

According to what they told me years later, they had begun by looking for him at María Alejandrina Cervantes' place, where they had been with him until two o'clock. That fact, like many others, was not reported in the brief. Actually, Santiago Nasar was no longer there at the time the twins said they went looking for him, because we'd left to do a round of serenades, but in any case, it wasn't certain that they'd gone. "They never would have left here," María Alejandrina Cervantes told me, and knowing her so well, I never doubted it. On the other hand, they went to wait for him at Clotilde Armenta's place, where they knew that almost everybody would stop except Santiago Nasar. "It was the only place open," they declared to the investigator. "Sooner or later he would have to come out," they told me, after they had been absolved. Still, everybody knew that the main door of Plácida Linero's house was always barred on the inside, even during the daytime, and that Santiago Nasar always carried the keys to the back door with him. That was where he went in when he got home, in fact, while the Vicario twins had been waiting for him for more than an hour on the other side, and if he later left by the door on the square when he went to receive the bishop, it was for such an unforeseen reason that the investigator who drew up the brief never did understand it.

There had never been a death more foretold. After their sister revealed the name to them, the Vicario twins went to the bin in the pigsty where they kept their sacrificial tools and picked out the two best knives: one for quartering, ten inches long by two and a half inches wide, and the other for trimming, seven inches long by one and a half inches wide. They wrapped them in a rag and went to sharpen them at the meat market, where only a few stalls had begun to open. There weren't very many customers that early, but twenty-two people declared they had heard everything said, and they all coincided in the impression that the only reason they had said it was for someone to hear them. Faustino Santos, a butcher friend, saw them come in at three-twenty, when he had just opened up his innards table, and he couldn't understand why they were coming on a Monday and so early, and still in their dark wedding suits. He was accustomed to seeing them come on Fridays, but a little later, and wearing the leather aprons they put on for slaughtering. "I thought they were so drunk," Faustino Santos told me, "that not only had they forgotten what time it was but what day it was too." He reminded them that it was Monday.

"Everybody knows that, you dope," Pablo Vicario answered him good-naturedly. "We just came to sharpen our knives."