

Santa and the Zabbazara Bus

BY LUCRECE BEALE

The ring is made from the beard of the fiercest ghoul in witchdom.



Synopsis: None of the Voodoo man's magic works on Mr. D and the boy. He thinks they are Santa and the Princess and finally admits their power is greater than his.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The little boy waved the coat hanger around his head. He tried to think of some magic words that would frighten the Voodoo man. All he could think of were nursery rhymes, and he didn't think they would sound too impressive.

He turned to Mr. D and said, "Santa, will you kindly cast a spell over this wicked creature? I will wave the wand."

Mr. D was taken by surprise. He couldn't think of a single magic word. But suddenly the names of all the streets he had called out during the years he had driven his bus down Main Street came crowding into his mind.

"Dunrobbin. Dalonega. Wapakinoeta. Walhonding. Wisioming."

He shouted out the names of the streets in his fine old bus driver's voice. The little boy waved the coat hanger wildly. The Voodoo man was frightened nearly out of his wits.

"Stop it! Stop it! I'll tell you my secret. What good is it now anyway?" He sat down on the floor in front of the throne.

Mr. D stopped shouting. The little boy put down the coat hanger. They leaned over the Voodoo man and, hardly dared to breathe. This was the secret they had to know. Until they did neither Santa Claus nor the Princess nor any fairy creature was safe.

The Voodoo man slowly drew the shoe off his right foot. Then he drew off the sock. On his long big toe there was a ring of woven hair.

"There it is," he said sadly. "It is made of hairs taken from the beard of the fiercest ghoul in witchdom. I lived with him in the bottom of a well, and plucked his whiskers one by one while he slept. Since he slept only one night a year it took me 70 years. But it was worth it, for when I had made the ring, the ghoul was my slave and I had the power to conquer all of fairyland.

"I have turned the Santa Land workers to stone. I have put the Fairy Queen to sleep. I have turned all her subjects into mice. I have been to the bottom of the sea and changed the mermaids into sardines. "There is no spell I could not cast. Now I find your power is greater than mine, after all."

He began to pull his sock back on. Mr. D and the boy looked at each other. They had to get the ring. As long as it stayed on the Voodoo man's toe, his power remained even though he did not know it.

"Wait," said Mr. D. "Let us look more closely at the ring. He reached down and took the Voodoo man's foot. The boy leaned over and grasped the toe. Mr. D's whiskers and the boy's curls brushed against the bottom of the Voodoo man's foot.

"Stop! You're tickling me!" cried the Voodoo man. Before he could stop himself he kicked out his leg and sent both Mr. D and the boy sprawling.

Mr. D's whiskers slid to the top of his head and the boy's golden wig came all the way off " and landed on the Voodoo man's toe. Mr. D looked at the boy. The boy looked at Mr. D. Then they looked at the Voodoo man and they knew everything was over.

The Voodoo man was on his bare feet hopping up and down with joy.

"You're not Santa Claus! You're not the Princess! That's why my secret power didn't work!" He rushed out of the hall screaming, "I'll find them! There's no place they can hide from me!"

NEXT: The X Mark