

The Flan, the Emu, and the Godwit

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

Drew lowered his head to the ground to the godwit’s eye level and asked, “Where’d you get that, Ben?”

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

Drew rolled his eyes and said: “Do I really need to remind you that I’m a flightless bird? Just because you’re a godwit and can fly over 7,000 miles nonstop...”

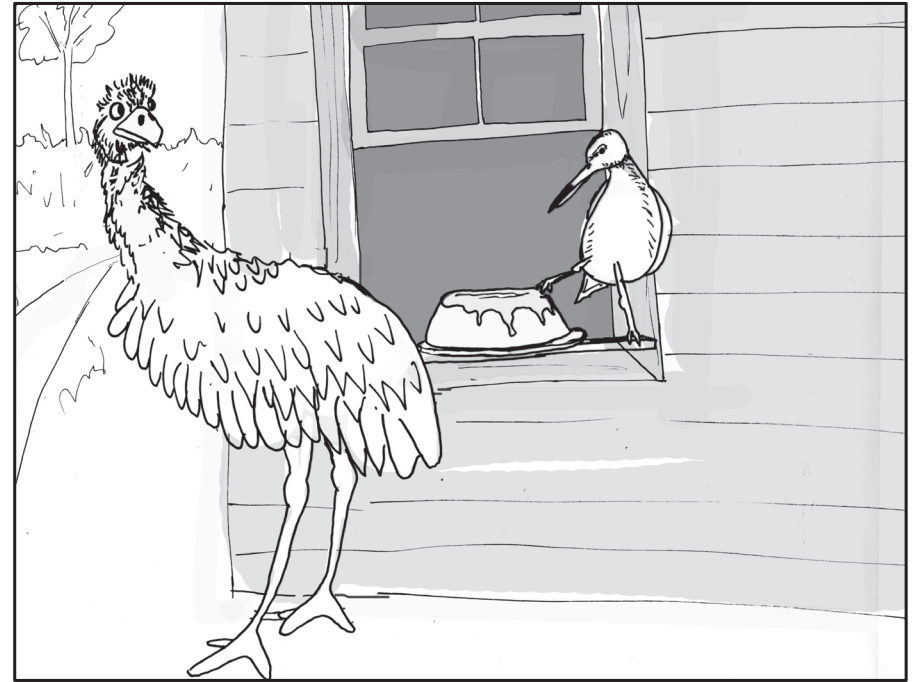
“SHH,” Drew cut him off. “I think I hear something.”

The birds froze. Ben raised his long fuzzy neck up and swiveled his muppet-like head to look for the source of the sound.

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

“Not that way, you ninny,” cried Drew a-wing. “How many times do I have to tell you to think before you run, man!? Follow me to that farmhouse!”

“AHHHHH,” Ben yelled as he ran willy-nilly toward the house. His stubby wings flapped uselessly at his sides. *There’s nothing*



funnier than watching an emu run, thought Drew. It was even funnier because Ben screamed as he ran. *What a fraidy-bird*, thought Drew.

Drew landed on a windowsill at the back 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, hoping that they’d lost the dingo.

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

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"Do you really not know a flan when you see one? It's a delicious custard dessert with caramel on top," said Ben. He put his beak right up to the flan to take a whiff.

"DINGO," Drew cried (he was kidding). Ben, reacting without thinking as usual, panicked and stuck his head deep inside that flan. This reminded Drew of an ostrich burying his head in the sand and he bent over in laughter. But his laughter was short-lived because Ben remained neck-deep in the flan for so long that Drew was sure he'd drowned. Drew began calling his name and pecking Ben's neck furiously. Ben lifted his head out of the flan, swiveled it around for a moment, then stuck his head right back into the flan.

"What are you doing, mate? MATE?!" Drew hopped onto Ben's back and began plucking at his feathers. Ben lifted his head out of the dessert and swiveled it around to look at Drew.

"You know, mate, I reckon there's a desert in that dessert," he said.

"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 said.

"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 shoving him tail-first into the flan.

Drew felt himself pass through a layer of sticky goop... and come out of the flan somewhere else entirely. He was so shocked that it didn't even surprise him 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," cried Drew. "Did we just travel through a dessert 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 and finish your migration to Alaska!"

"That's... the least panicky thing you've ever said," commented Drew.

"You've got flan on your face, Drew," said Ben.

"You too, you goofy emu!"

