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*Dramatic Publishing*

FROM THE NOVEL BY  
JERRY SPINELLI

# CRASH

DRAMA BY Y YORK



**“Serious, poignant, real-world themes ...  
bullying, forgiveness, redemption and  
family tragedy.” —*The Buffalo News***

# CRASH

**Drama. By Y York. From the novel by Jerry Spinelli. Cast: 5m., 3w.** Crash plays football for his middle school. He runs and scores and is unstoppable. He puts his head down and makes yardage. In his life he is selfish, self-centered, unstoppable, a boy running so fast he can't see the chances for love and connection that are all around him. His new friend, Mike, cherishes all of Crash's bold and bullying characteristics, while his old acquaintance, Penn Webb, sees a deeper, secret, hidden Crash that circumstances threaten to bury forever. Life presents Crash with a chance to win really big, but in order to win, he's going to have to come in second. "Emotional, tender moments ... quietly instruct young watchers and listeners never to demean or denigrate, verbally or physically abuse, threaten, coerce or intimidate others—bullying, under many disguises. Message signed, sealed and delivered." (*The Buffalo News*) Area staging. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Code: CQ6.

*Cover: First Stage, Milwaukee, featuring (l-r) Elliott Brotherhood, Robert Spencer, William Esty and Matthias Wong. Photo: Paul Ruffolo. Cover design: Jeanette Alig-Sergel.*

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# Crash

By  
Y YORK

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(CRASH)

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## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to Y York as the dramatizer of the play and Jerry Spinelli as the author of the book in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The names of Y York and Jerry Spinelli *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. The credits shall read as follows:

*Crash*

By Y York

Based on the novel by Jerry Spinelli

Biographical information on Y York and Jerry Spinelli, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

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In addition, all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“Originally commissioned and produced by the Seattle Children’s Theatre.”

*Crash* ran from April 18 through May 19, 2013, at Seattle Children's Theatre.

Cast:

Abby..... Emily Chisholm  
Penn Webb ..... Rio Codda  
Dad, Scooter u/s ..... Peter Crook  
Mom..... Beth DeVries  
Crash ..... Quinn Franzen  
Mike/Penn/Dad u/s..... Ben McFadden  
Scooter ..... Todd Moore  
Abby/Jane/Mom u/s ..... Sara Mountjoy-Pepka  
Mike, Crash u/s ..... Adam Standley  
Jane ..... Kate Sumpter

Production Staff:

Director ..... Rita Giomi  
Stage Manager ..... Amy Gornet  
Fight Choreographer ..... Geof Alm  
Costume Designer ..... Melanie Burgess  
Lighting Designer ..... Geoff Korf  
Production Assistant..... Becca Rowlett  
Sound Designer ..... Chris Walker  
Scenic Designer ..... Carey Wong  
Production Manager..... Michael Wellborn  
Assoc. Production Manager ..... Denise Martel  
Technical Director..... Mike Hase  
Asst. Tech Director ..... Eric Koch  
Company Manager..... Alexis Garrigues  
Charge Scenic Artist..... Jennifer Law

# Crash

## CHARACTERS

CRASH COOGAN: a big boy of 12.

MIKE DELUCA: a big boy of 12.

ABBY COOGAN: 10.

MOM and DAD (Marion and Dan): late 30s.

PENN WEBB: a little boy of 12.

JANE FORBES: a tall girl of 12.

SCOOTER: a man in his 60s.



## PLACES

The Coogan backyard and back porch, but not too literally depicted as every other place is implied by light, sound and/or object(s): school track, hospital corridor then hospital room, Mike's room and Penn Webb's front door. There's a fluidity of motion with no blackouts between scenes.

## TIME

Spring. Nine days in the current America, although it sometimes feels a little like before.

## NOTES REGARDING TEXT

“...” a slight hesitation, shift.

“—” an interruption, often by the next speaker, but sometimes the same speaker interrupting him/herself.

# Crash

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*(A Thursday afternoon in spring. Coogan backyard. CRASH COOGAN comes out of his house. He gets a shovel. He contemplates the plants then digs furiously. MIKE DELUCA enters and approaches.)*

MIKE. Who you burying?

CRASH. Who wants to know?

MIKE. Mike Deluca.

CRASH. Who are you, and what are you doing in my backyard?

MIKE. I'm new. I'm Italian.

CRASH. I don't care. We're Irish.

MIKE. You Irish with a name or just Irish?

CRASH. Crash Coogan's the name.

MIKE. Crash isn't a name, it's a verb.

CRASH. You're right, it is a verb. Crash!

*(CRASH tackles him, and they wrestle. CRASH pins him pretty quickly; they start laughing.)*

MIKE. You're pretty good.

CRASH. I'm very good.

MIKE. Thanks for not hitting me with the shovel.

CRASH. I don't need weapons.

MIKE. You digging for treasure?

CRASH. I'm burying the flowers so I don't have to weed them any more.

MIKE. Sweet.

CRASH. You're Mike?

MIKE. Deluca, yeah.

CRASH. Crash Coogan.

*(Fist bump.)*

MIKE. Crash is one perfect name for you.

CRASH. I play football.

MIKE. Me too.

CRASH. I'm a running back.

MIKE. A back needs to be fast *and* quick.

CRASH. I am.

MIKE. Maybe you're fast, but you're too big to be quick.

CRASH. Famous last words. You offense?

MIKE. The line. Next season I'm going defense. I want to sack the quarterback. *(Pointedly.)* And tackle the running back.

CRASH. You have to catch me before you can tackle me. What school do you go to?

MIKE. Springfield.

CRASH. Why haven't I seen you?

MIKE. I'm new.

CRASH. What's your homeroom?

MIKE. Mr. Schelling. The parents wanted to stay in Cleveland until the end of school, but I wanted to get to Pennsylvania and get the lowdown on the team. I want the coach to want me *before* summer tryouts.

CRASH. Coach Crescent is a stickler for grades. Get the grades or you don't play.

MIKE. I do OK, and when I don't, my dad yells at the teacher until she passes me. He's there every game, even when he's supposed to be at work.

CRASH. Oh, yeah ... my dad hates to miss a game. I broke the touchdown record—

MIKE. Six in one game, I know.

CRASH. How do you know that?

MIKE. I know who you are. Why do you think I'm standing in your yard?

*(Fist bump.)*

CRASH. You're all right, Deluca

MIKE. My dad, he loves all that record stuff. I'm not one for numbers. I just like to hit.

CRASH. I just like to play. I can't wait until August.

MIKE. I know, four more months till practice. What a drag.

CRASH. Yeah. I hate spring.

MIKE. Baseball?

CRASH. When they add tackling, I'll play baseball.

MIKE. Yeah, me too. How about track?

CRASH. Too wussy.

MIKE. Hey, there's a cute chick in my homeroom going out for track.

CRASH. Who?

MIKE. Jane—Jane something.

CRASH. I don't know any Janes.

MIKE. She's new, too. Way cute. You like to play Man O' War?

CRASH. Yeah!

MIKE. I got the new version. We can play over at my house—it's the tall yellow one on Cloverdale.

CRASH (*looking off*). Don't look now.

MIKE (*looking off*). What is *that*?

CRASH. You'll see soon enough.

MIKE. What's he dragging?

CRASH. You'll see soon enough.

*(Enter PENN WEBB, dragging a wagon.)*

PENN WEBB. Hello, John. Hello there, I don't believe we've met. I'm Penn Webb.

MIKE. I'm Mergatroid.

PENN WEBB. Glad to meet you, Mergatroid.

MIKE. Jeez.

PENN WEBB. Is Abby home?

CRASH. Inside. What's in the wagon, Webb?

PENN WEBB. Thomas. *(To MIKE.)* Thomas is my pet turtle.

MIKE. I can see that. What are you, 7 years old or something?

PENN WEBB. No, I'm haven't been 7 years old since my 8th birthday, but it's funny you should mention *7 years old*. I found Thomas when I was 7 years old. A turtle can be your forever pet as he can live for decades and decades. There are instances of people having to make arrangements for the care of their pet turtles in their wills.

CRASH. Whoa!

*(All the characters, except CRASH, slow waay down as CRASH observes and talks to PENN WEBB in his mind. CRASH is calm and unrushed. We are now in **Crash World**. It looks and feels and sounds different from the real world. It is here that CRASH reveals some truth.)*

CRASH (*cont'd*). There you go, Penn Webb, babbling like a babbling brook, a jibber jabber, a non-stop talker, Penn Webb—the information machine! The walking breathing internet explorer without the internet. What's Mike supposed to think? Why can't you be cool? Why can't you be quiet? Why can't you just CHILL IT ALREADY, PENN WEBB.

(*The world reanimates. Real World.*)

PENN WEBB. So you see, having a pet turtle is a lifetime commitment.

MIKE. Well, that is a perfect example of too much information.

PENN WEBB. Oh no, that's not even everything there is to know about Thomas. We saved him on the highway in North Dakota where he was trying to cross to the other side. Then when we got here to Pennsylvania, we discovered he was an eastern box turtle who isn't even supposed to live in the Dakotas. We were bringing him home and we didn't even know it.

MIKE. Yeah? You drag him to Pennsylvania in that wagon?

PENN WEBB. He rode in the backseat with me. He doesn't ordinarily need a wagon; ordinarily he roams around the house without transportation, unless he's sleeping in his closet. Today the wagon is his ambulance. Thomas has stopped eating. Sometimes he stops eating in the winter, but it's spring so he should be eating his lettuce.

MIKE. Maybe it's time to turn him into soup.

PENN WEBB. I'm a vegetarian. And even if I were a meat-eater, I would never eat Thomas. I'd starve first.

CRASH. Why don't you go inside and find Abby, Webb?

PENN WEBB. Oh no, we have to do it outside because of the mess.

*(Enter ABBY COOGAN in a rush, with a pitcher.)*

ABBY. How is he, Penn?

PENN WEBB. He's lethargic, and he won't eat.

ABBY. Poor Thomas.

MIKE. Yeah, a real tragedy.

ABBY. Do I know you?

MIKE. Do I look familiar?

PENN WEBB. Abby Coogan, meet Mergatroid.

ABBY. You don't look familiar, but you sound like all the other creepheads my brother knows.

MIKE. Hey—

ABBY. I brought the water.

MIKE. Don't call me names if you know what's good for you—  
CRASH. It's OK, Mike. Abby thinks creephead means stand-up guy. *(To ABBY.)* Chill it, OK?

PENN WEBB *(opening the jar of dirt)*. Pour some in.

MIKE. What's that?

PENN WEBB. We're adding water to make Missouri Mud.

MIKE. You gonna eat it?

PENN WEBB. This mud is not for eating. Sixty-five years ago come the 25th of May, my great grandfather retrieved magic dirt from a tributary of the Missouri River. This mud has curative properties. I had to get my parents' permission to use it on Thomas.

MIKE. Are your parents quacks?

ABBY. His parents are not quacks.

PENN WEBB. They're Quakers. And I'm a Quaker, too.

MIKE. Is that some kind of cereal?

PENN WEBB. It's our religion. We believe in peace and the goodness of humankind.

ABBY. Don't tell him anything, Penn. Is this enough water?

PENN WEBB. That looks good.

ABBY. Can I put it on his shell?

PENN WEBB. Yes, while you think healing thoughts.

CRASH. You could have done this at your house, Webb.

PENN WEBB. Actually, the more people who are thinking about Thomas's health, the more likely the mud will heal him. Abby will think about it, and John will think about it, and you can, too, Mergatroid.

MIKE. Mike's the name. Mike Deluca. Italian.

PENN WEBB. Well. Glad to meet you, Mike Deluca. I'm still Penn Webb.

ABBY (*to MIKE*). Are you going to help Thomas get better by thinking about his health?

MIKE. Actually, not a chance.

PENN WEBB. I better get him home to his closet. We'll pick you up in an hour or so, Abby. Do you want to go with us, John? We're going to see what's blooming in the Habitat Garden.

(*MIKE snorts.*)

CRASH. Thanks but no thanks, Webb.

PENN WEBB (*still to CRASH*). The garden is really stunning this time of year, and it's free on Thursdays, so we could take Mike, too, if you want. Usually it's 16 dollars. The trees are starting to bud, but they don't have leaves yet. It's a chance to see the tiny flowers unencumbered by foliage—

MIKE (*can't believe it*). Jeez—

CRASH (*lying*). My Dad's taking me to the game tonight.

ABBY. No, he isn't.

CRASH (*silencing her*). Yeah, he is!



MIKE. Where do you guys sit?

CRASH. We get great seats.

PENN WEBB. Well, have a good time with your dad, John.  
Say hello to him for me. I have to go get ready for tulips.

*(PENN WEBB exits.)*

MIKE. Man, oh man.

CRASH. You don't know the half of it.

ABBY. If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.

CRASH. Then it's going to be a very quiet afternoon.

MIKE. Who dresses him?

ABBY. He dresses himself.

CRASH. They buy everything *second-hand*. He's never up to date.

MIKE. Is he in kindergarden, or what?

CRASH. No. He's as old as us, he's just a pipsqueak.

MIKE. I'm going to love this school.

ABBY. You leave Penn alone.

MIKE. Hey, not to worry—Mike-Deluca attacks are never fatal.  
I'm gonna go see if my dad will take me to the game, too.

CRASH. Great. Maybe we'll see you there. Somewhere among the other fifty thousand people in the stands.

*(Fist bump.)*

MIKE. Good to meet you, Crash Coogan.

CRASH. Good to meet you, Mike Deluca.

MIKE. Italian!

CRASH. Yeah!

*(MIKE exits.)*

ABBY. Dad's working tonight.

CRASH. Oh. Right.

ABBY. So he's not taking you to any baseball game.

CRASH. He said he might.

ABBY. He didn't because he doesn't break promises.

CRASH. Maybe I'll see if I can go with Mike.

ABBY. It's a school night. You could go see tulips with me  
and the Webbs. We'll be home by 7:30.

CRASH. That's not going to happen.

ABBY. You used to be friends.

CRASH. We were never friends.

ABBY. You went over to his house for dinner.

CRASH. Abby! Once. Years and years ago.

ABBY. More than once.

CRASH. As soon as I found out what they're like, I never  
went back. We were never friends.

ABBY. He likes you.

CRASH. There's nothing I can do about that.

ABBY. I like them.

CRASH. Then you go see tulips and make magic mud for  
Thomas. I'm not interested.

ABBY. ... You're supposed to weed Ma's flower bed. You're  
supposed to finish before she gets home from work.

CRASH. Don't worry about it.

ABBY. Don't bury the flowers again.

CRASH. Don't give me orders.

ABBY. Don't ... call me names.

CRASH. *You're* the one calling people creepheads. Just chill  
it, Abby.