THEY'd thrashed the competitors in the match, and there had been rumours of scouts for the pro teams attending: it had been a good evening, all in all. Tidus was pretty tired – he'd really made sure to show them what he was made of – and was bracing himself for the long walk home when a car pulled up beside him.

The car window slowly receded, and Tidus raised his eyebrows at the sight of Auron in the driver's seat, fixing him with one of his customary one-eyed stares. "You can drive?" he noted curiously.

Auron glanced down at his own hands on the steering wheel, looked back up at Tidus, and said, "Apparently."

Tidus clambered into the passenger's seat and fastened the seatbelt. "Thanks for picking me up," he said.

"I was in the neighbourhood," said Auron, and he pressed his foot onto the accelerator with such force that Tidus was violently flung forward in his seat. "I take it back," he said, massaging his neck where the rough fabric of the seatbelt had rubbed against it. "You can't drive."

"Huh," said Auron, just about managing to screech to a stop at a red light.

Tidus wondered how he might distract himself from his impending demise: perhaps making conversation would do the trick. "Haven't seen you in a while," he said. "Where've you been?"

"Here and there," Auron replied.

It occurred to Tidus, not for the first time, that there were numerous benefits of not having Auron around very much, despite his being Tidus' supposed legal guardian. One of the most apparent was the fact that the guy was a terrible conversation partner. Tidus rolled his eyes, looking out of the side window so Auron didn't see him.

"How was your match?" said Auron, pulling away again with perhaps a little more finesse than the previous time.

It was an unexpected question; Tidus gaped at him for a while before answering. He hadn't realised Auron had known he'd had a proper game that day, although that would explain why he had known to find him at the stadium. "It was great," he said. "We won." He debated telling Auron about the exact techniques his team had employed to do so, but decided he probably wouldn't appreciate the detail, so he decided not to elaborate further.

"Good," Auron replied, jerking the steering wheel to the side; they hurtled onto a slip road at approximately three times the appropriate speed. Tidus found the little hook above the passenger door and clung onto it desperately. "What's the car for, anyway?" he yelled, trying to make his voice heard over the unnecessarily high revving of the engine.

Auron smirked. "You'll see."

They pulled up at the dock; Tidus, staggering out of the car, had never been so glad to be alive.

"Catch," said Auron suddenly as he closed the driver's door,

and he looped the car keys into the air. Tidus was taken by surprise, but he caught them – of course – and looked down at them in confusion. He glanced back up at Auron with a frown.

"You can start driving at sixteen, correct?" said Auron.

"No way," said Tidus. His sixteenth birthday was next week. "I mean, uh, yeah, but –"

"Well, enjoy it," said Auron.

"You got me a car?" Tidus exclaimed.

Auron frowned. "Not exactly. I used your father's money. So, in essence, I suppose you got *yourself* a car." He hesitated. "You do … want it?"

Tidus tightened his grip on the keys. "Yeah, of course, I – that's so cool! Thanks, Auron!" He felt himself break into a big, embarrassing grin: Auron was a weird guy, but he really came through sometimes.

"You'll have to find someone to teach you," said Auron. "Although I'm sure you'll pick it up quickly enough. It didn't seem that hard."

"Wait," said Tidus. "Was that – you mean you've never –"

"Got you here in one piece, didn't I?" Auron replied.

"Oh man," said Tidus, and he couldn't help cracking up at the sheer absurdity of it; Auron permitted himself a chuckle as well, and they both stood there laughing for a while until Auron made to leave.

"You wanna stay for dinner?" Tidus asked. "I make a mean five bean chilli."

Auron paused for a moment, considering. "All right," he said eventually.