

## SHANNONOGAINS

My dad is accident prone.

To begin, my grandma will always mention once in a while about how he was the only accident out of her three kids. The contraceptive foam didn't work.

I usually cover my ears at this point.

My dad has a small, almost invisible scar on the left side of his head from when he pulled a canner on top of him at the age of six. After a hospital visit and some staples later, my grandma decided to put the canner up higher out of the children's reach.

He also has a scar on his knee from when he was eleven and a sliver of hammer metal came off while my grandpa was mid-hammering and flew into his son's knee. The sliver of metal is probably still there as he wasn't taken to the hospital. The bleeding stopped, no point—basically my family's motto.

My dad almost died when he was in high school. He got in his fancy red race car and came face to face with an electric pole rounding a corner at 20 miles over the speed limit. Thankfully, someone was driving down the same country back road and pulled my unconscious father from the wreckage, or else I wouldn't exist.

The car blew up minutes later into a fiery ball of metal and red paint.

When he was in the hospital and my grandparents were observing as he got the skin from his leg grafted onto his face, my Uncle Shawn got a phone call. He knew that his older brother Shannon had in fact almost died and was in surgery, so when the caller said, "Sorry for your loss. Shannon was a good kid." He freaked.

Someone else named Shannon had died. Not Shannon, his brother.

Some seven years later my dad accidentally had a child.

Hello.

My dad has had a lot of accidents during my lifetime: Stepmom number one, stepmom number two, almost becoming Mormon for a girl despite being an atheist who thinks religion is a scam responsible for most of the world's problems, blowing the windows out of his car because his stereo system was too loud, and getting pulled over every time we were in Newton for not wearing his seatbelt.

"If I had worn a seatbelt, I would have died in my crash."

I guess he's right. He is alive.

Some accidents are more memorable than others—stepmoms excluded.

The one I love to tell people about took place on the basketball court of my elementary school. It was during the depressing Stepmom #2 era, so getting out of the house was already a big deal. My best friend Emily had shown up on her bike, so she and I could play Fairies on the hill.

As I am clenching my hands to control the wind, (cause obviously I'm the Wind Fairy. Duh.) my dad comes over to me and says goodbye. I can't see his face because it is covered completely in blood. The gash stretching from his receding hairline to his eyebrow is wide and deep—a canyon of goop and blood.

"Go home with Emily."

He walks calmly away despite his brains falling out, hops on his bike with Stepmom #2 and her two kids in tow, and leaves eight-year-old me on the hill.

I begin to cry.

Emily points out my dad's blood under the little kid's hoop on the playground.

I cry more.

Standing in Emily's bedroom window, I sob my eyes out waiting for a text saying my dad's alive, or the call like on TV telling me he has passed away, or even better my dad's car pulling into the driveway void of Stepmom #2 and her kids.

That would be a double win.

Instead the car pulls into the driveway hours later Stepmom and Co. included, but I for once am relieved to see her ginger head because at least my dad is alive.

"Check out my stitches," he says to me then shows off the pictures of his head wound to Emily's parents. This is going to be a new favorite story for him.

On Monday, I show off the blood stain on the basketball court.

"Yeah, my dad cracked his head open on Saturday. That's his blood," I say with pride.