

RABBIT IS RICH

John Updike



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"A VERY FINE NOVEL INDEED!"

The Atlantic

"Dazzlingly reaffirms Updike's place as master chronicler of the spiritual maladies and very earthly pleasures of the Middle-American male."

Vogue

"UPDIKE'S TRIUMPH!"

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"MASTERFUL . . . GRACEFUL PROSE AND
VIVID IMAGINATION,

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I

RUNNING out of gas, Rabbit Angstrom thinks as he stands behind the summer-dusty windows of the Springer Motors display room watching the traffic go by on Route 111, traffic somehow thin and scared compared to what it used to be. The fucking world is running out of gas. But they won't catch him, not yet, because there isn't a piece of junk on the road gets better mileage than his Toyotas, with lower service costs. Read *Consumer Reports*, April issue. That's all he has to tell the people when they come in. And come in they do, the people out there are getting frantic, they know the great American ride is ending. Gas lines at ninety-nine point nine cent a gallon and ninety per cent of the stations to be closed for the weekend. The governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania calling for five-dollar minimum sales to stop the panicky topping-up. And truckers who can't get diesel shooting at their own trucks, there was an incident right in Diamond County, along the Pottsville Pike. People are going wild, their dollars are going rotten, they shell out like there's no tomorrow. He tells them, when they buy a Toyota, they're turning their dollars into yen. And they believe them. A hundred twelve units new and used moved in the first five months of 1979, with eight Corollas, five Coronas including a Luxury Edition Wagon, and that Celica that Charlie said looked like a Pimpmobile unloaded in these first three weeks of June already, at an average gross mark-up of eight hundred dollars per sale. Rabbit is rich.

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He owns Springer Motors, one of the two Toyota agencies in the Brewer area. Or rather he co-owns a half-interest with his wife Janice, her mother Bessie sitting on the other half inherited when old man Springer died five years back. But Rabbit feels as though he owns it all, showing up at the showroom day after day, riding herd on the paperwork and the payroll, swinging in his clean suit in and out of Service and Parts where the men work filmed with oil and look up white-eyed from the bulb-lit engines as in a kind of underworld while he makes contact with the public, the community, the star and spearpoint of all these two dozen employees and hundred thousand square feet of working space, which seem a wide shadow behind him as he stands there up front. The wall of imitation boards, really sheets of random-grooved Masonite, around the door into his office is hung with framed old clippings and team portraits, including two all-county tens, from his days as a basketball hero twenty years ago—no, more than twenty years now. Even under glass, the clippings keep yellowing, something in the chemistry of the paper apart from the air, something like the deepening taint of sin people used to try to scare you with. **ANGSTROM HITS FOR 42. "Rabbit" Leads Mt. Judge Into Semi-Finals.** Resurrected from the attic where his dead parents had long kept them, in scrapbooks whose mucilage had dried so they came loose like snakeskins, these clippings thus displayed were Fred Springer's idea, along with that phrase about an agency's reputation being the shadow of the man up front. Knowing he was dying long before he did, Fred was getting Harry ready to be the man up front. When you think of the dead, you got to be grateful.

Ten years ago when Rabbit got laid off as a Linotyper and reconciled with Janice, her father took him on as salesman and when the time was ripe five years later had the kindness to die. Who would have thought such a little tense busy bird of a man could get it up for a massive coronary? Hypertense: his diastolic had been up around one-twenty for years. Loved salt. Loved to talk Republican, too, and when Nixon left him nothing to say he had kind of burst. Actually, he had lasted a year into Ford, but the skin of his face was getting tighter and the red spots where the

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cheek and jaw bones pressed from underneath redder. When Harry looked down at him rouged in the coffin he saw it had been coming, Fred hadn't much changed. From the way Janice and her mother carried on you would have thought a mixture of Prince Valiant and Moses had bit the dust. Maybe having already buried both his own parents made Harry hard. He looked down, noticed that Fred's hair had been parted wrong, and felt nothing. The great thing about the dead, they make space.

While old man Springer was still prancing around life at the lot was hard. He kept long hours, held the showroom open on winter nights when there wasn't a snowplow moving along Route 111, was always grinding away in that little high-pitched grinder of a voice about performance guidelines and washout profits and customer servicing and whether or not a mechanic had left a thumbprint on some heap's steering wheel or a cigarette butt in the ashtray. When he was around the lot it was like they were all trying to fill some big skin that Springer spent all his time and energy imagining, the ideal Springer Motors. When he died that skin became Harry's own, to stand around in loosely. Now that he is king of the lot he likes it here, the acre of asphalt, the new-car smell present even in the pamphlets and pep talks Toyota mails from California, the shampooed carpet wall to wall, the yellowing basketball feats up on the walls along with the plaques saying Kiwanis and Rotary and C of C and the trophies on a high shelf won by the Little League teams the company sponsors, the ample square peace of this masculine place spiced by the girls in billing and reception that come and go under old Mildred Kroust, and the little cards printed with HAROLD C. ANGSTROM on them and CHIEF SALES REPRESENTATIVE. The man up front. A center of sorts, where he had been a forward. There is an airiness to it for Harry, standing there in his own skin, casting a shadow. The cars sell themselves, is his philosophy. The Toyota commercials on television are out there all the time, preying on people's minds. He likes being part of all that; he likes the nod he gets from the community, that had overlooked him like dirt ever since high school. The other men in Rotary and Chamber turn out to be the guys he played ball with back

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then, or their ugly younger brothers. He likes having money to float in, a big bland good guy is how he sees himself, six three and around two ten by now, with a forty-two waist the suit salesman at Kroll's tried to tell him until he sucked his gut in and the man's thumb grudgingly inched the tape tighter. He avoids mirrors, when he used to love them. The face far behind him, crew-cut and thin-jawed with sleepy predatory teen-age eyes in the glossy team portraits, exists in his present face like the chrome bones of a grille within the full front view of a car and its fenders. His nose is still small and straight, his eyes maybe less sleepy. An ample blown-dry-looking businessman's haircut masks his eartips and fills in where his temples are receding. He didn't much like the counterculture with all its drugs and draft-dodging but he does like being allowed within limits to let your hair grow longer than those old Marine cuts and to have it naturally fluff out. In the shaving mirror a chaos of wattles and slack cords blooms beneath his chin in a way that doesn't bear study. Still, life is sweet. That's what old people used to say and when he was young he wondered how they could mean it.

Last night it hailed in Brewer and its suburbs. Stones the size of marbles leaped up from the slant little front yards and drummed on the tin signs supporting flickering néon downtown; then came a downpour whose puddles reflected a dawn gray as stone. But the day has turned breezy and golden and the patched and white-striped asphalt of the lot is dry, late in the afternoon of this long last Saturday in June and the first of calendar summer. Usually on a Saturday Route 111 is buzzing with shoppers pillaging the malls hacked from the former fields of corn, rye, tomatoes, cabbages, and strawberries. Across the highway, the four concrete lanes and the median divider of aluminum battered by many forgotten accidents, stands a low building faced in dark clinker brick that in the years since Harry watched its shell being slapped together of plywood has been a succession of unsuccessful restaurants and now serves as the Chuck Wagon, specializing in barbecued take-outs. The Chuck Wagon too seems quiet today. Beyond its lot littered with flattened take-out cartons a

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lone tree, a dusty maple, drinks from a stream that has become a mere ditch. Beneath its branches a picnic table rots unused, too close to the overflowing dumpster the restaurant keeps by its kitchen door. The ditch marks the bound of a piece of farmland sold off but still awaiting its development. This shapely old maple from its distance seems always to be making to Harry an appeal he must ignore.

He turns from the dusty window and says to Charlie Stavros, "They're running scared out there."

Charlie looks up from the desk where he is doing paperwork, the bill of sale and NV-1 on a '74 Barracuda 8 they finally moved for twenty-eight hundred yesterday. Nobody wants these old guzzlers, though you got to take them on trade-in. Charlie handles the used cars. Though he has been with Springer Motors twice as long as Harry, his desk is in a corner of the showroom, out in the open, and the title on his card is SENIOR SALES REPRESENTATIVE. Yet he bears no grudge. He sets down his pen even with the edge of his papers and in response to his boss asks, "Did you see in the paper the other day where some station owner and his wife somewhere in the middle of the state were pumping gas for a line and one of the cars slips its clutch and crushes the wife against the car next in line, broke her hip I think I read, and while the husband was holding her and begging for help the people in the cars instead of giving him any help took over the pumps and gave themselves free gas?"

"Yeah," Harry says, "I guess I heard that on the radio, though it's hard to believe. Also about some guy in Pittsburgh who takes a couple of two-by-fours with him and drives his back wheels up on them so as to get a few more cents' worth of gas in his tank. That's fanatical."

Charlie emits a sardonic, single-syllabled laugh, and explains, "The little man is acting like the oil companies now. I'll get mine, and screw you."

"I don't blame the oil companies," Harry says tranquilly. "It's too big for them too. Mother Earth is drying up, is all."

"Shit, champ, you never blame anybody," Stavros tells the taller man. "Skylab could fall on your head right now

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and you'd go down saying the government had done its best."

Harry tries to picture this happening and agrees, "Maybe so. They're strapped these days like everybody else. About all the feds can do these days is meet their own payroll."

"That they're guaranteed to do, the greedy bastards. Listen, Harry. You know damn well Carter and the oil companies have rigged this whole mess. What does Big Oil want? Bigger profits. What does Carter want? Less oil imports, less depreciation of the dollar. He's too chicken to ration, so he's hoping higher prices will do it for him. We'll have dollar-fifty no-lead before the year is out."

"And people'll pay it," Harry says, serene in his middle years. The two men fall silent, as if arrived at a truce, while the scared traffic kicks up dust along the business strip of Route 111 and the unbought Toyotas in the showroom exude new-car smell. Ten years ago Stavros had had an affair with Harry's wife Janice. Harry thinks of Charlie's prick inside Janice and his feeling is hostile and cozy in almost equal proportions, coziness getting the edge. At the time he took his son-in-law on, old man Springer asked him if he could stomach working with him, Charlie. Rabbit didn't see why not. Sensing he was being asked to bargain, he said he'd work with him, not under him. *No question of that, you'd be under me only, as long as I'm among the living*, Springer had promised: *you two'll work side by side*. Side by side then they had waited for customers in all weathers and bemoaned their boss's finickiness and considered monthly which of the used cars on inventory would never move and should be wholesaled to cut carrying costs. Side by side they had suffered with Springer Motors as the Datsun franchise came into the Brewer area, and then those years when everyone was buying VWs and Volvos, and now the Hondas and Le Car presenting themselves as the newest thing in cute economy. In these nine years Harry added thirty pounds to his frame while Charlie went from being a chunky Greek who when he put on his shades and a checked suit looked like an enforcer for the local numbers racket to a shrivelled little tipster-type. Stavros had always had a tricky ticker, from rheumatic fever when he was a boy. Janice had been moved by this,

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this weakness hidden within him, his squarish chest. Now like a flaw ramifying to the surface of a crystal his infirmity has given him that dehydrated prissy look of a reformed rummy, of a body preserved day to day by taking thought. His eyebrows that used to go straight across like an iron bar have dwindled in to be two dark clumps, disconnected, almost like the charcoal dabs clowns wear. His sideburns have gone white but the top of his hair looks dyed in a broad stripe. Each morning at work Charlie changes his lavender-tinted black hornrims for ones with amber lenses the instant he's indoors, and walks through the day's business like a grizzled old delicate ram who doesn't want to slip on a crag and fall. *Side by side, I promise you.* When old man Springer promised that, when he turned his full earnestness on anything, the pink patches in his face glowed red and his lips tightened back from his teeth so you thought all the more of his skull. Dirty yellow teeth loaded with gum-line fillings, and his mustache never looked quite even, or quite clean.

The dead, Jesus. They were multiplying, and they look up begging you to join them, promising it is all right, it is very soft down here. Pop, Mom, old man Springer, Jill, the baby called Becky for her little time, Tothero. Even John Wayne, the other day. The obituary page every day shows another stalk of a harvest endlessly rich, the faces of old teachers, customers, local celebrities like himself flashing for a moment and then going down. For the first time since childhood Rabbit is happy, simply, to be alive. He tells Charlie, "I figure the oil's going to run out about the same time I do, the year two thousand. Seems funny to say it, but I'm glad I lived when I did. These kids coming up, they'll be living on table scraps. We had the meal."

"You've been sold a bill of goods," Charlie tells him. "You and a lot of others. Big Oil has enough reserves located right now to last five hundred years, but they want to ooze it out. In the Delaware Bay right now I heard there's seventeen supertankers, seventeen, at anchor waiting for the prices to go up enough for them to come into the South Philly refineries and unload. Meanwhile you get murdered in gas lines."

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"Stop driving. Run," Rabbit tells him. "I've begun this jogging thing and it feels great. I want to lose thirty pounds." Actually his resolve to run before breakfast every day, in the dew of the dawn, lasted less than a week. Now he contents himself with trotting around the block after supper sometimes to get away from his wife and her mother while they crab at each other.

He has touched a sore point. Charlie confides as if to the NV-1 form, "Doctor tells me if I try any exercise he washes his hands."

Rabbit is abashed, slightly. "Really? That's not what that Doctor Whatsisname used to say. White. Paul Dudley White."

"He died. Exercise freaks are dropping down dead in the parks like flies. It doesn't get into the papers because the fitness industry has become big bucks. Remember all those little health-food stores hippies used to run? You know who runs 'em now? General Mills."

Harry doesn't always know how seriously to take Charlie. He does know, in relation to his old rival, that he is hearty and huge, indisputably preferred by God in this chance matter of animal health. If Janice had run off with Charlie like she wanted to she'd be nothing but a nursemaid now. As is, she plays tennis three, four times a week and has never looked sharper. Harry keeps wanting to soften himself above Charlie, protect the more fragile man from the weight of his own good fortune. He keeps silent, while Charlie's mind works its way back from the shame and shadow of his doctor washing his hands, back into memory's reserves of energy. "Gasoline," he suddenly says, giving it that Greek cackle, almost a wheeze. "Didn't we used to burn it up? I had an Imperial once with twin carburetors and when you took off the filter and looked down through the inlet valve when the thing was idling it looked like a toilet being flushed."

Harry laughs, wanting to ride along. "Cruising," he says, "after high school got out, there was nothing to do but cruise. Back and forth along Central, back and forth. Those old V-8s, what do you think they got to the gallon? Ten, twelve miles? Nobody ever thought to keep track."

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"My uncles still won't drive a little car. Say they don't want to get crumpled if they meet a truck."

"Remember Chicken? Funny more kids weren't killed than were."

"Cadillacs. If one of his brothers got a Buick with fins, my father had to have a Cadillac with bigger fins. You couldn't count the taillights, it looked like a carton of red eggs."

"There was one guy at Mt. Judge High, Don Eberhardt, 'd get out on the running board of his Dad's Dodge when it was going down the hill behind the box factory and steer from out there. All the way down the hill."

"First car I bought for myself, it was a '48 Studebaker, with that nose that looked like an airplane. Had about sixty-five thousand miles on it, it was the summer of '53. The dig-out on that thing! After a stoplight you could feel the front wheels start to lift, just like an airplane."

"Here's a story. One time when we were pretty newly married I got sore at Janice for something, just being herself probably, and drove to West Virginia and back in one night. Crazy. You couldn't do that now without going to the savings bank first."

"Yeah," Charlie says slowly, saddened. Rabbit hadn't wanted to sadden him. He could never figure out, exactly, how much the man had loved Janice. "She described that. You did a lot of roaming around then."

"A little. I brought the car back though. When she left me, she took the car and kept it. As you remember."

"Do I?"

He has never married, and that says something flattering, to Janice and therefore to Harry, the way it's worked out. A man fucks your wife, it puts a new value on her, within limits. Harry wants to restore the conversation to the cheerful plane of dwindling energy. He tells Stavros, "Saw a kind of funny joke in the paper the other day. It said, You can't beat Christopher Columbus for mileage. Look how far he got on three galleons." He pronounces the crucial word carefully, in three syllables; but Charlie doesn't act as if he gets it, only smiles a one-sided twitch of a smile that could be in response to pain.

"The oil companies made us do it," Charlie says. "They

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said, Go ahead, burn it up like madmen, all these highways, the shopping malls, everything. People won't believe it in a hundred years, the sloppy way we lived."

"It's like wood," Harry says, groping back through history, which is a tinted fog to him, marked off in centuries like a football field, with a few dates—1066, 1776—pinpointed and a few faces—George Washington, Hitler—hanging along the sidelines, not cheering. "Or coal. As a kid I can remember the anthracite rattling down the old coal chute, with these red dots they used to put on it. I couldn't imagine how they did it, I thought it was something that happened in the ground. Little elves with red brushes. Now there isn't any anthracite. That stuff they stripmine now just crumbles in your hand." It gives him pleasure, makes Rabbit feel rich, to contemplate the world's wasting, to know that the earth is mortal too.

"Well," Charlie sighs. "At least it's going to keep those chinks and jigaboos from ever having an industrial revolution."

That seems to wrap it up, though Harry feels they have let something momentous, something alive under the heading of energy, escape. But a lot of topics, he has noticed lately, in private conversation and even on television where they're paid to talk it up, run dry, exhaust themselves, as if everything's been said in this hemisphere. In his inner life too Rabbit dodges among more blanks than there used to be, patches of burnt-out gray cells where there used to be lust and keen dreaming and wide-eyed dread; he falls asleep, for instance, at the drop of a hat. He never used to understand the phrase. But then he never used to wear a hat and now, at the first breath of cold weather, he does. His roof wearing thin, starlight showing through.

YOU ASKED FOR IT, WE GOT IT, the big paper banner on the showroom window cries, in tune with the current Toyota television campaign. The sign cuts a slice from the afternoon sun and gives the showroom a muted aquarium air, or that of a wide sunken ship wherein the two Coronas and the acid-green Corolla SR-5 liftback wait to be bought and hoisted into the air on the other side of the glass and set down safe on the surface of the lot and Route 111 and the world of asphalt beyond.

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A car swings in from this world: a fat tired '71 or '2 Country Squire wagon soft on its shocks, with one dented fender hammered out semi-smooth but the ruddy rust-proofing underpaint left to do for a finish. A young couple steps out, the girl milky-pale and bare-legged and blinking in the sunshine but the boy roughened and reddened by the sun, his jeans dirt-stiffened by actual work done in the red mud of the county. A kind of crate of rough green boards has been built into the Squire's chrome roof rack and from where Rabbit is standing, a soft wedge shot away, he can see how the upholstery and inner padding have been mangled by the station wagon's use as a farm truck. "Hicks," Charlie says from his desk. The pair comes in shyly, like elongated animals, sniffing the air-conditioned air.

Feeling protective, God knows why, Charlie's snipe ringing in his ears, Harry walks toward them, glancing at the girl's hand to see if she wears a wedding ring. She does not, but such things mean less than they used to. Kids shack up. Her age he puts at nineteen or twenty, the boy a bit older—the age of his own son. "Can I help you folks?"

The boy brushes back his hair, showing a low white forehead. His broad baked face gives him a look of smiling even when he isn't. "We chust came in for some information." His accent bespeaks the south of the county, less aggressively Dutch than the north, where the brick churches get spiky and the houses and barns are built of limestone instead of sandstone. Harry figures them for leaving some farm to come into the city, with no more need to haul fenceposts and hay bales and pumpkins and whatever else this poor heap was made to haul. Shack up, get city jobs, and spin around in a little Corolla. We got it. But the boy could be just scouting out prices for his father, and the girlfriend by riding along, or not even be a girlfriend, but a sister, or a hitchhiker. A little touch of the hooker about her looks. The way her soft body wants to spill from these small clothes, the faded denim shorts and purple Paisley halter. The shining faintly freckled flesh of her shoulders and top arms and the bushy wanton abundance of her brown-red many-colored hair, carelessly

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bundled. A buried bell rings. She has blue eyes in deep sockets and the silence of a girl from the country used to letting men talk while she holds a sweet-and-sour secret in her mouth, sucking it. An incongruous disco touch in her shoes, with their high cork heels and ankle straps. Pink toes, painted nails. This girl will not stick with this boy. Rabbit wants this to be so; he imagines he feels an unwitting swimming of her spirit upward toward his, while her manner is all stillness. He feels she wants to hide from him, but is too big and white, too suddenly womanly, too nearly naked. Her shoes accent the length of her legs; she is taller than average, and not quite fat, though tending toward chunky, especially around the chest. Her upper lip closes over the lower with a puffy bruised look. She is bruisable, he wants to protect her; he relieves her of the pressure of his gaze, too long by a second, and turns to the boy.

"This is a Corolla," Harry says, slapping orange tin. "The two-door model begins at thirty-nine hundred and will give you highway mileage up to forty a gallon and twenty to twenty-five city driving. I know some other makes advertise more but believe me you can't get a better buy in America today than this jalopy right here. Read *Consumer Reports*, April issue. Much better than average on maintenance and repairs through the first four years. Who in this day and age keeps a car much longer than four years? In four years we may all be pushing bicycles the way things are going. This particular car has four-speed synchromesh transmission, fully transistorized ignition system, power-assisted front disc brakes, vinyl reclining bucket seats, a locking gas cap. That last feature's getting to be pretty important. Have you noticed lately how all the auto-supply stores are selling out of their siphons? You can't buy a siphon in Brewer today for love nor money, guess why. My mother-in-law's old Chrysler over in Mt. Judge was drained dry the other day in front of the hairdresser's, she hardly ever takes the buggy out except to go to church. People are getting rough. Did you notice in the paper this morning where Carter is taking gas from the farmers and going to give it to the truckers? Shows the power of a gun, doesn't it?"

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"I didn't see the paper," the boy says.

He is standing there so stolidly Harry has to move around him with a quick shuffle-step, dodging a cardboard cutout of a happy customer with her dog and packages, to slap acid-green. "Now if you want to replace your big old wagon, that's some antique, with another wagon that gives you almost just as much space for half the running expense, this SR-5 has some beautiful features—a five-speed transmission with an overdrive that really saves fuel on a long trip, and a fold-down split rear seat that enables you to carry one passenger back there and still have the long space on the other side for golf clubs or fenceposts or whatever. I don't know why Detroit never thought it, that split seat. Here we're supposed to be Automobile Heaven and the foreigners come up with all the ideas. If you ask me Detroit's let us all down, two hundred million of us. I'd much rather handle native American cars but between the three of us they're junk. They're cardboard. They're pretend."

"Now what are those over there?" the boy asks.

"That's the Corona, if you want to move toward the top of the line. Bigger engine—twenty-two hundred cc's. instead of sixteen. More of a European look. I drive one and love it. I get about thirty miles to the gallon on the highway, eighteen or so in Brewer. Depends on how you drive, of course. How heavy a foot you have. Those testers for *Consumer Reports*, they must really give it the gun, their mileage figures are the one place they seem off to me. This liftback here is priced at sixty-eight five, but remember you're buying yen for dollars, and when trade-in time comes you get your yen back."

The girl smiles at "yen." The boy, gaining confidence, says, "And this one here now." The young farmer has touched the Celica's suave black hood. Harry is running out of enthusiasm. Interested in that, the kid wasn't very interested in buying.

"You've just put your hand on one super machine," Harry tells him. "The Celica GT Sport Coupe, a car that'll ride with a Porsche or an MG any day. Steel-belted radials, quartz crystal clock, AM/FM stereo—all standard. *Standard*. You can imagine what the extras are. This one has

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power steering and a sun roof. Frankly, it's pricey, pretty near five figures, but like I say, it's an investment. That's how people buy cars now, more and more. That old Kleenex mentality of trade it in every two years is gone with the wind. Buy a good solid car now, you'll have something for a long while, while the dollars if you keep 'em will go straight to Hell. Buy good goods, that's my advice to any young man starting up right now."

He must be getting too impassioned, for the boy says, "We're chust looking around, more or less."

"I understand that," Rabbit says quickly, pivoting to face the silent girl. "You're under absolutely no pressure from me. Picking a car is like picking a mate—you want to take your time." The girl blushes and looks away. Generous paternal talkativeness keeps bubbling up in Harry. "It's still a free country, the Commies haven't gotten any further than Cambodia. No way I can make you folks buy until you're good and ready. It's all the same to me, this product sells itself. Actually you're lucky there's such a selection on the floor, a shipment came in two weeks ago and we won't have another until August. Japan can't make enough of these cars to keep the world happy, Toyota is number one import all over the globe." He can't take his eyes off this girl. Those chunky eyesockets reminding him of somebody. The milky flecked shoulders, the dent of flesh where the halter strap digs. Squeeze her and you'd leave thumb-prints, she's that fresh from the oven. "Tell me," he says, "which size're you thinking of? You planning to cart a family around, or just yourselves?"

The girl's blush deepens. Don't marry this chump, Harry thinks. His brats will drag you down. The boy says, "We don't need another wagon. My dad has a Chevy pick-up, and he let me take the Squire over when I got out of high school."

"A great junk car," Rabbit concedes. "You can hurt it but you can't kill it. Even in '71 they were putting more metal in than they do now. Detroit is giving up the ghost." He feels he is floating—on their youth, on his money, on the brightness of this June afternoon and its promise that tomorrow, a Sunday, will be fair for his golf game. "But for people planning to tie the knot and get serious you