

Santa and the Zabbazara Bus

BY LUCRECE BEALE



The bus hurtled down the side of the mountain.

Synopsis: En route to Santa Claus land, a Voodoo man shows Mr. D, the bus driver, his present for Santa:

a mirror which will turn to stone all who look in it. When Mr. D says he will take him no further, the Voodoo man says they are already at Santa Land.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Voodoo man stepped off the bus and Mr. D jumped right after him. But Mr. D fell over his great big feet and went sprawling in the snow. When he got up both his glasses and the Voodoo man had vanished.

The little lost boy and the donkey and the crocodile also got off the bus. They stood there and wrung their hands and wondered what on earth to do.

"Perhaps it isn't Santa Land," said the crocodile hopefully. "Perhaps we aren't near there at all.

But the little lost boy pointed down the mountain where a cluster of lights glowed in the valley. "That looks the way I always thought Santa Land I would look," he said.

"Get back on the bus," ordered Mr. D suddenly. "We're going to get there before the Voodoo man!"

They piled back into the bus. The crocodile said, "But your glasses?" Mr. D said, "There's no time to find them!"

He stomped on the gas. The bus leaped forward. But without his glasses, Mr. D saw two roads, and took the wrong one. The

bus climbed in and out of a ditch, mowed down a line of trees and went hurtling down the far side of the mountain.

The wild ride ended with the bus upended in ice and snow at the bottom of the cliff. Mr. D still clung to the steering wheel and peered cross-eyed through the windshield that wasn't there any more. The little boy and the crocodile and the donkey were scrambled like an omelet at Mr. D's feet.

The bus had lost two wheels and the gas tank was punctured. The radiator was caved in and all four fenders were gone. The only thing that wasn't broken was the sign saying "ZABBAZARA." It still hung bravely on the side of the crumpled bus.

The crocodile was the first to speak. "I've lost seven teeth! Now I'm uglier than ever."

"Thank goodness I had no sense," said the donkey, rubbing his broken head. "If I had I would have lost it all."

"How about you?" asked Mr. D, lifting the little lost boy from the bottom of the pile. "Are you all right?"

"Oh, Yes! I thought it was a WONDERFUL ride! But what about Santa? How will we stop the Voodoo man now?"

"If only it were light," moaned the crocodile. "We'd know where we were."

The donkey pointed out the window. "There's light! It's the sun coming up through the trees!"

But the light was not the sun. It was a shiny red glob with long glittering arms that sparkled and glowed as it came towards the bus.

"It's a monster!" shouted the boy. "Get off the bus!"

They scrambled out the door, but as they stepped down they fell into freezing water. The bus had broken through a frozen lake and was slipping slowly to the bottom.

The four of them clung to the Zabbazara sign on the side of the bus. They stared in terror at the glowing beast inching toward them.

"Don't hurt us!" quavered Mr. D. "We don't mean anyone any harm!"

"I don't mean harm either," said a tiny voice from the middle of the shining glob. "I've come to help you."

The creature glided above them and fastened its long glittering arms around the sinking bus. With a mighty heave it lifted the bus and everyone clinging to it right out of the water.

SUNDAY: The Fabulous Dunklebum.