The Fall

by Abby Singer-Miller

“Can you skate?” Those three words helped me find the love of my life. At student registration I was asked, three days later I stepped on the ice for the first time in years, and I sucked. But, I kept skating and when preseason practice started I showed up. A lacrosse helmet and nothing else in my hands, and from that moment on I never looked back. I never once regretted saying yes to hockey. I started with not being able to skate a lap around the rink without falling, now I can skate around faster than I imagined I would ever be able to. I fell a million times and each time I would climb back to my feet and try harder, I started to get comfortable on the ice, until the one scrimmage. The scrimmage I fell backwards and bashed my head into the thing I loved the most.

“Open”, I could hear my teammates calling out letting me know where they were, letting me know they were ready for the puck. I passed and quickly straightened my back. I think. I don’t even know if that's what happened. All I remember is being on the ice, a shooting pain throughout my head. The coaches got there first, then my teammates. It was the first time I have ever cried in pain during a sport, and I don’t cry.

“Are you okay?” Are you dizzy?”. My coaches bombarded me with questions, each to make sure I didn’t have a concussion, my coach grabbed the back of my hockey pants and helped me off the slippery ice and back onto the hard cement. “What’s your name”, “Abby”, “What’s your father's birthday”, “I didn’t know that before I hit my head, but June 10th, I think” My coach questioned me over and over on simple questions until he was satisfied I didn’t have a concussion. A major headache yes, a brain bleed, no.

“Do you want to sit out or do you feel well enough to get back into the game?” he asked, I nodded yes and put my helmet that should've never left my head, back on and waited till my coach blew the whistle signaling the next group. I hopped over the white block separating me and the ice in which I have a love hate relationship with. I skated over to the position my coach told me to play. He smiled at me and dropped the puck onto the ice. As scared as I was I still charged forward as the puck slid across the ice towards my stick.

I changed out of my grossly sweaty gear and ignored the throbbing headache that lingered in the back of my head. I walked out of the locker room only to be reminded once again that if I felt dizzy or nauseous to tell my parents and to take it easy that night. It was that hockey practice, that night that as scared as I was and as much pain as it took I found exactly where I wanted to spend the next four years of my high school career at. I still am a bit more careful on the ice now, but I still love the feeling of stepping on the ice. So, when asked the question do I skate, I can finally answer with three short letters. Yes.