

Exemplar Read-Aloud Stories – “How the Camel Got His Hump.”

Kipling, Rudyard. “How the Camel Got His Hump.” *Just So Stories*. New York: Puffin, 2008. (1902)

Now this is the next tale, and it tells how the Camel got his big hump.

In the beginning of years, when the world was so new and all, and the Animals were just beginning to work for Man, there was a Camel, and he lived in the middle of a Howling Desert because he did not want to work; and besides, he was a Howler himself. So he ate sticks and thorns and tamarisks and milkweed and prickles, most ‘scruciating idle; and when anybody spoke to him he said “Humph!” Just “Humph!” and no more.

Presently the Horse came to him on Monday morning, with a saddle on his back and a bit in his mouth, and said, “Camel, O Camel, come out and trot like the rest of us.”

“Humph!” said the Camel; and the Horse went away and told the Man.

Presently the Dog came to him, with a stick in his mouth, and said, “Camel, O Camel, come and fetch and carry like the rest of us.”

“Humph!” said the Camel; and the Dog went away and told the Man.

Presently the Ox came to him, with the yoke on his neck and said, “Camel, O Camel, come and plough like the rest of us.”

“Humph!” said the Camel; and the Ox went away and told the Man.

At the end of the day the Man called the Horse and the Dog and the Ox together, and said, “Three, O Three, I’m very sorry for you (with the world so new-and-all); but that Humph-thing in the Desert can’t work, or he would have been here by now, so I am going to leave him alone, and you must work double-time to make up for it.”

That made the Three very angry (with the world so new-and-all), and they held a palaver, and an indaba, and a punchayet, and a pow-wow on the edge of the Desert; and the Camel came chewing milkweed most ‘scruciating idle, and laughed at them. Then he said “Humph!” and went away again.

Presently there came along the Djinn in charge of All Deserts, rolling in a cloud of dust (Djinns always travel that way because it is Magic), and he stopped to palaver and pow-wow with the Three.

“Djinn of All Deserts,” said the Horse, “is it right for any one to be idle, with the world so new-

and-all?”

“Certainly not,” said the Djinn.

“Well,” said the Horse, “there’s a thing in the middle of your Howling Desert (and he’s a Howler himself) with a long neck and long legs, and he hasn’t done a stroke of work since Monday morning. He won’t trot.”

“Whew!” said the Djinn, whistling, “that’s my Camel, for all the gold in Arabia! What does he say about it?”

“He says ‘Humph!’” said the Dog; “and he won’t fetch and carry.”

“Does he say anything else?”

“Only ‘Humph!’; and he won’t plough,” said the Ox.

“Very good,” said the Djinn. “I’ll humph him if you will kindly wait a minute.”