CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Just So Stories

Rudyard Kipling · *1902 · original English text*

IN the sea, once upon a time, O my Best Beloved, there was a Whale, and he ate fishes. Kipling's Just So Stories, told to a Best Beloved, are a complete set of origin tales, from the whale's throat to the butterfly that stamped.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How did the animals come to be as they are, and what kind of love and mischief lives in a tale told, again and again, to a Best Beloved?

"IN the sea, once upon a time, O my Best Beloved, there was a Whale, and he ate fishes."

How the Whale Got His Throat, the opening

The hosted text is Just So Stories (1902, PG #2781), complete as this collection (How the Whale Got His Throat through the later tales, including The Butterfly that Stamped). The opening is exact, including "IN the sea" and "O my Best Beloved." A complete set of origin tales for a wide band, including younger readers with guidance. Kipling's imperial and racial attitudes appear in places; teach the problem, and do not put slurs on the map. Quote this typography, including the address to the Best Beloved.

KEY CHARACTERS

the Best Beloved
The child addressee of the telling, present from the first sentence.

the Whale, and the first animals
The creatures of the opening tales, who come to be as they are.

the Elephant's Child, and the later animals
The curious and the stubborn of the middle and later origins.

the teller
The voice that says once upon a time, O my Best Beloved.

O MY BEST BELOVED

> *"IN the sea, once upon a time, O my Best Beloved, there was a Whale, and he ate fishes."*
>
> How the Whale Got His Throat

Grades K–5

Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

O My Best Beloved

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. The first tale is already a spoken story, with a listener in the room.

- The opening is exact in both witnesses, including 'IN the sea.'
- The Best Beloved is the collection's addressee, not a decoration.
- This is the first tale, not the only one.

> *"IN the sea, once upon a time, O my Best Beloved, there was a Whale, and he ate fishes."*
>
> How the Whale Got His Throat

02

How the Animals Came to Be

THE MIDDLE TALES

The camel's hump, the rhinoceros's skin, the leopard's spots, the elephant's child: the middle book is a set of origins, each with its own mischief and its own just-so close.

- Keep the tales distinct.
- The spoken refrain and the catalog of fishes are part of the fun of the first tale; later tales have their own music.
- A wide band, including younger readers with guidance, can hear these.

03

Places, and a Telling Voice

THE LATER TALES

The collection moves through other origins and other places, still in the voice that says Best Beloved. The last tales still belong to this one book.

- Do not stop at the first few animal origins if the file continues.
- Teach any imperial or racial attitudes as a problem; do not put slurs on the map.
- Cite this typography.

04

A Complete Set

THE HOSTED FILE

PG #2781 and the site EPUB are this complete 1902 collection. Quote stretches that appear in both, from the tales themselves.

- Complete Just So Stories.
- A spoken collection for a wide band.
- The opening typography is 'IN the sea.'

A Tale for a Child | Origins | Mischief | The Sea and the Land | A Spoken Book

What to watch for as you read

GRADES K–5

1. The hosted text is Just So Stories (1902, Project Gutenberg #2781), complete as this collection. The opening is exact: "IN the sea, once upon a time, O my Best Beloved, there was a Whale, and he ate fishes."
2. A complete set of origin tales for a wide band, including younger readers with guidance. Kipling's imperial and racial attitudes appear in places; teach the problem, and do not put slurs on the map. Quote this typography, including the address to the Best Beloved.
3. Quote stretches that appear in both the Gutenberg text and the site EPUB.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #2781, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/just-so-stories/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.