

**‘Speed’**  
**A short story by Joshua McGarry**

His heart was pounding, sweat poured down his cheek. Fourth place in your first race in Formula One would not be bad, but he knew he could do better. He knew it. He steered round the sweeping right hand corner, his brakes locked. The rear of the car stepped out a little, but he got past. One overtake led to the next, and another and once more. There it was. Victory, on the last lap. His radio crackled: *“Amazing! I am completely speechless!”* His head engineer knew he could do well but this was a whole new breed of ‘doing well.’

He sat alone in the paddock, calming down after a long, adrenaline-fuelled day. His team principal, Roman, emerged. *“Congratulations out there today, one race in and you’ve already caught the eye of our engine supplier. Just you wait and they’ll sign you to the factory team.”* To race for Ferrari would be a dream come true for the young driver, for he had been on their junior teams throughout his GP3 and Formula 2 careers, and he had always strived for it.

Race 2, Bahrain came and went, a second step on the podium was his. Three months and May had arrived; it was Monte-Carlo weekend. He had fought long and hard for his first place championship position, but he knew he had reached his peak. He thought the tight, intimidating race on the streets of Monaco would be his downfall.

Lights out, and the screaming racers were away. Starting fifth did not do him justice, and he had a lot of catching up to do. He collided with a Renault at the casino square and received front wing damage. He lost ten positions in the resulting pit stop and now the race really was on. He focused to the point where

he was driving instinctively. He zoomed past eight rivals, over one straight. The next two were five hundred metres ahead with five laps to go. It was near impossible. Especially on a circuit where it was hard to bridge a gap at all. However, with DRS open, his speed was much higher. He threw his electronic power assistance into overtake and was on the hunt.

He caught up to second place and was going two-wide around the last corner of the race. He dipped to the right to put his opponent off. But suddenly, the battling Mercedes dropped back almost instantly. He crossed the line only to look behind him in his rear view mirrors to watch the carnage ensue.

*“An open drain cover,”* said Roman. *“Not only could you have been part of that crash, but you could have lost your life. Not one car in that collision came out without damage to the halo. If the same accident occurred this time last year, before the halo was introduced, men could’ve died or at least had broken necks.”* And it could have been the driver’s fault. *“You’re very lucky,”* finished Roman.

The following six weeks, he let that sink in. He had a mediocre Canada, France and Austria, but he had to snap out of it. He had dropped back to fifth in the drivers’ championship, and had a lot of ground to cover. He needed to remove thoughts of what might have happened, and focus on what he could do, which was be the first rookie champion. He was on his way to fulfilling his dream until the thirtieth lap of the British Grand Prix, his home race.

He had started his go-karting career there and his heart lay in the asphalt of Silverstone. His family and life-long friends were there to show their support. An accident was being tended to at a corner and a safety car was deployed. A forklift was raising a written-off car. But his brakes failed. He couldn’t slow down. He was headed right for the forklift. He turned his car but it was no use. He travelled

underneath the forklift. The bars of his halo snapped. His head was slingshot forwards. It looked like his luck had finally run out.

An air ambulance landed on the track. His body was pulled from the cockpit and the resuscitation process began. Red flag. The race was over.