

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

RUDYARD KIPLING  
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 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 jack-knife, 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 jack-knife, 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 jack-knife—He swallowed them all down into his warm, dark, inside cupboards, and then he

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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 hiccough. 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 hiccoughs.'

'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.'

## RUDYARD KIPLING

## JUST SO STORIES

With Illustrations by the Author

Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Lisa Lewis

I keep six honest serving-men  
 (They taught me all I knew);  
 Their names are What and Why and When  
 And How and Where and Who.

How did the camel get his hump? Why won't cats do as they are told? Who invented reading and writing? How did an inquisitive little elephant change the lives of elephants everywhere?

Kipling's imagined answers to such questions draw on the beast fables he heard as a child in India, as well as on folk traditions he later collected all over the world. He plays games with language, exploring the relationships between thought, speech, and the written word. He also celebrates his own joy in fatherhood. The tales were told to his own and his friends' children over many years before he wrote them down, adding poems and his own illustrations. They invite older and younger readers to share a magical experience, as more jokes, subtexts, and exotic references emerge with every reading.

This fully illustrated edition includes two extra stories and Kipling's own explanation of the title.

- INTRODUCTION • TEXTUAL NOTE • BIBLIOGRAPHY
- CHRONOLOGY • APPENDICES • EXPLANATORY NOTES

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