

THE CRASH
(monologue)

by
A.J. King

FADE IN

BLACK SCREEN

A VOICE fills the void.

VOICE (V.O.)
(firmly)
Wake. Up.

Slowly, the veil of blackness lifts. We see the pavement of the highway, cut through the desert. Our view is sideways, perpendicular to the road. Red pieces of metal are strewn about; shattered bits of glass pepper the black asphalt. The SOUND of flames and POPPING as the thrashed shell of the car begins to burn.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That was one of the more impressive accidents that I've been unfortunate enough to witness.

Our view rolls to the stormy sky above.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What? Did you think they wouldn't catch up to you? All those choices over the years, stacked up on top of one other?
(beat)
You know the drill. You knew it long ago, just as well as I did. Despite the infinite decisions and random events that have conspired to become your life, complete... you've been here before.
(beat)
How easy it is to forget.
(beat)
(beat)
I know how you feel. I've been down my own road, learned my own lessons.
(beat)
Every so often, they all add up. You can't outrun them forever.

Our view looks around slowly to find the owner of the voice, but we are alone.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Look over there... you see that?

There is an intersection in the desert.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That's were you were headed... left
or right... or straight ahead.

(beat)

All up to you.

(beat)

You would have gone screamin'
through here never seeing the
options.

(beat)

We all come to see them sooner or
later... usually right after some
horrendous event... some
spectacular crash. We scream
headlong down the road ahead, blind
to the off ramps and exits and
obstacles. Pushing on, ever faster
until eventually, we outrun our
angels.

(beat)

The crash.

(beat)

It might be the loss of a job, or a
car, or a house... they're all just
'things' though, you know. Easily
replaced.

(beat)

Once every so often, the crash is
really bad... the loss of self-
control, the loss of a battle
within... the loss of love, trust,
respect.

(beat)

The love of someone, the love for
someone... a love for yourself.

(beat)

Look behind you. What do you see?

(beat)

Carnage?

(beat)

The sportscar of your life
shattered, strewn about the highway
like the Child of Fate had a temper
tantrum with a toy...

(beat)

It's broken.

(beat)

You... and I... are broken.

(beat)

(beat)

Here, sit up.

Slowly, the view lifts, staring off to the desert horizon.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

At your feet... the rearview mirror there.

(beat)

I know you don't really wanna pick it up. I was hesitant at first too.

(beat)

Scared to stare at the reflection, through the reflection. What would I see? What will you?

(beat)

But I'm sure you're like me. That something in the back of your mind screaming at you to turn the mirror over and look into the glass... that tinge of morbid curiosity *will* get the better of you... it always does.

(beat)

You'll turn it over. Maybe for vanity's sake... maybe to check for wounds.

(beat)

Pick it up... go ahead, look.

A hand reaches for the rearview mirror resting against a foot. It slowly picks up the mirror. The hand turns the mirror to face us. A WOMAN's eyes fill the reflected frame. Blood trickles down the side of her temple from a scalp wound.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Don't worry. The blood running down your cheek will stop. The wound will heal.

(beat)

But it'll leave a scar... they always do. These types of things always leave their mark.

(beat)

(beat)

Focus.

(beat)

Look deeper into the glass... concentrate.

(beat)

Can you see them? Further... back through time?

(beat)

All those decisions that you made... Right, wrong... a life of choices that conspired to bring you to this ruin.

(MORE)

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)
 Each one, a small leap to this
 point.
 (beat)
 Go deeper, further back.
 (beat)
 Can you see them now? The first
 time you stole something?... That
 first time you spoke a lie?... The
 first time that you stood on top of
 a friend instead of beside them?
 (beat)
 All of the people that you cut off
 as you raced wildly toward the here
 and now?
 (beat)
 Listen.
 (beat)
 (beat)
 Can you hear each decision... can
 you hear beyond your own mind to
 the voice? Your mother, your
 father, your pastor or priest? Can
 you hear the faint version of
 yourself in there somewhere? That
 voice of reason that you shoved
 aside so that you could just push
 on through... determined to forget
 about consequences?
 (beat)
 Your own voice... ever faint, ever
 present.
 (beat)
 You know better. You knew better.
 (beat)
 (beat)
 Stand up.
 (beat)
 STAND. UP.

Slowly, our view rises, looking around. Behind the burning
 shell of the destroyed sports car is a debris field of bent
 parts running along the highway for miles behind us.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What?
 (beat)
 You didn't think you could just
 stay here forever did ya?
 (beat)
 This might feel like the end, but I
 assure you, it's not.

Our view starts to drift slightly.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Easy, easy. Don't expect everything to work right away. You gotta move slowly... I know it hurts, but it'll hurt more if you just sit around.

(beat)

You might have betrayed yourself to get here, but your body will come back to you... you're stronger than you think.

(beat)

You always have been. He made you that way... made you strong.

(beat)

(beat)

What? Ahhh... a skeptic, huh?

The voice laughs.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

'Your honor, I present to you, exhibit 'A'... a post-crash living, breathing you.'... Not just breathing, but standing here... a survivor.

(beat)

Broken, but a survivor.

(beat)

So... what happens now? It's still your decision... always has been.

(beat)

Where do ya go from here?

(beat)

Well? What's it gonna be? You gonna fight to rebuild that shiny red convertible spread all over your highway, your desert?

(beat)

Can you hear them, your friends? They're close by, they'll be here soon enough... You know they're gonna offer you the chance to rebuild it, better, even faster than it used to be. Sure, it'll take some hard work, but in the end you'll be speeding along your highway, just like before... pedal to the metal with the wind in your hair.

(MORE)

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

(beat)

But you and I both know what that means, don't we.

(beat)

Take a second... It's okay. Think about it.

(beat)

It took me a while. It's an enticing offer... It's one way you can take this nightmare and shove it deep into the rearview mirror in your hand... Just jump in the rebuild and burn rubber.

(beat)

But... what if?

(beat)

Suppose for a second that you considered the possibilities created when you navigate *around* the obstacles in the road instead of blowing right through them.

(beat)

It seems like such a simple thing... But imagine what it would be like to see the exits signs and actually be able to read what they said?

(beat)

Decisions whizzing by at breakneck speed in your sports car... but what if, you didn't rebuild the car.

(beat)

What if this time you made the decision to walk.

(beat)

(beat)

I agree, it's a long way.

(beat)

But that's okay... life isn't a race.

(beat)

(beat)

Consider that if you walked the rest of the way, you would be able to see those obstacles coming at you for miles... and with a little fancy footwork, all of the roadblocks in your path, no matter how big would become instantly passable... without harm or offense.

(MORE)

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

(beat)

You might not believe it at this moment, but over time, you'll get better at dodging them... you'll even learn to jog again.

(beat)

But in order to leave this place... to get started again... there's a few things you'll need to do. It'll be difficult, but that wound on your head won't heal without it.

(beat)

(beat)

You'll need to accept it.

(beat)

Accept all of it.

(beat)

Take responsibility for the crash. Recognize all of the times that you could have, or should have, slowed down... or times when you should have turned to the left or to the right, instead of just plowing on straight ahead.

(beat)

Understand. This. Now.

(beat)

Accepting responsibility is not defeat... You have not failed.

(beat)

This is life, after all... Just as it's not a race, it is also not a competition.

(beat)

So take ownership of those decisions in your rearview... cherish and your scars. They will be an invaluable guide in the future.

(beat)

Keep close that little mirror, your history, in your hands.

(beat)

With a simple choice, you can make these things part of the 'old' you...

(beat)

Yes.

(beat)

It is that simple.

(MORE)

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

Your history forms the basis for who you were and who you will become. It would be yet another betrayal to forget that.

(beat)

Now.

(beat)

Let's sort you out, shall we? You'll never be able to move if you try and bring all of this wreckage with you... You've got to bring the lessons, but give up the weight.

(beat)

Forgiveness.

(beat)

That's the key... forgive those who've done damage to you... those who've hurt you. Those that are the deepest wounds form the deepest scars. They're earned. But you must be able to give up the pain or you'll forever be fixed here, in this crash.

(beat)

Forgive. Yourself.

(beat)

You can't change the fact that you've crashed... you can't alter the decisions that got you here. History is history, there's no changing that... but you can choose to forgive *yourself* for the crash. The Others call them life's little lessons... carry them with you.

(beat)

Remember those people that *you* cut off along your way here? Well, that might be a little more tricky... But in order to truly heal from this, you'll need to make amends. You never know... maybe it'll be enough to slow them down and help them avoid a crash of their own.

(beat)

(beat)

How's the head doing? Let me see the cut.

Our view aims downward, twists from one side to the other, then back up to the desert horizon.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It's almost closed up. You're doing well.

(beat)

(beat)

I've come here because I care about you... I've been watching you for a while, and hoping that you might avoid this crash. I do feel sorry for you... saddened that it took such destruction for you to finally hear me, to truly listen.

(beat)

I can show you the way... I can train you to walk again.

(beat)

But... it is your choice to proceed.

(beat)

(beat)

I, am your friend.

(beat)

All I want for you are the best things... the best moments, the best memories, the best loves to be experienced... and laughter, pure and innocent.

(beat)

I want you to be free from the things that haunted you.

(beat)

I am as close as your own breath. Call on me... even just a whisper... in joy, in sadness, I'm here for you.

(beat)

(beat)

But, as your friend, know that I have new expectations of you... I expect you to make your decisions with a newfound responsibility... not out of fear, but out of acceptance and maturity and experience.

(beat)

Out of love.

(beat)

And, as I am your friend, I expect that you too will be a friend to others... those people that I put before you in life.

(MORE)

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

Remember that failings are only failings, if the lessons go unlearned.

(beat)

I am ready when you are.

(beat)

(beat)

I will teach you to take each step, one at a time... and soon, you'll have walked a mile... soon, you'll have walked ten.

(beat)

Soon.

(beat)

And because I am your friend, I will walk beside you, with you.

(beat)

I can help you step around the trappings and the dangers of your world.

(beat)

I know what lies ahead for you... I can see all the way to the end. With me by your side, you'll build your strength through me.

(beat)

But the decision is yours... it always has been... it always will be.

(beat)

I have always been here for you... all you have ever needed to do, was ask.

The view focuses solely on the path ahead. There are obstacles in the distance. The horizon is steady, while the dark clouds are giving way to lighter versions... not entirely, but enough to offer hope.

WOMAN

Will you walk with me?

VOICE (V.O.)

With unconditional love. Every step of the way.

FADE OUT