



## Mr. Shnoo's Zoo

By Lucrece Beale

### Chapter 1

#### SHNOO'S ZOO

Once upon a time there was a man named Shnellingham Shnoo who loved animals more than anything in the world.

When he was a small boy he collected tropical fish and turtles and hamsters. As he grew older his collection grew to include raccoons and monkeys and snakes. By the time he was a young man he was collecting tigers and zebras and even giraffes!

Finally, Mr. Shnoo bought a zoo. It was an old rundown place owned by a man named Crookshank. This man did not love animals. He kept them in cages so small they hardly had room to turn around. He gave them very little food and he did not heat their houses and he never spoke kindly to them.

Crookshank was glad to sell the zoo because he loved money as much as Mr. Shnoo loved animals. Mr. Shnoo was so anxious to help the animals that he agreed to pay much more than the zoo was worth. It was going to take him 10 years to pay for it. It was arranged that he would pay 1000 gold pieces each year. If in any year he could not pay it he would lose both the zoo and all the gold he had already paid.

Furthermore, Crookshank insisted that until the zoo was entirely paid for, he himself would continue to live there.

These were very hard terms but Mr. Shnoo was so happy to have the zoo he did not mind too much. He immediately set about improving things for the animals.

He built an aquarium and filled it with strange fish from all over the world. For the birds, he built an enormous cage that was glassed in for winter. He enlarged the elephant house and built an outdoor pool for the hippopotamus. He erected a beautiful building for the monkeys and a separate house for the snakes.

He called the zoo Shnoo's Zoo and before long people began to come from far and wide to pay to see his animals, for word spread that they were the finest and happiest animals in the land.

Now it happened that the Queen of the land was very fond of animals. She let it be known that in order to encourage kindness to animals she intended to visit all the zoos before Christmas and to make an award of 1,000 gold pieces to the one she found the most deserving.

When Mr. Shnoo heard this he was very excited. He felt that no finer zoo than his existed and he was sure he would win the 1,000 gold pieces. He very much needed the gold because his last payment to

Crookshank was due on Christmas Eve and he had spent so much money building up the zoo that he really did not have the gold to pay.

Now he felt that his troubles would soon be over: the zoo would be all his; Crookshank would be gone, and he could do even finer things for his animals.

He rushed about the zoo spreading the good news. He promised Molly, the hippopotamus, he would buy her a husband; he told Herbert and Louise, the giraffes, he would build them a grape arbor; and to Blue Lady, the parakeet, he promised a bottomless bowl of honey.

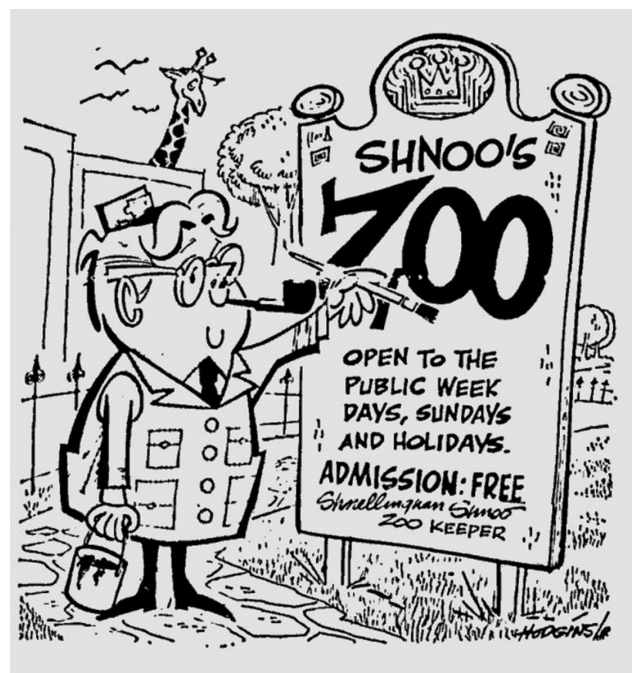
As he left the bird house he ran into Crookshank who handed him a letter.

"Came yesterday," said Crookshank. "I got it from the postman."

Mr. Shnoo looked and gasped. "Goodness! Why didn't you give it to me sooner?"

"Forgot," said Crookshank.

"Impossible!" cried Mr. Shnoo. He stared in awe at the envelope. There, scrawled in red letters, were the words: "To Mr. S. Shnoo at the Zoo from Mr. S. Claus at Santa Land."



## Chapter 2

### MR. SHNOO'S DECISION

"What can it mean?" gasped Mr. Shnoo, staring at the letter from S. Claus at Santa Land.

"Why not open it and see?" said Crookshank stiffly.

Mr. Shnoo tried but his fingers trembled so he could hardly hold the letter, let alone open it.

"Give it to me," snapped Crookshank. "I'll open it."

"Yes, yes," murmured Mr. Shnoo agitatedly. "Dear me, I am shaking all over!"

"You are like a child," taunted Crookshank. "You believe anything." He ripped open the envelope and drew out a letter written in red ink on the back of a piece of green and white striped wrapping paper. He read in silence.

Mr. Shnoo cried, "Out loud! Read it out loud!"

Crookshank made a face and read aloud. "Dear Shnellingham Shnoo."

"Think of that!" interrupted Mr. Shnoo. "My whole name!"

"Do you want to hear it or not?" asked Crookshank rudely.

"Yes yes. Read on!"

"Dear Shnellingham Shnoo.

"I have heard that you have a fine zoo and that there is nothing you cannot do with animals. If this is so I hope you will be willing to help me for I have a very serious problem.

"As you perhaps know I have eight reindeer who fly me around the world each Christmas eve. These deer are wonderful creatures but they have been serving me for over 1,000 years and now, alas, old age is affecting them and I fear they will be unable to make the long trip again.

"I must have eight new reindeer before Christmas. Would it be possible for you to let me borrow them from your zoo? I know this is asking a great deal because I'm sure you hate to let your pets out of sight. However, I promise I will take good care of them and they will be happy.

"Sincerely,

"S. Claus."

Mr. Shnoo beamed. "Think of it!" He took the letter from Crookshank and read the whole thing through again. When he reached the end he said, "But there's a postscript! You didn't read that!"

"It's humbug!" sniffed Crookshank.

"P. S." read Mr. Shnoo aloud. "Maybe I can be of help to you sometime if you should ever need me. Santa."

"Hump!" said Crookshank.

Mr. Shnoo waved him away. "The honor of it! My reindeer to carry Christmas all over the world!"



"Are you mad?" exclaimed Crookshank.

"I must go and tell them at once," said Mr. Shnoo.

"You are out of your head!" sneered Crookshank.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Shnoo.

"Idiot!" yelled Crookshank. "Your reindeer can't fly!"

Mr. Shnoo's face fell. He sat down on a bench. "I hadn't thought of that."

He scratched his head. He chewed on the knuckle of his right thumb. He crossed his legs and jiggled his left foot. He screwed up his eyes and twisted his mouth.

This is the way Mr. Shnoo acted when he was thinking. Usually it helped him to get his thoughts in order. It was especially useful when he had a decision to make.

But today nothing helped. Finally he got up and said, "I think I'll go have a look at them."

Off he went to the reindeer enclosure with Crookshank tagging along behind him. Mr. Shnoo leaned against the fence and gazed at the deer. They were not very handsome. They were short and heavy and thick bodied. But their antlers were magnificent and they were brave and gentle creatures.

Mr. Shnoo's face began to work. He wound one leg around the other and jiggled his elbows. He was thinking again.

Suddenly he straightened. "I'm sending a message to S. Claus," he said. "I'll tell him he can use my deer."

"But..." began Crookshank.

Mr. Shnoo smiled and rolled up his sleeves. "No buts," said he. "I shall TEACH them to fly!"

## Chapter 3

### FLYING LESSONS

For three days and three nights Mr. Shnoo worked with the reindeer but he could not teach them to fly.

“You can do it! You can!” insisted Mr. Shnoo. He spread his arms and leaped from rock to rock to show them what he wanted of them.

The reindeer were anxious to please. They listened to Mr. Shnoo's instructions: they ran to and fro; they even leaped over the low fence he built. But that is as near as they came to flying.

Mr. Shnoo set up a movie screen and showed the deer a movie of Santa Claus in his sleigh being carried over the rooftops by eight soaring reindeer.

“There!” exclaimed Mr. Shnoo. “If they can do it so can you.”

The deer stared at the screen in astonishment. They could not believe that the graceful creatures skimming above the clouds were the same as themselves. When the picture was over they looked at one another in wonder but they were still earthbound and could not fly.

Mr. Shnoo took Horace, the herd leader, to the bird cage and left him there the whole day to watch the birds skimming among the trees. At the end of the day Horace had gained nothing but a crick in the neck from holding his head back so long. Mr. Shnoo rubbed Horace's neck with reindeer liniment oil. The next day he took him to the monkey cages.

“See, even the monkeys can do it!” said Mr. Shnoo. “And they don't have wings.”

Sure enough, the monkeys were gliding from bar to bar as if flying were the easiest thing in the world. The funny-faced creatures screamed at Horace, laughing at him for his great solid bulk that he couldn't lift off the ground.

Back in the reindeer enclosure Horace was very sad and all the other reindeer were sad too. They knew they were not beautiful and now they felt they were failures. Mr. Shnoo saw how they felt and he was filled with remorse.

He put his arm around Horace's thick neck. “Never mind.” He murmured. “You are as you are. You needn't try to fly anymore.

He gave all the deer an extra big feeding and patted each one on his soft muzzle. Then he went to his office to send a message to Santa Claus.

“Sorry,” he wrote. “I can't help you after all. My reindeer can't fly.”

Then he went off to bed for it was late and he was very tired after all his efforts. He was cheerful but he couldn't help feeling disappointed. He had so wanted his deer to shine. And of course he had wanted very much to help Santa because it isn't everyday that Santa asks help from anyone.

“Whatever will Santa do now?” wondered Mr. Shnoo.

He went to sleep and while he slept he had a dream. He dreamed that the reindeer, his own Shnoo's Zoo reindeer, were flying, all on their own, without the slightest difficulty. The dream was so real and so

powerful it woke him and he popped out of bed crying, “Could It really be?”

He shook his head and got back under the covers. “What nonsense” he grumbled. A minute later he was out of bed again ‘pulling on his trousers. “I'll just go have a look anyway,” he said to himself. “Perhaps the poor creatures are in trouble.”

He ran out of the house and off to the reindeer enclosure. There, by the light of the moon, he saw the most extraordinary sight.

The reindeer were not just flying, they were soaring. They somersaulted: they made hairpin turns; they shot down; they skimmed the earth and surged heavenward again. They flew in formation; they flew solo; they zigzagged; they coasted. They hung motionless in the center of the heaven.

Mr. Shnoo rubbed his eyes “Crookshank is right.” He murmured. “I am out of my head.”



## Chapter 4

### A BEAR IN TROUBLE

“No,” said a voice close by. “You’re not out of your head.”

Turning in astonishment, Mr. Shnoo saw a fat little man perched on the fence. He was dressed all in red and had rosy cheeks and a white beard. He was smoking a little white pipe and nodding and smiling as he watched the reindeer spinning over head.

“Why, you’re . . .” began Mr. Shnoo.

“S. Claus,” said the little fat man “From the North Pole.”

Mr. Shnoo nearly toppled over with surprise “You mean Santa Claus?”

“The same,” said the little fat man. He sucked at his pipe and blew out a cloud of smoke that almost hid him from sight. When he appeared again he was off the fence and standing beside Mr. Shnoo. “The reindeer are magnificent,” he said. “You must be very proud.”

“But I don’t understand,” said Mr. Shnoo. “When I left them tonight they couldn’t fly at all. I’ve worked with them for days and days with no success at all. To tell the truth, I had given up hoping.” He looked up in wonder as the deer did a triple somersault through the stars and Horace, the leader, carried away by the sheer Joy of it all finished off with a full gainer layout and a swan dive besides.

“Pshaw” said Santa. “Getting them to fly was nothing.” He reached into a little bag he carried over his back and pulled out a small blue jar. “Flying pills,” he said. “Very useful things to have. I took the liberty of giving one to each of the deer. To Horace I gave two because he seemed a bit down in the mouth.



“This may have been a mistake,” he added as Horace suddenly swooped low and buzzed Mr. Shnoo’s head.

“My word!” cried Mr. Shnoo, ducking out of the way. “What wonderful pills! Do you suppose you might leave me some? Just think what a zoo I would have!”

He had a sudden vision of Molly, the hippopotamus, and Henrietta, the elephant, light as feather pillows, sailing through the air.

Santa shook his head. “Wouldn’t do at all.” he said. “Every creature would be flying off and the whole nature of things would be turned topsy turvy.”

Mr. Shnoo had to admit this was so. “Although,” he said longingly, “It would be a wonderful thing to make all the animals in the zoo as happy as Horace.”

Your animals are happy,” said Santa. “I have never seen so happy a zoo.”

“It is not mine yet,” said Mr. Shnoo. “I must pay 1,000 gold pieces before Christmas day or I shall lose it. However, I am not worried as I hope to have the thousand in good time.”

He told Sana how the Queen was inspecting all the zoos in the kingdom and was going to make an award to the finest one.

“I think she will like Shnoo’s Zoo,” said he. “Then I shall pay off Crookshank and the zoo will be mine.”

Santa nodded. Then he said, “Day Is breaking. I had better be off. I’d much rather stay here for I dearly love a zoo but I suppose there’s works aplenty waiting for me at home.”

He placed his fingers in his mouth and whistled. The flying deer wheeled about and coasted back to earth.

“I’ll leave them here for the Queen to see,” said Santa. I’ll be back for them on Christmas Eve.”

As he spoke there came a terrible sound. Somewhere an animal roared in pain.

“It’s one of the bears!” cried Mr. Shnoo. “Oh, goodness me!”

He turned on his heels and rushed away with Santa beside him. Past the duck pond, past the antelope pastures, past the prairie dog hills they tore until they came to the caves of the bears. There was Nancy, the polar bear, and Daisy and Henry, the black bears, and Ernest, the hybrid. There was not a sign of trouble.

Then there came that fearful roar again and Mr. Shnoo clapped his hands to his head.

“It’s Honeybun” he cried as a little brown bear came tottering on two legs out of her cave.

## Chapter 5

### POOR HONEYBUN

When Honeybun was a little bit of a cub in a faraway land, her mother had been killed by a hunter. When the hunter discovered the orphaned baby bear, he was sorry for what he had done. He carried the cub all the way back to his own land and gave her to Mr. Shnoo.

“She’s a runt and she’s sickly” said the hunter, “But maybe she’ll have a chance with you.

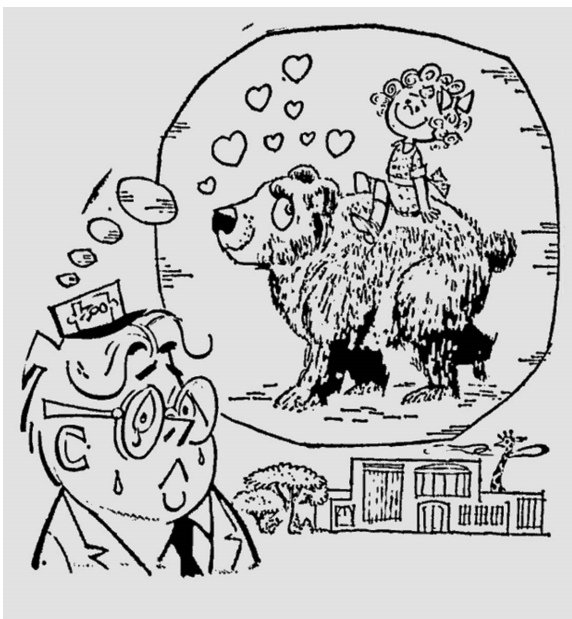
Mr. Shnoo felt in love with the little brown bear. He called her Honeybun. He kept her in his room and gave her milk from a bottle every three hours. He kept hot water bottles in her bed and gave her cod liver oil and vitamins. Most importantly, he gave her lots and lots of T. L. C. which is a prescription for Tender Loving Care.

Honeybun thrived. She was always a runt but she was the liveliest runt anyone ever saw. After a few months she was so lively she was moved to the caves with the big bears.

Everyone loved her. She was such a show-off. She would stand on her hind legs and clap her paws and make funny faces. Little children saved all their peanuts to throw to Honeybun. The bear would stand there making faces and putting on a regular circus until the children had thrown in all their peanuts. She knew exactly when the bags were emptied and no more peanuts coming. Then she would sweep up all the nuts from the ground and have a feast. She never lost a nut no matter where it landed.

Once a little girl squeezed between the bars of the cage and ran up to Honeybun, waving a vanilla ice cream cone. Everyone screamed and the keeper went leaping over the fence waving a stick.

They need not have become so excited. Honeybun simply licked the Ice cream off the cone. Then she licked the little girl’s mouth where some ice cream was sticking. Then she yawned and lay down for a nap.



After that, they sometimes let children lead Honeybun around the zoo on a chain. Sometimes little children even rode on her back.

“She’d never hurt a soul,” declared Mr. Shnoo.

But now someone had hurt Honeybun. She came tottering out of her cave holding her paws over her mouth and growling deep in her throat.

“Something’s stuck in her mouth,” said Mr. Shnoo. He climbed the fence and put his arm around Honeybun’s neck. Honeybun dropped to all fours and stood shaking her head, moaning and rolling her eyes. Mr. Shnoo put his hands on her muzzle and gently opened her jaws.

All Honeybun’s teeth were gone!

Santa followed Mr. Shnoo over the fence. He picked up something from the ground. “Look! A firecracker!”

Now it was all clear. Someone had given Honeybun a firecracker instead of a peanut and the firecracker had gone off in the poor bear’s mouth and blown out all her teeth.

Honeybun’s roar of pain had been heard all over the zoo and attendants and office workers and the animal doctor gathered at the cave.

“Do something!” Mr. Shnoo begged the doctor. “She’s in terrible pain.”

The doctor examined Honeybun and shook his head. “Better put her to sleep,” he said. “Without teeth she can never eat again. She’d starve by and by.”

Santa stepped forward and said, “I think I can help her.”

Crookshank was standing there with the rest and he said, “Whoever you are you’d better move on. You heard what the doctor said and he ought to know.”

The others muttered among themselves saying, “Why not let turn try?” And Mr. Shnoo took Santa’s arm and said, “Please! Do what you can.”

“Very well,” said Santa. “But I can’t do it here,”

He tied a rope around Honeybun’s neck and led her away Mr. Shnoo watched until they had almost disappeared. Then he went running after them crying, “Wait for me! Wait for me!”

## Chapter 6

### THE BLUE.SCALED SCHOLAR

“Where are we going?” asked Mr. Shnoo as he and Santa left Shnoo’s Zoo behind and started down the road leading poor Honeybun on a rope.

“There’s an elf in Santa Land named Dr. Kernoodle,” said Santa “He has a wonderful way with sick animals. I think he can help Honeybun.”

“Oh, I hope so” said Mr. Shnoo rubbing his fingers through the brown bear’s fur. But, oh dear, I don’t think she can go that far. Look! She is staggering already.”

Honeybun swung her hurt head back and forth. She seemed ready to give up and lie down right there in the road.

Santa said, “Don’t worry. We’ll go by sea - the way I came. It’s a very fast and restful trip.”

Mr. Shnoo got behind Honeybun and gently pushed her along. “A voyage should do her good,” he said. “She was on a ship once before, when she was a cub.”

“It’s not exactly a ship.” said Santa, tugging on Honeybun’s rope.

“It’s a Blue-Scaled Scholar.”

“Blue-Scale Scholar! What is that?”

“You’ll see soon enough.”

And sure enough Mr. Shnoo did see, for they came, by and by to the end of the road and there was the river. Waiting at the edge of the river was an enormous fish covered with sky blue scales. He was big as a tug boat and his mouth when he opened it was as large as a small front porch.

“Come In,” said Santa and he led Honeybun and the astonished Mr. Shnoo right into the gaping jaws of the Blue-Scaled Scholar.

The mouth snapped shut behind them and Mr. Shnoo didn’t know what to do. It was all so dark and scary. He heard Santa calling to him and he could see a light far ahead. He pushed Honeybun down a slippery, slidey passageway until he came into a lighted sitting room. The walls and floor were red and the furniture was quite modern with lots comfortable sofas covered with puffy pillows.

There were books on shelves, along the walls. Santa went straight to one of the shelves and picked up a book. It was called “Three Little Fish and How They Grew.”

“He likes to be read aloud to,” said Santa. “That is why he is called Scholar, I expect.”

He sat down on a sofa, put on his spectacles and opened the book to Page 634. He began to read. The room started to move gently up and down as the Scholar moved out toward sea. Honeybun curled up on some pillows behind the sofa. She did not seem at all alarmed to find herself in such strange surroundings.

But Mr. Shnoo was very puzzled. He sank down on a sofa but he couldn’t keep still. He kept jumping up and down and examining things.

Finally Santa put down his book and said, “Why are you so fidgety? What is the matter?”

“I have been thinking,” said Mr. Shnoo. “I have never seen so remarkable a creature. I must have a Blue-Scaled Scholar for my zoo.”

Santa shook his head. “They do not live in captivity. In fact, no mortal eye other than yours has ever seen one. If you tell anyone about it you will be told you were dreaming.

“And perhaps I am,” said Mr. Shnoo, rubbing his eyes. But a moment later he knew he wasn’t because the voyage came to an abrupt end. Mr. Shnoo stood up so suddenly he bumped his head quite hard on the ceiling.

The great mouth of the Scholar opened and Santa and Honeybun and Mr. Shnoo walked out. They were on the beach of a snow covered land. Mr. Shnoo knew right away it was Santa Land because there was a big red sleigh waiting there and dancing around the sleigh were hundreds of tiny elves come to welcome Santa home.

Santa greeted all his little workers and fussed with them a little for being away from their work. Then he told them about Honeybun. The elves were sorrowful to see so sad a bear.

Gently they lifted Honeybun onto the sleigh. When Honeybun was settled comfortably, Santa and Mr. Shnoo got in beside her. Then each elf took his place on the ropes and all together they gave a mighty tug until suddenly - Zip! Away they sped over the snow!



Chapter 7

DR. KERNOODLE



Dr. Kernoodle was a funny little elf with snowy white hair and a long, pointed nose that reached to the bottom of his chin.

He had a hospital on the edge of Santa Land. Over the door was a sign that said, "Animals are welcome. Humans are not."

"Mr. Shnoo is not an ordinary human," said Santa as he introduced Mr. Shnoo to the doctor. "He is a zoo keeper. He keeps so fine a zoo that it is expected the Queen will honor him before Christmas and this will benefit all the animals in the zoo."

"Ah?" said Dr. Kernoodle, scratching his long, pointed nose. "And what brings you here?"

"Honeybun," said Mr. Shnoo. He pulled the little brown bear through the door. "She has had all her teeth blown out and will starve because she can ever cat again."

"Tch, tch," said Dr. Kernoodle. He leaned down and opened Honeybun's jaws and poked his long, pointed nose into her mouth. "Tch, tch" he said again. He pulled out his nose and stood up shaking his head.

Mr. Shnoo's heart dropped and he turned quite pale. "You can't help her?" he asked sadly.

"Don't know," said the doctor. "Go away. Come back later today." He led Honeybun into his office and slammed the door.

Don't worry," said Santa, taking Mr. Shnoo away. "Dr. Kernoodle is a wizard. Once he built a whole new trunk for an elephant who had lost his in a swinging door. Another time he cured a snake that had swallowed an alligator, head first. Cured the alligator, too."

Mr. Shnoo was greatly cheered. He went with Santa to Santa's house. Mrs. Claus gave them both a pot of hot chocolate and a super-duper, double meringue, graham cracker crusted chocolate cream pie, the likes of which, Mr. Shnoo declared, had never been made in the Queen's own kitchen.

After this snack Santa took Mr. Shnoo to see the workshops. All the little elves were back at work making Christmas toys. Mr. Shnoo sat awhile and helped make buttons for panda bear eyes. Then he helped the elves make crocodile tears and kangaroo pockets and bunny tails.

"It's like a zoo!" exclaimed Mr. Shnoo. "The animals are almost real."

"They're real enough to us," said Santa. "And they'll be real for the children who get them if they manage to see it that way."

The day sped by. Suddenly there was a commotion outside. The elves rushed to the windows but before they could get there the door flew open and in came Honeybun, up on her hind legs and doing a jig! A polka-dot handkerchief was bound round her muzzle and tied with a bow that fluttered and bounced as the little bear danced.

Dr. Kernoodle followed her in. He said she was as good as new and not only could eat but could dance for the Queen for he'd taught her the jig while her new teeth were setting.

"The teeth," he added, "once belonged to a prehistoric dinosaur whose remains I've kept all these years. I stuck them in with my special Never-Fail-Kernoodle-Stickum. They'll do better than her own."

Mr. Shnoo was so happy he begged Dr. Kernoodle to come and be permanent doctor at his zoo. But the doctor said no, he'd die of old age if he left Santa Land for he was already several thousand years and could only live in a land where years didn't count so much.

Santa took Mr. Shnoo and Honeybun back to the sea and saw them safely into the Blue-Scaled Scholar's mouth,

"I'll come for the reindeer on Christmas eve," said Santa. "But, if you should need me before then, shut your eyes and stand on your head and wiggle your toes and say SELBUORT GNIPPOP three times and I'll come."

Mr. Shnoo saw that SELBUORT GNIPPOP was TROUBLES POPPING spelled backwards. He said, "Thank you. I'll remember."

Then the Blue-Sealed Scholar's mouth clamped shut and Mr. Shnoo and Honeybun were on their way.

## Chapter 8

### THE BIRDS ESCAPE

The trip home was even more enjoyable than the trip to Santa Land for by now Mr. Shnoo was accustomed to his surroundings and was able to relax. Remembering that the Blue-Scaled Scholar liked to read to, Mr. Shnoo found the book "Three Little Fish and How They Grew" and, taking up where Santa had stopped on Page 819, he read it through to the end.

Then he began to read from a book of poetry called "Sea Voices." He could tell the Blue-Scaled Scholar like it because he made a gentle bumbling sound as he sped on his journey.

When they arrived on home shores Mr. Shnoo thanked the Scholar for the voyage and promised to bring him some new books for his library. Then he hurried with Honeybun to the zoo. He put the bear in her cage and untied the handkerchief that bound her muzzle.

"How would you like a steak?" he asked.

Honeybun clapped her paws and Mr. Shnoo gave her an enormous hunk of meat which she easily polished off with her dinosaur teeth.

Later, in the office, Mr. Shnoo said to Crookshank, "We must keep a sharp watch for visitors carrying fire crackers. Mustn't let this happen again. Also, I must order extra feedings for Honeybun. She'll need building up."

"Waste of money," said Crookshank with a scowl.

"That's not for you to say," said Mr. Shnoo. "It's my zoo."

"Not entirely until you pay me my last pieces of gold," retorted Crookshank.

"You'll have your gold by Christmas eve" said Mr. Shnoo. He hurried away, not only to escape Crookshank but because he had to inspect the zoo. He wanted to make sure everything was in order for the Queen's visit which surely would be coming any day now.

Because he had heard that the Queen was especially interested in birds he went first to the bird cages. It was winter and most of the bright plumaged birds were kept in warmly heated, glass enclosed cages. Very few were hardy enough to be allowed in the outdoor cages.

"Keep them warm," said Mr. Shnoo to the bird keeper.

"Yes, indeed," nodded the keeper. "I keep it like a tropical forest in here."

Mr. Shnoo went on to the aquarium, the reptile house and the lion cages. He ended up at the reindeer enclosure where the deer were calmly grazing, giving no hint that they knew how to fly.

"Feed them well," Mr. Shnoo said to their keeper. "They have a big night coming."

"Yes sir!" said the keeper though little he knew of the reindeer's secret.

Mr. Shnoo's heart was filled with happiness. He felt he was the most fortunate man alive to have such a zoo.



"And now that Honeybun is well our troubles are over," he thought as he dropped off to sleep that night.

But alas! His troubles were only begun for he was hardly out of bed the next morning when the bird keeper was banging on his door.

"Sir! An awful thing has happened! I can't think how it came about!"

Mr. Shnoo took the fellow by the shoulders. "What is it? Tell me!"

"The birds!" sobbed the keeper. "They've flown away!"

"What?"

The keeper nodded. "One of the glass windows was broken and they all flew out. Oh, how could it have happened? The glass was there last night!"

Mr. Shnoo threw on his coat. "We must find them quickly," he cried. "They'll freeze to death!" With the keeper at his heels he dashed from the house.



## Chapter 9

### THE GIRAFFES WEAR HATS

Mr. Shnoo rushed to the bird cage. It was empty. A large pane of glass in the ceiling had been broken and the curious birds had escaped one by one.

Sending for workmen, Mr. Shnoo ordered them to repair the glass at once. Then he and the attendants snatched up nets and sacks of feed and went out to hunt for the birds.

A pigmy owl was found fast asleep perched on the zebra cage. He was easily captured and returned to the cage. Mr. Shnoo spied several peacocks strolling down the penguins' walk. He spread a trail of seed and coaxed them back to their cage. The flamingoes, their pink feathers fluffed by the wind, were found huddled on the steps of the elephant house. They were very glad to follow Mr. Shnoo back home.

But when all these creatures were back in the cage there were hundreds of small birds still missing. They had flown to the tops of the highest trees where they sat shivering with cold and fright. Mr. Shnoo and his men climbed the trees but no sooner would they reach out with nets than off the birds would flutter to another branch.

Ladders were brought but when they were raised they only frightened the nervous birds off to entirely different trees.

The men got a huge net and held it under a tree. The strongest men climbed up the trunk and shook the branches with all their might. But not even one small bird fell into the net.



Mr. Shnoo did not know what to do next. He knew that if the birds stayed outdoors a little longer they would freeze. He beat his hands together and rubbed his head and tried and tried to think what he might do.

Crookshank came along and shook his head at the sight of the birds in the trees. "How unfortunate to lose them just before the visit of the Queen" he said.

"It's not the Queen I care about," retorted Mr. Shnoo. "It's the birds themselves!" He went off under the trees, biting his lip and pulling

his ear and twisting his mouth until suddenly he knew what he had to do.

He rushed off to the bear cages and slipped into the brown bears' cave. Honeybun, snoozing there, woke up and gave him a big bear hug. Mr. Shnoo said, "Excuse me, Honeybun, I haven't time to play right now." He pushed her gently away. Then he shut his eyes and stood on his head and wiggled his toes and said "Selbuort Gnippop!" three times.

He got back on his feet and looked around. There was only Honeybun sitting back on her haunches with her jaws wide open to show off her dinosaur teeth. Mr. Shnoo was too upset to praise her as she wished. He slipped out of the cave and looked all around but there was no one there. Only bears.

Mr. Shnoo was terribly disappointed. He hadn't known exactly what to expect but he had been pretty sure Santa Claus would appear as soon as he had said the magic words.

As he went back to the birds he thought, "All is lost! They won't last another hour." The zoo doctor was there and he agreed "They will have terrible colds and could not last."

They all stood about feeling sad and helpless. Suddenly one of the men shouted and pointed down the road. "Look yonder! The giraffes are out!"

They all turned and stared. Here came Herbert and Louise ambling down the road. They had baskets of straw strapped on their backs and on the tops of their heads they wore enormous round hats tilted between their ears.

"The zoo is haunted!" exclaimed one of the men. "First the bear, then the birds, now the giraffes wearing hats! There's trouble everywhere?"

## Chapter 10

### THE BIRDS BEGIN TO SING

Mr. Shnoo watched in astonishment as Herbert and Louise came toward him. The giraffes swung their long necks to and fro and dipped their heads. The enormous straw hats between their cars tilted over their eyes and they looked like ladies of fashion strolling on the beach.

The keeper who had charge of the large animals cried out and started away to head off the giraffes but Mr. Shnoo said, "Wait!" and held up his hand. He saw a short round man walking between Herbert's front legs and he knew suddenly just who it was. "Thank goodness!" he exclaimed. He went up to the little round man and said, "I was afraid you wouldn't come!"

"Of course I came," said Santa, for that is who it was. "But it took me a few minutes to work out a plan."

"What is the plan?" asked Mr. Shnoo. "What can we do?"

"Bring a ladder," said Santa.

Mr. Shnoo brought a ladder and Santa propped it up against Herbert's neck. Santa climbed up to the basket on Herbert's back and took out a big brown bucket and a paint brush. He hooked the bucket over his arm and climbed up to Herbert's chin. He dipped the brush in the bucket and began to paint Herbert's neck.

"What kind of paint is that?" asked Mr. Shnoo.

"Isn't paint," replied Santa. "It's honey."

When he had finished painting Herbert's neck with honey he went over and did the same thing to Louise.

"Now," he said, "We'll see what happens." He led Herbert under the nearest tree. The giraffe pushed his neck up, up through the branches until the hat on his head was at the very tip top of the tree.

Then Mr. Shnoo exclaimed, "Why, it's not a hat at all!" It was a nest of straw. As soon as the birds saw it they fluttered from the branches and settled in the nest. Other birds found the honey and they gathered on Herbert's neck like flies on sticky paper. Many of them slid or were pushed off and as they fell they landed in the basket on Herbert's back which was filled with straw and made the nicest kind of nest.

Then Louise took her place under another tree and Herbert was led to the bird cage where the birds were gently coaxed off Herbert and into their old nests. Herbert made three trips and Louise made three trips and when they finished there wasn't a single bird left out in the cold. Mr. Shnoo turned up the heat in the cages and the zoo doctor rushed around filling hot water bottles to put in the nests and arranging steam kettles to moisten the air.

But it was clear the birds were ailing. They shivered and their feathers drooped and their eyes were dull. Blue Lady, the parakeet, was the sickest of all. Her eyelids fluttered then closed, and she lay on her back with her tiny legs straight up in the air.

Mr. Shnoo put his finger on her breast. Her heart was beating very faintly.

"Poor Blue Lady," murmured Mr. Shnoo. Tears gathered in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. Herbert and Louise, whom no one had time to take back to the giraffe house, leaned over his shoulder and cried, too.

It was very sad because everyone knew that Blue Lady and all the other birds were going to die. But Santa wasn't sad. He was busy at a stove in the corner. He was cooking a strange concoction made from pills and powders and drops of oil taken from the little bag on his back. He stirred and tasted and sniffed until finally he was satisfied.

He took the pan from the stove and set fire to its contents. It did not flame up but gently smoldered. As wisps of smoke drifted up, the bird cage filled with the most wonderful fragrance and suddenly a marvelous thing happened: all the birds began to sing!



## Chapter 11

### HENRIETTA FALLS OVER

Mr. Shnoo sniffed and all the attendants sniffed. Never In this world had they smelled so sweet a smell.

“What is It?” Mr. Shnoo asked. “What have you made?”

“Tropical incense,” said Santa, watching the smoke drift from the pan. “It’s a secret I learned from a fairy queen who rules the island where birds go when they die.”

“It is magic!” cried Mr. Shnoo. “See what is happening?”

Truly, it was a sight to see and a sound to hear. The birds had left their nests and were darting about the cage. The songs they sang had never been so clear and lively. Even Herbert and Louise, the giraffes, were affected by it all. They swung their long necks and strange humming sounds came from their throats.

Above all the turmoil there came a sudden cheerful “peep!” and there was Blue Lady perched on Mr. Shnoo’s shoulder.

“Happy day, indeed!” agreed Mr. Shnoo. “Ah,” he said, turning to Santa, “If only I had the recipe for your Incense!”

“No need.” said Santa. “For now I believe your birds will live forever.”

Mr. Shnoo was overcome. “Because of you,” said he, “Shnoo’s Zoo now has flying reindeer, a bear with dinosaur teeth, and birds that will never die! What a sight for the Queen!”

Santa wrapped his long wool scarf around his neck. “I hope she comes soon,” he said. “For back luck seems to plague you.”

“Don’t worry,” said Mr. Shnoo, “I am sure our bad luck is over.”

“Perhaps,” said Santa. “Anyway, you know how to reach me should the need arise.” With that he was out of the door and gone before Mr. Shnoo could blink his eyes.

Mr. Shnoo was wrong. His bad luck was not over. The next day trouble came to the big animal house when Henrietta, the elephant, fell over on her side and could not get up again.

It happened this way:

Every night Henrietta was tied to a stake on the right side of her cage and it wasn’t her custom to lean against the big stone wall on her right while she slept. The night before she was tied to the left side of her cage. When she dozed off she leaned over to the right as was her custom but the wall was not there and poor Henrietta went plop! right over on her side.

Now an elephant can lie down by first bending his front legs under him and then kneeling down on his back legs. When he is down like this he can get back up very easily. But when an elephant is lying on his side, all four legs stick straight out and no matter how much he tries he cannot get back up on them.

This is the way Henrietta was found and Mr. Shnoo was very angry.

“Who staked her against the left wall?” he demanded.

The elephant attendant swore it

I had not been his fault. “She was staked on the right side. I saw it myself!”

“Who else was about?”

“No one. Except Crookshank who’s always around.”

Crookshank declared he’d had nothing to do with the matter and Mr. Shnoo said anyway, the thing to do now was to get Henrietta back on her feet. He called in all the men in the zoo and they all got behind Henrietta and pushed and pushed and pushed but they could not budge her.

Mr. Shnoo had the men put a pulley at the top of the cage. He wrapped canvas around Henrietta’s middle and tied it with ropes through the pulley. Then the men pulled on the ropes. Henrietta was raised two inches but, try as they would, the men could lift her no higher.

Poor Henrietta kicked her legs feebly and snorted unhappily, through her trunk. She looked at Mr. Shnoo as if to say, “Hurry! I can’t stay this way much longer!”

“Don’t worry,” said Mr. Shnoo gently. “We’ll get you up.” But how they were to do it, he did not know.



## Chapter 12

### SKATING HENRIETTA

Mr. Shnoo went off in a corner and chewed on the knuckle of one thumb. He scratched his head and jerked his mouth sideways and screwed up his eyes. Everyone could see he was thinking.

The men stood about waiting until finally Mr. Shnoo said, "I've got it!"

He ordered the men to dig a huge hole in the floor of the elephant's cage. The edge of the hole came right to Henrietta's middle. Her legs hung over the side. Mr. Shnoo got some wide planks and laid them in the hole so they slanted down the side like a big bamboo slide.

Now Mr. Shnoo had all the men line up behind the elephant and he cried, "One, two, three - push!" They gave a mighty push and over Henrietta went, sliding down the planks to land on her feet in the bottom of the hole.

"Hooray!" shouted the men.

But Mr. Shnoo was filled with dismay. He stared down at Henrietta. He thought, "She's on her feet but how will we get her out of the hole?"

In truth, Henrietta was as bad off as before. To make matters worse, the poor elephant was very upset about the whole thing. She stood unhappily at the bottom of the hole and refused to look at Mr. Shnoo or take any food or do anything she was told.

Elephants have very tender feelings and Mr. Shnoo was afraid Henrietta would not get over her experience unless he did something quickly. He thought, "There's only one thing left for me to do." And, much as he hated to, he had to do it for Henrietta.

He went behind the door. He stood on his head and shut his eyes and wiggled his toes and said, "Selbuort Gnippop!" three times. He was hardly back on his feet before Santa was there.

"I was all ready to come," said Santa, "For I have been thinking there are mysterious things happening at this zoo and this time I'm staying until the mystery is solved."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Shnoo. "But, first, how shall we get Henrietta out of the hole?"

Easy," said Santa. "Build a ramp out of the hole and Henrietta can walk out."

This seemed so simple a solution, Mr. Shnoo was ashamed he had not thought of it himself. He set the men to work digging a ramp which made a long gentle slope into the hole. But when it was done Henrietta stared at it and refused to move. The men could neither push her nor pull her out.

Santa said, "I have something in my bag I think will do the trick." He reached in the bag he carried slung over his shoulder and pulled out for gigantic elephant skates. He went down the ramp and fastened a skate on each of Henrietta's feet. He put a rope around her waist and took the end of the rope to the top of the ramp. Then all the men pulled on the rope and swoosh! the astonished Henrietta shot to the top of the ramp.

Now a surprising thing happened. Henrietta was so fascinated by the strange things on her feet that she skated all over the great animal house. She would not let the skates be taken off. When she was back in her cage and the hole filled up she skated from wall to wall and back again. She trumpeted long and joyously through her trunk and rose on her hind legs and skated round and round.

Never had anyone seen so remarkable a sight!



## Chapter 13

### MONKEY BUSINESS

Santa went back to the office with Mr. Shnoo. There they found a letter for Mr. Shnoo written on fine white paper with the letterhead engraved in gold.

Her Royal Highness will visit Shnoo's Zoo the day after tomorrow," said the letter.

"At last!" said Mr. Shnoo. He rushed about the office putting things in order. "Thank goodness, we are ready for her!"

"I hope you will be the day after tomorrow." said Santa.

"Why shouldn't we be?"

"Too many strange accidents have happened," said Santa. "I believe someone is trying to harm the zoo because he does not want you honored by the Queen."

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Shnoo. "I don't believe it!"

"Well," said Santa. "I shall stay here until the Queen comes or there is certainly something mysterious going on and, to tell the truth, I am curious."

Mr. Shnoo fixed up a bed for Santa next to his own and they went to sleep telling each other animal stories.



That night the watchman was going on his rounds when he saw what appeared to be the sun rising over beyond the fish pond. Because it wasn't time for the sun to rise the watchman thought he was seeing things as a result of an upset stomach.

But while he rubbed his eyes and considered going to his locker for some bicarbonate of soda, he heard a crackling noise and the sound of all the monkeys in the zoo screeching in fright. At the same time the sunrise became a bright orange color and the watchman smelled smoke,

He turned on his heel and raced off to Mr. Shnoo's house shouting. "Fire! Fire! The monkey house is on fire!"

Everyone in the zoo came running but when they got to the monkey house there was so much smoke they could not enter. Firemen rushed up with hoses. They made everyone stand back while they poured water on the house.

The monkeys screeched and howled. Finally Mr. Shnoo could stand it no longer. He put his coat over his head and rushed by the firemen and into the house. He did not need to see. He knew every cage by heart and the name of every monkey.

Quickly he broke a sky light. Then he raced around opening the cages and calling out the monkeys.

"Fanny, Robert, Hazel!" He boosted them out of the cages and they fled through the sky light. They did not need urging. Hundreds of monkeys rushed out. When they were safe Mr. Shnoo climbed up and huddled with them on the roof.

Smoke whirled around them and flames began to lick the edges of the roof. The firemen raised ladders but they could not climb through the flames. Neither could Mr. Shnoo climb down. He and the monkeys were on an island surrounded by fire and soon the island would be on fire, too.

Mr. Shnoo tried to be calm. He told himself that Santa would save them but how it could be done he could not imagine. Really he was quite frightened.

Suddenly he heard a shout go up from the onlookers below and Mr. Shnoo looked down and saw everyone gazing off into the sky. Mr. Shnoo looked up, too, and saw all his reindeer swooping down from above. Shaking their antlers and tossing their heads, the deer skimmed over the tips of the flames and glided down to the roof top.

A little fat man looked down from the back of Horace, the lead deer, and greeted Mr. Shnoo with a wave of his hand.

"The Reindeer Express!" he shouted. "Hop on!"

## Chapter 14

### READY FOR THE QUEEN

Santa was so cool and calm that Mr. Shnoo forgot his fright and even the monkeys seemed unafraid. They climbed on the backs of the reindeer and clung to the branches of the great antlers with their tails. When they were all on, Mr. Shnoo found a place on Horace's head. Then Santa gave the signal and away they flew.

Up, up and over the flames they went and oh, how the people below cheered and carried on to see them safe at last! Just for fun the deer zoomed far up into the sky and, wild with freedom and the wonder of it all, they swept up and down playing hide and seek in the clouds. They played leap frog and somersaulted over the moon and did swan dives through the stars. On and on they went, surging round and round the whole great sky.

The monkeys clung to the antlers and Mr. Shnoo fastened his legs around Horace's chin. They had a ride they would never forget.

At last it was over. The reindeer glided gently back to their reindeer pasture. But the monkeys had not had enough. They jumped up and down and beat their hands together and jabbered furiously. It 'as clear they wanted another ride.

But Mr. Shnoo said, no, they'd had enough but since they liked the reindeer so much they could stay in the reindeer stables until new cages were built. The old monkey house had burned to the ground.

By now it was daylight. Santa and Mr. Shnoo went off to Mr. Shnoo's office for breakfast which they cooked on a little stove Mr. Shnoo kept by his desk. While they were eating Crookshank came in.

He said, "What with the fire and all, the zoo is in very bad shape. Perhaps you had better call off the Queen's inspection."

"Not at all," said Mr. Shnoo. "The monkeys are fine in the reindeer stables and the Queen will find everything in good condition - providing, of course, it stays that way."

"I want to remind you that my money is due me tomorrow," said Crookshank "If you fail to make it the zoo becomes mine."

"Yes," said Mr. Shnoo, sipping his coffee.

"I want payment before the Queen's visit," said Crookshank.

"AFTER the Queen's visit," corrected Mr. Shnoo. "I have until sundown according to the agreement."

"Hump!" said Crookshank and he banged out of the office.

"I do not trust that fellow," said Santa.

"He is an unpleasant one," agreed Mr. Shnoo. "I shall be glad when I have paid him off and the zoo is mine. Oh, the things I shall do with it!"

He lay back in his chair and dreamed again his wonderful dreams for the zoo.

Santa said, "Perhaps I should make a quick visit back to Santa Land. After all, tomorrow is Christmas Eve and Mrs. Claus gets very upset thinking something may go wrong at the last minute. Nothing ever does but I had better check anyway."

"And I" said Mr. Shnoo, "will get ready for the Queen."

So they parted. Mr. Shnoo made an inspection trip of the zoo and it seemed to him that never had the animals seemed so fit and happy. He told them of the Queen's coming visit and begged them to be on their best behavior.

They seemed to understand. Georgie, the rhinoceros did not complain when attendants gave his hide an extra scrubbing. The leopards were agreeable when they were turned out doors so their cages could be painted. The king cobras said nothing when they were given no dinner so they would be more lively the next day.

Every animal and every helper was anxious to please. Mr. Shnoo was filled with pride. He could hardly wait for the Queen to see his zoo.

Little did he know what the morrow would bring!



## Chapter 15

### THE FLOOD

Mr. Shnoo got up very early on the morning of Christmas Eve. He did not know what time the Queen would arrive but he intended to be ready for her. He dressed carefully in his best blue suit. He shined his shoes and selected an elegant tie and put a sparkling white handkerchief in his breast pocket.

He went outdoors. It was a fine day. Even the sun was shining, which was unusual at this time of year. Crookshank went hurrying by, his head hunched down between his shoulders.

“Merry Christmas!” called Mr. Shnoo gaily.

Crookshank did not answer but rushed on. Mr. Shnoo shrugged. He was too happy to be annoyed. He whistled a gay tune as he strolled along. Presently he noticed that the path he walked on was damp. As he went on, the path became wetter and wetter until Mr. Shnoo’s feet began to get quite soggy. In fact, by now, there was water rushing over his shoes.



He slopped in amazement and looked all around. There seemed to be a flood of water coming down the sidewalks and spreading out to the animal cages. Even while Mr. Shnoo stood there, the water rose halfway up his legs.

Attendants began to run from the animal houses shouting “Flood! Flood!” The lions roared in surprise and the leopards growled and leaped against the doors of their cages. Snakes slithered to the pipes and lighting fixtures on their ceilings. The monkeys climbed onto the reindeer’s antlers and the seals were washed right out of their pools.

Ducks swam down the road and an old sea lion floated over to visit the polar bear.

“Where is it coming from?” cried Mr. Shnoo as the attendants rushed by carrying chickens and prairie dogs and other small creatures that could not swim.

“The main water line has burst over beyond Molly’s house!” shouted a man sailing by on a raft loaded with small animals.

Mr. Shnoo waded over to Molly’s house. But the time he reached there he was swimming. The hippopotamus was not at all disturbed. She had floated out of her pool and was calmly swimming up and down the big mammal house.

Mr. Shnoo pulled himself up on Molly’s back and tried to think what to do. Presently Molly swam right out the door and Mr. Shnoo could see tons of water pouring out of a big round hole in the main water pipe that ran beside the house.

“Good heavens!” he thought. “There’s enough water there to drown us all!”

Without waiting another second he shut his eyes and stood on his head and wiggled his toes. This was a very hard thing to do on top of Molly’s slippery back but he finally managed it and he said ‘Selbuort Gnippop’ three times real quickly. When the last word was out he fell into the water over his head and when he came up, Molly was gone.

“Help! Help!” sputtered Mr. Shnoo because he thought he was going under again.

“Quit calling for help and come help me!” cried someone. Mr. Shnoo shook the water out of his eyes and saw Molly nearby with Santa sitting astride her neck, facing backwards and pushing a paddle as hard as he could.

Mr. Shnoo climbed aboard and Santa handed him a paddle and shouted, ‘Back her up! Full steam astern!’

Mr. Shnoo faced around to Molly’s rear and he and Santa paddled furiously while Molly, sensing what was wanted of her, paddled her own feet in reverse. Little by little she was backed up to the big hole in the water pipe.

“Now!” shouted Santa. “Give her all you’ve got!”

He gave a mighty shove and Mr. Shnoo gave a mighty shove and Molly gave a mighty shove and plop! Molly’s end went right in the hole and the water was stopped.

## Chapter 16

### THE QUEEN ARRIVES

Molly was stuck in the hole like a stopper in a bottle and not all the water in the pipe could shove her out again until she was good and ready to leave.

Santa and Mr. Shnoo put down their paddles and looked around. Never had there been such a mess at the zoo! The water was going down but it would be a long time before it had all run off and the animals calmed down and their cages cleaned up.

Mr. Shnoo hailed an attendant who was drifting on a raft made of a broken door.

“Go call the city water works!” he shouted.

The attendant did as he was told. The water men turned off the water at the main pipe and rushed to the zoo. Fortunately they brought boats with them. Otherwise they would have had to swim once they got inside the zoo gates.

When Molly had unplugged the pipe the men looked at the hole and exclaimed in surprise.

This pipe didn't break by itself. Someone has busted it open with an axe!” The men pointed out the marks on the pipe that proved this was so.

“Yes,” said Santa. “Someone did it and I know who.”

“WHO?” said Mr. Shnoo.

“The same one who gave a firecracker to Honeybun and broke a window in the bird house and staked Henrietta to the wrong wall and set fire to the monkey house.”

“But who?” demanded Mr. Shnoo.

“Crookshank,” said Santa.

“Impossible!”

“Crookshank.” repeated Santa.

“He has schemed and worked to prevent your getting an award from the Queen. Since you fixed up so fine a zoo he wants it back and he's determined you shall not be able to pay him off today. And he's not done yet. Since the flood has been stopped he will think of something else. Wait and see.”

“Oh, dear,” moaned Mr. Shnoo in despair. “What shall I do?”

“Face him with the charge at once,” advised Santa. “I think you have not a moment to lose.”

“But I must clean up the zoo! Everything is turned about and heaven knows what the Queen will think!”

“Do that later,” said Santa. “Crookshank comes first!”

“I suppose you're right,” said Mr. Shnoo.

He borrowed a plank from ones of the water men and he sat on one end and Santa sat on the other end and off they paddled to hunt for Crookshank.

They had gone only a few yards when they heard from far off a hullabaloo of automobile horns honking and bells ringing. The din came closer and closer until it stopped at the gate of the zoo and there came a great fanfare of trumpets and the rolling tattoo of drums.

“Good heavens!” cried Mr. Shnoo. “It's the Queen!”

He paddled furiously until the water was too shallow to hold the plank. Then he and Santa jumped off and rushed to the gates of the zoo. There sat the Queen, all regal and stiff, in a fine open carriage surrounded by guards dressed in purple and ermine.

“Your Highness,” said Mr. Shnoo, bending low. “Welcome to Shnoo's Zoo.”

The Queen gazed at him in astonishment. His clothes were sopping and his face was covered with dirt. Behind him stood Santa and the

two of them together looked like mud pies set out to dry.

The Queen stepped down from the carriage, wincing a little as her heel sank into mud.

“Mr. Shnoo?” she said uncertainly

Mr. Shnoo bowed again. “The same,” he muttered unhappily.

“As you know,” said the Queen, “I wish to sponsor a happy and well cared for zoo. I also wish to award the owner 1,000 pieces of gold. I have visited all the zoos in the land. I have saved your zoo for last because I have heard such wonderful reports about how beautifully you keep it and how tenderly you treat the animals.

“I must say,” she added looking about her. “It seems rather muddy and unkempt out here but I know inside the gates it will be different.”

“Eh - yes, Your Majesty - eh - very different!” stammered Mr. Shnoo miserably and bowing low he led her into the zoo.



“I wish to sponsor a well-cared-for zoo,” said the Queen.



## Chapter 17

### MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

Fortunately someone had left a row boat tied up inside the zoo gates and Mr. Shnoo seated the Queen in the bow of the boat while he and Santa took the oars.

“How extraordinary!” said the Queen. “I’ve never inspected a zoo by boat before. I must say it is quite restful!”

Some swans paddled alongside and nodded gracefully to the Queen as if they knew she was royalty. A raft of bunny rabbits floated by followed by a crocodile who nudged the Queen’s boat curiously before drifting off.

“How perfectly wonderful!” exclaimed the Queen. “You do not keep the tame animals caged in. They are at home all over the Zoo!”

At this moment the boat came to a sudden halt and although Santa and Mr. Shnoo rowed furiously, nothing happened. Then the boat began to rise from the water and they saw to the horror that Molly, the hippopotamus, whom they had forgotten to return to her cage, had swum under the boat and was now trying to stand up.

For a moment the boat teetered on Molly’s back before splashing down into the water, fortunately right side up. The Queen was shaken but quite game, and thought it all a splendid lark. She took some peanuts from her purse and threw them to Molly.

Mr. Shnoo and Santa rowed on. They showed the Queen the bear with the dinosaur teeth, the monkeys who lived in the reindeer’s antlers, and Henrietta, the skating elephant.

The tour was almost ended when a dreadful ruckus broke out in the lion house. The large cats roared and at the same time a man screamed a most awful scream.

Santa and Mr. Shnoo bent their backs to the oars and in two seconds the boat landed on the steps of the lion house. It could go no farther because the water had receded from the house and the floor was dry. Mr. Shnoo and Santa and the Queen rushed into the house and there they saw a fearful sight!

Crookshank stood in the cage holding his hands before his face find screaming while the lions leaped at him. The angry lions had already ripped Crookshank’s trousers and torn away his coat. Mr. Shnoo leaped past an attendant and rushed into the cage. Crookshank screamed, “Save me! Save me!”

“Down Lucy,” said Mr. Shnoo quietly. “Flossy! Cedric! Go away! Edgar, quiet!”

Calmly he laid his hand on each lion’s head and obediently they crept away. Mr. Shnoo picked Crookshank up in his arms and carried him out of the cage.

“It was his fault!” cried the attendant. “He unfastened the cage and tried to turn the lions loose. Said he wanted them to frighten away the Queen. He stuck pins in them to make them wild!”

“Is this true?” asked the Queen sternly.

“It’s my zoo,” said Crookshank lamely.

Then Mr. Shnoo told the Queen how he had bought the zoo from Crookshank and fixed it up and made it what it was today but It wasn’t really his until he made the final payment of 1,000 gold pieces.

The Queen said, “It’s yours now for I have never seen such a wisely run zoo or a man so good with animals.” She opened her purse and drew out a check for 1,000 pieces of gold and tossed it to Crookshank who took it and slunk away.

“I should like,” said the Queen, “for this zoo to be known as my favorite zoo and I should like to present it with 1,000 gold pieces each Christmas as long as I reign.”

Mr. Shnoo turned quite pink with happiness. “It shall be called the Queen’s Zoo,” he said, “and it will grow better each year.”

He looked around for Santa but the fat little fellow had gone. Suddenly they heard the jingling of bells overhead. The rushed out doors and saw eight reindeer circling overhead. Santa was perched on the very last one.

“Good gracious!” cried the Queen. “I had forgotten Christmas is almost here!”

“For me,” said Mr. Shnoo. “Christmas has already come!”

He waved happily to Santa and the Queen waved and Santa waved back. And they all shouted together, “Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas to all!”



*Story and images are the property of the family of Lucrece Beale and reprinted with their permission.*