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Just so Stories

Rudyard Kipling

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Just so Stories Rudyard Kipling
Just So Stories for Little Children is a 1902 collection of origin stories by the British author Rudyard Kipling. Considered a classic of children's literature, the book is among Kipling's best known works.

Context:
The stories, first published in 1902, are origin stories, fantastic accounts of how various phenomena came about.[1] A forerunner of these stories is Kipling's "How Fear Came," included in his The Second Jungle Book (1895). In it, Mowgli hears the story of how the tiger got his stripes.

Approach:
The Just So Stories each tell how a particular animal was modified from an original form to its current form by the acts of man, or some magical being. For example, the Whale has a tiny throat because he swallowed a mariner, who tied a raft inside to block the whale from swallowing other men. The Camel has a hump given to him by a djinn as punishment for the camel's refusing to work (the hump allows the camel to work longer between times of eating). The Leopard's spots were painted by an Ethiopian (after the Ethiopian painted himself black). The Kangaroo gets its powerful hind legs, long tail, and hopping gait after being chased all day by a dingo, sent by a minor god responding to the Kangaroo's request to be made different from all other animals.

Contents:
1. How the Whale Got His Throat — why the larger whales eat only small prey.
2. How the Camel Got His Hump — how the idle camel was punished and given a hump.
3. How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin — why rhinos have folds in their skin and bad tempers.
4. How the Leopard Got His Spots — why leopards have spots.
5. The Elephant's Child/How the Elephant got his Trunk — how the elephant's trunk became long.
6. The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo — how the kangaroo assumed long legs and tail.
7. The Beginning of the Armadillos — how a hedgehog and tortoise transformed into the first armadillos.
8. How the First Letter Was Written — introduces the only characters who appear in more than one story: a family of cave-people, called Tegumai Bopsulai (the father), Teshumai Tewindrow (the mother), and Taffimai Metallumai, (the daughter). Explains how Taffimai delivered a picture message to her mother.
9. How the Alphabet Was Made — Taffimai and her father invent an alphabet.
10. The Crab That Played with the Sea — explains the ebb and flow of the tides, as well as how the crab changed from a huge animal into a small one.
11. The Cat That Walked by Himself — the longest story, explains how man domesticated all the wild animals except the cat, which insisted on greater independence.
12. The Butterfly That Stamped — how Solomon saved the pride of a butterfly, and the Queen of Sheba used this to prevent his wives scolding him.
13. The Tabu Tale (missing from most British editions; first appeared in the Scribner edition in the U.S. in 1903).

About Kipling:
Joseph Rudyard Kipling 30 December 1865 – 18 January 1936 was an English journalist, short-story writer, poet, and novelist. Kipling's works of fiction include The Jungle Book (1894), Kim (1901), and many short stories, including "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888). His poems include "Mandalay" (1890), "Gunga

Din" (1890), "The Gods of the Copybook Headings" (1919), "The White Man's Burden" (1899), and "If—" (1910). He is regarded as a major innovator in the art of the short story; his children's books are classics of children's literature; and one critic described his work as exhibiting "a versatile and luminous narrative gift".

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