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# **How The Ostrich Got Its Long Neck: A Tale From The Akamba Of Kenya**



## Synopsis

A three-time Caldecott Medalist provides the illustrations in a humorous African folktale that explains in playful language how the ostrich got its unusual shape.

## Book Information

Age Range: 3 and up

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## Customer Reviews

In an inspired pairing, Aardema (Misoso; Jackal's Flying Lesson, reviewed June 26) and Caldecott Medalist Brown's (Stone Soup) pump up the energy in this animated Kenyan pourquoi tale.

Suggesting the oral tradition from which the story comes, Aardema intersperses her narration with exotic, rhythmic sounds ("Kudu galloped away, ka-PU-tu, ka-PU-tu, ka-PU-tu!"). "Long long ago, when the earth was set down and the sky was lifted up," a crocodile with a toothache persuades a kind but foolish ostrich to pull out the offending tooth. When Crocodile's hunger proves mightier than his dentistry needs, he chomps down on Ostrich's neck, stretching it dramatically before the bird finally escapes. Right in step with this well-paced tale are Brown's vigorous, scribbly compositions of watercolor and markers. Raffish and bold, they are as spirited as the tale itself. Ages 4-7. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

PreSchool-Grade 4?An enchanting pourquoi tale from Kenya. Poor short-necked Ostrich cannot touch the ground with his beak. He must sit down to catch insects and, no matter how far he stretches, the berries on the bushes are always beyond his reach. Crocodile has her own problem?a raging toothache. When the kindhearted bird sticks his head into Crocodile's mouth to pluck out the painful tooth, her jaws clamp shut, beginning a humorous tug of war that leaves

Ostrich with a versatile new neck and a more developed sense of caution. Aardema spins a tale full of tension and humor. Crocodile, with her tears splashing into the river, is easy to pity, while Ostrich, often forced to crouch in uncomfortable positions, evokes equal sympathy. Led by doom-saying Fish Eagle, who admonishes, "Don't do it," the other animals act as a Greek Chorus, and their warnings and reactions move the plot at a rapid pace. Sprinkled with the animals' wonderful sound effects, this story will be a natural to read aloud. Brown's paintings, done in watercolor and marker on hot press board, have a loose, informal look. River-mud tones and a few full-color spreads provide an appropriate landscape, but the real focus is on the characters. Outlined and accented with heavy black marker, they are humorous and appealing. Ostrich, in particular, is endowed with a full range of facial expressions, from trepidation at placing her head in Crocodile's mouth to a look of delight at picking her first berries. Totally satisfying. Joy Fleishhacker, New York Public Library Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Love it! My family lived in Ukambani (Mwingi District) for several years... just had to have this book, but great for EVERYONE! Kitavu kii ni kiseo muno vyu!

nice book

This is a fun dramatic book that I have used from kindergarten thru third grade. It was a hit and really held the students attention. Thumbs up!

I sent this book to my ostrich-loving granddaughter. My daughter told me they read it 20 times in 2 days; it has become Liliana's favorite of all her many books!!

I was very disappointed. When we received this hard cover book the outside was extremely sticky, like there had been a huge sticker on it that was recently removed. Then we read the book and found a few ripped pages. This vendor definitely didn't described the condition of this book accurately.

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