

The Flan, the Emu, and the Godwit

“Oi, Drew, did you know that if you say ‘razor blades’ you’ll sound just like an American saying ‘rise up lights,’” asked Ben.

Drew lowered his head to the ground, looked the godwit steadily in the eyes, and asked, “Where’d you get that, Ben?”

“I dunno. Something called a meme that I saw in New Zealand just before I left,” said Ben, peering at the emu over his long bill. “You should try leaving Australia sometime, you know, Drew.”

Drew rolled his eyes and said: “Is it really necessary to remind you that I’m a flightless bird? Just because you’re a godwit and can fly nonstop for more than 7,000 miles doesn’t mean...”

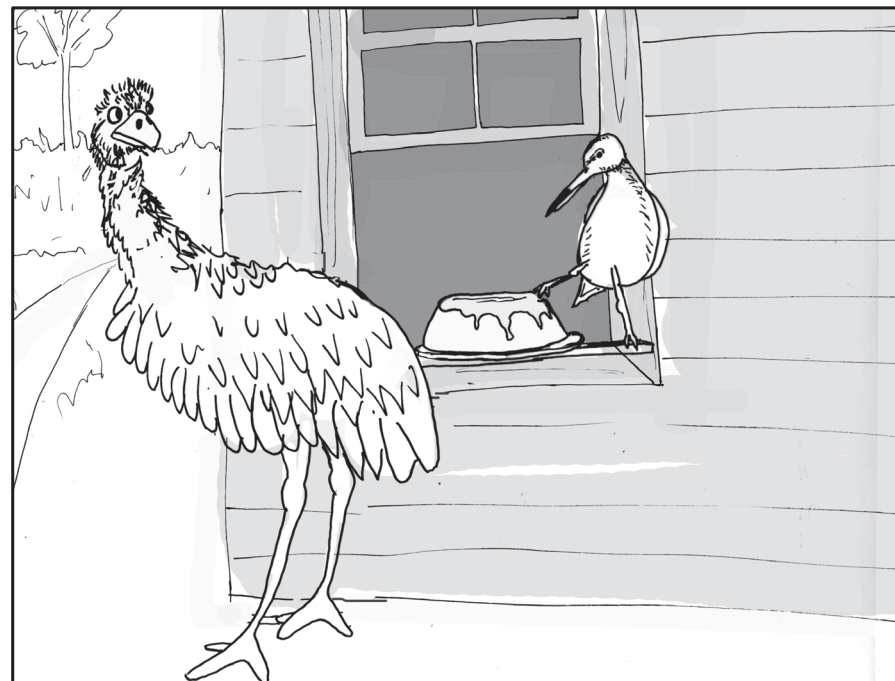
“SHH,” Drew cut him off. “I think I hear something.”

The birds froze to listen, and Ben raised his long fuzzy neck and jerkily swiveled his muppet-like head in different directions to identify source of the sound.

“DINGO,” he screeched, and started running as fast as his long, strong legs would carry him—straight toward a wall.

“Not that way, you ninny,” cried Drew, already airborne. “How many times do I have to remind you to think before you run, man?! Follow me to that farmhouse over there!”

“AHHHHH,” Ben yelled, sprinting willy-nilly toward the house, his mini wings waving frantically, if uselessly, at his sides. *There’s nothing more hilarious than watching an emu run*, thought Drew. It was even funnier because Ben squawked as he ran. *What a fraidy-bird*, thought Drew.



Drew landed on a windowsill at the rear of the house and beckoned Ben over. Ben rushed to his side and peered around the corner of the house in the direction they’d come, checking to see whether they’d lost the dingo or not.

“What’s this weird goopy stuff,” Drew asked, pointing at a flan that had been set out on the windowsill to cool.

“Do you really not recognize a flan when you see one? It’s a delicious custard dessert with caramel on top,” said Ben, putting his beak right up to the flan and inhaling its sweet, warm scent.

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“DINGO,” Drew cried (he was kidding). Ben, reacting without thinking as usual, panicked and stuck his head neck-deep into the center of the flan. It so reminded Drew of an ostrich he’d once seen burying his head in the sand that the godwit doubled over in laughter—but it was short-lived because Ben’s head remained submerged in the flan for so long Drew became certain he’d drowned. Troubled, Drew began calling Ben’s name and pecking his neck furiously. Ben lifted his head out of the flan, momentarily swiveled it this way and that as if looking for something, and then stuck his head straight back into the flan.

“What are you doing, mate? MATE?!” Drew vaulted onto Ben’s broad back and plucked at his fuzzy feathers. Ben, removing his custard-covered head once more, swiveled his long neck around so that his head was level with the godwit on his back.

“You know, mate, I reckon there’s a desert in that dessert,” he said thoughtfully.

“Now I know you’ve lost it—did you inhale custard or something,” asked Drew.

Out of the corner of his eye, over Drew’s head, Ben spotted the dingo rapidly approaching in the near distance.

“Get in the flan, Drew,” he ordered.

“What, have you gone mad? I’m not...”

“If you don’t want to be dingo dinner, GET IN THE FLAN,” Ben ordered, grabbing Drew with his beak and shoved him tail first into the flan.

Drew felt himself ooze through a layer of goop... and come out of the flan in a totally different environment. He was so astonished that he wasn’t surprised to see Ben’s disembodied head and neck hovering above him in thin air (Ben had dropped him on the ground).

Grunting, Ben wriggled himself through the flan portal and into...

“It’s a DESERT,” exclaimed the bewildered godwit. “Did a dessert just transport us into a desert?”

“Got us away from that dingo, didn’t it mate,” replied Ben.

“Where are we and how do we get back,” asked Drew, clearly distressed.

“Now who’s panicking,” said Ben. “You’re the flier here. Fly around and see if you can figure out where we are—just don’t leave me here to finish your migration to Alaska!”

“That’s... the least panicky thing you’ve ever said,” commented Drew, calmer but still in shock.

“You’ve got flan on your face, Drew,” said Ben.

“You too, you ridiculous emu!”

