

# The New Car

"There you are," the car dealer said as he gave Natalie's Dad a set of car keys. "Oh and be careful which button you press", he said in a hushed sort of voice. He winked at Natalie, turned around, and walked off. Natalie frowned wondering what he meant.

"What was that for?" she asked her 10 year old twin sister, Mable, whose nose was glued to a book titled, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerers Stone*.

"What was what for?" she asked.

Natalie hesitated, then said, "Never mind."

"Come on Milo!" said Natalie's Mom. Milo was Natalie's younger brother. "Who wants to ride in the new car?" she asked.

"I do!" cried Natalie, and she forgot about the strange message.

The next morning, when Natalie and Mable were playing a game of chess, her Dad called "Kids? How many times do I have to call you? Put on your shoes. We're going to the store!"

Both Natalie and Mable groaned, stood up, walked down the stairs, and slipped on their shoes. "Sorry Dad. We didn't hear you." Natalie said.

"Ok. Let's get going." her Dad said. "Where is Milo?" he asked.

"I'm right here!" Milo said as he popped out of the coat closet.

"Okay, what button if the music?" Natalie's Dad asked when they were in the car and driving down the street.

"Maybe it's that one," Suggested Milo, pointing to a red one, labeled "FM" that was strangely far away from the rest.

"Yup. That's it," Natalie's Dad said. "FM radio". Just as Natalie's Dad pressed the button, a small door (which Natalie never would have noticed was there) opened on the steering wheel, revealing another button.

"What is that button for?" asked Mable.

"Hmm. That's odd," said Natalie's Dad.

"What's odd?" asked Natalie.

"Nothing. It's just that the button in this door says, *Are you sure?*"

"Should we press it?" asked Milo.

"I guess so", said Natalie's Dad.

Yet again, when Natalie's Dad pressed the button another highly camouflaged door revealing another button opened near the cupholder. This time it was close enough to Natalie that she could see that it read: *Are you REALLY sure?*

"Okay, This is a little weird..." said Mable.

"Press it!" exclaimed Milo.

Natalie's Dad pressed it. Again, another door on the ceiling opened, who's button inside read: *Okay then*. Natalie's dad pressed it. Something told Natalie that they shouldn't have done that. Natalie gasped.

"Oh no!" she cried, remembering the message from the previous day, "Dad, I don't think—"

But Natalie broke off. A strange noise was coming from the engine. She strained her ears. The noise started to move all over the car. It started to shake.

"Eek!" cried Mable.

Natalie closed her eyes. She could feel the car driving faster and faster.

"Dad, slow down!" said Milo.

"I...I...I...can't help it!" yelled Natalie's Dad. Suddenly the car stopped moving. It stopped shaking. Natalie opened her eyes, and saw blue. It was the sky.

Milo yelped, "Dad, the car grew wings!"

Natalie looked to her left and noticed that Mable had her eyes closed.

"Mable," she said, "It's okay, you can open your eyes."

Mable opened her eyes, saw that they were flying, and moaned, "Dad, how did we get up here?"

"I..I don't know," he answered, sounding awestruck.

"How far off the ground are we?" asked Mable.

"I don't know, all I can see is white down there," said Milo.

"Those are clouds," said Natalie, stretching from the middle seat to look out the window. "But," asked Natalie, "*how* are we flying?"

"I just said how: the car grew wings!" said Milo.

Natalie looked again out the window. Indeed, there was a pair of wings, which *had* seemed to grow out of the car.

"Oh," said Mable, sounding scared, "What is that?"

Natalie's Dad yelled, "A plane!"

"That's not a plane!" said Milo.

"Then what is it?" asked Mable.

"I don't know," replied Milo.

Natalie squinted her eyes. Something was moving fast towards them.

Mable screamed, "It's a big bird!" she said, "Look, It's flapping its wings!"

"It's not a big bird, it's a dragon!" said Milo.

"Don't be silly," said Mable. "Dragons aren't real... are they?"

Natalie looked out the windshield. It did look like some sort of dragon.

"Well," said Natalie. "Whatever it is IT'S COMING RIGHT TOWARDS US!!! Can you get out of the way or something Dad?"

"I don't know how!" he said.

"Just turn the steering wheel or something!" screamed Mable.

Natalie's Dad turned the steering wheel, and they moved towards the right.

"Ha! There we go. Easy enough," he said

But when Natalie looked out the window, the creature was turning left right towards them!

"Dad, I think it's following us!" Natalie cried.

She looked out the window again. The dragon was close enough that she could see it clearly. It was at least two times bigger than the car, and had small curly horns. It was getting closer... closer... closer! It was too close. It was hovering side by side with the car.

"Dad, go forward!" cried Milo.

Natalie's Dad pressed the gas pedal, and the car lurched forward. The dragon followed. Natalie looked over at Mable. She was sitting completely still, clinging to her seatbelt, with her mouth open and breathing very fast. She noticed herself and Milo were doing the same. Natalie looked out the back window. The dragon was catching up.

"Drive faster!" she told her Dad.

Her Dad pressed harder on the gas pedal. They flew through the air even faster. The dragon fell behind. Further and further they got, until it was completely out of sight.

"It's gone!" said Natalie, looking out the back window. Natalie's Dad slowed down.

"*That*," said Milo in a scared voice, "was scary!"

"Yeah!" said Mable in an even more scared voice.

They sat there for a few moments in silence.

"Well, I guess now we will have to find a way to get down." Said Milo.

Nathalie groaned, "I didn't even think about that", she said.

They spent the next 15 minutes pressing different buttons. They even looked for one reading "LM", after Milo got the idea that "FM" stood for "flying mode" and "LM" must stand for "landing mode". However, there were no buttons reading LM. All four of them were completely out of ideas. Natalie thought and thought and thought. Then she got an idea.

"Dad?", she said. "How do airplanes go up and down?"

Her Dad snapped his fingers. "That's it!" he said. He put both his hands on the steering wheel and pulled it towards him. They went up. "Bingo!", he said.

“Good thinking, Natalie!” said Mable.

“Well”, said Milo. “We went up, so how do we go down?” he asked.

“Hmm.” Said Natalie’s Dad. He pushed the steering wheel back into its original position. They started moving down. “There we go,” he said.

Natalie looked out Mable’s window. The clouds were getting closer, but they didn’t look the same as before. They were no longer white and friendly looking. Instead they were dark and stormy.

“Dad,” she said, “those clouds don’t look very nice.”

“What do you mean? They’re whi—. Oh no!” he said.

“Pull up!” said Milo. But it was too late. They had entered the clouds. All of them braced themselves, but nothing happened.

Natalie opened her eyes. “Maybe those aren’t storm clouds?”, she said. But right as she said that, the car gave a sudden jolt. “Never mind.”, she said.

They went up, down, spun in a circle and did it again. All of them started to yell.

“Go up! Go down!” Natalie and her siblings cried, as their Dad pulled on the steering wheel helplessly.

“It’s now working!” he said, as they continued to jerk around. There was a flash of light and then a loud rumble. Hail started to hit their windows.

“What are we going to do?”, said Mable.

“I guess just wait it out.” Said Natalie’s Dad. So, for almost an hour, they sat waiting as the car bobbed helplessly through the storm cloud, until it finally calmed.

“Is it over?” asked Mable.

“I think so”, her Dad replied.

“Let’s try landing”, said Milo. Natalie’s Dad pushed the steering wheel in and the car started to move down. Once they emerged from the clouds, they could see their city, and as they got closer they could see their neighborhood, and then their house.

“Dad?”, asked Natalie as they pulled into the driveway.

“Yes, Natalie?”, he said.

“Do you think we have enough groceries?” she asked.

“Oh, yeah... yeah. I think we do.”, he replied.