidentally discovered that our passports expired a few weeks ago. My jaw dropped in shock. I felt defeated when I realized that I would not swim in the crystal clear waters of Cancun any time soon. After my parents refunded as many purchases as they could and argued over who should be blamed for this mishap, my mom suggested we should just drive to Orange Beach and book a last-minute hotel there. I agreed that this idea served as our best option. This way, our packing would not go to waste, and we could still enjoy our spring break at the beach. The change of plans frustrated us even more than last night's situation, but my anticipation for the vacation remained nonetheless.

When we finally reached our destination in Orange Beach, I thought I could finally relax; the hotel we were staying at, however, had different plans. At around 3 a.m. during the first night at the hotel, I was startled awake to the sound of an alarm alerting all hotel residents that we must evacuate the building because an emergency has been reported. My heart pounded against my chest as I hurriedly descended twelve flights of metal staircases in my pajamas, frantically wondering what caused the alarm to sound. My paranoia caused me to think of worst-case scenarios. Even the warmth of the summer night outside the resort building could not prevent me from trembling in fear. When all the residents came downstairs, we were not given any answers to clear our confusion, so everyone eventually trekked back up to their rooms. However, the same alarm sounded two more times during the night. The fire department eventually discovered that the alarm system was merely faulty. My anxiety quickly turned back into drowsiness. As I

sleepily trudged back to the elevator for the third time, I could not help but think about how terrible my luck has been during the past few days. As my head hit the pillow, I could only hope the chaos would finally end.

The entire Cancun fiasco was tragically hilarious. If I had simply thought to ensure my family's passports were up-to-date in advance, then I might have been able to enjoy a vacation I had been looking forward to for months. Now, my family and I take extra precautions to ensure our preparation for any trip. I vividly remember how miserable I felt during the whole situation. I now realize that the lessons my family learned and the laughs we shared made it all worth it.