

Choices. They'll haunt you. Follow you into the black and sit there, just to watch you burn. And the wrong choices, they never go away. You can ignore them, run from them and talk over them, pretending they never were and never will be. But we're human. We're neither perfect, nor invincible. If only, sometimes we could be.

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Looking back now, it was stupid. Even then, we knew it was stupid. But we were young, and thought it was our right to be idiots. You only live once. YOLO had been floating around the school for months now and it looked like it would never fully leave.

It had been a hard year, one that no one would ever sanely or voluntarily repeat. School wouldn't be the same after next summer. That time was coming, the one you dreamed about since you were about six, playing with Barbie and her pink convertible. You know, the one with the sparkles. We had gotten our licenses and the hated and seemingly pointless six month probation had ended. We didn't even realize they were protecting us. Protecting us from ourselves.

The big screen makes it seem cool. Rebel is the way to be. Who follows rules anyway? Not us. We were older now. We're sophisticated. Yet not old enough to know you can't just be smart later. That you can't procrastinate life. You need to be smart now or you probably aren't going to have a later.

I had one too many. Or maybe many too many. Honestly, I lost count fast. Not that I cared. And then, after the sickening blur of the music and laughing, the only things I remember, we left. I climbed behind that big old wheel and started that old rust bucket

right up, still laughing. I was fine. I could keep it together, right? Bro, we're young. Nothing can touch us. Come at us, road. We can take you. You don't scare us.

I still remember that day. I think I'd be more worried if I had forgotten it. The spin, the tree and then the dark. The sirens coming out of the blackness, and looking over to see them, slouched over their seat. I call their name, softly at first. Then louder. And then, I scream.

Choices. They never leave you. Bad ones never go away. And life, it's a pretty valuable thing. Priceless. I'd give anything just to see them, smiling back at me today. But that can't happen, no matter how much I want it to, or how many salty tears fall to the ground. You don't get a second chance at life, don't steal your friend's chance at a brilliant future. You may grow up and live, buy your first apartment, go to college, get your sports car and that ridiculous tattoo you've always wanted, but they won't. And it was because of one, single choice.