

Chitty Chitty BANG BANG'S Magical Reading Tour

An extract from Ian Fleming's
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Suddenly Commander Pott happened to glance at the dashboard, over on the left, opposite Mimsie, and he said excitedly, 'I say, all of you, look at that!'

And Mimsie looked and Jeremy and Jemima peered over the back of the seat, and amongst all the knobs and instruments a light on top of a small

knob was flashing pale pink! And it was showing a word, and the word said 'PULL'!

'Good heavens!' said Commander Pott. 'I wondered what that knob was for, but it's one of the ones I haven't had time to tinker with. What can it be for?'

'Look!' cried Mimsie. 'The light's turning red!'

And sure enough it was, and now another word was showing! And do you know what the other word said? It said 'IDIOT'! So now the angry red knob read 'PULL IDIOT'! And Commander Pott laughed out loud and said, 'Well I never! That's pretty good cheek! Here's CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG taking control and calling me an idiot into the bargain! Oh, well! Here goes!' And he reached over and pulled down the little silver lever.

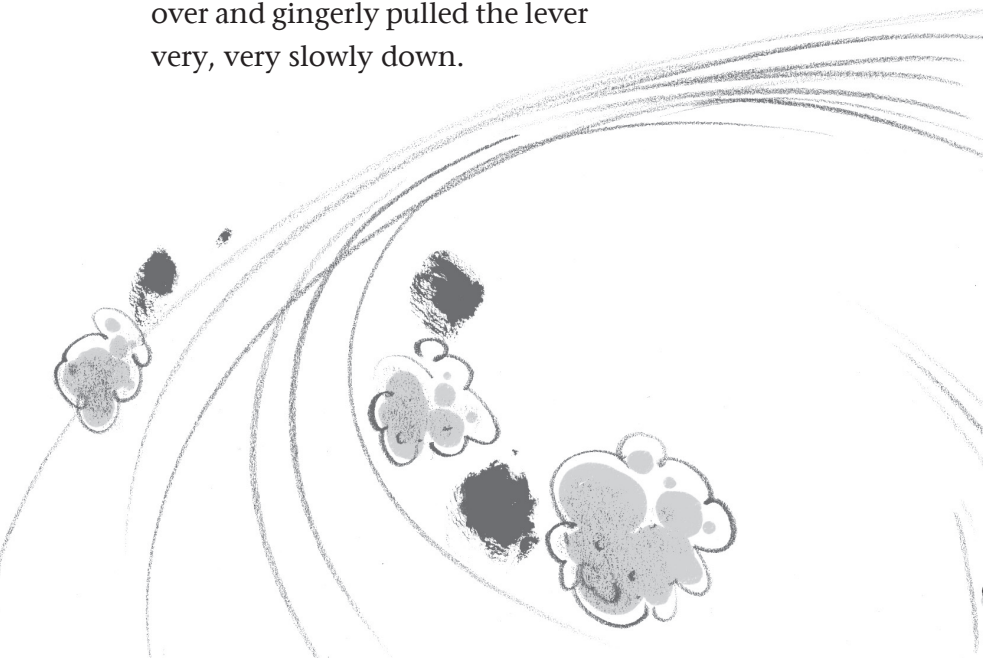
The children, in fact the whole family, sat on the tips of their behinds, if you see what I mean, and waited excitedly to see what would happen.

And a kind of soft humming noise began. It seemed to come from all over the car – from the front axle and from the back axle and from underneath the bonnet. And then the most extraordinary transmogrifications (which is just a long word for 'changes') began to occur. The big front mudguards swivelled outwards so that they stuck out like wings, sharply swept back, and the



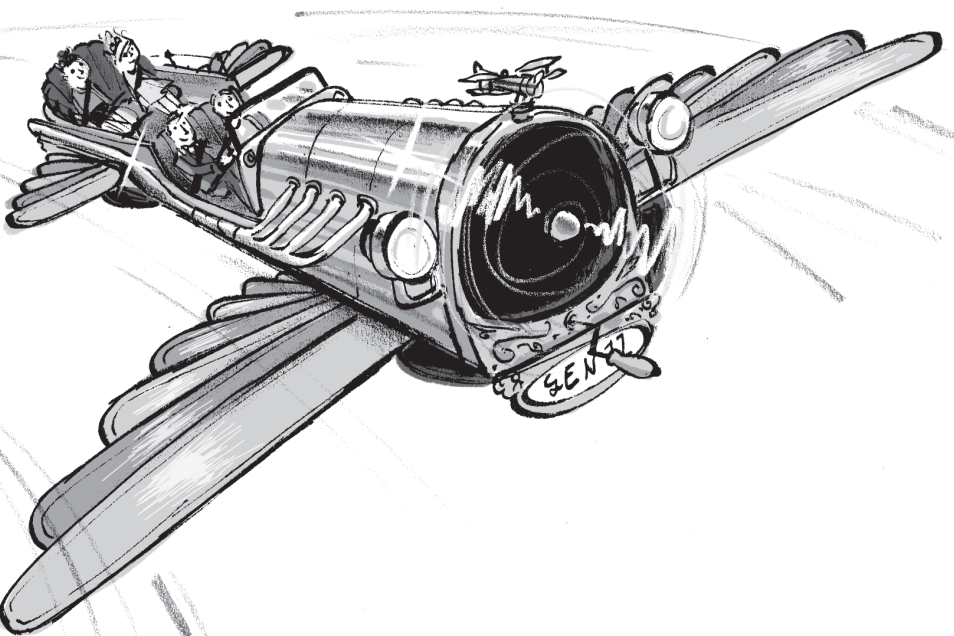
smaller back mudguards did the same (it was lucky the road was wide and there was single-lane traffic, or a neighbouring car or a telegraph-pole might have been sliced in half by the sharp green wings!). The wings locked into position with a click and at the same time, though the family couldn't see it from behind, the big radiator grille slid open like a sliding door, and the big propeller of the fan belt, together with the fly-wheel underneath that runs the petrol pump and the electric generator, slowly slid forward until they were sticking right out in front of the bonnet of the car.

And then, on the dashboard, beside another little lever a *green* light started to blink and this light said 'PULL DOWN', and Commander Pott, rather nervously but this time obediently, reached over and gingerly pulled the lever very, very slowly down.



And then, in heaven's name, what do you think happened?

Yes, you're right, absolutely right. The wings slowly tilted, and as Commander Pott, at last realizing what CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG was up to, pressed down the accelerator pedal, the big green car, which was now what I might call an aerocar, tilted up her shining green and silver nose and took off! Yes! She took off like an aeroplane and soared up over the car in front, just missing her roof, and roared away over the long line of stationary cars in the queue, while all the people stared out of their car windows in absolute astonishment and Commander Pott called out,



'Hang on, everyone. For heaven's sake hang on!' Mimsie and Jeremy and Jemima clutched the arm-rests beside them and just sat, stiff with excitement and with their eyes and their mouths wide open, thinking, Heavens above! What is going to happen next?