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Translated by Kirk Nessel

EXPEDITIOUS

We were dining peacefully at the López Farnesis's house, such agreeable people, good hosts, when the stranger began telling his story:

—It was a windy afternoon. There wasn't a soul on the lakeshore. Ducks fluttered up, I tensed, and suddenly saw him, this guy high up on the cliff edge. Not a safe place to be, a sheer wall forty meters high. I looked at him, shocked, and he looked at me. He's with the Coast Guard or something, I thought. The thin ledge he stood on gave way all at once; he'd have plummeted down, if not for the branches he grabbed as he slipped. He hung there swinging in air, no way to get any footing.

—How awful! the women exclaimed.

—But I got him down quickly, the stranger said, reassuring.

—Thank goodness, we sighed. You're a hero. Tell us how you did it.

—Very simple, he said. A bullet.