

“What should we do?” asked Samwise, still crouched over her pile of vomit on the carpet.

“We should probably shut the trunk or the garage door, that’s for sure,” answered Terry.

Steven started to slide over to his telephone. Terry, without turning around, said, “Who are you calling?” There was an air of menace to his voice, a tone that made everyone stop.

“I’m just-” Steven began.

“Just put the phone down and slide away, snail,” cautioned the turtle. Instead of turning around, he pulled his automatic shotgun from his shell and cocked it.

“But, I didn’t-”

Terry turned around to face Steven. “We both know what you were going to do, and we both know that that isn’t going to happen on my watch. Slide away from the phone. Do we need anything else before we leave, because I don’t feel like sitting around like sitting ducks.”

“You can’t have the license plates,” said Steven. His face was a mixture of sudden courage and boldness and terror.

“Say what, boy?” asked Terry. And he made his way closer to Steven, holding his gun menacingly.

“You can’t... you can’t have the license plates. I won’t call the police, but you can’t use my plates. I’m going into the garage to undo everything I’ve done so far,” answered Steven, eager to be rid of these unwelcome guests. Steven was half-way there when the gun cocked again, unnecessarily.

“Don’t make me pour salt on the wound, snail. How about you be a good little girl and hide in your room until Mommy and Daddy get back from the opera? How does that sound?” Then Terry forced the snail out of his way, and he walked into the garage and shut the trunk lid, hard. He couldn’t fight the irony of the fact that just hours earlier he had been in a trunk, himself, wondering if he would be dead. Indeed how the tables have turned. “Come, Samwise! Time to go, girl!” At the sound of her name, Samwise came

bounding into the garage. She immediately took her seat in the passenger seat of the vehicle, ready for a car trip. Terry slammed shut the trunk lid and took his space in the driver's seat. He reached down to turn the key of car when he noticed something strange; the key was missing.

Terry looked up, and there was Steven, keys in his slimy hand-like thing, dangling without much support from his non-fingers. Terry felt rage filling up within him. It had been a long day, and he wasn't up to dealing with ornery snails. Terry burst from the car and ran into the house. He tackled the snail in the hallway, then he sat on him, forcing the snail to be face-thingy up. Then Terry began to punch into his face-thingy. Blow after blow, he smacked the snail left and right, breaking very little in the way of bones or teeth on account of snails having neither. Then Terry stood up and started smashing Steven's shell with his feet. "Looks like we're having French food for supper, Samwise," Terry muttered, always thinking in one-liners.

Then Terry stopped, not because Steven had had enough punishment, but because Terry heard sirens. They seemed far off, but they were growing closer and closer. Did that snail just call the po-po? Terry wondered to himself for a short bit, but he didn't think much on it. Immediately he grabbed the keys and jumped back in the vehicle.

"What happened? And why do you have snail on you?" asked Samwise, cocking her head to one side in confusion and, possibly, ear-infection.

"Nothing your pretty little head needs to worry about," Terry answered, in a condescending tone characteristic of action heroes. In his head, he added, 'Not that your head is that pretty to start with,' but he didn't say that. He pulled the vehicle out of the garage, turned back toward the interstate, and gunned it.

"I don't think you need to use such condescending tones with me, Terry, even if it is characteristic of action heroes," came Samwise's hurt and sad reply.

"Hey, Sammy! See the rabbit? You want the rabbit? Get the rabbit, girl!" said Terry, and the dog, against her wishes, went crazy with excitement, looking for the rabbit. She never did find it, but she wagged her tail a whole lot, and then she totally forgot what they were talking about.

Terry felt an urge to get away from there fast, and in the opposite direction, if possible. He floored it, and soon they were cruising along at seventy-five miles per hour. The car was so nice and well built for that speed, that Terry didn't even notice that they were going that fast. Suddenly, he heard a ringing cellphone.

"Do you have a cellphone?" asked Samwise, looking around the car for the source of the sound.

"No, I don't." Terry, also, took quick glances around for the source of the cellphone.

"I think it's coming from the glove box," breathed Samwise. Then she carefully opened it up, and found it. She answered the phone before Terry could tell her not to. "Hello?"

"Pop quiz, apphole. What goes slightly less than seventy miles an hour and then goes 'boom'?" came a professional sounding voice from the other end.

"He said, 'What goes slightly less than seventy miles per hour and then goes 'boom'?" reported Samwise to Terry. Terry just rolled his eyes at her. Then, to the mysterious phone man, she said, "I don't know. What?"

The voice on the other end said, "You do." Then there was a click and the ring tone. Samwise shut the phone.

"He said, 'You do,' and that was it. I don't get it," she told Terry.

Terry thought about it for a moment, then he peered at the odometer, and he saw that there was a sticker right at seventy miles per hour. If he went below that speed limit, then the car would probably explode, killing him and Samwise and re-killing the senator in the back. This must be just his luck. Now he has to drive fast just when he doesn't want to get noticed by anyone. Terry sped up to eighty miles per hour, then he set the cruise control. "Genius," he thought. "There will be no way I can accidentally go below that speed."

"Terry, what does that mean?" Samwise looked nervous and scared. She knew that this was yet another bad turn of events for them.

“It means that if this car goes below the speed limit of seventy miles per hour, then the car will explode killing you and me and re-killing the senator in the trunk there,” Terry explained.

“But, the speed limit is seventy-five, not seventy,” countered Samwise, a somewhat clever doggie.

“Yes, but I meant our speed limit. As in, the limit lower end of speed we can encounter. We can go as fast as we want, no problems. But we can’t go as slow as we want,” counter-countered Terry, a somewhat cleverer turtle. Terry started thinking out different scenarios in his head. What was the worst that could happen?

Just then he heard a blare of sirens behind him. He checked in his rear view mirror to see a couple police cars. Terry slowed a little, but he was prepared to try to explain (at least part) of his situation to the officers. After all, he was a member of the force, himself. He was a detective after all.

“Pull over, turtle,” came a voice over a megaphone. The police vehicles were right behind Terry now, flashing their lights and their headlights, trying to get him over to the side of the road. Terry switched lanes with no intention of pulling over for no one.

“I can’t, officers!” called Terry out his window, but the police cars didn’t have their windows down and they were kinda far behind him, too. Terry wondered if this looked a little bit like the O.J. Simpson car chase made so famous in the late eighties. Then he realized that his car looked nothing like a Bronco, and he felt better.

The police vehicle did not leave them alone. It blared a horn, then the officer in the passenger seat leaned out the car with a megaphone and called out, “Pull the vehicle over, now!” Then he accidentally hit the “squelch” button on the megaphone, and it made him and his partner laugh really hard.

Terry concentrated with all his might, and he sent the message, “These guys aren’t doing anything wrong. Just let them go.” He put all his strength into that one message, and he forced it into their brains. Shortly after that, for no apparent reason, the officers turned their lights off and they turned around and drove the other way.

It had worked! Terry was getting his psychic powers back, slowly but surely. He and Samwise cheered loudly for their situation, and Samwise looked really happy and proud to be in the car with Terry. They hugged, but just briefly because longer would be weird (especially with no one driving because they were hugging) and then Terry resumed driving.

Terry thought of other situations that could possibly arise from their situation. He knew that they could get a flat. They could run into a toll booth. They could hit a deer or another car or a person (killing them instantly). In his mind he couldn't think of anything else that could go wrong.

"Get out a notebook," he told Samwise. Sam reached deep into Terry's shell and came out with a notebook. She also reached in and grabbed a pencil and pen.

"Ok. What do I write down?" She opened the notebook and found a fresh page, leafing through all kinds of pages of complex mathematical formulae.

"Write down: 1) Flat tire. 2) Toll booth. 3) Hit a deer. 4) Hit another car. 5) Hit a person, and then in parentheses write 'killing them instantly'. These are all bad things that could happen while we drive this car. Can you think of anything else?" asked Terry, looking over at Samwise.

"Construction," answered Samwise, staring straight ahead.

"I suppose that could be. Write that down," Terry suggested, still looking at Samwise.

"No, construction. Up ahead," said Samwise, and she pointed straight ahead of them.

Terry turned and looked forward to see a long line of backed-up cars due to the extensive construction on this part of the interstate. He slowed down to just above seventy, and he began looking for a way out, but the lanes were all packed. Their vehicle was coming very quickly upon a line of stalled cars.

"Holy sh-" Terry began, and they both braced for impact.