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Oh Deer

Bzzt, Swoosh, Slam. That's all I heard, the only thing that remains in my memories from before we hit. Hit what? Another car? A tree? It was not clear to me at the time. Buckled into my hot pink car seat with my happy meal that was once on my lap, now scattered onto the floor. The only thing on my mind was why we had stopped moving, I just wanted to go home.

It was not abnormal for me to see my dad on his phone while driving. He always told me he was a professional driver because he drove a tractor-trailer for a living. In my little six-year-old head that made sense to me. So when I heard the buzz of his phone and watched him pick it up, I thought nothing of it. Yet as he began typing I felt the car swerve a little, then bam we came to a quick halt.

After the crash, there was something all over the windshield, but it was so dark that I could not tell exactly what it was. Eventually, my dad opened his door, the lights came on, and I saw that the windshield was covered with blood and fur. As my dad picked me up out of the car, I saw the deer that we had just hit, lying so still upon the cold pavement. I only saw it for just a second yet I remember it so clearly. A huge light brown deer lying on its side covered in blood, so much blood. Its front half was fully intact like nothing had even happened, but the back legs were gone and there was a huge gash near its stomach where its "insides" were falling out. It was an awful sight that was not meant for a six-year-old to see, yet I did and never said anything to my parents about what I saw.

Eventually, my mother came and pulled up beside us. As my dad buckled me into my car seat and kissed me on my forehead I asked “What did we hit” pretending like I didn’t know. He simply answered with “a momma deer” and shut the door. As my mom drove me home, my head filled with questions and the image of the pregnant deer lying on the ground engraved into my head. Yet all that came out of my mouth were two simple questions that I knew the answer to but couldn’t help but ask; “Did the momma die?” and “Did the babies in her tummy survive?” When I got home as I laid in my bed all I could think was “We just took a life”.

Today I am so thankful that the accident wasn’t worse than it was. My dad’s awful decision to pick up that phone could have killed both of us, even though he believed it was all the deer’s fault. I’m hoping my father makes the right decision someday to leave the phone where it is even when it buzzes. Someday his luck will run out if he continues this habit and he could hit another car and kill an entire family for one selfish mistake. That day we arrived alive but we might not someday.