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Crashes

“Accidents will occur in the best regulated families.”

Charles Dickens, David Copperfield

Many years ago, I wrote my car off in a major crash when I was on holiday. I was taking a day out to come home to conduct a wedding, and a car coming towards me missed a downhill corner and hit me side-on, shunting my car into a field and against a solid gatepost. The impact crushed my car on one side, and the gatepost did the same on the other. I was left in a little space in the middle. I only had a small cut on my forehead, but when I saw the state of my car afterwards, I knew how lucky I had been.

Charles Dickens was right. Accidents will occur in the best regulated families. I just wish that one hadn't happened in mine.

I recently watched the coverage of a day in the *Tour de France* when there were several major crashes. One rider dislocated his shoulder, had it “popped back in”, remounted his bike and made it to the finish of the stage – and was in contention at the front. Another literally bounced several times along the road having been catapulted over his handlebars. The scrapes and burns on his arms and thighs – easily see through his torn clothing – were horrible. A third had to abandon the race with a fractured coccyx, and, given the ferocity of the crash he was involved with, it was a surprise that it was only a coccyx that got fractured.

Yes indeed, accidents will occur in the best regulated families. In bike races, car journeys and the like, crashes, sadly, are part of life. Some are fatal. Some are serious. Some leave you with lucky escapes. But they happen, there's no getting away from that. Sometimes, there's someone or something to blame for a crash. But mostly they are accidental, random events. “Accidents will happen,” the old proverb tells us. And there is truth in that. So, let's do all we can to avoid crashes, to stay safe, and take care. And when they happen? Let's hope we can walk away unscathed.

Oh, and the wedding I was heading for the day I had my crash? A helpful colleague had to step in and do the necessary. After all, we wouldn't want a bride and groom to have their wedding day ruined by an unfortunate crash, would we?

A prayer for today

When I travel, keep me safe. If I crash, help me start again. Amen

An original reflection by @ Tom Gordon

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