

Santa and the Zabbazara Bus

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Synopsis: The Voodoo man reveals his power is a ring on his toe. He discovers that Mr. D and the boy are not really Santa and the Princess.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Santa and the Princess were hiding under a tin washtub in the palace kitchen. They heard the Voodoo man running through the palace hunting for them, and they knew he had discovered who Mr. D and the little boy really were.

"He'll find us! "whispered the Princess. "We can't stay here!"

It was true they couldn't stay there, but they didn't dare come out from under the tub. They did the only thing they could think of. They started crawling out of the room inside the washtub.

At the moment the Voodoo man came into the kitchen. He stared at the crawling washtub in amazement. Then he beamed with pleasure, for he knew what made the tub move.

He took a mighty swing with his right foot and sent the tin tub high in the air and skittering against the ceiling. On the floor sat Santa and the Princess. Helpless.

But the Voodoo man gave a howl of pain and fell over in a faint. He had forgotten that his shoe was off. The mighty kick had smashed the toe that wore the secret ring of woven hair.

Mr. D and the little boy crept into the kitchen. When they saw what had happened Mr. D cried "The ring is his secret power Take it off quickly!" But the Voodoo man's toe had swelled to the size of an orange and no power on earth could pull the ring over the bulge.

The Princess snatched a pair of scissors from the pantry shelf and tried to cut the ring. But the hairs from the beard of a ghoul are hairs of steel and cannot be out.

Then Mr. D said, "Cut off his toe!"



Twisting the ring on his toe, the Voodoo man screamed his curse.

But witches and fairies and elves and Voodoo men are not like ordinary folk. They cannot be cut up or killed like mortals. They can only be destroyed by spells whose magic is stronger than their own.

Santa knew this, and the Princess knew it. Santa said sadly, "The ring is there to stay."

At these words the Voodoo man recovered his senses and Santa and the Princess fled from his sight.

But the Voodoo man did not give chase. He had other plans. Hopping on one foot, he passed down the corridors of the palace. He entered every room and twisting the woven ring on his toe he said these words:

"Whatever creature from the non-mortal world enters this room hereafter will turn into a rug and will carpet this floor forevermore."

As he left each room he took a piece of chalk and drew a huge X on the door to show he had been there and left his curse.

Mr. D. and the little boy watched in horror. They knew that even if Santa and the Princess had gone out of the palace they would come back after the Voodoo man had left, and they would become carpets in the golden castle.

Then Mr. D got an idea. It was so big it made him shiver all over.

He pushed the astonished little boy into one of the rooms where the Voodoo man had cast his spell. He took his handkerchief and rubbed out the X mark on the door. Then he went in the room with the boy and shut the door.

"Now, yell," said Mr. D. "Yell as loud as you can!"

Next: A Merry Christmas to All