

Santa and the Zabbazara Bus

BY LUCRECE BEALE



"Where is Santa Claus? We must see him immediately!"

Synopsis: The Fabulous Dunklebum turns on all the lights on his glittering arms so Mr. D can see to repair the bus. But the gas had leaked out, so the monster had to carry the bus up the mountainside.

CHAPTER SEVEN

It was a long way up the mountain. The snow was deep and the rocks slick with ice. The Fabulous Dunklebum was gasping for breath when he finally brought the Zabbazara bus to the road at the top of the hill.

Daylight had come. The little boy pointed over the other side of the mountain to a cluster of houses and stables and workshops.

"It is Santa Land! And look how the road winds downhill. We can coast all the way. The Fabulous Dunklebum won't have to carry us any further."

"Then he can ride inside with me," said the crocodile. "I am sure he would like to see Santa, too."

She had fallen in love with the creature and did not want to part from him. The Fabulous Dunklebum was only too glad to stay with the only friends he had ever had. But he was too big and had too many arms to fit inside the bus, so he plopped on the roof.

Mr. D took the wheel. Even though he couldn't see straight he was the only one who knew how to drive, and you had to

know a great deal just to blow the horn of a machine like the Zabbazara bus.

He flapped his ears furiously and the bus began to roll. The little boy hung over one shoulder and the donkey over the other. Between them they kept Mr. D in the middle of the road by shouting "Move left!" or "Move right!"

As the way got steeper the bus went faster and faster. The crocodile thumped her tail wildly and screamed "Slow down! Slow down!" But, unfortunately the brake wasn't working any more and there was no way to slow down.

The Fabulous Dunklebum was so shaken up some of his long glittering arms slipped down through the windshield that wasn't there any more and began to flash lights off and on in Mr. D's face. Mr. D, not knowing what else to do, put his hand on the horn and honked it all the way down the mountain.

Noisy as a circus parade, the bus finally came to the bottom of the incline and, still in one piece, coasted into Santa Land.

For a long moment no one moved on the Zabbazara bus. They could hardly believe they were alive.

Then the little boy shouted, "We're in time! I see elves. They are Santa's workers: See, they are standing all around. The Voodoo man hasn't come!"

It was true. Across the snow fields they could see little fellows in peaked caps standing about the shops.

Mr. D leaped off the bus with the others behind him. They raced across the snow banks shouting "Hooray, hooray! We've come on time!"

Mr. D reached the first two elves. They had sacks of toys over their shoulders. Mr. D was so excited his crossed eyes rolled in his head.

"Where is Santa Claus?" We must see Santa immediately! It's very important!"

The elves gazed at him and made no reply.

The little boy and the donkey and the crocodile and the Fabulous Dunklebum came panting up behind Mr. D.

"They don't answer me!" exclaimed Mr. D. "They don't understand!"

But the others took one look at the elves and fell back in horror.

"They're not alive!" gasped the boy. "They've turned to stone!"

NEXT: The Terrible Spell