

CHAPTER 4

The Third Book of the Series: Mary Poppins Opens the Door

Mary Poppins Opens the Door, the third and final volume of the three basic Mary Poppins books (with 255 pages of text), is almost as long as the preceding volume and has eight chapters.

The book opens on November 5, which in England is Guy Fawkes Day. Guy Fawkes was a Catholic in Protestant England under King James I. Fawkes became part of a plot to assassinate the King and blow up Parliament in what is called the Gunpowder Plot on November 5, 1605. Ever since then, that day on the calendar has been observed as Guy Fawkes Day, on which his effigy is burned on a bonfire to the accompaniment of fireworks, which are as closely linked to November 5 in England as they are to July 4 in America. The general term *guy* (which dates from 1806) has different meanings in England and America. In England, it means "a grotesque effigy of Guy Fawkes burned on Guy Fawkes Day, or a grotesque-looking person." In America, it used to be a familiar term for any man, but more recently, especially in plurals like "you guys" it can apply to both men and women.

The Banks family in Number 17, Cherry Tree Lane, is in its usual chaotic condition when Mary Poppins is not there to organize everything. Mr. Banks is particularly agitated on this bleak and chilly November morning because Robertson Ay (the man of all work who works as little as possible) has given him one black shoe and one brown one, and Mr. Banks announces that he will