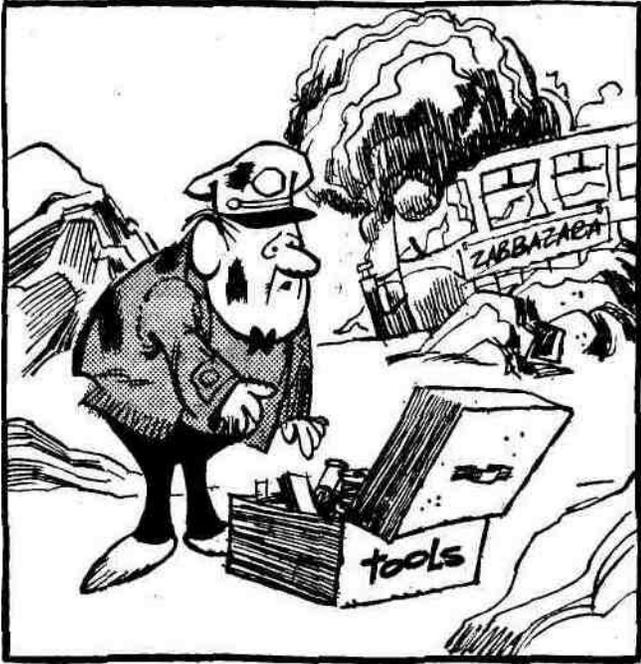


# Santa and the Zabbazara Bus

BY LUCRECE BEALE

*Mr. D got out his tool box to fix the broken bus.*



Synopsis: Mr. D's bus breaks through a frozen lake at the bottom of a cliff in Santa Claus Land. A strange monster lifts the broken bus and its occupants out of the lake.

## CHAPTER SIX

"Hooray! We're safe!" cried the little lost boy as the shining monster deposited the bus on dry land.

The crocodile shook her head admiringly. She said she had never met so strong and brave a creature as the monster and if she had not been so ugly she would have kissed him to show her gratitude.

Lights all along the beast's arms blinked and fluttered with embarrassment. "I am ugly myself," he said. "As you can plainly see."

Well, he certainly wasn't handsome. He had a flat mushy face like a smashed-in tomato. He was fat and stooped and his many glittering arms hung from his shoulders like willow tree branches.

"What are you?" gasped Mr. D, striving with all his might to see out of his poor crossed eyes.

"I'm the friendless Fabulous Dunklebum," said the creature in his tiny squeaky voice. "I'm the only one of my kind. I've

lived all my life at the bottom of this cliff, where I can hide my lights in a cave so I won't frighten anyone."

"I think you are gorgeous," said the crocodile, trying to hide her missing teeth.

"You have magic, too," said the donkey. "Those lights are very magical. In fact, I think you have more magic than anyone I've ever seen."

"Except the Voodoo man!" exclaimed the little boy. "And now the Voodoo man is going to get Santa Claus!"

Mr. D shook his head. "Not yet. We may still get there in time. We can fix the bus by the light of the Fabulous Dunklebum!"

He told the creature of the Voodoo man, who was off to cast a spell over Santa Land. The Fabulous Dunklebum turned on all his lights as high as they would go. They lit up the whole mountainside.

Mr. D got out his tool box. It was filled with bobby pins and rubber bands and fingernail files and chewing gum that Mr. D had used to repair the bus a hundred times before. They found the two missing wheels and hammered them back on with the crocodile's tail. They pried open the radiator and the donkey stomped on the twisted pipes until they were straight. They fastened on the bent and broken fenders with bandage strips.

"She's good as new!" said Mr. D finally.

"Oh, hurry, hurry!" cried the little boy. "Let's go!"

They said goodbye to the Fabulous Dunklebum and thanked him for all he'd done. Then they all got on the bus and Mr. D started her up. The engine gave one gasp and quit. There wasn't any gas. It had leaked out of the punctured tank.

Mr. D groaned. The Zabbazara bus was useless. They would never get to Santa before the Voodoo man, and Santa Land would go under a spell forever.

But even as Mr. D groaned, he felt the bus jerk. The little boy cried, "He's carrying us again!"

Sure enough, the Fabulous Dunklebum had lifted the bus in his long swinging arms and was carrying it slowly up the steep mountainside.

**To be continued.**