

I arrived home with my briefcase bulging with papers, reports, studies, research, proposals, contracts. My wife, who was playing solitaire in bed, a glass of whiskey on the nightstand, said, without glancing up from the cards, "You look tired." The usual house sounds: my daughter in her room practicing voice modulation, quadraphonic music from my son's room. "Why don't you put down that suitcase?" my wife asked. "Take off those clothes, have a nice glass of whiskey. You've got to learn to relax."

I went to the library, the place in the house where I enjoy being by myself, and as usual did nothing. I opened the research volume on the desk but didn't see the letters and numbers. I was merely waiting. "You never stop working. I'll bet your partners don't work half as hard and they earn the same." My wife came into the room, a glass in her hand. "Can I tell her to serve dinner?"

The maid served the meal French style. My children had grown up, my wife and I were fat. "It's that wine you like," she said, clicking her tongue with pleasure. My son asked for money during the coffee course, my daughter asked for money during the liqueur. My wife didn't ask for anything; we have a joint checking account.

"Shall we go for a drive?" I asked her. I knew she wouldn't go—it was time for her soap opera.

"I don't see what you get out of going for a drive every night, but the car cost a fortune, it has to be used. I'm just less and less attracted to material things," she replied.

The children's cars were blocking the garage door, preventing me from removing my car. I moved both cars and parked them in the street, removed my car and parked it in the street, put the other two cars back in the garage, and closed the

door. All this maneuvering left me slightly irritated, but when I saw my car's jutting bumpers, the special chrome plated double reinforcement, I felt my heart race with euphoria. I turned the ignition key. It was a powerful motor that generated its strength silently beneath the aerodynamic hood. As always, I left without knowing where I would go. It had to be a deserted street, in this city with more people than flies. Not the Avenida Brasil—too busy. I came to a poorly lighted street, heavy with dark trees, the perfect spot. A man or a woman? It made little difference, really, but no one with the right characteristics appeared. I began to get tense. It always happened that way, and I even liked it—the sense of relief was greater. Then I saw the woman. It could be her, even though a woman was less exciting because she was easier. She was walking quickly, carrying a package wrapped in cheap paper—something from a bakery or the market. She was wearing a skirt and blouse.

There were trees every twenty yards along the sidewalk, an interesting problem demanding a great deal of expertise. I turned off the headlights and accelerated. She only realized I was going for her when she heard the sound of the tires hitting the curb. I caught her above the knees, right in the middle of her legs, a bit more toward the left leg—a perfect hit. I heard the impact break the large bones, veered rapidly to the left, shot narrowly past one of the trees, and, tires squealing, skidded back onto the asphalt. The motor would go from zero to sixty in less than seven seconds. I could see that the woman's broken body had come to rest, covered with blood, on top of the low wall in front of a house.

Back in the garage, I took a good look at the car. With pride I ran my hand lightly over the unmarked fenders and bumper.

Few people in the world could match my skill driving such a car.

The family was watching television. "Do you feel better after your spin?" my wife asked, lying on the sofa, staring fixedly at the TV screen.

"I'm going to bed," I answered, "good night everybody. Tomorrow's going to be a rough day at the office." ■