

The Flan, the Emu, and the Godwit

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

Drew lowered his head to the ground to be eye level with the godwit. “Where’d you get that, Ben?”

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

“I’m a flightless bird,” retorted Drew. “Just because you’re a godwit and can fly for 7,000 miles nonstop doesn’t mean...”

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

The birds froze. Ben raised his long fuzzy neck and swiveled his head back and forth looking for danger. This made him look like a muppet. “DINGO!” he shrieked. Panicking, he ran as fast as his long, strong legs would carry him. Straight toward a wall.

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



“AHHHHH!” Ben yelled as he sprinted willy-nilly toward the house, his stubby wings flapping uselessly at his sides. *There’s nothing funnier 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 back of the house and beckoned Ben over. Ben rushed over and peered around the side of the house in the direction they’d come. He couldn’t tell if they’d outrun the dingo or not.

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

“Do you really not know a flan when you see one?” asked Ben. “It’s a delicious custard dessert with caramel on top.” Ben put his beak right up to the flan to take a whiff.

“DINGO!” Drew cried (he was kidding). Ben reacted without thinking, as usual. He 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 then he started to worry. Ben didn’t take his head out of the flan, but remained neck-deep for a few minutes. Drew began calling Ben’s name and pecking his neck furiously. Ben lifted his head out of the flan, looked around for a moment, then stuck it 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 twisted his long neck so that his head was level with the bird on his back.

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

“Now I know you’ve lost it. Did you drown in there or something?” asked Drew.

Out of the corner of his eye, over Drew’s head, Ben spotted the dingo 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 said. Then he grabbed Drew with his beak and shoved him into the flan.

Drew felt himself pass through a layer of sticky goop... and come out of the flan in a totally different place. 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 the bewildered godwit. “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?” cried Drew.

“Now who’s panicking?” asked 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 trip to Alaska. You’ve been all over the world, you’re the planner!”

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

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

“You too, you goofy emu!”

