

THE COSMIC ADVENTURES OF

BINKY & ZOINK



**BINKY & ZOINK
AT THE ZOO**

AS TOLD TO ALAN NOLAN



BINKY & ZOINK AT THE ZOO

Time Unit: KZP87C, afternoon

Translation computer: functioning

Language: English

Transmission begins.

How's she cuttin'?

My name is Binky and my twin brother is Zoink. I've been re-programming an Alpha-Ba-Na-Na/Earth translation unit to pick up some of your Earth-Ireland sayings so I can sound more like an Earth person.

Story, bud? The craic is only mighty! There, I've nearly got it working properly!



Zoink and I arrived on your planet a few time units ago in our starship the Millennium Dodo. Zoink named the ship after his favourite Alpha-Ba-Na-Na animal, the dodo. It's a bit of a bucket of bolts, but it got us from our homeworld all the way to Earth, so, unlike its namesake, the Millennium Dodo can actually fly. Especially when I'm at the controls – when it comes to flying starships, I'm the *knees of the bee*.

Zoink was excited to see what the dodos on earth were like, so we decided to visit the zone of Ireland that you Earth beings call 'the zoo'. We decided we'd like to take our time and see the countryside as we travelled, so we left the Millennium Dodo in the market square where we landed it and, having consulted a guidebook to Ireland that we had borrowed from the Library, slithered to a 'bus stop' at the edge of the square. There were a few Earth beings waiting in



line and we joined the queue to wait for the large public transport motorised vehicle known on Earth as the 'bus'.

After a couple of time-units the 'bus' appeared, coming suddenly around a corner and giving me a terrible fright. "Holy Ba-Na-Na-Moley!" I shouted, but Zoink stuck out his arm-tentacle to stop the bus, just like it instructed in the book. We got on, and after we gave the driver some small, circular metal tokens of currency, we were on our way.



The journey to the zoo on the bus took a lot longer than the journey to Earth in the Millennium Dodo, mainly due to obstructions in the road that Zoink

found out were called 'road works' in the guidebook. All I could see were some Earth beings standing around on a hole, wearing yellow plastic hats and busily digging away with spades. It made me a bit homesick to see the people standing around in holes because back on Alpha-Ba-Na-Na we don't live in buildings that go up into the sky, we live in burrows that go deep down under the purple soil. Seeing the men busily digging also made Zoink a bit homesick as he is forever losing his key at home, and having to dig a tunnel to get to his bedroom. He is well known as the most forgetful Alpha-Ba-Na-Nan is the whole of the Ava-Ka-Do system!

The bus finally arrived at the zoo and Zoink and I slithered down the steps. As soon as we passed through the turnstile – not an easy thing to do when you have seven tentacles instead of two legs – we could hear in our ear antennae the calls and whoops of the wild animals within.



And what strange animals there were! There was a huge grey animal with big ears and a long grey nose, there was a big, orange, furry, stripey animal with pointy ears and pointier teeth, and there was a small black and white bird with a yellow beak. But the strangest thing of all was how quiet they were and how they

didn't seem to be moving. I mentioned it to an Earth man who was standing in the corner wearing a hat. "Of course they're quiet, you nitwit," he said, "They're stuffed toys – this is the gift shop!" Zoink and I left the shop, feeling like a pair of right 'eee-jits', as you say here on Earth.

The real animals were much bigger than the stuffed ones in the shop! The grey animal with the nose and the ears was HUGE! We loved slithering around the zoo looking at all the Earth animals. Then Zoink suddenly had a *wave of the brain*. Not everybody who lives on Earth lives close to a zoo, so that means many of you have no chance of seeing animals close up. Zoink thought that if we got some of our favourite animals together in the Millennium Dodo, we could bring them all around Ireland and allow all the Earth people to see them!



So that's what we did! The next day we opened the Millennium Dodo Touring Zoo right in the middle of the market square and the Earth beings, big and small, started to form a queue. They couldn't



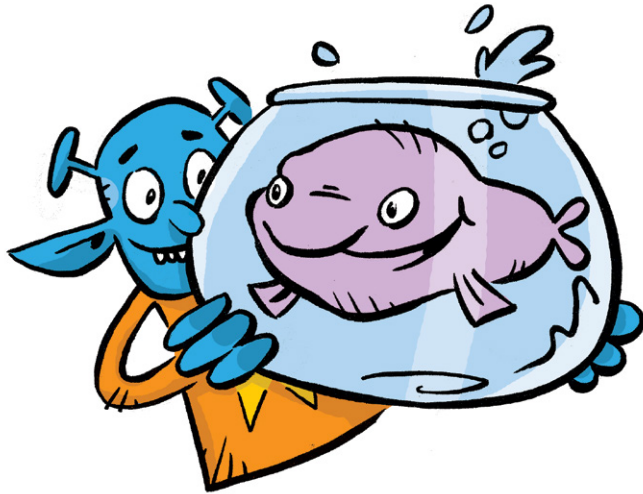
believe the range of animals we had on display – the fished-faced axolotl, the star-nosed mole, the goggly-eyed aye-aye and the slimy blob fish were all marvelled over by the Earthlings.

One small pink-ish Earthling, with orange hair and a green ribbon asked if all these animals came from our home planet.

“No, strange little curly-topped female,” said Zoink, “These animals aren't from Alpha-Ba-Na-Na, these



strange creatures all come from Earth!” And he was right! We found the axolotl in Mexico, we found the star-nosed mole in Canada, and the aye-aye comes from Madagascar. “The blob fish is a personal friend of mine,” said Zoink, “His name is Bruce and he’s from Australia. Say *G’day*, *Bruce!*” Bruce did, but the little girl didn’t understand the blob fish’s language. Maybe her Blob Fish/Earthling translation unit was broken.



“We found out all about these creatures in those papery things you call books that we borrowed from the library,” I told the Earthlings. I tapped my cranium, making my purple antennae wobble, “*Up there for the thinking, down there for the dancing*, as you say here on Earth.” Although how anybody can dance properly when they only have two feet, and not seven leg tentacles like we all do on Alpha-Ba-Na-Na, I’ll never know!

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