

Santa and the Zabbazara Bus

BY LUCRECE BEALE

"I am the Voodoo man," said the stranger.



Synopsis: Driving his bus to Zabbazara, a place he made up in order to escape from Main Street, Mr. D picks up two passengers: A crocodile and a donkey.

CHAPTER THREE

On and on went the Zabbazara bus with Mr. D clinging to the wheel and pressing with all his might on the gas. People gazed in astonishment as he passed them by.

"My goodness!" they exclaimed to one another. "Was there really a donkey on that bus? And a CROCODILE?"

Mr. D did not think it strange to have a donkey and a crocodile riding with him on the bus. He thought this was the way things were done away from Main Street. And they were much more agreeable than the passengers he had carried up and down Main Street all his life.

For one thing, they didn't make fun of him. In fact, the crocodile complimented him on his big ears.

"When you wiggle them it makes a very pleasant breeze back here," she said.

Mr. D was so pleased at this he wiggled his ears without stopping for 40 miles. The crocodile finally asked politely if he would stop because she was getting chilly.

The donkey asked Mr. D why he wore his shoes under the seat instead of on his feet. Mr. D explained that the shoes didn't fit because his feet were so big. The donkey offered to stretch the shoes with his own feet, and he did. He stretched the fronts right out of the shoes. After that they fit Mr. D's feet just fine.

While the bus was stopped for Mr. D to put on the shoes, a little boy came up and knocked on the door.

"I'm lost," said the little boy.

"Where is your home?" asked Mr. D kindly.

"I don't have any home," said the boy. "I don't have any father, and I don't have any mother. I don't have any brothers, and I don't have any sisters. I'm lost, and I don't have anywhere to go."

He began to cry. The crocodile and the donkey began to cry, too, to hear such a sad story.

Mr. D said, "Get on the bus, little boy. You're not lost any more. You're going to Zabbazara with us."

The little boy hopped on the bus. The crocodile put him on her lap and dried his tears. The donkey sang a song about boys and donkeys who didn't know who they were or where they were. Soon they were all laughing and singing, and Mr. D thought what a wonderful bus it was. He was very, very glad! he had left Main Street to set out for Zabbazara, wherever it might be.

It was getting dark and it had begun to snow when Mr. D saw a bent old man standing by the road.

"He looks cold and lonely," thought Mr. D. "Perhaps he'd like to go to Zabbazara, too." He stopped the bus and called out, "Would you like a ride?" The man got on the bus and Mr. D saw he wasn't really old—he was ageless. And he wasn't really bent—he was pulled down by the weight of the bag he carried.

"We're going to Zabbazara," said Mr. D, cheerfully.

"Then," said the stranger, "You won't mind taking me to Santa Land first."

"Santa Land! How on earth would we get to Santa Land?"

"I'll show you the way. I have business there."

"W-who are you?" stammered Mr. D.

"I'm the Voodoo man," said the stranger.

As he spoke everyone on the bus shivered with a sudden fear.

NEXT: The Voodoo Man's Present.