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RUDYARD KIPLING

JUST SO Stories

Illustrated by the author

Introduction by Robert L. Hillerich

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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TEXT ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

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Introduction

Rudyard Joseph Kipling was born of English parents in Bombay, India, on December 30, 1865. During the five years that young Kipling spent with his parents, two influences stand out as molding his entire career. From his father, artist and art teacher, Rudyard undoubtedly received his sensitivity and his interest in art. From the native "ayahs" who cared for him and his sister, young Kipling gained his abiding interest in the country of his birth.

If Hemingway is correct in his statement that an unhappy childhood is essential for a writer, the years following his fifth birthday certainly provided Kipling with this qualification. As was the custom with good English families, Kipling and his sister were sent to England for their education. For six years they lived with the wife of a retired naval officer in Southsea. During this time, young Kipling was constantly harassed. Everything he wanted to do was considered a "sin." He was punished continually by being forbidden to read, and he often went about with a sign on his back saying "liar." There

was respite for one month of each year, however, during which he visited his aunt, Lady Burne-Jones, and it was partly her interest and encouragement which deepened his love for books and paintings. Through reading and art, Kipling managed to escape from the harsh reality of this "house of desolation" which he later described in "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep."

At the age of eleven, young Kipling was rescued by his mother. Thick glasses helped his weak eyes, and a period of travel with his father strengthened his weakened spirit. In 1878 Kipling began his formal education at United Service College in Devonshire, an army prep school. It was here that peer friendships were established. Kipling's interest in reading was encouraged by the headmaster, and poems that he wrote during this period were published privately by his father. Later, happy memories of friendships and mischief from his school days were recalled by Kipling in *Stalkey & Co.* It was during this time also that young Kipling developed his excessive zeal for imperialism that was to remain with him for the greater part of his life.

Physically, Kipling was a very small man. He was slight in build, became bald at a relatively early age, and wore a heavy military-style mustache from his early twenties. His classmates often called him "gigger" because the thick glasses he wore resembled the gig lamps on the horse carriages that filled the streets.

A brilliant conversationalist, Kipling was both student and master of the language. He exploited the cockney dialect in his writings. He was typically English in his attitudes, firmly espousing imperialism and all it stood for. In his personal beliefs and in his writings, he was the spokesman for bravery, doggedness, self-sufficiency, and complacency.

At the age of seventeen, Kipling returned to India as a journalist, first in Lahore, then in Allahabad, where he later became editor of a weekly. During these years he

often risked his life in travels to remote spots in India, gathering information about people and places; and always he was writing. *Departmental Ditties* (1886) and *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) were written piecemeal during this time as filler stories for the papers, to be published shortly thereafter in book form.

Returning to England in 1889 in search of a publisher, Kipling very quickly became famous as a writer of short stories about India. His earlier books were reprinted and a number of others were published, including *Ballads and Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892), as well as *The Light That Failed* (1891). The latter records his early difficulties in trying to earn a living as a writer.

Kipling's quick fame in England and America probably was due to a number of factors. His personal knowledge of India as well as his mastery of language were true assets. On the other hand, while he saw much of India, the depth of his understanding was very limited. Although not an inspired interpreter, he did much to make India interesting to a large general public. The growth and development of English urban areas was undoubtedly another factor in the demand for his adventure stories.

In 1892 Kipling married an American girl and settled for five years in Vermont. During this time he did some of his best work, including *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *Captains Courageous* (1897). His American neighbors, however, failed to understand a man who, after receiving his own private post office, also tried to acquire his own personal railroad. These feelings and a quarrel with his brother-in-law were factors in the decision of Kipling and his wife to leave the United States for a home in England. Kipling's feelings about America were not enhanced two years later when, upon a visit to New York, his daughter contracted pneumonia and died.

Settled permanently in England, Kipling did his best work during the ten years following the turn of the

century. *Kim*, published in 1901, is undoubtedly his finest novel. The *Just So Stories* (1902), illustrated by the author, and *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) were also among the better stories published at this time. In 1907 Kipling achieved the ultimate recognition when he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature.

During World War I personal tragedy again descended upon Kipling. His young son was killed in France as a member of the Irish Guards. In memory of his son, Kipling wrote *The Irish Guards in the Great War* (1923), a history of that famous regiment.

Kipling's career as an outstanding writer virtually closed with the publication of *Puck of Pook's Hill*. After twenty years of quality work, he continued to write, but no longer with the skill, assurance, imagination, or speed of his prime years. Even his imperialistic views, so much in tune with the earlier years, began to tarnish after the war, as he came under criticism for being so militantly Tory. His, however, was a paternalistic imperialism, one which considered the welfare of the common man. "Recessional" (1897) represented a warning to his queen against the excessive and uncaring kind of imperialism that he could see developing.

Kipling died January 18, 1936, leaving a nearly finished autobiography, which was published the following year under the title *Something of Myself*. During his lifetime he left much of himself; he left a permanent contribution to the field of English literature in the areas of the short story, novel, and poetry. His influence has been acknowledged by Hemingway, James Joyce, and Winston Churchill, as well as by Eugene O'Neill and Mark Twain, who literally wore out copies of Kipling's works.

His skill and popularity made Kipling one of the most parodied writers of his time. It was in the short story that he reached his zenith, frequently including a twist of humor or horror to rival the best of O. Henry or Poe. Always making good use of local atmosphere, he some-

times became very sentimental in his works. He has been likened to a sculptor rather than to a painter in his style: the carefully hewn detail, the deliberately turned phrase, was of greater importance to him than the gestalt.

With the *Just So Stories,* Kipling captured the imaginations of children all over the world. These stories are unique examples of the playful whimsicality through which the author has informed children of all ages what transpired "In the beginning of years, when the world was so new and all . . ."

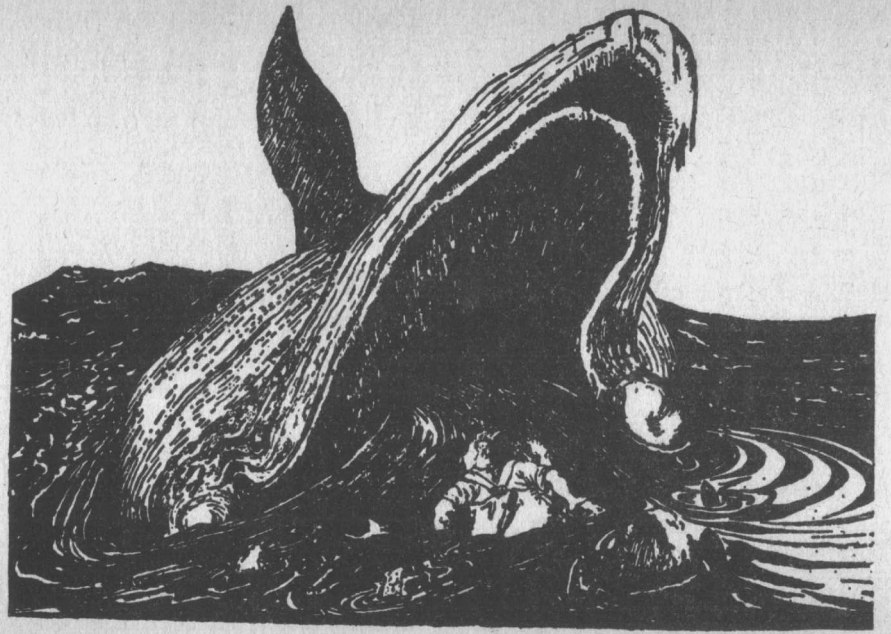
The *Just So Stories* are a collection of "explanations," telling "How the Leopard Got His Spots," "How the Camel Got His Hump," and even "How the Alphabet Was Made." In these stories Kipling reveals his humor and imagination as well as his interest and background in India. The *Just So Stories* most clearly exemplify Kipling's interest in the language itself; his use of alliteration, mastery of rhythm, and control of phrasing point up a love of the vehicle of communication which surpasses the concern about content. In this respect, these stories typify the music of language: they were written to be told, to be read aloud and listened to.

In his own telling of the *Just So Stories,* Kipling rocked back and forth on his toes, using different voices for the different characters. Each word, as it rolled from his tongue, was an important element of sound and color to entrance his audience. And entranced they are still, all over the world, from the "Altogether Uninhabited Interior" to "the banks of the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River."

"But, Mr. Kipling, how do you know that's so?"

"It's just so, Best Beloved. Just So."

ROBERT L. HILLERICH



How the Whale Got His Tiny 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 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 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.'

So the Whale swam and swam and swam, with both flippers and his tail, as hard as he could for the hiccoughs; 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.

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,
When, then you will know (if you haven't guessed)
You're 'Fifty North and Forty West!'