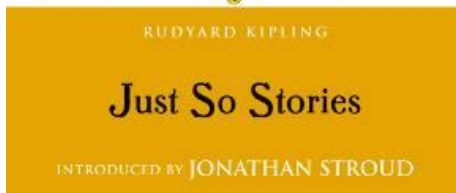


## Why the Ostrich Lost It's Flight

By Molly Drummond

Inspired by the *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling

Once, long ago, Best Beloved, the Ostrich had its flight. It had, and still has, huge wings and every day it would fly once round the world simply to warm itself up before breakfast. But what is different about Long Ago Ostrich and our present ostrich, was that its head was far larger back then. It is quite remarkable, Best Beloved, but that Long Ago Ostrich's head was nearly as big as yours or mine! If anyone saw Ostrich, they knew he was a very wise creature indeed and far more superior to them. Another difference, Best Beloved, is that this Ostrich would eat meat. The only way for it to catch the meat would be by a series of complex and clever traps that only



wise Ostrich would think of, that no-one else could understand. So, altogether, Long Ago Ostrich was widely respected and often feared, and remember, it had a much bigger head.

One morning, before breakfast, the Ostrich was just about to set off flying round the world to warm himself up when Man came crashing through the Undergrowth. Ostrich looked him up-and-down in a superior type of way.

"Good morning." said Man.

"Oh." Ostrich said, quite rudely. Nevertheless, Man pursued.

"Clever and Wise Os--"

"Clever and Wise are both the same thing." sneered Ostrich, laughing at Man in a cruel way. Nevertheless, Man pursued.

"Oh Wise Ostrich, may I trouble you for some hunting Skill?" (Skill could be given and taken those days).

"I don't give away hunting Skill and especially not to *your* type." said Ostrich, wrinkling the skin around his beak. Nevertheless, Man pursued.

"Oh Clever Ostrich, but I can't catch food! And I can't last forever on things from the Undergrowth."

"Then you shan't last forever." shrugged Ostrich, and flew away. Man could not fly, so he could not pursue. He went to see the Great God of the Forests, the Green Djinn.

"Good Afternoon." said Man dismally.

"Good Afternoon." boomed the Green Djinn, who was very polite, "Why do you look so dismal, Man?"

"It is Ostrich!" wailed Man, "He's rude and big-headed!"

“Is he?” asked the Green Djinn, and Man nodded dejectedly. The Green Djinn turned into a whirlwind of leaves and disappeared. Man stood up, shrugged, and went back to hunt for things from the Undergrowth.

Meanwhile, the Green Djinn had at last caught up with Ostrich, who had flown round the world 40 times already and had stopped in China to take a rest. Ostrich looked him up-and-down in a superior type of way. He didn’t know the Great God of the Forest when he saw it.

“Good Evening.” greeted the Green Djinn politely.

“Oh.” said Ostrich.

“I’ve had a grave and serious com-”

“Grave and Serious are the same thing.” sneered Ostrich, laughing at the Green Djinn in a cruel way. But before he knew it, the Green Djinn had fashioned a clever and complex cage out of bamboo that Ostrich found himself sitting in.

“You are a very rude creature!” roared the offended Green Djinn, who was very proud and did not like to be corrected, “You deeply offended Man by not even giving him one hunting Skill! Also, you deeply offended me – the Green Djinn (and now you could see the realization on poor Ostrich’s face, Best Beloved). To punish you, I will take away two of your favourite traits. Your wisdom will definitely be one...” and the Green Djinn thought.

“Oh no! No!” cried Ostrich pitifully.

“And you’re flight!” finished the Green Djinn, and took Ostrich and pulled his wisdom from out of his ears. It wanted to stay so much that it dragged Ostrich’s cage too. The Green Djinn had to pull it right across the sea, (which Ostrich hated and he told the Green Djinn that he would never drink water again unless he had to). By the time they reached Africa, all Ostrich’s wisdom had been pulled right out of his ears, and into the sea, where all the little fishes ate it. The Green Djinn was astonished about how much wisdom Ostrich had had, for now his head had shrunk to a minute size. “And you’re flight.” said the Green Djinn, but by this time Ostrich was so dazed and stupid he didn’t know what was happening.

So Ostrich lost his flight and had to stay in Africa, and he lost all his wisdom otherwise he might have invented the Aeroplane before Man did and flown back to his forest. He had forgotten how to catch meat, and had to eat things from the Undergrowth, but the Green Djinn made sure he kept his huge wings so as to remind of how proud he was, and how it had gotten him into such trouble.