Just So Stories
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Rudyard Kipling

with illustrations by the Author
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Just So Stories
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 mackerel 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 ship-wrecked 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, 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 ship-wrecked 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 creeped, 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.
This is the picture of the Whale swallowing the Mariner with his infinite resource and sagacity, and the raft and the jackknife 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, AB. 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 jackknife and the suspenders. You must never forget the suspenders.
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 Fitch-burg 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 criss-cross, 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,
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 Hammerheaded Sharks. The Whale never found the little 'Stute Fish till he got over his temper, and then they became good friends again.
who had given him leave to trail his toes in the water; and he married and lived happily ever afterwards. So did the Whale. But from that day on, the grating in his throat, which he could 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 Door sills 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.”

“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 powwow 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.”
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 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.
“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?”
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.
“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. 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 learnt 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 grown-ups 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 frowzly 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 the hump –
    Cameelious hump –
Kiddies and grown-ups too!
How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin

Once upon a time, on an uninhabited island on the shores of the Red Sea, there lived a Parsee from whose hat the rays of the sun were reflected in more than oriental splendour. And the Parsee lived by the Red Sea with nothing but his hat and his knife and a cooking stove of the kind that you must particularly never touch. And one day he took flour and water and currants and plums and sugar and things, and made himself one cake which was two feet across and three feet thick. It was indeed a Superior Comestible (that’s Magic), and he put it on the stove because he was allowed to cook on that stove, and he baked it and he baked it till it was all done brown and smelt most sentimental. But just as he was going to eat it, there came down to the beach from the Altogether Uninhabited Interior one Rhinoceros with a horn on his nose, two piggy eyes and few manners. In those days the Rhinoceros’s skin fitted him quite tight. There were no wrinkles in it anywhere. He looked exactly like a Noah’s Ark Rhinoceros, but of course much bigger. All the same, he had no manners then, and he has no manners now,
and he never will have any manners. He said “How!”, and the Parsee left that cake and climbed to the top of a palm tree with nothing on but his hat, from which the rays of the sun were always reflected in more than oriental splendour. And the Rhinoceros upset the oil stove with his nose, and the cake rolled on the sand, and he spiked that cake on the horn of his nose, and he ate it, and he went away, waving his tail, to the desolate and Exclusive Uninhabited Interior which abuts on the islands of Mazandaran, Socotra and the Promontories of the Larger Equinox. Then the Parsee came down from his palm tree and put the stove on its legs and recited the following Sloka — which, as you have not heard, I will now proceed to relate:

Them that takes cakes
Which the Parsee man bakes
Makes dreadful mistakes.

And there was a great deal more in that than you would think.

Because, five weeks later, there was a heatwave in the Red Sea, and everybody took off all the clothes they had. The Parsee took off his hat, but the Rhinoceros took off his skin and carried it over his shoulder as he came down to the beach to bathe. In those days it buttoned underneath with three buttons and looked like a waterproof. He said nothing whatever about the Parsee’s cake, because he had eaten it all — and he never had any manners, then, since or henceforward. He waddled straight into the water and blew bubbles through his nose, leaving his skin on the beach.

Presently the Parsee came by and found the skin, and he smiled one smile that ran all round his face two times.
This is the picture of the Parsee beginning to eat his cake on the Uninhabited Island in the Red Sea on a very hot day, and of the Rhinoceros coming down from the Altogether Uninhabited Interior, which, as you can truthfully see, is all rocky. The Rhinoceros’s skin is quite smooth, and the three buttons that button it up are underneath, so you can’t see them. The squiggly things on the Parsee’s hat are the rays of the sun reflected in more than oriental splendour, because if I had drawn real rays they would have filled up all the picture. The cake has currants in it, and the wheel thing lying on the sand in front belonged to one of Pharaoh’s chariots when he tried to cross the Red Sea. The Parsee found it, and kept it to play with. The Parsee’s name was Pestonjee Bomonjee, and the Rhinoceros was called Strorks, because he breathed through his mouth instead of his nose. I wouldn’t ask anything about the cooking stove if I were you.
Then he danced three times round the skin and rubbed his hands. Then he went to his camp and filled his hat with cake crumbs, for the Parsee never ate anything but cake, and never swept out his camp. He took that skin, and he shook that skin, and he scrubbed that skin, and he rubbed that skin just as full of old, dry, stale, tickly cake crumbs and some burnt currants as ever it could possibly hold. Then he climbed to the top of his palm tree and waited for the Rhinoceros to come out of the water and put it on.

And the Rhinoceros did. He buttoned it up with the three buttons, and it tickled like cake crumbs in bed. Then he wanted to scratch, but that made it worse; and then he lay down on the sands and rolled and rolled and rolled, and every time he rolled, the cake crumbs tickled him worse and worse and worse. Then he ran to the palm tree and rubbed and rubbed and rubbed himself against it. He rubbed so much and so hard that he rubbed his skin into a great fold over his shoulders, and another fold underneath, where the buttons used to be (but he rubbed the buttons off), and he rubbed some more folds over his legs. And it spoilt his temper, but it didn’t make the least difference to the cake crumbs. They were inside his skin, and they tickled. So he went home, very angry indeed and horribly scratchy – and from that day to this, every rhinoceros has great folds in his skin and a very bad temper, all on account of the cake crumbs inside.

But the Parsee came down from his palm tree, wearing his hat, from which the rays of the sun were reflected in more than oriental splendour, packed up his cooking stove and went away in the direction of Orotava, Amygdala, the Upland Meadows of Antananarivo and the Marshes of Sonaput.
This is the Parsee Pestojee Bomjonjee sitting in his palm tree and watching the Rhinoceros Strooks bathing near the beach of the Altogether Uninhabited Island after Strooks had taken off his skin. The Parsee has rubbed the cake crumbs into the skin, and he is smiling to think how they will tickle Strooks when Strooks puts it on again. The skin is just under the rocks below the palm tree in a cool place: that is why you can’t see it. The Parsee is wearing a new more-than-oriental-splendour hat of the sort that Parsees wear, and he has a knife in his hand to cut his name on palm trees. The black things on the islands out at sea are bits of ships that got wrecked going down the Red Sea, but all the passengers were saved and went home.

The black thing in the water close to the shore is not a wreck at all. It is Strooks the Rhinoceros bathing without his skin. He was just as black underneath his skin as he was outside. I wouldn’t ask anything about the cooking stove if I were you.
This Uninhabited Island
   Is off Cape Guardafui,
By the Beaches of Socotra
   And the Pink Arabian Sea:
But it’s hot – too hot from Suez
   For the likes of you and me
   Ever to go
   In a P&O
   And call on the Cake-Parsee!