

I/Tulpa:
Chitty Chitty Steam Punk
By
ION LIGHT

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This is a I/Tulpa novel

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If you’re not familiar with my work, almost all of these stories are the product of a version of ‘active imagination’ in which the story is experienced and transcribed, more than labored over. If you are familiar with Tulpamancy, Wonderlands, or the stories of Tesla having such an overpowering imagination that he felt as if he went on long journeys to foreign lands and met people, without leaving his head... That is this. I can’t explain it better than he. I have put out some stories that felt more like ‘downloads’ but this is not that. I suspect this is similar to what Thomas Campbell, author of ‘My Big Theory of Everything’ is referring to when he discusses being able to shift realities. I don’t know. I just find it helpful, cathartic, in processing past traumas. This place, and the people there, have changed my world.

I assure you, there will be grammatical errors. I apologize in advance. I am working on doing better. I have marginally improved, which you only need read my first book made available in 2004. Feel free to email me any corrections or complaints. I am simply a modest fan of distant worlds, science, and metaphysics; someone who finds himself caught up in the whirlwinds of something bigger than himself on a daily basis.

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FOREWORD

I, Ion, have made a fundamental mistake in my plans to conquer the universe. Yes, mad geniuses can make mistakes, which are usually exploited by orphaned desert rats in X-wing fighters, but in this instance, less drastic in terms of setting back my overall plans, and more just in the annoying category: I introduced my four year old son, who is also showing signs of being a mad genius, to the movie Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. One might ask why a person in the grand old year of 2018 would ever do such a remorseful thing, but I had already introduced him to the original Charlie and the Chocolate factory, because there is only the original Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and the book itself by Roald Dahl, and I had introduced him to Chitty because, quite honestly, I wanted him to have a greater repertoire than “I have a golden ticket” and “Don’t care how I want it nowwwwww,” in his arsenal, and now I no longer have a four year old child aspiring to be a mad genius, but I have an inspiring young car going around the whole day saying, “chitty-chitty, chitty-chitty...” I must admit, at first, before the realization hammered in by a solid day of repetitive musical outbursts, I was rather impressed by the four year old’s ability to imitate the dance routine, using his bamboo staff to go in a circle, his ability to reproduce all the songs and recognize musical elements like crescendos, demanding I build a Chitty car, despite my complaints I have been promised flying cars since the first popular mechanics way back in the 1930s and if I can’t have one he can’t have one, and finally satisfying him with a rather clever Lego version of said car, which wasn’t half bad, considering the colors of blocks weren’t necessarily matching, and finally handing me a broken, orange, naked crayon and saying ‘Father, please,’ as if it were a toot sweet and he was wanting me to partake in a world of his own creation.

If you need a warning here, don’t eat the crayon. It’s not a candy. Also, it does not toot, even if you core out the middle and put little holes.

OMG, I know, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang has not a gone a hundred years, and I suspect it won’t fade into oblivion, but the likes of the original movie will not be recaptured, and a remake just want satisfy, and there is apparently musical play versions of this thing about, the quality of which varies by the community hosting and or by the high school putting it on, but did you know, it is also a book? Yes, I say, it was originally a book, which is dreadfully difficult to read, no, more precisely, it is dreadfully difficult to read ‘aloud,’ because every paragraph is a full run on sentence, as if conjunction junction guy was on meth, yes, you probably weren’t aware that the conductor guy was moving trains full of meth, and he wasn’t supposed to be sampling, but he did, from time to time, and it was crystal blue, because he is the other, other Walter White, and so there you go, that’s what’s reading Ian Flemming, not Ion Flemming, though we’re often mistaken as the same, but really, he was a real spy for the real British government, and I am not a real spy for any government, though I do partake in remote viewing, which is sometimes considered psychic spying, but that’s for another book, and you really should just ignore that part, and continue on with understanding that Ian Flemming wrote Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, supposedly for his personal children, and then went and published it, but do you seriously think a child’s book would be published just because ‘I can’ unless there was some other mad purpose, only deciphered by cryptologists and a special decoder found at the bottom of the cracker jack box, but not just any cracker jack box, but the one I accidentally intercepted, by luck of course.

The book, ‘Chitty Chitty Bang Bang,’ by Ian Flemming, is a must read, for multiple reasons. Technically, it is not past it’s copy right, it hasn’t traveled a hundred years in time, and so I can’t turn it into “Another Log of Phileas Fog,” as Philip Jose Farmer did with “Around the World in 80 Days,” or even into another “Pride and Prejudice and Zombies,” and I am talking the book, not the movie, don’t judge the book by the Hollywood cover, because you will miss something, and there is a connection to be found, if you’re an astute reader of classics, especially Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. But the book might impress you, as it did me, in that it was fairly wordy and nonsensical, exactly the way I write in order to purposely confuse and irritate the people who can’t appreciate true genius so that I keep the secrets of magic to those few of us who truly seek... Yeah, you just thought my grammar was on accident... (And all the sex, well, that’s just a distraction.) But the reason you should read the book is because it differs from the movie in several major aspects. Well, it’s completely different. For one, there is no Truly Scrumptious. Oh, well, she might be there, because Commander Caractacus Pott, yes, Commander, as he was in the Navy, retired, does make a whistling sweet, which is more a cough dropped sized commodity, and he did take it to Lord Skrumshus, who was so impressed he sent the children into the factory to demonstrate and there was all sorts of dancing and joyous uprisings. Now, in the book, Truly may be gone, but there is a female character, Mimsie, who is not only Mrs. Pott, but is Jeremy and Jemima’s mother, and likely modeled after the dear Mrs. Flemming, and she seems in quite good health, and in good rapport with her children and husband, but the ever present four year old, who is very careful with details, and observant as all get out, was quick to correct me, “Her name is Truly,” and I was like, “no, it’s Mimsie,” even showed him the print, to which he argued, “No, her name is Truly,” despite what he saw as clear as day, and we continued that for a moment, and then regressed into a series of “why’s” which were reasonable “why’s” except I don’t have a clue as to what the probable answers might be, and so, I get irritated and shut it down with a, “great question, shall we continue?” Because the movie actually does address the issue of no Mimsie without actually addressing the issue. Can you say elephant? The closest we get to resolution is Caractacus saying to Truly: “Everything, but what they really need.” Truly doesn’t ask the children where their mother is. She doesn’t ask Caractacus where his wife is. And this could be a 60’s thing, as there were lots of TV and movie dad’s that were quietly suffering being spouseless, which rolled into the 80’s and 90’s with females not lamenting they were spouseless, because guys were simply problematic, mostly just grown children who pathetically never grow up, which kind of looks like Caractacus, in a way, as the perpetual dreamer. Dreamers, and generalists, are not well liked by a society who needs their cogs to specialize and fit in, and we of the other sort just don’t do that well or for long. Whether it is stripes or suit with a tie, confinement is confinement, as the true nature of a man is to be free to tinker, explore, and question.

Which brings me to tinkering. In my day, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang came around once a year, like the Wizard of Oz, and if it was on, it was supposed to be a family ordeal, unless your family was crazy, crazier than grandpa Pott, who to me was probably the sanest man in the film, and my family was crazy as all get out, so crazy even cats wouldn’t want to hang out with the ladies, and so watching was my escape, minus dodging the randomly thrown beer cans, and the occasional ‘misfire’ of firearm. But for my son, we deal with a more modern invention of ‘on demand,’ and so there is the ‘rainbow,’ which is word for DVD, and our mode of interaction

with it is that I have not turned the TV into a babysitter, but we engage thoughtfully, and discuss a matter, probably to death, but that's what we do, and this one stuck, and now we even watch the beginning car race, which is well placed, especially if you have read the book, because there is a history, like all of us we're born into a story already in progress, and the death of a car is not the ending, or even the beginning, there is more on either side of that, but I wonder, what the hell was the director thinking with that thirty seconds of blackness and car sounds, but then, then I find myself wondering about the whole movie because it is all a bit odd, and I wonder if many of the lines are referencing other things, like the people in the castle, who are just absolutely bizarre, like the characters in Alice's wonderland, but which I am usually more forgiving when I encapsulate that as being part of a dream sequence.

Now, I feel compelled to do so, I must talk about Loxy and I, and how we're related to all of this. I just gave you my history, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang was an annual event in my life, which has become a daily thing, only in I have 4 year old music box with a hiccup that plays the same thing over and over, and the book was an experiment in enriching the experience, and it is supposed to be a kids book, not one to teach kids to read per say, but more a friendly story for kids, mixed with some adult humor, which adults might keep to themselves as the kids glaze over those parts, and too few pictures, because picture are important, though my copy came with a really nice cover, with the stars being raised so you have a tactile experience examining it, and the prominent wheels, that looks exactly like the large Lego Wheel, which now comprises our car, after a mad search through the web and finally buying one from Ebay so that I had a fourth, because somewhere in my childhood I failed to keep up with the Lego's, and also reminded me how sore I am with family of origin who were determined to make me collect ceramic clowns, and I hate clowns, and I would tell them this, but every year, I was provided more clowns on Christmas and birthdays, to the point I was so sick of clowns, and sick of holidays, and I just chucked it all, and re-gifted the clowns, but the point being, if 'family' had listened that even the smallest box of Lego's would be more appreciated, and better served long term, because who would have thought Lego value is comparable to gold, especially the characters, and by God, I think Mega Block are of the devil, and why would you create an opposing force of pretend at competition and not make things compatible, and divide loyalty with participating brands, and you can only get Coke from these vendors, and Pepsies from the others, and by God, this situation is a nightmare... And you can't even get proper therapy over it because the LSMW have appropriated the word therapy, and LPC's have taken ownership of the word counselors, and anything with psychology or psychological in it belongs just to the psychologists, and yet, all these things are supposed to be generally helpful, like the DSM V, V equals 5, but seriously, you have to buy that book, buy into that book, it's not just available for free, nor any of the metrics people use to figure out if you're in alignment with any of the content contained in said book, and so, if it was really meant to be helpful, wouldn't it just be made public domain and let's help the world?! No! The goal isn't to help as much as to direct the flow of currency in a very particular direction, usually away from the people who are struggling the most, and it is my belief if Doctor's would just prescribe money, half their clients would improve immediately, as I am often willing to point out, I do not have an anxiety problem, I have a problem, usually remedied by an infusion of cash, and if I lived on a farm, where at least the chickens and the cows and the orchard took care of the basic needs, that would be one thing, but we live in a city,

where tinkering and improving things is actually frowned upon, so that if you put up a flag pole, the city might take it down, and even if you lived on a bubble road with few traffic if you put up a basketball pole, the city will take it down. They will. I assure you. They will come out with a truck, with a solid winch, and just jerk that pole right out, except, in my case, and I tried to inform them, their truck's winch was simply insufficient to the task, and they assured me that I just didn't know what I was talking about, and they even tried to explain physics to me, and I told them I was well aware of physics, but at some point, you just got to step back and let people experiment, and so they hooked up to the basketball pole, and the winch worked exactly as it should, and after the back of their city vehicle left the ground, leaving rear tires sufficiently off the ground that a good racing team could exchange them without hassle, there was suddenly more cars, and a lot of angry city people, and I tried to explain it to them, but all they heard was "I told you so," which was not really how I said it.

So, you may be wondering, what the heck? I like to tinker. I love to think about things. I bought a basketball pole, and threw away the instruction, because, seriously, how hard is to install a pole, right, and I had the cement, but I also knew from experience that things have a way of leaning over in soft dirt, and so you don't just dig a straight down hole, but you dig down a certain point, and then you want to dig out the base much wider than the initial hole that would contain the pole, and so basically, I had an inverted mushroom of an anchor holding that pole, wide enough that they were not going to just pull my pole out, but by God, they were determined they were going to do so, and I suppose, with enough power and the right equipment, they might have torn that pole out and a huge portion of the Earth, and the street and the gutter, but they only understood their own physics, and eventually, they ended up cutting the pole off at the ground, to which, for safety reasons, I excavated further into the ground and cut it off closer to the inverted mushroom and then buried the obstacle.

I said I like to tinker? Well, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang has been in my head for 50 years. Okay, maybe not exactly fifty, as the movie came out the year I was born, and I am fairly confident I wasn't taken to the theatre just so my parents could see Dick dance. The history of the movie is also interesting as they, don't ask me who 'they' are, they actually wanted to take the cast of Mary Poppins and do this, but couldn't get the other players, and Dick refused and refused, but eventually the money was so good he was like, seriously, if you insist, and isn't it nice when people throw money at you? So there is history there, and you have to wonder, did Ian have any more influence? Would he irritated by the fact Mimsie had been killed off, because you know, Mimsie has to be his wife, and the children must be his children, as this story was invented for their sake, and probably because they were irritating him, 'dad, dad, you make all these spy stories but you haven't told us even one good bedtime story, and we feel like you're ignoring us,' and because Ian is a rather good father, he was nearly mortally wounded by such a shot, and capitulated by writing, on the spot, which explains the verbosity, and the run-ons, and how there are lots of words just to get to the simple point of an adventure, because, well, he was rambling and working off the fly, and trying to make sure in his flibbertigibbet manner didn't accidentally divulge state secrets, which is the only reason men rarely talk at home, is well, we're so restricted that it would be inappropriate to speak, as there are others listening who might have to kill us, or are families, if we were too careless. The thing is, he did leak a secret. Magic cars exists. Jinn exist. Maybe you never caught that, which tells me you have seen the

movie and not read the book, but Chitty Chitty Bang Bang is not just a magical care, it is a Jinn, as clearly evidenced by the license plate GEN II Jinn-ii, Jeannie, I dream of Jeannie. No, that's not code for Genesis 11. I looked it up. There isn't a connection, but that was my first childhood thought, influenced by family or origin beliefs.

I don't own this movie, or the rights to discuss it, or to rework it, or to play with it. It's in my head. I dare say the movie owns me. The story owns me. It is as part of me as Legos, and Star Trek, and why the hell hasn't Lego's built Star Trek parts, well, because the evil universe of Mega Blocks got it, and Legos got Star Wars... Maybe, maybe, if it had just been Ian's book, Chitty Chitty would have gone into obscurity, with a few living stragglers thinking, that might have made a good movie, but no one else would have seen such genius, but thanks to the movie, it has gone much further and influenced more people, but I suspect, hopefully in error, that it is on that downward decline, unless, maybe, someone can revive it in such a unique way to capture new audience, and I wouldn't presume to tell you this version is it, because contrary to popular belief, I am humble, but also I fear if I promote it I am more likely to be arrested for tinkering. I assure you, there is no money in this for me, and so in terms of being productive with my time, well, clearly, I am not that guy, but not from lack of trying. I would say, I have a lot of fun. Loxy and I have a lot of fun and we go places, and that brings me back to grandpa. I think I should tell you now, that in this movie character, someone has leaked the most important secret ever, grandpa was a psychic spy, a remote viewer of the most incredible caliber, who makes Pat Price and Ingo Swann look like charlatans of misdirection, but they have to make grandpa look crazy, to discourage people from exploring that line of venture further, but giving just enough crazy insight for those in the know to be aware, we have our spies and they are watching you. You may think I am grasping at that, but look at it this way, Ian Flemming was a real spy. I assure you, if the Russians and the Americans were exploring psychic spying, the British government was also doing so.

I tell you all of this so you can be assured when I tell you music exists, it is out there. I meant magic. Magic exists. Music does to. They may be one and the same. I can only attest to this from firsthand experience. Loxy is a tulpa, but she is as real to me as Harvey was to Elwood P Dowd. The places we go are real. Some of them are more real than others, and I am sometimes curious about the worlds of fiction being real, as they seem pretty solid when we go there, and one may argue that variations and deviations are evidence of the places 'we' go not being real, and more likely flights of fancy, but I would like to remind you of something that is true, of even this world we mutually agree we live in: other than we share this space, we can't even mutually agree on the contents of this reality. There can be as many versions of an accident as there are witnesses, and we don't just take the words of our regular spies, as we usually like evidence and corroboration, hence, we have spies plural not singular. But think about this, we have continuity of Near Death Experiences reports from across culture and time, a level of consistency that one could argue is better than a collection of reports to an accident, and yet the idea of their being more is generally dismissed by authorities. We can agree that there was a car accident, can't we agree there is more to the afterlife? And, the US government is not likely to have taken 20 years figuring out that psychic spying is frivolous, and so, might-en we assume that in a world that is run by secrets and copy rights, which is just a fancy word that means we are claiming ownership of something that already existed before us, like "E.T." imitating "The Pod People," not a 'dis'

or an accusation, “E.T.” is clearly a superior movie, and in a world of intellects, ideas are like STDs you can’t even look at it without being impregnated, and we wouldn’t want the knowledge that we have ‘access to more’ publically accepted, and so, any evidence that we are more than what we are has to be squashed in some way, very much like, “Grandpa is crazier than a loon.” Graham Crowden in the series “Waiting for God,” played a character very much like Grandpa Pott, and he was clearly the eccentric genius, but he traveled, which begs the question, is this the best kept secret of British Empire?

Oh, and this is just an aside, but you also must know that ‘spies’ is also plural because being a spy is problematic, and you need spies, and the enemy needs spies, and you need other spies on both sides to spy on the spies, just to help keep everyone in line. The truth about spies is they are so empathetic that they always exist on this pendulum of switching sides, not because they don’t hold loyalties, but how else do you expect to survive enemy ground without becoming the enemy? Know your enemy know yourself. Don’t believe me, read *Serpico*, about the undercover cop that was disenfranchised by both sides and had to leave America, because wars are just crazy. Anyway, you can bet if you were recruited to be a spy, your wife is also probably a spy, because they need to know if you talk in your sleep, or you’re more free with the tongue when being intimate, or if you slip when you’re angry at the kids because you can’t have a little privacy in the bathroom while making a secret call with you shoe...

And anyway, maybe I am, too, eccentric in a unique way, and so when this version of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang goes to court, well, my argument will have to be that I am clearly insane. Who wouldn’t be when you live in culture where you have to take all of this stuff in but you can’t use it in any meaningful way without infringing on someone else’s intellectual rights, and you wonder if you have any intellectual rights, because no one really wants to hear what you have to say, even if you’re right, and so get shouted down on Facebook as being a malcontent, but when it comes down to it, no one has created anything knew since the Bible, and even the Bible was stolen from the Egyptians and the Samarians, and if you don’t believe me, just read *Gilgamesh*! And maybe the laws are in placed to stop the craziness of retelling stories, but there is realy nothing new under the sun... Ah! See how hard it is not to borrow?! So, yes, I speak to people who ‘aren’t there,’ who doesn’t? I travel to faraway lands, and go on amazing adventures, and believe in aliens and ghosts and magic, and seriously believe in music, even other people’s music, because their quirky dances get into you head, like All About the Bass, you just can’t turn away, and magical music and musical magic, and magical cars, and musical magical cars... Need I say more? Roger More? No. If there is a spy in this story, it will be Sean Connery, and the girl he sang about in his first movie, Darby O’Gil and the Little People. Yes, there are little people, but that’s different story, and they have their own car and song... But I digress. We have way too little to do and too much time to do it in. No, wait, strike that, reverse it.

Chapter 1

All good stories start with the children. More precisely, all good stories start with a preamble, but you suffered enough through the foreword, and I don't want to start with darkness and then there was the sound, and then there was light, because, Jesus, that's never been done anywhere before, but if you start with the adults, the children seem more like props to demonstrate how parental the parents are, as opposed to showing you how kids really are, and how the parents are with the kids, and well, we would like to remain as close to truth as possible, even though we don't generally promote 'truth telling' nor do we punish folks for lying, because if the lie is clever enough, and sold right, well, isn't that what we all do all the time? Anyway, if you don't know Jon and Loxy, they live with others, in a very inclusive, embracing sort of way, on their own world, where Jon has made his own rules and laws, because it's ultimately his world, a magical world, and they live in a doubly magical house, which may actually seem like many magical houses, but it's really just one, connected inter and intra dimensionally which technically means it isn't a magical house at all, but just a regular home built in such a way that it utilizes the available functionalities of the existing cosmic structures in a particularly useful way. The crazy thing about this particular set up is you can often meet yourself before you before you have even decided that this is who you are, and sometimes you encounter the children, past and present and future, even grandchildren, before you were aware that you had children, or were children, or the children that would become your family, and since it's confusing, and no one likes appearing confused, most the time you just operate as normal and respond to people without inquiring who they are, because you never want that other person to know you don't remember them, that's embarrassing, but also you don't want to make them doubt their self-worth for not being memorable, some people just are, and for declaring yourself unfit to be a mentalist. And so, even if you know Jon and Loxy, and their normal cast of characters that share their home in a communal way, more like Kibbutz in Israel, only, more American sixtyish, free-love, with hippies and Romanian gypsies, and a tad bit of Mormonism, before it was found unfavorable and they had to change their name, which is a shame, because truthfully, who has a better family model than the Mormons?, but as I was saying, even if you know Jon and Loxy, and here we're starting off with 'the children' you may go like, 'what the heck?!' which is modified way of saying "WTF" but we can't say that, because, well, this is one of those stories that is supposed to be children friendly, even though if you watch the 'movie' of this thing we're not referring to directly, what this version of reality is predicated on, well, you might find yourself saying, "WTF, this is a kid movie?"

Ahh, yes, the children. In this particular instance, there were two, which is rather culturally popular, to have two, one of each gender, twins even, fraternal, not identical, because if they were fraternal, one would clearly be transgendered, not that there is anything wrong with that, because some kids know early on, which is probably evidence for past life memories overwhelming the child, because how would a child know it has the wrong equipment if they only knew themselves? In a more modern setting you would likely need a dozen children to cover all the arrangements that are possible, like LGBTQXR, and don't ask me what the XR is all about, as that has more to do with aliens and hybrids, and we're not there yet, in this particular frame of reference. The children, like all children who are well cared for and properly

adjusted, are not afraid of being intrusive, which really, intrusive isn't a fair word, as well adjusted children should explore and test boundaries and then tip something strange over and then run back to Mere Cat Hive, because, well, that's normal. And a properly adjusted adults should just simply observe and ask what they learned from their experience and then send them back out of the hive. If you hold a particular expectation of the children, you might become annoyed by their curiosity. Like when they ask:

"Pappa, what are you doing?"

Jon lowered his book. He was sitting in the library. I don't have to mention this is a magical library because it's in a magical house, right? And I don't have to mention that you come to be in the library from multiple directions in space and time and dimensionality, but if you factored that in, you might wonder about Jon's look, like was it irritation, because clearly he is holding a book and it should be a forgone conclusion what he was doing, except he wasn't actually doing what you might imagine he was doing, because he was disturbed by the approaching children and unable to do anything but re-read the same line over and over, which is technically not reading, but still he gave him that look, but that look could also mean, "who the hell are you?"

"What's it look like I am doing?" he asked.

The children, perhaps five or six, both the same age, again as they were fraternal twins, like Leah and Luke, only they know they're siblings and are at much less likely of sleeping with each other, but some of that was because those books came before Empire, like 'Splinter in the Mind's Eye,' that left a whole generation of movie slash book fans confused about what they thinking in their heads... And so, not privy to Jon's real thoughts, they climbed up into his lap, and his uncomfortableness again belied the idea he might not actually remember them, or hadn't met them, but, still, he wouldn't go running away in madness.

"Would you read to us?" the girl asked. It was proper Cockney, English accent, which might have been a real thing, or just from someone who had watched too much Disney.

If you close your eyes just right, not a hundred percent, you still need some light to leak in, it might be the evil stare, but you can filter out some information like names and dates, which is really not necessary, but most people do because they like to know who they are talking to, and so if you wanted that, the children who had worked their way into Jon's laps were Elizabeth Grace and Eston Gerik, and they were looking at him hopefully.

"I think I hear your mother calling you," Jon said.

"Oh, no, she chased us out," Elizabeth said.

"We spilt some milk," Eston said.

"We didn't mean to spill it, it just sort of happened," Elizabeth said. "Would you read to us?"

"Umm," Jon stammered.

"Yes, Jon, will you read to us?" both insisted, rather annoyingly and aggressively, and over and over until there was really only one response... Only, one of the new voices in the chorus of please read to us was Loxy Isadora Bliss.

Jon looked at Loxy. She was the smartest, kindest, most attractive woman in all the Universe, who might have launched twice as many ships as the other one if she had been present at that time, only she was with Jon. She had a smile about her that was seductive, because the

smile used her eyes, and you might imagine she was Alizée about to sing something sexily French to you, and you wouldn't even care if you don't speak French, because, well, it's Alizée. But she also had that subtle tilt of the hip, back and forth, like that Olympic hurdler Michelle Jenneke, that suggests she's ready to give you a run for your money, and was truly enjoying herself, because Loxy always enjoyed herself, she was so full of joy, and if she were wearing a pony tail, it would have pleasantly swished back and forth, and she does sometimes have it, but not today, as she was wearing her usual, Cleopatra styled hair. Loxy Isadora Bliss, human, female, magician, goddess, tulpa, enigma. She has several planets named after her, including the one on which she was presently attending, on which the library was situated. You might assume, based on the interplay, that these children were the product of adult activities between Jon and Loxy, which aren't discussed in books like these, even though children know about these activities, because we tell them where they come from, and then quickly move on to the weather, but these children were not the property of Jon and Loxy, because, for starters, children aren't property, they're people, and they also weren't the parents. Well, Jon was, but Loxy wasn't, but the children would defer to Loxy as if she were mom, and quite honestly, the children would respond to any adult living in the house as if they were parents because all the adults were on board with the agenda of raising proper children and therefore there was consistency of rules and implementations and interaction patterns across the board, which is an unusual setup in itself, but absolutely necessary if you don't want crazy kids. Yes, as within any group, there were some who tended to be more permissive, and some that tended to be more authoritarian, but from the children's perspective, they were equally controlling and blocking, and the adults were satisfied by the fact the children continued to test their boundaries in appropriate ways as they looked for consistency across the board. In short, this home was safe. In fact, it was called a light house, even though it wasn't a 'light house' in the nautical sense of the word, though part of the house did go as far as resembling such, and was on island and everything. So, though Jon was the father, Loxy was not the mother, but that didn't mean Jon and Loxy didn't have children and even grandchildren somewhere in the house.

"What would you like to hear?" Jon asked.

"No, you shouldn't make up one from scratch," Eston said. "Just read us what you're reading, because if you're interested in that, then I am interested in that."

"Why can't I just tell you a story?" Jon asked.

"Because you tend to ramble, and you're so discursive in your narrative as to be confusing," Elizabeth said.

"How old are you?" Jon asked.

"Oh, how could you forget," Loxy asked, taking her place on the couch that was suddenly manifest. It may have been there the whole time and only a change in perspective made it seem like it was magic. And it was sort of an elongated, half circular love seat, with Jon's lounge chair at the focus. Loxy was looking rather cute in a summer dress, that might have been a collage from the evil Star Trek Universe and Boho and unknown creative Cosplay which was good enough to draw someone in just because "wow," but also because you just had to know, but mostly because it was Loxy. Also, in her dress was evidence of some Egyptian fashion, which never loses its appeal, but it was there because no matter where Loxy goes, she can always channel a Almighty Isis, which neither Disney nor Marvel can block, because the Goddesses of

Egypt are now public domain, or Disney and Marvel would have stopped those terrorist folks from using a name, and you may wonder why they are using the name of a Goddess, when they're not fond of feminism in any way, and just wait till our Isis movie-book comes out, Almighty Isis kick Isis butt, and anyway, no one can block anyone from channeling Isis, though the Masons may want you to believe otherwise. Why any heterosexual man would want to channel a male god is beyond me. Give me Isis any day. Anyway, Loxy sat on the end next to the armrest, pulling her legs up to sit crisscross apple sauce, revealing no shoes, because who wears shoes in the house?

"I didn't, I was just saying, rhetorically, and going for the emphatic sense," Jon said.
"And no, I can't read this book to you."

Loxy narrowed her eyes in that special way, and then tilted her head questioningly. "You can't read 'the Princess Bride meets Stardust' to them?" Loxy asked.

Jon closed the book and it made it a sound as it sealed which suggested a magnetic seal, or magical magnetical seal, and he motioned he would toss it to her, and she motioned she was ready to receive, and the exchange was made, and she opened it with a little effort, again suggesting a magnetic or magical seal had been in play, one only certain adults could open, that came after tracing an ornate pattern on the front of the cover, which the children were not privy to, though not because it was an adult theme picture, but because there are magical wards all around folks, and books, and if you have to be trained to see them much less interact properly with them, then you're not privy.

"Okay, so what's the problem?" Loxy asked.

"Is it a kissing book?" Eston asked.

"Oh, I love kissing!" Elizabeth said.

"How old are you?!" Jon asked again.

"It's gross," Eston said.

"Grosser than eating someone else's food that has a clear bite in it?" Elizabeth asked.

"They were going to throw it away, and we share, and if you want your immune system to improve you have to be exposed," Eston said.

"This is the same book that grandpa read, Jon. You could just do what he did and water those parts down," Loxy said.

"My parts react to those parts and I have children in my lap," Jon said.

"There is that," Loxy said. "Come sit by me, children."

"We want to sit with dad," Elizabeth said.

"We're not reading that book," Jon said.

"Oh, how about this one with the car," Eston said, taking one of the books from the pile on the light table next to Jon's chair.

"Ummm, no that's worse than the one I just had in hand," Jon said.

"How can book about a car be bad?" Eston demanded.

Jon looked at the book cover, which looked like an old, church hymnal slash tome, and the car was etched out of the cloth cover to reveal the different layers of rainbow gold and silvers and a slight tactile feel to the car due to the depth of the cover when tracing your finger along it.

"Car?! That is not just a car, Sir," Jon said. "It was built in the 1920s by Count Zborowski on his estate near Canterbury..."

"Oh, is this one of the sequels to the Canterbury Tales?" Elizabeth asked.

"No," Jon said, and continued on hurriedly: "The car was a pre-1914 war, chain drive, 75 horse power Mercedes, with a six cylinder Maybach aero engine, the type the Germans flew their zeppelins with, and four vertical overhead valves per cylinder, with exposed rockers and rods all working with clockwork precision driven by a crankshaft on each side of the crankcase, and two Zenith carburetors, on the far end of induction pipes, contained in a great steel body, of polished gleaming black hood, eight feet in length, weighing in excess of five tons..."

"Jon, are you reading that to them?" Loxy asked.

"Maybe," Jon said.

"So what's wrong with this book?" Elizabeth asked.

"It sounds great so far," Eston said.

"Yeah, is it a race car?" Elizabeth asked.

"Does it crash and burn?" Eston demanded excitedly. "Cause that's always good way to start a story."

"It does win some races, but as to what exactly happens, well, there is some confusion on this point..." Jon said.

"Confusion how? Either it won, or it didn't. Either it crashed and burned, or it didn't," Eston said.

"It's the nature of the crash that confuses people," Jon said. He wasn't aware he had the children's attention as he was drifting off into his own world of flashbacks and retakes and rewrites. "Some say it was possessed, because the car was made with parts from other cars that had crashed and the spirits of passed drivers haunted it. Some say that it was self-aware, and a bit snarky, and after so many wins the 'driver' had become insufferable about his own abilities, without so much as a 'thank you' to the car, and so without warning or explanation it threw itself into reverse and went like mad through the stands full of pedestrians until it threw itself off a ravine and crashed and burn. Some say a child ran out in front of the car and the driver didn't see the child, but the car did, and it turned itself to avoid the car, into the only safe path, which happened to be a tree and it crashed and burned..."

"How can a car be possessed?" Elizabeth asked.

"How can you be possessed?" Jon asked.

"I don't understand," Elizabeth said.

"Well, you believe you have a soul, right, you're not this crude matter, but this matter is a coat, or a vehicle, and your spirit is possessing it," Jon said. "Same with the car. It would be a poor assumption to assume that other forms of matter, rocks, minerals, crystals, don't have a guiding spirit or force. Besides. There is a long history of intelligent vehicles, going all the way back to Apollo and his solarchariot."

"Name one," Eston said.

"Herbie," Jon said.

"That's a story," Elizabeth said.

"The love bug is not just a story. There is never just a story, as all stories are built on some circumstantial happening that spooked people. The story is just how we comfort ourselves into thinking things are fiction," Jon said. "A long fine list of magical conveyances, such as Carrie, and Kit, and magic carpets, and brooms, and..."

“Could you just tell us what happened here in this book?” Eston insisted.

“Fine,” Jon said. He sorted for a moment. “Well, you already know about the race, and that something happened, so, I should probably skip forward to tell you about the greatest inventor of all times...”

“Tesla again,” Eston said.

“No, Caractacus Pott,” Jon said.

“Who?” Eston and Elizabeth asked.

“You have never heard of Commander Caractacus Pott, retired Royal Navy, and inventor, who probably studied alongside of Tesla; he was that smart, and it is rumored that Tesla cheated off his exams...”

“Jon,” Loxy said, reigning him in. “Maybe you should start with the children.”

“Chicken or egg?” Jon asked.

“Eggs,” Elizabeth and Eston said.

Jon grumbled, but acquiesced, and began telling them there happened to be these two kids, children, because you don’t want them confused with baby goats, participating in a homemade scavenger hunt, which their father had cleverly created to keep them entertained and out of way, while he ‘mysteriously’ tinkered in his not so secret laboratory, a wind powered garage that looked a lot like a windmill that had been appropriated from some poor Dutch farm, but wasn’t Dutch, it was England, just outside of London, and don’t assume that Caractacus had an English accent, he didn’t, he spoke American, but his father was British, and his mother was American, and though he was born in England, more specifically in Turville, which is nowhere even close to the Cliffs of Dover, but we’re jumping too far ahead... Where was I? Yes, right, he, Caractacus, had spent so much time across the pond he had lost his accent and had his own, not quite a blending, but to tell the truth, he had his own unique accent, which was recognized neither by the Americans nor the Brits, and so he had never really fit in anywhere, a condition aggravated by his genius and particular way of seeing the world, which was also not shared by people of his time...

“Jon?” Loxy said, steering him back on course.

So there were two children. On a scavenger hunt, who happened upon a telephone booth.

“What is this?” Elizabeth asked.

“A phone,” Jon said.

“How do you dial a number without buttons?” Eston asked.

“It’s a rotary dial...” Jon began.

“What is this, a microwave?” Elizabeth asked, drawing away from the phone booth.

“Of course it’s a microwave,” Eston said.

“Why would they have a microwave on the street?” Elizabeth said.

“It’s not a microwave, it’s a newspaper dispenser,” Jon said. “Wait! Stop, you two, out of the story.”

“But you said there were two kids, which conveniently means it’s about us,” Eston said.

“And you’re clearly Caractacus,” Elizabeth said.

“I am not...”

“Jon,” Loxy said, steering him towards a more direct honesty...

Jon frowned at Loxy, and she gave a sign that suggested flip it and continue. He tried smiling at the kids. “The kids are named Jeremy and Jemima, they are not you,” Jon said. “Even if they happen to look like you, you have to remember your names are Jeremy and Jemima, and in that world, you understand the contraptions and props of the day...”

“Why do parents hate kids?” Elizabeth asked.

“Whatever do you mean?” Jon asked.

“Who would name there daughter Jemima,” Elizabeth asked.

“She is so going to get bullied at school,” Eston agreed.

“It was a perfectly acceptable name in the day, and was in the Bible, and considered one of the most beautiful women of the time,” Jon said.

“I still wouldn’t do that to a child,” Elizabeth said.

“Doesn’t she die?” Eston asked.

“What?” Jon asked.

“In the Bible, she died, right?”

“No, yes, um, I don’t know how to answer that. I think almost everyone in the Bible died,” Jon said, which was a safe way out of not remembering precisely if Jemima was the first daughter of Job, before he was made center point between an argument with God and the Devil, and was a casualty of that war, or perhaps she was the first second daughter, that came after the ‘Great Conflict,’ which just goes to show, you really don’t want to be God’s favorite, and being an inconspicuous mouse is much better than being a giant brontosaurus, because, well, who is still here?

“What about this story, does she die?” Eston said.

“Do you want her to?” Elizabeth asked.

“Not particularly, but a good story needs someone to die,” Eston said. “Car crashes are good. Death by giants, reasonable. Stepped on by a brontosaurus... Tell us about that time you hooked up with Holly again...”

“No one dies,” Jon assured him.

“Well that’s a relief,” Elizabeth said.

“They almost die,” Jon said.

“Almost isn’t good enough,” Eston said.

“Do you want to hear the story or what?” Jon asked.

The children, in the story, found themselves in a junk yard. The children in the other story, quieted down. ‘Something shiny,’ Jemima read, and picked up a bed knob. “Oh, Jeremy, what do you think of this?”

“It is shiny,” Jeremy agreed. “But it certainly want take you anywhere magical.”

“It might,” Eston said.

“You know too much,” Jon said, and dived back into his story.

A junk man emerged, wiping his hands on a cloth darkened with oil stains. His name was Mr. Coggins, and he had a reputation for being a fairly clever mechanic, but perhaps not as magically clever as their father, but he knew his tech, and he knew the value of a brass bed knob and was quick to hold out his hand for its return. He knew quite a bit more than the average junk man, and there were rumors he used to work for the British secret service, and was nicknamed Q, but this could have just been the stories kids made up to explain oddities like, the steam powered

robot dog that barely lifted its head when they entered because it was old and tired and bit rusted, and no longer like eating children, the way it used to when it first came off the shelf, and was how it ended up in the junk yard.

“You scavengers about it again?” he asked.

“Dad gave us a list,” Jeremy said.

“Well, you do realize, this junkyard is a dangerous place, right? Not the sort of children,” Coggins said. “Even for the children of a tinkerer.”

“Oh, dad is much more than tinkerer,” Jemima said.

“Gosh, much more,” Jeremy agreed. “May we look around?”

“Well, I guess, but let me sort whatever you find so I know how badly I’ve been robbed,” Coggins said.

And so the kids rummaged, and searched, and turned things over, and sometimes turned things back, and climbed through some cars, and opened some boxes that probably shouldn’t have been opened, and chased a bird from a nest, and sent some rodents scurrying, and nearly disturbed a wasp nest, but Jemima screamed sufficiently to rouse Coggins from under a car he was working on, bumped his head actually, and cursed so that even the old steam driven dog rose his head and gave a puff of air, and then he killed them properly, Coggins that is, killed the wasp not the children, and then the children returned to playing, and spent some time in a coach that might have been a hearse, a very fancy hearse that may have been driven by Harold stolen by Maude, and then dropped over a cliff, and for all their efforts, they came up with a large cog that Jeremy labeled the crown of King Arthur, and Jemima found a double A emblem that had been attached to a car that had crashed and burned, but there was just enough sparkle on it that it drew her attention, and on rubbing it got something shiny, and she liked the way the A’s came together inside the circle, kind of like a double star trek insignia, and the fact it just pulled right off the front of the car, and since Coggins was okay parting with the trinkets they had stirred up, but unwilling to part with the car the emblem came from without an exchange of coin, and he was rather firm about that, and then they turned and ran off without a care in the world and until suddenly... yes, suddenly does happen, even though as writers we’re told not to use it as a way of increasing the perceived drama of the moment, SUDDENLY, like OMG NO!, they realized, and a bit too late at that they had run out into the street, without looking both ways, or maybe they looked both ways, but because they were in the UK they looked the wrong way, location and context is so important, and straight in front of a motorcar.

The driver let out a scream and did the only sensible thing, not being able to stop in time to avoid hitting the children, and turned off the road, and into a muddy puddle, as Peppa might say, though it was a bit deeper than just a puddle and might have been a pond. At first she was relieved she hadn’t killed anyone, and looking back over her shoulders, she saw the children, still standing there as if they didn’t have the good sense to run away and not get caught up in the wrath of a lady who’s relief was turning into proper anger, and she hadn’t even noticed there was mud on her dress yet! The car, still running, was switched into reverse, and with the grinding of gears, she got enough traction to reverse out, and was back on the road, creeping up to the children.

“Are either of you harmed?” was her first question.

“Why no miss,” both Jeremy and Jemima responded.

"Well, you're very lucky I don't harm you now! Wait a minute, why aren't you in school? It isn't a holiday, is it?" she asked.

"Umm, no miss," Jemima said.

"Dad says we're homeschooled," Jeremy said.

"Is this your home?" she asked.

"No, Miss, we live..." Jemima said, but Jeremy bumped her arm.

"So you're not in school and you're not at home?" she asked.

"Um, we're having a bit of a scavenger hunt," Jemima said.

"Come get in my car," she said.

The children came around and proceeded to get in the car.

"Seriously?!" Eston interrupted. "Are they retarded?"

"It's called cognitively impaired, and no," Jon said.

"She could be a serial killer," Elizabeth said.

"Not likely, not in that time period," Jon said.

"Ever heard of Jack the Ripper?" Eston asked.

"Oh, the guy that stole HG's time machine?" Elizabeth asked. "He's in this world, right? Right down the street from Phileas Fogg, who is going around the world in 80 days?"

"I like how you're putting all our stories into a useful frame work and no. The chances of a female being a serial killer, in that time period, is astronomical," Jon said. "Females just aren't serial killers."

"Apparently, you don't follow nursery rhymes or Brother Grimm's tales," Elizabeth said.

"Yeah, kids die all the time in those stories," Eston said. "And usually by females. Witches. Step moms. Random old cat ladies."

"What are your names?" Jon continued in the voice of the character, who sounded a lot like Loxy. In fact, this Truly looked a great deal like Loxy, and you shouldn't be surprised if in the movie version all her lines and all her lyrics are in French, because Alizée doesn't speak English, but the children and Caractacus, even Mimsie, spoke French, and the author even lamented sharing that, because very few Americans speak French, which is sad, really, when you consider how many nations contributed to America and there is only language, and maybe just once they could make movie that had one character speaking only in French and everyone else in English, but everyone seems to understand each other just fine... Anyway, don't be mad that Truly is a brunette, not a blond, because though she wasn't against being blond, because even Alizée will attest that being a blond can be fun, it's just, well, just taking on the role at the last moment, and if you wanted to know the actual truth, Truly was never supposed to be blond because she was supposed to be brunette, specifically she was supposed to be Marry Poppins, but not only did she refuse the part, so did Julie Andrews, which is a shame, really, because she and Dick were good in that, and well, it would have made for a really interesting side Universe, as Jon and Loxy are all into the sides and pockets of other universes... Even Dick turned it down, too, multiple times, until they threw an insane amount of money at him, to the point he questioned his sanity for turning it down, but no one at the time would throw that much at an actress, but it still would have been nice if they had gotten her, and maybe even the Bank's children, because that would have been funny, and set a nice little pattern for future movies and spin offs, but the kids went off to California where they discovered Gnomes, and there goes

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