Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Helping you choose books for children

0-5 5-7 7-9 9-12 12+

Just So Stories

Rudyard Kipling

Published by **Puffin**

Sample extract from *Just So Stories* includes:

Introduction by Jonathan Stroud

Who's who in *Just So Stories*

Extract from *Just So Stories*

Biography of Rudyard Kipling

Introduction © Jonathan Stroud

End Notes © Penguin Books 2008

Please print off and read at your leisure.

INTRODUCTION BY
JONATHAN STROUD

Here's how I came to love the *Just So Stories*. Most nights when I was small, my mother read to me at bedtime. My father did so rarely, and when he did it was a notable event. I would be as quiet as I could (I was a wriggly child), while he brought out a book that had been his favourite as a boy. This was the *Just So Stories*, and it soon became a shared delight between us. I lay silent in the half-dark, listening to my dad's voice as he carried me to far-off places and far-off times, back near the beginning of the world.

The tales explain how things began. They are comical accounts, and my father told them all with gusto. So I would close my eyes and grin as he related how the Leopard got his spots and the Camel got his hump; I would chuckle (a little uncomfortably) at the scritchy, itchy tale of how the Rhinoceros got his skin. And best of all – by far the best – I would squirm with delight at the wicked escapades of the Elephant's Child, one of the funniest stories ever written.

Each tale is full of marvels, but the real magic in them

is their language, which explodes like fireworks in your ears. It thrums with a uniquely twirly dancing rhythm that sweeps you up like a magic carpet; it is crammed with sensuous lists of remote, exotic places that conjure the wonders of the wide, wide world. And it is packed with beautiful phrases. Where else can you visit 'the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever-trees', or meet the Cat that Walked by Himself, 'waving his wild tail and walking by his wild lone'? It is like listening to the chanting of a spell.

The power of this spell is strongest when spoken aloud. The *Just So Stories* are intimate and playful, made for sharing. They began as stories told to Kipling's daughter, Josephine, and the fun he had is evident in the way he messes about with words, altering them, compressing them, making up new ones. He fills the pictures (which he drew) with hidden codes and pictograms (the image of Noah's ark occurs often, placed within an 'A': this is 'ark-A', or 'RK' – Kipling's initials) and adds long captions stuffed with extra jokes.

There is a hidden sadness in the book as well. Josephine died when she was only six, and Kipling recalls her in the Taffy stories and poems, about a cave-girl and her father who work together to invent writing. Of course, Kipling cannot truly recover his daughter – there is a limit to the potency of words – but he *can* fix their love so that it is remembered always. Shared things have that power.

WHO'S WHO IN THE *JUST SO STORIES*

Whale – a very hungry sea creature.

'Stute Fish – a small, clever fish and the only fish left in the sea after the Whale has gobbled all the rest.

Mariner – a fisherman with infinite-resource-and-sagacity who has a raft, a jack-knife and suspenders (you must never forget the suspenders).

Camel – a grumpy, most 'scruciatingly idle creature.

Djinn – an intelligent spirit, who is in charge of all the deserts.

Parsee – Pestonjee Bomonjee, the clever cook with the crumbly cake.

Rhinoceros – a creature from the Altogether Uninhabited Interior, with a horn on his nose, two piggy eyes and few manners.

Leopard – a greyish-yellowish catty-shaped kind of beast.

Ethiopian – a man with bows and arrows, who lived on the High Veldt with the Leopard; they used to hunt together.

Baviaan – the dog-headed, barking Baboon, who is Quite the Wisest Animal in All South Africa.

Elephant's Child – a young animal with a blackish, bulgy nose, as big as a boot, that he could wriggle about from side to side; he is often spanked for asking too many questions.

Crocodile – a long animal with big teeth who looks just like a log of wood when partly submerged in the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River.

Bi-Coloured-Python-Rock-Snake – a scornful creature with a scalesome, flailsome tail that is perfect for spanking a young elephant.

Kangaroo – a grey, woolly animal with four short legs; he was once called Boomer, but lost his name because he was so proud.

Little God Nqa, Middle God Nquing and Big God Nquong – the three gods who speak to the Kangaroo.

Stickly-Prickly Hedgehog – a clever creature.

Slow-Solid Tortoise – another clever creature.

Painted Jaguar – a creature who lived on the banks of the turbid Amazon and ate everything that he could catch.

Tegumai – short for Tegumai Bopsulai, which means 'Man-who-does-not-put-his-foot-forward-in-a-hurry'.

Teshumai – Teshumai Tewindrow, which means 'Lady-who-asks-a-very-many-questions'.

Taffy – short for Taffimai Metallumai, which means 'Small-person-without-any-manners-who-ought-to-be-spanked'; Tegumai and Teshumai are her father and mother.

Stranger-man – a member of a far-away tribe: the Tewaras.

Eldest Magician – the being at the Time of the Very Beginning whose job it was to get Things ready.

Crab – named Pau Amma, this was the very first crab in the world.

Cat – the wildest of all the wild animals.

Most Wise Sovereign Suleiman-bin-Daoud – Solomon, the Son of David; a very wise king with a thousand wives.

Most Beautiful Queen Balkis – Suleiman-bin-Daoud's head Queen; a very wise queen and an even wiser wife.

Butterfly – a quarrelsome butterfly.

Butterfly's Wife – the quarrelsome butterfly's quarrelsome wife.

Contents

How the Whale got his Throat	1
How the Camel got his Hump	13
How the Rhinoceros got his Skin	25
How the Leopard got his Spots	37
The Elephant's Child	53
The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo	71
The Beginning of the Armadillos	83
How the First Letter was Written	99
How the Alphabet was Made	119
The Crab that Played with the Sea	141
The Cat that Walked by Himself	161
The Butterfly that Stamped	183

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.

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 whity 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.



'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 jack-knife, 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, 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 jack-knife, 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 jack-knife. 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.

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 half-way 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 jack-knife 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, 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 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 jack-knife 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.

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.



When the cabin port-holes 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



Now 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.'

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.



'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 pow-wow 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 pow-wow with the Three.

'Djinn of All Deserts,' said the Horse, '*is* it right for any one 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 dustcloak, 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. 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.

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.

AUTHOR FILE

NAME: (Joseph) Rudyard Kipling
BORN: 30 December 1865 in Bombay (now called Mumbai)
DIED: 18 January 1936 in London
NATIONALITY: British
LIVED: in India, England and the USA
MARRIED: to Caroline 'Carrie' Balestier
CHILDREN: Josephine (who died from influenza at an early age), Elsie and John (who was tragically killed in action during World War I)

What was he like?

Rudyard Kipling was a bookworm. He loved to read anything and everything. He was exceedingly adventurous and loved to travel to exotic, far-off places. While working for an Indian newspaper, he spent seven years touring the vast country to find material for his articles. Rudyard was an ardent supporter of the British Empire. It was his poems and short stories of British soldiers in India that made his name as an author. However, it is his children's stories for which he will be remembered.

Where did he grow up?

Rudyard was born in the Indian city of Bombay (now called Mumbai). He lived there happily until the age of six, learning about Indian culture from his Indian nanny, who also taught him Hindi. But in 1872 everything changed. It was thought

that India was no place for a British child to grow up, so Ruddy, as he was known, was taken back to England with his younger sister. They spent five miserable years at a foster home in Southsea, where they were treated cruelly. Rudyard's frequent punishments included being forbidden to read – something that was absolute torture for him. When Mrs Kipling returned from India, she and her two children spent the summer in Devon, before Rudyard was dispatched to boarding school. His schooldays later inspired him to write the popular novel *Stalky & Co.*

What did he do apart from writing books?
After finishing school Rudyard returned to India, where he worked for seven years on the Punjab's daily newspaper, *The Civil and Military Gazette.* As a journalist, it was his job to travel around India looking for new and exciting material for his articles. During his lifetime Rudyard also resided in the USA with his family (his wife was American) and holidayed for long periods in South Africa. However, it was probably his solo trips that he enjoyed most of all – he famously said: 'He travels fastest who travels alone.' When he wasn't writing or travelling, he was playing golf – he even played it in the snow.

***Where did Rudyard get the idea for* Just So Stories?**
The *Just So Stories* were bedtime stories long before they appeared in a book. Fantastical accounts of just how the world and the animals in it got to be how they are today, they were Rudyard's way of entertaining his eldest daughter, Josephine.

Perhaps this is why they sound so good when they are read aloud. The style of writing reflects the traditions of Indian and African storytelling – something that Rudyard picked up while on his travels.

What did people think of* Just So Stories *when it was first published?

Just So Stories for Little Children (the original title) was first published as a collection in 1902, at the height of Rudyard Kipling's popularity. It appealed immediately to both children and adults, and its sheer brilliance was one of the reasons why Rudyard was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature five years later. He was the first British author to win the prize.

What other books did he write?

Rudyard Kipling was a prolific author – at times, he wrote three short stories a week. He was versatile too, writing stories, poems and novels for both children and adults. His most famous and best-loved books are *Kim* (the tale of an orphaned boy in India), *The Jungle Book*, *Puck of Pook's Hill* and, of course, *Just So Stories*. As well as winning the Nobel Prize for Literature, he was asked to become the Poet Laureate, but turned this down. He also turned down a knighthood.

GLOSSARY

adscript – one who is forced to work on a certain farm

agate – an ornamental, striped stone

Angles – a Germanic people who settled in parts of Britain

archipelago – a large group of islands

Bonte-Buck – (also bontebok) an antelope with a reddish-brown coat and white face, found in Africa

Bush-Buck – (also bushbuck) a small antelope with a reddish-brown coat and white markings, found in Africa

Cetacean – a marine animal belonging to the group of sea creatures that includes whales, dolphins and porpoises

comestible – an item of food

crocodile-tears – someone who cries crocodile-tears is just pretending to be upset

djinn – (also jinn) an intelligent spirit from Arabian and Muslim mythology

Dravidian – a group of languages spoken in southern India and Sri Lanka

eland – the world's largest antelope, found in Africa

equinox – the time of year when day and night are the same length (this happens twice a year, in September and March)

fauna – the animals from a particular place or time

feudal – relating to a medieval system of land ownership and the people who lived and worked there

flora – the plants from a particular place or time

heriot – a tribute paid to a lord upon the death of a tenant

Hi-ber-ni-an – this is really Hibernian, a person from Ireland

hierarchical – about a system of ranking people

hieroglyphics – writing that is made up of pictures

indaba – a council or meeting to discuss an important matter

inordinate – unusually large or excessive

Jutes – a Germanic people who settled in southern Britain

koodoo – (also kudu) a striped African antelope

latitude – a measurement that shows how far north or south of the equator somewhere is

longitude – a measurement that shows how far east or west of Greenwich, London, somewhere is

mother-of-pearl – a smooth, shiny substance found inside some sea creatures' shells

mulga – a small Australian acacia tree with greyish leaves

neap-tide – a tide where there is the smallest difference between high and low water

Neolithic – something from the later part of the Stone Age

palaver – a long, irritating fuss or discussion

Parsee – a descendant of those who fled to India from Persia (now Iran) during the 7th and 8th centuries AD

prognathous – having a lower jaw or chin that sticks out

promontory – a point of high land jutting out into the sea or a lake

punchayet – a village council in India

quagga – an extinct South African zebra with a yellowish-brown coat and darker stripes

repositories – places where things are stored

sagacity – good judgement

serf – a peasant who had to work on a particular farm or for a particular farmer

sloka – a small part of a longer verse written in the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit

Spinifex – a grass with coarse, spiny leaves and flower heads

spring-tide – a tide where there is the biggest difference between high and low water

suspenders – braces

ti-tree – (also tea tree) a small, Australian tree whose leaves are used to make tea

turbid – cloudy

veldt – (also veld) South African grassland

vitiate – to spoil