

DELIGHT-FILLED ORIGIN TALES THAT ANSWER  
"WHY" IN THE MOST UNEXPECTED WAYS.

# JUST SO STORIES



RUDYARD KIPLING

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

In preparing this edition, I've kept Kipling's words, rhythms, and playful spellings just as he wrote them, with two small exceptions.

One story included a word that was once common but is now a racial slur. I've adjusted the wording so the sense of the story remains, but without a term that would distract or hurt modern readers. My aim is to keep the fun of Kipling's voice while making sure families can enjoy these tales today.

I've also added back *The Tabu Tale*. This story was printed in the very first American edition of *Just So Stories* in 1902, but left out of the British edition that same year. Because of that, many readers have never seen it—but it belongs with the others and rounds out the collection.

## HOW THE WHALE GOT HIS THROAT



IN the sea, once upon a time, O my Best Beloved, there was a Whale, and he ate fishes. He ate the starfish and the garfish, and the crab and the dab, and the plaice and the dace, and the skate and his mate, and the mackereel and the pickereel, and the really truly twirly-whirly eel. All the fishes he could find in all the sea he ate with his mouth—so! Till at last there was only one small fish left in all the sea, and he was a small 'Stute Fish, and he swam a little behind the Whale's right ear, so as to be out of harm's way. Then the Whale stood up on his tail and said, "I'm hungry." And the small 'Stute Fish said in a small 'stute voice, "Noble and generous Cetacean, have you ever tasted Man?"

"No," said the Whale. "What is it like?"

"Nice," said the small 'Stute Fish. "Nice but nubbly."

"Then fetch me some," said the Whale, and he made the sea froth up with his tail.

"One at a time is enough," said the 'Stute Fish. "If you swim to latitude Fifty North, longitude Forty West (that is magic), you will find, sitting *on* a raft, *in* the middle of the sea, with nothing on but a pair of blue canvas breeches, a pair of suspenders (you must *not* forget the suspenders, Best Beloved), and a jackknife, one shipwrecked Mariner, who, it is only fair to tell you, is a man of infinite-resource-and-sagacity."

So the Whale swam and swam to latitude Fifty North,

This is the picture of the Whale swallowing the Mariner with his infinite-resource-and-sagacity, and the raft and the jack-knife and his suspenders, which you must not forget. The buttony-things are the Mariner's suspenders, and you can see the knife close by them. He is sitting on the raft, but it has tilted up sideways, so you don't see much of it. The whitey thing by the Mariner's left hand is a piece of wood that he was trying to row the raft with when the Whale came along. The piece of wood is called the jaws-of-a-gaff. The Mariner left it outside when he went in. The Whale's name was Smiler, and the Mariner was called Mr. Henry Albert Bivvens, A.B. The little 'Stute Fish is hiding under the Whale's tummy, or else I would have drawn him. The reason that the sea looks so ooshy-skooshy is because the Whale is sucking it all into his mouth so as to suck in Mr. Henry Albert Bivvens and the raft and the jack-knife and the suspenders. You must never forget the suspenders.



longitude Forty West, as fast as he could swim, and *on* a raft, *in* the middle of the sea, *with* nothing to wear except a pair of blue canvas breeches, a pair of suspenders (you must particularly remember the suspenders, Best Beloved), *and* a jackknife, he found one single, solitary shipwrecked Mariner, trailing his toes in the water. (He had his mummy's leave to paddle, or else he would never have done it, because he was a man of infinite-resource-and-sagacity.)

Then the Whale opened his mouth back and back and back till it nearly touched his tail, and he swallowed the shipwrecked Mariner, and the raft he was sitting on, and his blue canvas breeches, and the suspenders (which you *must* not forget), *and* the jackknife—He swallowed them all down into his warm, dark, inside cupboards, and then he smacked his lips—so, and turned round three times on his tail.

But as soon as the Mariner, who was a man of infinite-resource-and-sagacity, found himself truly inside the Whale's warm, dark, inside cupboards, he stumped and he jumped and he thumped and he bumped, and he pranced and he danced, and he banged and he clanged, and he hit and he bit, and he leaped and he crept, and he prowled and he howled, and he hopped and he dropped, and he cried and he sighed, and he crawled and he bawled, and he stepped and he lepped, and he danced hornpipes where he shouldn't, and the Whale felt most unhappy indeed. (*Have* you forgotten the suspenders?)

So he said to the 'Stute Fish, "This man is very nubbly, and besides he is making me hiccup. What shall I do?"

"Tell him to come out," said the 'Stute Fish.

So the Whale called down his own throat to the shipwrecked Mariner, "Come out and behave yourself. I've got the hiccups."

“Nay, nay!” said the Mariner. “Not so, but far otherwise. Take me to my natal-shore and the white-cliffs-of-Albion, and I’ll think about it.” And he began to dance more than ever.

“You had better take him home,” said the ’Stute Fish to the Whale. “I ought to have warned you that he is a man of infinite-resource-and-sagacity.”

So the Whale swam and swam and swam, with both flippers and his tail, as hard as he could for the hiccups; and at last he saw the Mariner’s natal-shore and the white-cliffs-of-Albion, and he rushed halfway up the beach, and opened his mouth wide and wide and wide, and said, “Change here for Winchester, Ashuelot, Nashua, Keene, and stations on the *Fitchburg Road*;” and just as he said “Fitch” the Mariner walked out of his mouth. But while the Whale had been swimming, the Mariner, who was indeed a person of infinite-resource-and-sagacity, had taken his jackknife and cut up the raft into a little square grating all running crisscross, and he had tied it firm with his suspenders (*now* you know why you were not to forget the suspenders!), and he dragged that grating good and tight into the Whale’s throat, and there it stuck! Then he recited the following *Sloka*, which, as you have not heard it, I will now proceed to relate—

By means of a grating  
I have stopped your ating.

For the Mariner he was also an Hi-ber-ni-an. And he stepped out on the shingle, and went home to his mother, who had given him leave to trail his toes in the water; and he married and lived happily ever afterward. So did the Whale. But from that day on, the grating in his throat, which he could

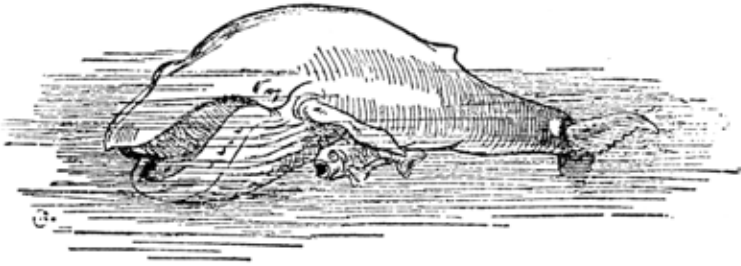
Here is the Whale looking for the little 'Stute Fish, who is hiding under the Door-sills of the Equator. The little 'Stute Fish's name was Pingle. He is hiding among the roots of the big seaweed that grows in front of the Doors of the Equator. I have drawn the Doors of the Equator. They are shut. They are always kept shut, because a door ought always to be kept shut. The ropy-thing right across is the Equator itself; and the things that look like rocks are the two giants Moar and Koar, that keep the Equator in order. They drew the shadow-pictures on the doors of the Equator, and they carved all those twisty fishes under the Doors. The beaky-fish are called beaked Dolphins, and the other fish with the queer heads are called Hammer-headed Sharks. The Whale never found the little 'Stute Fish till he got over his temper, and then they became good friends again.



neither cough up nor swallow down, prevented him eating anything except very, very small fish; and that is the reason why whales nowadays never eat men or boys or little girls.

The small 'Stute Fish went and hid himself in the mud under the Doorsills of the Equator. He was afraid that the Whale might be angry with him.

The Sailor took the jackknife home. He was wearing the blue canvas breeches when he walked out on the shingle. The suspenders were left behind, you see, to tie the grating with; and that is the end of *that* tale.



WHEN the cabin portholes are dark and green  
    Because of the seas outside;  
When the ship goes *wop* (with a wiggle between)  
And the steward falls into the soup-tureen,  
    And the trunks begin to slide;  
When Nursey lies on the floor in a heap,  
And Mummy tells you to let her sleep,  
And you aren't waked or washed or dressed,  
Why, then you will know (if you haven't guessed)  
You're "Fifty North and Forty West!"



## HOW THE CAMEL GOT HIS HUMP



OW this is the next tale, and it tells how the Camel got his big hump.

In the beginning of years, when the world was so new and all, and the Animals were just beginning to work for Man, there was a Camel, and he lived in the middle of a Howling Desert because he did not want to work; and besides, he was a Howler himself. So he ate sticks and thorns and tamarisks and milkweed and prickles, most 'scruciating idle; and when anybody spoke to him he said "Humph!" Just "Humph!" and no more.

Presently the Horse came to him on Monday morning, with a saddle on his back and a bit in his mouth, and said, "Camel, O Camel, come out and trot like the rest of us."

"Humph!" said the Camel; and the Horse went away and told the Man.

Presently the Dog came to him, with a stick in his mouth, and said, "Camel, O Camel, come and fetch and carry like the rest of us."

"Humph!" said the Camel; and the Dog went away and told the Man.

Presently the Ox came to him, with the yoke on his neck and said, "Camel, O Camel, come and plough like the rest of us."

This is the picture of the Djinn making the beginnings of the Magic that brought the Humph to the Camel. First he drew a line in the air with his finger, and it became solid; and then he made a cloud, and then he made an egg—you can see them both at the bottom of the picture—and then there was a magic pumpkin that turned into a big white flame. Then the Djinn took his magic fan and fanned that flame till the flame turned into a magic by itself. It was a good Magic and a very kind Magic really, though it had to give the Camel a Humph because the Camel was lazy. The Djinn in charge of All Deserts was one of the nicest of the Djinns, so he would never do anything really unkind.



“Humph!” said the Camel; and the Ox went away and told the Man.

At the end of the day the Man called the Horse and the Dog and the Ox together, and said, “Three, O Three, I’m very sorry for you (with the world so new-and-all); but that Humph-thing in the Desert can’t work, or he would have been here by now, so I am going to leave him alone, and you must work double-time to make up for it.”

That made the Three very angry (with the world so new-and-all), and they held a palaver, and an *indaba*, and a *punchayet*, and a powwow on the edge of the Desert; and the Camel came chewing milkweed *most* ’scruciating idle, and laughed at them. Then he said “Humph!” and went away again.

Presently there came along the Djinn in charge of All Deserts, rolling in a cloud of dust (Djinns always travel that way because it is Magic), and he stopped to palaver and powpow with the Three.

“Djinn of All Deserts,” said the Horse, “*is* it right for anyone to be idle, with the world so new-and-all?”

“Certainly not,” said the Djinn.

“Well,” said the Horse, “there’s a thing in the middle of your Howling Desert (and he’s a Howler himself) with a long neck and long legs, and he hasn’t done a stroke of work since Monday morning. He won’t trot.”

“Whew!” said the Djinn, whistling, “that’s my Camel, for all the gold in Arabia! What does he say about it?”

“He says ‘Humph!’ ” said the Dog; “and he won’t fetch and carry.”

“Does he say anything else?”

“Only ‘Humph!’; and he won’t plough,” said the Ox.

“Very good,” said the Djinn. “I’ll humph him if you will kindly wait a minute.”

The Djinn rolled himself up in his dust-cloak, and took a bearing across the desert, and found the Camel most 'scruciatingly idle, looking at his own reflection in a pool of water.

"My long and bubbling friend," said the Djinn, "what's this I hear of your doing no work, with the world so new-and-all?"

"Humph!" said the Camel.

The Djinn sat down, with his chin in his hand, and began to think a Great Magic, while the Camel looked at his own reflection in the pool of water.

"You've given the Three extra work ever since Monday morning, all on account of your 'scruciating idleness," said the Djinn; and he went on thinking Magics, with his chin in his hand.

"Humph!" said the Camel.

"I shouldn't say that again if I were you," said the Djinn; "you might say it once too often. Bubbles, I want you to work."

And the Camel said "Humph!" again; but no sooner had he said it than he saw his back, that he was so proud of, puffing up and puffing up into a great big lolloping humph.

"Do you see that?" said the Djinn. "That's your very own humph that you've brought upon your very own self by not working. Today is Thursday, and you've done no work since Monday, when the work began. Now you are going to work."

"How can I," said the Camel, "with this humph on my back?"

"That's made a-purpose," said the Djinn, "all because you missed those three days. You will be able to work now for three days without eating, because you can live on your humph; and don't you ever say I never did anything for you.

Here is the picture of the Djinn in charge of All Deserts guiding the Magic with his magic fan. The camel is eating a twig of acacia, and he has just finished saying “humph” once too often (the Djinn told him he would), and so the Humph is coming. The long towelly-thing growing out of the thing like an onion is the Magic, and you can see the Humph on its shoulder. The Humph fits on the flat part of the Camel’s back. The Camel is too busy looking at his own beautiful self in the pool of water to know what is going to happen to him.

Underneath the truly picture is a picture of the World-so-new-and-all. There are two smoky volcanoes in it, some other mountains and some stones and a lake and a black island and a twisty river and a lot of other things, as well as a Noah’s Ark. I couldn’t draw all the deserts that the Djinn was in charge of, so I only drew one, but it is a most deserty desert.



Come out of the Desert and go to the Three, and behave. Humph yourself!”

And the Camel humphed himself, humph and all, and went away to join the Three. And from that day to this the Camel always wears a humph (we call it “hump” now, not to hurt his feelings); but he has never yet caught up with the three days that he missed at the beginning of the world, and he has never yet learned how to behave.

The Camel's hump is an ugly lump  
Which well you may see at the Zoo;  
But uglier yet is the hump we get  
From having too little to do.  
Kiddies and grownups too-oo-oo,  
If we haven't enough to do-oo-oo,  
We get the hump—  
Cameelious hump—  
The hump that is black and blue!  
We climb out of bed with a frouzly head  
And a snarly-yarly voice.  
We shiver and scowl and we grunt and we growl  
At our bath and our boots and our toys;  
And there ought to be a corner for me  
(And I know there is one for you)  
When we get the hump—  
Cameelious hump—  
The hump that is black and blue!  
The cure for this ill is not to sit still,  
Or frowst with a book by the fire;  
But to take a large hoe and a shovel also,  
And dig till you gently perspire;  
And then you will find that the sun and the wind,  
And the Djinn of the Garden too,  
Have lifted the hump—  
The horrible hump—  
The hump that is black and blue!  
I get it as well as you-oo-oo—  
If I haven't enough to do-oo-oo—  
We all get hump—  
Cameelious hump—  
Kiddies and grownups too!