

MOTOR MOUTH

by Ken Bradbury



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(Two chairs sit side by side. In the stage right chair Carlyle. Actually, he or she is the car, or at least part of it. Carlyle is the automobile's onboard computer system. Bailey enters, excited.)

BAILEY: Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy! It got it! My first new car! Man, I can't believe it! *(Bailey sits in the left seat. Carlyle shows no expression.)* This is great. I've never driven a new car off the lot before. Wait'll everybody sees me. *(seeing something on the "dashboard")* "Congratulations. Your new Honda-Yota is equipped with the newest onboard computer system. This thing is so awesome, we don't even include instructions. It'll tell you everything you need to know." Cool. But who cares? I just want to cruise the strip. Well ... here goes ... *(turns the key)*

CARLYLE: *(in an ominous tone)* Fasten your seatbelt.

BAILEY: What? Oh. I guess it talks to you. *(Bailey fastens belt, then begins to turn the key again.)* Here we go!

CARLYLE: Your seatbelt is twisted.

BAILEY: *(stops)* Huh? *(looks at his/her seatbelt)* Oh. Gee ... thanks. This is weird. I'm already talking to my car. *(in a mock-computer tone)* "I hope I'm ready now." *(begins to turn the key)*

CARLYLE: You are.

BAILEY: *(stops ... this is something new ... the car can hear him)* Wow. Now that's weird. *(moves gearshift and takes off)* *(singing)* I'm "on the road again!"

CARLYLE: Destination?

BAILEY: Huh?

CARLYLE: What is your destination?

BAILEY: My ...?

CARLYLE: Where are you going?

BAILEY: I ... I don't know. I'm just gonna drive around. It's a new car. I want to show it off.

CARLYLE: That is not a valid destination.

BAILEY: I know that.

CARLYLE: What is your destination?

BAILEY: I gotta find a way to turn that function off. Okay, I'll go down to the mall, turn around then cruise the shopping center. Okay?

CARLYLE: Turn left.

BAILEY: I know how to get to the Mall.

CARLYLE: Look both ways.

BAILEY: Look ...

CARLYLE: Car approaching from the left.

BAILEY: (*looks*) I can see that.

CARLYLE: It is now safe to proceed.

BAILEY: (*looking around his dashboard*) There's gotta be an off switch for that voice.

CARLYLE: This system contains no owner-serviced parts. Please do not attempt to reconfigure the system yourself. The mall is seven blocks ahead on your right, exactly point 496 miles.

BAILEY: I can see the sign from here.

CARLYLE: You are tailgating the truck in front of you.

BAILEY: I'm at a stoplight.

CARLYLE: Please maintain a safe distance.

BAILEY: You want me to back into the guy behind me?

CARLYLE: The stoplight has now turned green.

BAILEY: You can see that?

CARLYLE: Please proceed with caution.

BAILEY: Look, you want to drive?

CARLYLE: Please proceed with caution.

BAILEY: I know. I'll turn up the radio and drown out that voice. (*reaches for the radio*)

CARLYLE: Which station do you wish?

BAILEY: I don't know. You mean you switch the stations for me?

CARLYLE: Your Honda-Yota is equipped with XM Radio. Please select a station.

BAILEY: Something loud.

CARLYLE: Twenty-three percent of teenage automobile accidents are caused by drivers distracted by loud music. I shall now select Beethoven's Symphony Number Seven in A-Major.

BAILEY: No, you won't!

CARLYLE: The stoplight has turned red.

BAILEY: (*slamming on the breaks*) Oh, darn!

CARLYLE: You have just encountered the rear bumper of a 1998 Chevy X-10. The driver of the X-10 is now getting out of his truck.

BAILEY: Oh, no! (*gets out of his seat and stands beside his car*) Look, I'm really sorry. Yeh, I've got insurance. (*looking at his own front bumper*) No, I don't think it did much damage to my car.

CARLYLE: Seven hundred and twenty dollars including labor and all applicable state and federal taxes.

BAILEY: Shut up! (*to the man beside him*) No, not you. Look, I'm really sorry. (*reaching for something to write with*) Here, I'll give you my name and address and my dad'll give you a call tonight. I'm really sorry, mister. Man, I'm so nervous I can't even remember my own address.

CARLYLE: 412 Oak Street, Apartment 7B.

BAILEY: I knew that! (*to the man*) What? I mean, I knew that I'd run into somebody if I didn't pay attention. (*handing the man the paper*) I'm really sorry.

CARLYLE: The light has now turned green.

BAILEY: (*kicks the chair/car*) Be quiet! (*to the man*) Huh? Yeh, I'll be careful. And thanks for being so nice. (*gets in the "car"*) You did this.

CARLYLE: Please proceed with caution.

BAILEY: I'm not going anywhere until I shut you off. Look what you did to my bumper.

CARLYLE: Emergency vehicle approaching from your left. Please pull out of the way.

BAILEY: (*looks in rearview mirror*) Huh? Oh, darn. (*he whips the car to the right*)

CARLYLE: You just encountered a fire hydrant.

BAILEY: What? (*looks*) Oh, no!

CARLYLE: The approximate cost of damage is nine hundred twenty-two dollars and fourteen cents.

BAILEY: Shut up!



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