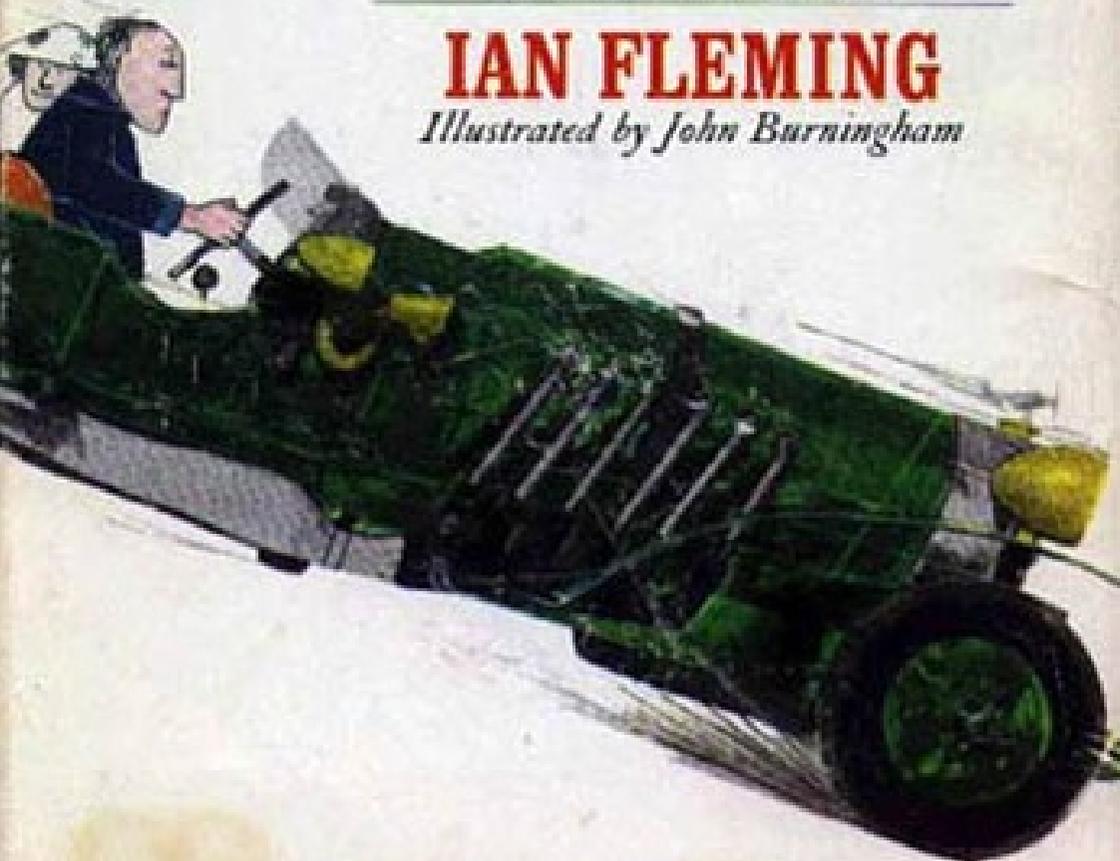


Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

The Magical Car

IAN FLEMING

Illustrated by John Burningham



The wild adventures of a spirited British family

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Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang

The Magical Car

Adventure Number Three

Ian Fleming

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Dedication

These stories are affectionately dedicated to the memory of the original CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG, built in 1920 by Count Zborowski on his estate near Canterbury.

She had a pre-1914 War, chain-drive, 75 horse-power Mercedes chassis, in which was installed a six-cylinder Maybach aero-engine—the military type used by the Germans in their Zeppelins.

Four vertical overhead valves per cylinder were operated by exposed push-rods and rockers from a cam-shaft on each side of the crank-case, and two Zenith carburettors were attached, one at each end of a long induction-pipe.

She had a grey steel body, with an immense polished bonnet eight feet in length, and weighed over five tons.

In 1921 she won the Hundred M.P.H. Short Handicap at Brooklands at 101 miles per hour, and in 1922, again at Brooklands, the Lightning Short Handicap. But in that year she was involved in an accident[1] and the Count never raced her again.

I.F.

[1] This is a polite way of putting it. In fact CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG suddenly went mad with rage about something, and with the Count at the wheel, got out of control and charged through the timing-hut, very fast, backwards!

Adventure Number Three

The moon shone down on the Hotel Splendide where the Pott family, Commander Caractacus Pott, Mimsie, and the twins, Jeremy and Jemima, lay fast asleep after their terrific adventures of the last twenty-four hours. In the hotel garage CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG was also dozing comfortably, as her engine and crank-shaft and brake-linings cooled off after her exciting dash across the Channel to France.

When Joe the Monster had seen the lights go out in the hotel and had noticed from the shadows on the blinds that Commander Pott and Mimsie were sleeping in one room, with Jeremy and Jemima in another room next door, he and his ruffians got swiftly to work.

From the boot of the car they took out a number of burglarious instruments—a telescopic aluminium ladder for climbing the wall of the hotel, a jemmy (this is a burglar's tool for opening windows and doors that looks rather like a very powerful tin-opener) and some rope. Joe the Monster whispered a series of commands, and in a trice the gang had run the ladder up the hotel wall to the room where Jeremy and Jemima lay fast asleep. Then, while Man-Mountain Fink, who was as strong and as big as he sounds, held the foot of the ladder, Soapy Sam, who was a very tiny man but a very strong one, crept softly up the ladder and after some quick work with the jemmy slipped over the window-sill into the room where the twins lay sleeping.

He had had his orders. He went first to Jemima's bed, whirled up the four corners of the sheet on which she was lying, and with her bundled up inside it, tied a knot out of the four corners so as to make her look like a bundle of washing.

And almost before she could awake he handed her softly out of the window and into the arms of Man-Mountain Fink.

Jeremy had stirred in his sleep, but here again it only needed a few quick movements and he too was on his way out of the window, and then their clothes and shoes were hurled pell-mell after them.

But of course the children were quickly awake, and even before they could be bundled into the back of the black car they had started to struggle and squeak.

But, alas, not loud enough!

Mimsie woke up and said sleepily to Commander Pott, "Did you hear that squeaking? It sounded sort of muffled. I suppose it wasn't the children."

But Commander Pott only gave a sleepy grunt and said, "I expect it was bats or mice," and went firmly off to sleep again. And neither of them paid any attention to the sound of the black car starting up and softly driving away.

Fortunately CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG had smelt trouble. Heaven knows how, but there it is. There was much about this magical car that even Commander Pott couldn't understand. All I can say is that, as the gangsters' low black roadster stole away down the moonlit streets, perhaps its movement jolted something or made some electrical connection in the mysterious insides of CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG, but anyway there was the tiny soft whirr of machinery, hardly louder than the buzz of a mosquito, and behind the mascot on the bonnet, a small antenna, like a

wireless aerial, rose softly, and the small oval bit of wire mesh in miniature, rather like what you see on top of the big radar pylons on aerodromes, began to swivel until it was directly pointing after the gangsters' car, which was now hurtling up the great main road towards Paris.

And all through the night, while Commander Pott and Mimsie were asleep and while the twins were being bumped about in the back of the gangsters' car, CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG'S Radar Eye was following every twist and turn of Joe the Monster, hunched over the wheel of his black tourer.

Now Joe the Monster, was in fact head of an international gang of robbers and ruffians and he was known in France as Joe le Monstre (I hope this isn't the first French word you've learnt!). And when things got too hot for him in England he moved his gang over to France and vice versa.

As soon as they got out of the town of Calais, he ordered the knots on top of the sheet bundles which contained Jeremy and Jemima to be undone by Soapy Sam and Blood-Money Banks, between whom the twins were wedged on the back seat. For although he was a monster in the eyes of the law, neither he nor his gang of crooks were so monstrous as to want Jeremy and Jemima to suffocate.

The two children were too startled to know really what was happening to them. They both knew it wasn't something good, but being children of rather adventurous parents, they weren't easily frightened.

Joe the Monster leant back from the wheel and said over his

shoulder, in a voice that was meant to be sugary, "Now then, duckies, everything's quite all right. Your dear pa and ma have asked us to take you for a little night drive to see something of the French countryside by moonlight." He turned to Man-Mountain Fink, who sat beside him. "Ain't that right, Man-Mountain?"

"Absolutely-one-hundred-per-cent-right-and-cross-my-heart-and-wish-to-die," said the big man all in one breath.

"Hear that, my duckies?" called Joe the Monster above the rushing of the wind. "You're in good hands, the very best. You just go off to bye-byes, and when you wakey-wakey there'll be a delicious brekky waiting for you."

Now, if there is one thing the twins, and most other children of their age, hate, it is being talked to in baby language. Certainly as far as Jeremy was concerned, he would prefer Joe to be monstrous rather than niminy-piminy. At least you know where you are with grown-ups who behave like grown-ups, but no child likes a grown-up to talk like a baby.

But truth to tell, both Jeremy and Jemima were too sleepy from the previous day's adventures to care very much what was happening to them, so they snuggled up together and Jemima was soon fast asleep. But before Jeremy dozed off he heard snatches of conversation between Joe the Monster and Man-Mountain Fink drifting back from the front seat.

And the snatches of conversation were something like this:

"Just what we want for the Bon-Bon job ... innocent pair of monkeys ... shove 'em in just before closing ... five thousand

francs ... keys of the safe are in the till ... when the old geyser goes for the change ... then Soapy can use the jelly."

Trying to make head or tail out of these mysterious sentences, Jeremy snuggled up alongside Jemima, and lulled by the speed of the car and the rush of the wind, and knowing, as children always do know, that their father and mother would soon rescue them, he too went fast asleep.

It had been three o'clock in the morning when the children had been kidnapped from the Hotel Splendide, and it was eight o'clock when the gangster car drew up outside a deserted warehouse owned by Joe the Monster in the suburbs of Paris, over 150 miles away from Calais.

And it was precisely at this moment, when the gangsters were carrying the bundled-up children into the building, that the miniature radar on the bonnet of CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG held steady, as if she knew that this was the end of their journey. Then, perhaps because of a short circuit or perhaps for some other reason quite beyond my understanding, CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG'S powerful klaxon began to go "GA-GOO-GA, GA-GOO-GA, GA-GOO-GA," and just went on doing it, making the most horrendous din you could imagine.

Commander Pott and Mimsie were instantly awake, and with, I am sorry to say, a very powerful swear-word (it was "Dash my wig and whiskers", if you want to know), Commander Pott leapt out of his bed, pulled on some clothes and dashed downstairs and round to the garage to find what the electrical fault was and stop it before they had the whole

population of Calais, led by the police and the fire-brigade, charging round to find out who was responsible for the horrendous din. You can imagine his astonishment when directly he tore open the garage doors and stood face to face with CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG, there was one last "GOO-GA" and then dead silence.

"Now, what the devil's the matter with you?" said Commander Pott. And as if in reply, the giant headlamps suddenly blazed on and off in one gigantic wink of warning.

Commander Pott was even more puzzled. "There must be something terribly wrong with your electrical system," he said sympathetically. "Let's see what the matter is," and he went to open the bonnet. But then, for the first time, he caught sight of the thin little radar antenna sticking up in front of the wind-shield, and he stopped in his tracks. "What in heaven's name..." he had just begun, when Mimsie came dashing across from the hotel.

"The children," she cried desperately, "they've gone! And their clothes too! There are the marks of a ladder on the window-sill and somebody's been at the window breaking in! They've been kidnapped, I know it, by those awful men we ran into yesterday! For heaven's sake, Jack" (which she always used as short for Caractacus), "what are we to do?"

Commander Pott didn't argue, or say "Are you sure?" or "How do you know?" or even go to see the evidence for himself. He knew that Jeremy and Jemima would never have left the hotel of their own accord—and certainly not, he added realistically to himself, without having had any breakfast. He

looked from the tearful Mimsie to CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG, and suddenly he knew, he knew absolutely for sure, that that was the meaning of the radar device, and that the magical car had sounded her own horn both to wake them up and because she knew where the twins had gone.

"Here, darling," he said urgently. "Here's some money, be a good girl and run over and get the rest of my clothes and pay the bill. CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG knows where they've gone. Don't ask me how, but I know it for sure, and we'll get after them."

As Mimsie ran off, glad to have something to take her mind away from her fears, Commander Pott jumped into the driving seat and pressed the self-starter, and at once the great car, with her usual "CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG", leapt into life, and Commander Pott steered her out and across the street just as Mimsie came running out of the hotel.

She jumped in beside him and they were off, slowly at first so that Commander Pott could watch the movement of the little radar scanner on the bonnet just in front of him. At first it pointed left down the main street and then corrected itself just like a compass when it had got on the right course, and then at the big turning towards Paris it swivelled to the right, and Commander Pott obediently whirled the wheel and they were off on the huge main road which said "TO PARIS".

Now Commander Pott really trod hard down on the accelerator and the speedometer climbed up and hung around a hundred miles an hour, as the great green car, its supercharger screaming like a banshee, positively ate up the kilometres,

which, instead of miles, is how they measure distances on the Continent. As each fork or turning in the road came up, he followed the direction indicated by the radar scanner, and with CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG going "Lickety-split, Lickety-split, Lickety-split", they hurtled on towards the gangster hide-out, where Jeremy and Jemima had been locked into a bare, cell-like room at the back of the deserted warehouse.

Jeremy's and Jemima's clothes had been thrown in with them, and they now dressed quickly and began, in whispers just in case anybody might be listening at the door, to wonder where they were and what was going to happen to them—and above all, when somebody was going to bring them their breakfast.

Jeremy was just telling Jemima about the mysterious words of Joe the Monster, "doing the Bon-Bon job" and "Soapy using the jelly", when the door was unlocked and Joe the Monster himself came in, beaming (as far as, with his ugly mug, he could beam), while behind him Soapy Sam followed with a tray that he put down on the floor beside the children (there was no furniture in the room—not a stick of it).

Jeremy got stoutly to his feet and said, in as firm a voice as he could muster, "Where are we and what are you doing with us? You'll get into bad trouble if you don't take us back to our parents straight away. You'll have the police after you any moment now." And he glared as big a glare as he could glare into the black-bearded face of the huge man who towered above him.

"Ha, ha, that's good, that's real good! Hear that, Soapy? The young 'un says the cops will be after me." He turned back to Jeremy and leered hideously down at him. "Why, my little man, the cops have been after me since I was smaller than you. Think of that now, all these years they've been hunting after me and my pals and they ain't caught up yet. Often been sniffing at me heels, mark you, even offered ten thousand pun' for what they are pleased to call 'information leading to my apprehension', which, in English, means gen on how to catch me. And now you expect me to quake in my shoes because of a little English family called Pott! Haw, haw, haw!" And he positively shook with demoniac laughter.

Jeremy said angrily, "We're not so little as all that. My father was a commander in the Navy and he is a famous inventor and explorer, and anyway, besides us there's CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG."

"And who might he be?"

"It's not a 'he', it's a 'she', and she's a car, the most wonderful car in the world, she's ma..." Jeremy was going to say "magical", but he shut his mouth just in time. Better keep that a secret!

"Oh, you mean that old green rattletrap of yours?" sneered Joe the Monster. "I'll give you that it's certainly a rum old bus—the way it took to the air last evening when we had you cornered. I suppose your inventor pa has found some way to make a car fly. That right?" Joe the Monster's small, pig-like eyes became smaller and craftier than ever. "I suppose you've got something there. That invention might be worth a lot of

money in the right hands. Now, if you'd like to tell your old pal Joe how it's done, maybe I can take out some patents and give your dad a piece of the money I'd get for sellin' 'em. What about it, young feller, you and me go into partnership, sort of?"

Jeremy said bluntly, "I don't know how it works and I wouldn't tell you if I did know."

"Oh, well," said Joe the Monster, "I guess I'm not all that keen to go into the motor-car business. Now then, let's get down to brass tacks and then you two youngsters can tuck in to that scrumptious brekky Soapy's brewed up for you. Now then—" he looked at them both craftily "—just you both listen to me, and if you do what you're told you'll come to no harm, and even earn yourselves a bit of pocket-money into the bargain. And when it's over I'll see you're both put on a train and sent back to your precious dad and mum in that hotel in Calais."

Jeremy opened his mouth to speak, but Joe the Monster held up a big hairy fist. "Now don't you argue with me, young 'un, and I don't want any more of your lip. Just listen carefully to what you have to do." He paused and spoke slowly, looking from one to the other of them to see that they were paying attention. "Now, all I'm telling you both to do is to go and buy yourselves a big box of chocolates. How would you like that? Just kind of a reward for being such a jolly couple of kids, see? I like kids, I really luv 'em." (Joe the Monster tried to put a sweet, fatherly expression on his face, but all that he could manage was a kind of ape-like grimace.) "Now then, not far away from here, twenty minutes' ride, is the most famous chocolate-shop in the world. It's called Le Bon-Bon, which, in case you don't know it, is French for sweet, and it's run by an

old geyser called Monsieur Bon-Bon. He's been in it for fifty years, and his dad before him and his grandad before that, and he makes the finest sweets and chocolates in the world, get me? Absolutely the top lollies. Now this here old geyser's a funny old guy and he only opens up his shop for four hours in the middle of the day. Can't be bothered to keep it open any longer because he and his parents have made so much money that he doesn't have to work too hard, see? So he keeps the shop open from ten to twelve in the morning and from two to four in the afternoon. At twelve o'clock this morning me and my pals are going to drive you round there and give you a pocketful of money, and all you've got to do is what I tell you. You walk into the shop and ask for a box of chocolates costing four thousand francs, that's about three English pounds in the old francs, which are the only kind I understand, so you can see it's a fine box of chocolates, eh?" And he looked inquiringly from one to the other.

"Not bad," said Jeremy grudgingly, as if, in his family, they were given a three-pound box of chocolates every day.

"Not bad, he says!" shouted Joe the Monster angrily. "I'll say it's not bad. It's the biggest box of chocolates either of you have ever seen." He quickly calmed down, fished out a pocket-book stuffed with notes and took out one and handed it to Jeremy. "There you are, five thousand francs. I'll tell you what, I'll even let you keep the change. So there you are, duckies, all you do is walk into the shop together when I tell you, hand over the money and say politely, 'A box of chocolates for four thousand francs, please.' The old geyser don't know much English, but he'll understand that sentence in any language under the sun. Then you hand him that bit of money and take

the chocolates and your change, and that's the end of that. Easy job of work, eh? Nice slice of cake. You're a couple of the luckiest kids I ever did see. Now then, you got all that straight?"

They both nodded.

"O.K. then," said Joe the Monster breezily. "Come on Soapy, and let's get our chow. Looking at the fine breakfast you've dished up for these kids is making me hungry." He turned at the door. "Ta-ta, kiddies, and be good until Uncle Joe comes and fetches you." He walked out, followed by Soapy Sam who locked the door behind them.

Well, the china on the old tin tray was pretty chipped and not all that clean. But by this time Jeremy and Jemima were ravenous and they cheerfully squatted down on the hard concrete floor and set to.

A French breakfast is very different from an English one. To begin with, French bread, instead of being in loaves, comes in long, thin shapes about the length and width of a policeman's truncheon, and it's mostly crust, but very delicious crust. The big slab of French butter tasted much more like farm butter than most of the stuff we get in England, and the strawberry jam was very syrupy, like all French jams, but full of big, fat, whole strawberries. The coffee with milk, which the French call *café au lait*, was, if you happen to like coffee, better than the wishy-washy stuff you often get in England. So after a bit of rather cautious experimenting, Jeremy and Jemima set to with a will, and in between mouthfuls whispered their thoughts and fears about Joe the Monster's plans. With the help of the

snatches of conversation that Jeremy had heard in the car, they came to the following conclusion, which, since it's more or less right, I will pass on to you.

They guessed that they were going to be used by Joe the Monster and his gang to rob Monsieur Bon-Bon. They were to be the "innocent pair of monkeys" who would be "shoved in just before closing", while, presumably, the gang waited round the corner with perhaps one of them apparently examining the sweets in the shop window but really watching the twins through it. Jeremy had been given a five-thousand-franc note to buy a four-thousand-franc box of chocolates, and Monsieur Bon-Bon would have to go to the till to change it. ("Keys of the safe in the till".) As soon as Monsieur Bon-Bon opened the till the gangsters would dash in and knock him on the head and seize the keys, which were presumably the keys of the safe where he kept his money.

"But," whispered Jeremy, "I simply can't understand about this business of 'Soapy using the jelly'. What can that mean? There might be jellies in a sweet-shop, I suppose. Do you think they are going to gag Monsieur Bon-Bon with his own jellies so that he can't shout for help?"

They both giggled at the idea, but it was Jemima who got the right answer.

"You remember yesterday when we blew up Joe the Monster's stores in that huge cave? Well, Daddy said that some of the cases were full of stuff called gelignite, and he said it was the stuff that gangsters use to blow open safes with. Mightn't 'jelly' be kind of gangster slang for gelignite?"

"You've got it," whispered Jeremy, "by Jove, you've got it! That's just what they're going to do. They'll get the keys out of Monsieur Bon-Bon's till, and those keys probably open Monsieur Bon-Bon's safe. Now, for heaven's sake, what are we going to do about it?"

At this moment they heard a key in the lock, and Soapy Sam came in to take away the tray and lead them off to wash their hands in a smelly old bath-room at the back of the huge, deserted warehouse. Then they were back in their cell again, and the door was locked on them and they squatted together in the farthest corner away from the door and went on with their urgent whispering.

"When we go up to the counter to buy the chocolates," said Jeremy, "we've somehow got to warn Monsieur Bon-Bon that there are gangsters outside. But we don't know half a dozen words of French between us. How can we possibly tell him?"

"Could we just make faces and point our fingers at him like guns and shout 'Bang'?" said Jemima helpfully.

"He'd think we were just being cheeky," said Jeremy. "We've got to write him some sort of a note."

"But we haven't got any pens or pencils or even paper."

"We've got the paper," said Jeremy triumphantly, and he produced the big five-thousand-franc note and spread it out between them. "Now if we could just write in big letters 'GANGSTERS' across the note, I am sure it's a word Monsieur Bon-Bon will understand. But what can we possibly use for ink?" He looked accusingly at Jemima. "It's a shame you're not

a bit older and then you'd have a lipstick. In adventure stories, girls are always using lipsticks to write notes with."

"It's not my fault," whispered Jemima fiercely. "Anyway, I hate the stuff. I once tried Mummy's and I ended up looking as if I'd smeared my face with raspberry jam. Mummy was very angry with me, at least she pretended to be, but I think she was really only trying to stop laughing."

"Well, come on," whispered Jeremy urgently, "it must be getting near the time. I've got absolutely nothing in my pockets except a handkerchief and some bits of string and my pocket-knife. What've you got?"

"Nothing, absolutely nothing except my handkerchief," said Jemima despairingly. "But isn't there anything you can do with your knife? It's full of gadgets and things."

"By golly," exclaimed Jeremy, "of course we can use the sharp tip of the cork-screw and punch holes in the bank-note to spell out the word 'gangster' in big letters. Come on, let's get going quickly. You come and sit between me and the door in case anyone looks through the keyhole." And he fished out his pocket-knife, opened the cork-screw and set to work with the five-thousand-franc note in front of him on the concrete floor.

They both examined his handiwork and agreed that anyone who handled the note would feel the holes and look at it very suspiciously, and almost certainly hold it up to the light to see if the note was so badly damaged that it wasn't worth five thousand francs.

Jeremy had only just stowed the note and his knife away in

his pocket when the door opened and Joe the Monster came in, followed by Man-Mountain Fink.

"Come on, duckies, time to go," he said jovially. "Now, just one little formality before we set off. I'm sure you kiddies—" he looked suspiciously from one to the other—"I'm sure you kiddies haven't been up to any tricks, but just in case, I'd like to see what's in your pockets."

(Jeremy gave a sigh of relief. Thank heavens they hadn't found a pencil and paper somewhere, or been able to do any of the other tricks they had thought out.)

He innocently emptied his pockets of his pocket-knife and handkerchief and showed the five-thousand-franc note, well folded up. Jemima just showed her handkerchief.

After they had been made to pull out the linings of their pockets to show that nothing was hidden, Joe the Monster said, "All right, kiddies, let's go. Remember what you've got to do—you just walk into the shop and ask for a box of chocolates for four thousand francs, right?" And they trooped out, with Man-Mountain Fink taking up the rear to prevent any attempt to escape.

They piled into the black tourer and were soon roaring off through the streets to where, in the distance, the Eiffel Tower, which is a gigantic tower made of iron right in the middle of Paris, stood up like a huge needle in the sky.

Jeremy kept an eye on the clocks on churches and outside shops, and he saw that the minutes were hurrying on towards twelve o'clock, when, as Joe the Monster had said, Monsieur

Bon-Bon closed his shop for the morning. And sure enough, as they passed a gleaming shop window with the huge words "BON-BON" inscribed above it in gold, and turned down the next side-street and stopped, Jeremy heard some distant clock begin the first chimes of twelve.

The door of the car was thrown open and they were hustled out on to the pavement. "Run! Run!" said Joe the Monster furiously. "We've got late and he'll be shutting up his shop. Now don't forget, do exactly what I told you and you'll come to no trouble. If not—" and he lifted a big hairy fist as Jeremy and Jemima sped off round the corner.

Sure enough, the doors of Monsieur Bon-Bon's brilliantly-lit shop were just closing as they dashed up, and they had no chance to examine the row upon row of delicious sweets and chocolates temptingly arrayed in the long window.

A great wave of delicious chocolate smell hit them as they edged in past the closing door, and there was a charming little old man, in an old-fashioned suit with an apron round his fat tummy and a long white beard and whiskers, almost like Father Christmas.

He beamed down at the two children and let the door stand open. "Qu'est-ce que vous desirez?" And from the lift of his eyebrows the children guessed he was saying, "What do you desire?" Jeremy, panting from the run, managed to stammer out, "A box of chocolates, please, for four thousand francs."

"Aie!" exclaimed Monsieur Bon-Bon. "Quatre mille francs —zat ees a very beeg box of chocolates," and he moved over

to the counter, on which there was an endless array of beautiful boxes tied with huge coloured ribbons.

He picked out one. "You like zees one? She is mixed-up chocolates."

Jeremy and Jemima stifled a desire to giggle at his funny English, but it wasn't difficult to stifle the giggle, for they knew the danger wasn't over yet and that the terrifying part of the adventure was still to come.

"Oh, yes, please," said Jeremy quickly, and at the same time, over Monsieur Bon-Bon's shoulder, he saw the sly face of Soapy Sam gazing in through the window past all the luscious array of sweets and chocolates.

Monsieur Bon-Bon, who was used to the indecision of children and the time they took to make up their minds, looked rather surprised, but he walked behind the counter to wrap up the box and Jeremy followed him and held out, with, I admit, a rather trembling hand, the five-thousand-franc note, while Jemima stood beside him biting her knuckles and almost jumping up and down with excitement.

Monsieur Bon-Bon took the note, and as the children had expected, he at once opened it up and felt the holes in it. He looked at them suspiciously, and seeing the urgency and excitement on their faces and somehow smelling a rat, he lifted the note up to the light and softly spelt out the letters one by one. "Gangsters," whispered Jeremy urgently, "gangsters outside," and he jerked his head back towards the door.

Monsieur Bon-Bon was suddenly transformed from a

delightful old Father Christmas into a man of action. Without a word he ran, surprisingly quickly for an old man, across the shop to the door and bolted and barred it, then he pressed down quickly on a big lever beside the door and the steel shutters of the shop rattled down outside, but not before the children caught a last glimpse of Soapy Sam's face, now contorted into a furious snarl.

Then Monsieur Bon-Bon darted back behind the counter and picked up the telephone, excitedly shouting a lot of French down it, amongst which Jeremy and Jemima heard the word "police" used several times. Then Monsieur Bon-Bon put the receiver back on the hook and came round and stood looking down at the children for a minute or two. Then he said, "And now, mes enfants, tell me what zees is all about, yes?"

But as Jeremy began to stammer out his story, from outside in the street came the familiar warning blare of CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG'S tremendous klaxon "GA-GOO-GA, GA-GOO-GA, GA-GOO-GA," and then a splintering crash of glass and metal and the sound of shouts and people running.

Now, what had happened was this.

CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG had broken all records in her dash from Calais to Paris, and then, almost seeming to take charge of the steering-wheel herself, had finished the trip with a hair-raising sprint through the crowded streets, ignoring traffic lights, police whistles and the angry shouts of other motorists as if she knew there were only minutes to spare.

Commander Pott clung grimly to the wheel and Mimsie

spent most of the time with her hands over her eyes, as if at any moment they would crash.

But then the little radar scanner on the bonnet held steady along one particular stretch of street, and CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG slowed down all by herself as if she were sniffing about looking for something. And sure enough, as they passed a big sweet-shop with the words "BON-BON" in gold upon it, a low black car dashed suddenly out of a side-street and Commander Pott and Mimsie just had time to recognize it as the gangster car, when CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG positively wrenched the wheel out of Commander Pott's hands and tore straight like a charging bull, across the street—straight at the black tourer.

CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG hit the black tourer right in its middle with a tremendous crash and tinkling of glass and knocked it right over on its side, spilling Joe the Monster, Soapy Sam and Man-Mountain Fink out on to the road. And just at that moment, as the gangsters scrambled to their feet to make a run for it, with sirens screaming, French motor-cycle patrols appeared from both ends of the street and tore down upon them.

Commander Pott jumped from the driving seat of the now motionless green car, and joined in the chase which now ensued, finally bringing Joe the Monster to the ground with a flying tackle like you see at Rugby football.

And then, with the three gangsters lined up and covered with the policemen's revolvers, the door of the sweet-shop opened and the little man looking rather like Father Christmas came

running up, followed by Jeremy and Jemima.

Well, you can imagine the scenes of happiness and excitement that followed as the twins were reunited with their parents. But then there had to be a lot of confabulation with the police after a French Black Maria had driven up and taken the shouting and cursing gangsters away.

But at last everything had been explained in a mixture of English and French, and many compliments were piled on the shy heads of Jeremy and Jemima for the gallant part they had played in bringing about the capture of the gangsters.

Then a police break-down lorry appeared and hauled the remains of the gangsters car away and promised to have CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG'S broken front bumper and bent-in radiator nose put right as quickly as possible. And Monsieur Bon-Bon and the Pott family watched sympathetically as the great green car was hauled carefully off to a near-by garage, where Commander Pott later visited her to see that she was being properly looked after, and that she hadn't suffered any internal damage as a result of her brave ramming of the black tourer.

But she seemed quite happy being attended to by a host of admiring French mechanics, and Commander Pott returned cheerfully to Monsieur Bon-Bon's house over his shop, where he had insisted that the whole Pott family should first of all have an enormous lunch and be shown some of the sights of Paris, and then spend the night before going off the next day.

Madame Bon-Bon was just as nice as Monsieur Bon-Bon,

and there were two rumbustious children about the same age as the twins, called Jacques and Jacqueline, and everyone, talking a mixture of bad French and bad English, got on tremendously well together.

The French police paid several visits during the rest of the day and took everybody's statements in writing, and announced that the Pott family, for their collective efforts in catching the gangsters, would be rewarded with no less than 100,000 francs, which is about £800, and Madame Bon-Bon added her own reward, which was to reveal the closely-guarded secret of the Bon-Bon family on how to make Bon-Bon "Fooj", which was the way she pronounced "fudge". (And on the opposite page, I have passed on to you the recipe, which you will find very easy to make and absolutely delicious.)

TOP SECRET

Monsieur Bon-Bon's Secret Fooj

Ingredients:

1 lb. granulated sugar

1 small tin Nestle's condensed milk

¼ lb. finest butter

1 tablespoonful water

1 tablespoonful golden syrup

4 tablespoonfuls unsweetened chocolate

Put all the ingredients into a saucepan. Melt slowly on a low gas until the mixture thickens slightly and is absolutely

smooth. Turn up gas and boil very quickly until the mixture forms into a soft ball when a sample is dropped into cold water. Remove from heat and beat well with a wooden spoon.

Pour the whole mixture into a flat greased tin, mark in squares and leave to set.

When cold, *devour!*

The next morning, after another of those wonderful French breakfasts, Commander Pott went round to the garage, and sure enough, CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG, although still wearing a slightly battered look, was in splendid order and came booming round to the Bon-Bon shop, where the whole Bon-Bon family insisted on being shown every detail of her. Then Monsieur Bon-Bon beckoned Jeremy and Jemima back into the shop and told them to hold out their arms, and piled box after box of wonderful sweets and chocolates into them until the twins could hardly stand upright. And since the piles of boxes rose higher than their faces, they could hardly see their way to the door and had to be helped as they staggered out to pack their scrumptious presents into the back of CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG.

Then there were affectionate farewells all round, and both families promised to keep in touch and visit each other whenever they had a chance. (I may say that the families remained firm friends for ever after.)

And then CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG went motoring

docilely off down the street with quite a different expression on her face from the furious snarl she had worn in that same street the day before.

They got out on to the open road for Calais and for either the car ferry or the "Air Bridge" to England (they hadn't yet made up their minds which way to go), and Commander Pott said, over his shoulder, to Jeremy and Jemima, "Well, I think that's quite enough adventure for the time being. It's high time we all went home to peace and quiet."

And Mimsie said, very forcibly, "I entirely agree."

But in the back Jeremy and Jemima both gave a squawk of protest. "Oh no," they cried, more or less together. "More adventures! More!"

And at that, believe it or not, there came a whirring of machinery from somewhere deep down inside CHITTY-CHITTY-BANG-BANG. The front and back mudguards swivelled out into wings, the radiator opened up and the whizzing propeller of the cooling-fan slid out, and with a tremendous "Whoosh" the great green car soared up into the sky.

"My hat!" shouted Commander Pott (which was the right thing to shout, as his hat had in fact blown off). "I can't control her, she's taken off. Where in heavens is she taking us?"

AND

TO

TELL

YOU

THE
TRUTH...

EVEN I HAVEN'T BEEN LET INTO THE SECRET

[The end of *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang, The Magical Car*.
Adventure Number Three by Ian Fleming]